

A collage of fresh vegetables including radishes, carrots, green beans, and a bumblebee on a yellow flower.

Community Growing in a time of crises: The Campy Growers

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A Fair Way To Go 2016 Fairness Commission Report – 56 recommendations



Stigma, unemployment, housing quality, benefits sanctions, attainment gap, health.

#56: Increase community gardens and projects for low-cost food and to create social and community connections (DP/DCC)... Community gardens can contribute to 23% of the recommendations.

“Communities are interested in developing neighbourhood garden projects to provide food and, as importantly, positive social activities for local people.”

“Social prescribing provides an effective response to poor mental health and wellbeing and social isolation and should be available to vulnerable communities across the city.”

Community Allotment Officer post created 2015.

www.dundepartnership.com/content/dundee-fairness-commission

Multiple global crises

- Climate emergency failures. El Niño '24
- Ecological emergency systems.
- Health emergency multiple morbidities
- And our own home voted for by older g
- We see the edges of and protected. Oth
- But we won't be pr

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Communities in need of TLC...

- Nature deprivation
- Poor diet
- Lack of exercise
- Normalisation of drug/alcohol abuse
- Social isolation
- Long-term sickness
- All lead inevitably to poor mental health



Gardening as therapy:

- 🍷 Social integration.
- 🍷 Inspire achievement.
- 🍷 Regenerate the environment - biodiversity.
- 🍷 Provide healthy, free food.
- 🍷 Inspire creativity.
- 🍷 Provoke positive interactions.
- 🍷 Vocational capacity.
- 🍷 Engender pride in communities.
- 🍷 Mental health and resilience.

Green/nature contact is essential for healthy development and mental wellbeing.



Strategies and Policies:

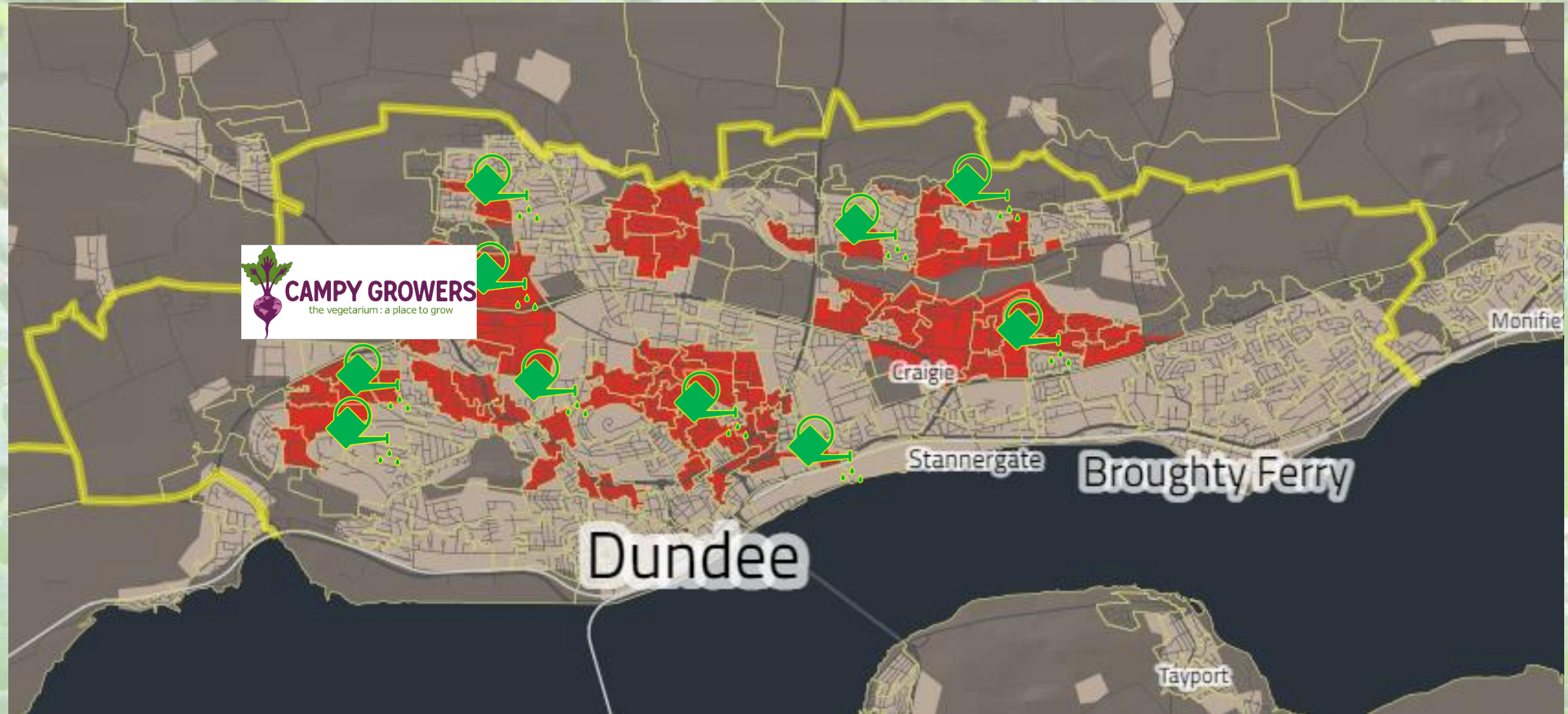
- Declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergency 2019
- Climate Action Plan
- Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity 2021
- Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate 2021
- Covenant of Mayors: C40 Cities Race to Zero
- Food Growing Strategy 2020
- Local Plans



Dundee's crises

- Top for teenage pregnancies despite massive decrease, most drug deaths in Europe despite massive decrease, mental health services failing to prevent or respond to crises.
- Domestic violence; long-term ACES damage.
- Attainment gap – associated with deprivation.
- Agencies are stretched and can only address acute crisis situations – constant firefighting.
- Community-wide prophylactic therapy is the key to reducing future demand for services.

Dundee's deprivation map



The Campy Growers!

- Camperdown Country Park Huge project to lever cultural shift towards local food growing.
- Community group interested in city-wide food productivity, biodiversity, soil restoration etc.
- Emphasis on education, ecological systems and sustainability – organic principles.



The Council process

- Loooooong process:
- Rundown site has no facilities shelter/toilets
- Initial ScotGov RCGF application (2017) rejected.
- Feasibility study led to community group formation.
- 2nd RCGF application successful 2021: funding for facility build ~£1mill.
- Building facility completed Nov 2022.



The Campy Growers!

#Campysinas

- Small group permitted onsite and started growing from May 2021.
- La Via Campesina: international peasants' movement for food sovereignty and self-reliance/resilience.
- Registered as a SCIO 2023
- Funding for Development Worker from Scotland Loves Local and gardener/coordinator from Dundee City Council's Climate Choices Fund.



Dundee's Voices Climate Choices Fund

- Participatory budgeting
- Community Empowerment Act (2015)
- Community climate action
- **£375,000 Dundee Climate Fund**
- <https://dundeesvoice.com/unitychoices.scot/budgets/7>



Dundee

Climate Fund

YOUR Vote.
Future.
Dundee.

The Campysinas' process

- Manual methods.
- Compacted, dead soil.
- Aeration with broadfork
- Addition of large amounts of municipal compost/leafmould
- Growing onsite from 2021.
- Rejuvenating the soil.
- Manual methods – low carbon growing.



The veg.



The Campysinas' Challenges

- Problematic beasts...
- Slugs – daily collections
- Bunnies – determined visitors
- Deer – drone herding
- Pigeons – bumblebee tunnel.



The Campy Growers!

- First veg box deliveries 7th August.
- Community visits; resource for organisations e.g. James Hutton, forest schools.
- Biological recording, educational events; soil surveys, moth trapping – lesser swallow prominent and 1st Dundee record for a Portland moth.
- Volunteers are dedicated and committed – playpark veg stall.



Strange things...



Collaborators

- The Eden Project – Guild of Growers.
- Local food larders - interactive.
- Froglife.
- NHS Tayside.
- Dundee Community Gardens Network.
- MAXwell Centre.
- Fareshare.
- Starter Packs.
- Community Payback team.
- James Hutton Inst. Kernza®
- Intelligent Growth Solutions.
- Transition Dundee.



The Future...

- More veg. Grain.
- More beasties.
- A lease.
- Long-term grant funding.
- Rain-water harvesting.
- EAV
- ...Suggestions?





THAT'S ALL FOLKS!



Questions??



Crises what crises..?

The big issues:

- Climate emergency
- Pollution/nature loss
- Over-population (human+livestock)
- Poor nutrition
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Substance abuse
- Child mental health



Positive impacts of gardens:

- Local greening; low food miles.
- Engender pride in communities.
- Social integration.
- Inspire understanding.
- Rejuvenate the environment.
- Provide healthy, free food.
- Inspire creativity.
- Provoke positive interactions.