



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

What is a community food initiative?

Community Food Initiatives foster communities where everyone has access to an equitable, inclusive, and thriving local food systems.

Here is an example...

Social **Farms**
& **Gardens**



Case Study

Community Food Initiatives

Project Background and Objectives:

Social Farms & Gardens is a UK wide charity supporting communities to farm, garden and grow together.

Their mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and the environment through nature-based activities which enable people and communities to reach their full potential, as a part of everyday life.

They advocate and campaign for greater recognition, funding and opportunities for nature-based activities, providing a united voice for organisations and groups delivering such initiatives. By influencing policy makers and working with partners in the voluntary, public, private and academic sectors they seek to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and the environment.

- By providing expert advice, support and a free membership scheme to support communities to grow in sustainable ways, they support thousands of grass root organisations from small fruit and veg plots on urban housing estates to large-scale rural care farms; transforming lives and connecting people.
- They design and deliver innovative training programmes and practical support which empowers and enable communities to thrive and grow.
- They help their members to access commissioned services and demonstrate that they deliver high quality provision.
- They promote income generating opportunities and quality assurance for members to deliver their work with confidence, pride and impact.



Within Wales, they provide leadership for 6 collaborative workstreams, including community orchards, food hubs, allotments, green corridors, community farms and skills training.

Project Achievements and Benefits Provided:

Through a team of experienced staff, Social Farms and Gardens seek to ensure best practice is achieved, pitfalls are avoided and any funding or income raised is spent to maximum effect.

They see their role as being able to provide structured leadership which allows initiatives to navigate towards success and by sharing insight, experience and training they ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved.

Successful outcomes in Wales are:



Community
Orchards now
thriving in the
past 2 years



Food Hubs in
operation



New Allotment
plots across 15
sites



Community
food spaces
have been
developed
across Wales

Project Challenges and Key Learnings:

Social Farms and Gardens are experiencing a significant increase in demand from the public and communities to set up and run food initiatives, but access to land and the ability to fund projects in a sustainable way are proving to be key obstacles.

They have highlighted that this access to land issue is a major barrier for community food initiatives in Wales. A recent [Institute for Welsh Affairs report](#) outlined recommendations to improve this situation, and Social Farms and Gardens advocate these measures should be enacted.

- They have highlighted that as an intermediary organisation, they find securing funding challenging.
- They point out that due to their capacity to drive best practice through their extensive knowledge, expertise and ability to take a wide-ranging overview of what does and does not lead to success. They are sure they could prevent the duplication of efforts which incurs from numerous small projects being funded in isolation, and avoid funds being dissipated without significant positive outcomes.
- They would also highlight that many community food initiatives deliver value in diverse ways which stretch well beyond food outputs and monetary terms. These including promoting community pride and spirit, improving physical and mental health, reducing social isolation and educating people to make healthier food choices. Placing a value on these less tangible benefits is something that Social Farms and Gardens can assist policy makers and project teams to map and report.

Future Plans:

Social Farms and Gardens plan to retain their leadership role, supporting and guiding a spectrum of initiatives for a growing membership. Projects will both build on current successes and look for innovative ways to thrive in the future, widening the reach of the organisation. Within Wales this will include scaling up community growing initiatives to commercially viable levels, supporting the establishment and running of new Care Farms, mentoring, coaching and training volunteers and community groups. They feel they are extremely well placed to act as a conduit for funding between funding bodies and the grassroots projects within communities, ensuring that successful outcomes are achieved.



[Social Farms & Gardens Website](#)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



gov.wales/fooddrinkwales
[@fooddrinkwales](https://twitter.com/fooddrinkwales)

*With thanks to Social Farms and Gardens for
participating in this case study*