



Veg Advocate Small Grants Programme



Produced with support of Cardiff
and Vale University Health Board



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board

Welcome from our Veg Advocate Documenters

As Veg Advocates, our role has been to raise the profile of veg within our communities and all of the delicious and nourishing things you can do with them.

As Veg Documenters, it has been inspiring for us to learn more about the community-based activities happening across Wales by fellow Veg Advocates, catalysed by the 'Peas Please' initiative.

Feedback from the Welsh Veg Advocates highlights how support, in the form of small pots of funding, can really enable groups to work together to put the spotlight on veg in our communities.

Bringing together growers, chefs and wholesalers kicked off conversations and enabled exploration of the possibilities of collaboration around growing, trading and cooking local veg. Growing, harvesting and cooking veg at after-school and summer holiday play schemes raised the profile of veg amongst children. Sharing recipes and hosting cooking events enabled the celebration of the heritage of veg within our communities.

If we all work together as Veg Advocates, we can create more abundance within our communities that, in turn, will support the health, well-being and creative possibilities for present and future generations. The more we can catalyse collaboration across cultures, generations and disciplines - bringing together chefs, artists, growers, educators, young people, elders and everyone in between - the more flavours we can infuse to create a tasty and nourishing future.

Poppy Nicol and Llinos Hallgarth
Veg Advocate Documenters

Where did the activities take place?

11 activities in Wales, involving 12 Veg Advocates and reaching 384 people

01 Gardd Ffrancon
Bangor

02 Pwerdy Powerhouse - Yr Ardd
Llandysul

03 Nurture Centre
Carmarthen

04 The Environment Centre
Swansea

05 The Swansea Children's Centre
Swansea

06 Summit Good
Swansea

07 The Bridge Mentoring Plus Scheme
Bridgend

08 Global Gardens
Cardiff

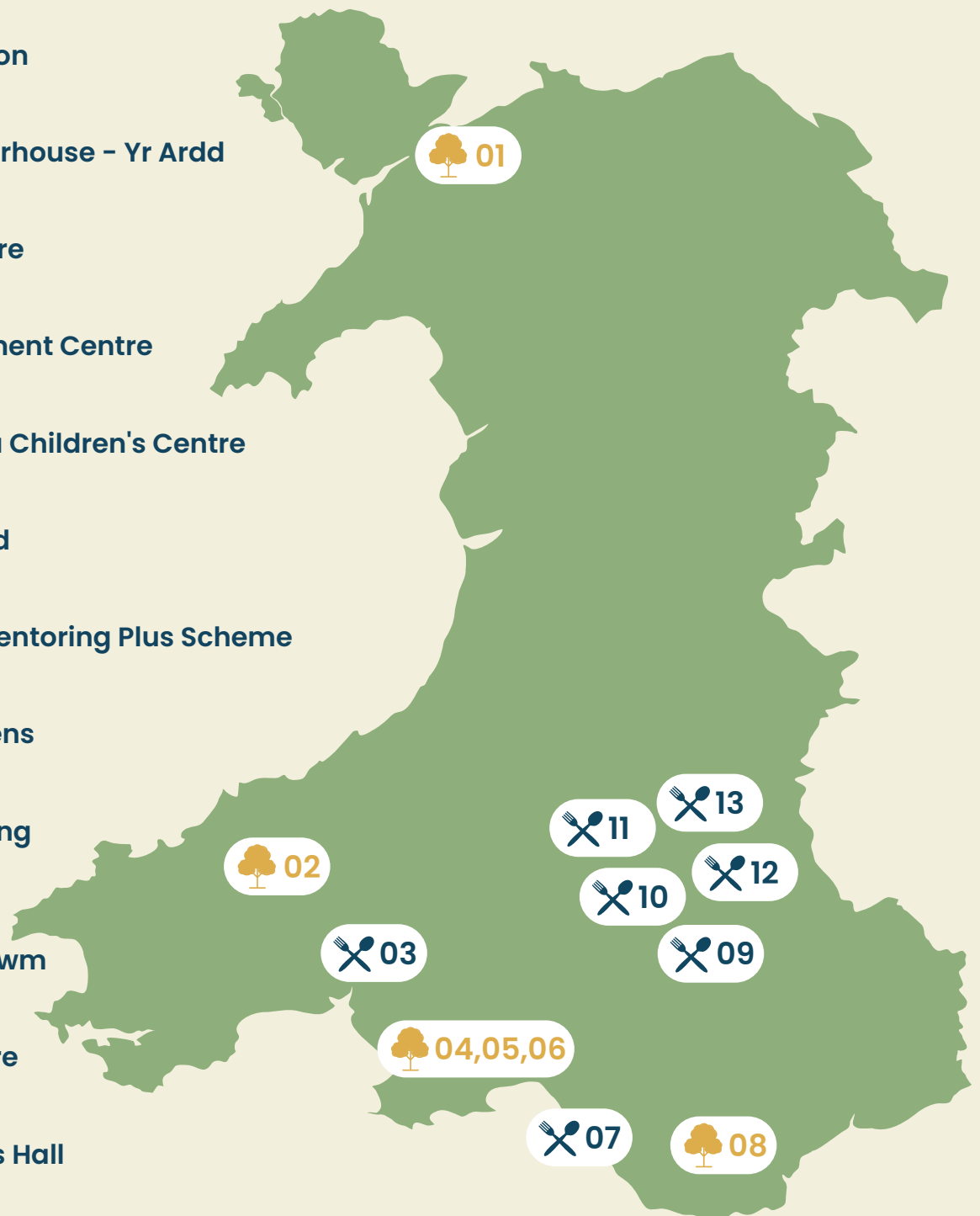
09 Brynithel Flying Start Hub
Abertillery

10 Flying Start Cwm
Ebbw Vale

11 The Star Centre
Tredegar

12 Ystruth Ladies Hall
Abertillery

13 Tai Calon Community Housing
Blaina



A Flavour of the Grant Activities

4-hour session for staff and volunteers with Barnardo's Practical Home Management Service in Bridgend. This session aimed to help them to support families on a budget to increase their access to healthy foods, including vegetables

Children aged between 4-11 years old all accessing our out of school care programme – after school and holiday play scheme at the Swansea Children's Centre

Permaculture in Action – Swansea Community Growing Network (SCGN) Garden Visit

SCGN hosted an Annual Gathering, a permaculture in action event, and a permaculture networking evening

Partneriaeth Ogwen brought people together to plant hanging baskets with vegetable and flower plants

5 food growing workshop in Yr Ardd, Llandysul – harvesting what was grown and cookery demonstration and a cook along, with recipe handouts created for the cook along

Global Gardens hosted a workshop on the dietary benefits of eating pulses and the role they can play for climate action. They also hosted a workshop with Vaida @OneSmallSpoon on cooking with seasonal and nourishing pulses

A 'Healthy Start Veg Project' at Flying Start hubs in Blaenau Gwent as part of the 'Summer of Fun' summer holiday programme

What type of activities took place?

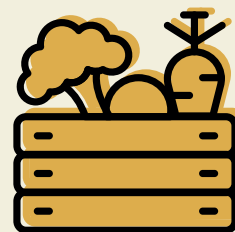
Cooking: x5



- Workshop on cooking with pulses
- Workshop on cooking with seasonal produce
- Workshop on healthy cooking on a budget
- Community seasonal cooking workshop
- Community preserving workshop
- Summer Holiday workshop for children on healthy eating

Education: x8

- Workshop on cooking with seasonal produce
 - Workshop on healthy cooking on a budget
 - Introducing new veg in a food share
 - Workshop on nutritional benefits of pulses
 - Community seasonal cooking workshop
 - Community preserving workshop



Growing: x7



- After-school/holiday food growing scheme for kids
- Community growers network field-trip to a permaculture garden
- Community grow along
- Edible hanging basket workshop
- Monthly community growing and harvesting workshops

Material development: x3



- Cooking with pulses blog and zine
- Directory of local suppliers
- Recipes and instruction handouts

Events: x9

- Networking event for local chefs, businesses and suppliers
- Networking event for community growers



What do Veg Advocates think it will take to make it easier for everyone to eat veg in communities in Wales?

Emerging Themes

"Raising awareness of the local supply chain and how to utilise local veg within menu planning."

"Building new skills in food growing."

"Sharing information about barriers to accessing healthy foods, including vegetables."

"Raising awareness of the nutritional benefits of cooking pulses."

"Hands on experience, making veg more widely available, risk free opportunities for trying veg."

"Raising awareness of tips that can be shared with families about ways to improve access to healthy foods, including vegetables and about local support that is available for people on a low income to access food."

"Networking connections for businesses to build working relationships with local growers."

"Enabling children to try new vegetables."

"De-mystifying permaculture and how it can support food growing in small spaces."



Veg Advocate Case Studies

Peas Please Get Together

held on 22/11/22 & 12/09/22

Hosted by Alex Cook, Peas Please Advocate at Cegin Hedyn Community Cafe, Carmarthen.

Our ambition was to bring together local chefs with local vegetable growers as an opportunity to discuss the challenges we all face in the workplace, share recipes and service ideas. The focal point of the evening was around ways to utilise and promote the amazing seasonal produce of the local growing community, some chefs attended that are currently doing so and some not.

The evening ran for 3-4 hours which included a discussion and a free communal meal prepared by volunteer chefs, showcasing some great local produce. Attendees were all provided with a comprehensive working list of local suppliers.

Stories, working knowledge and experiences were shared with the hope of increasing the number of local vegetables on menus and how best to achieve this. Business advice was also shared on how to maintain value on menus whilst increasing vegetable content.

A wide variety of local cooks, tv chef presenters, commercial growers, community growers and restaurant/venue managers attended, x15 in each event. Public sector cooks were also invited, unfortunately none were able to attend the meetings.



Improving access and removing barriers to Veg –

- Raised awareness of the local supply chain
- Educated on how to incorporate more local veg into menu planning and provided a local directory of suppliers
- Networking between chefs, local businesses and suppliers

What went well? –

- Tips/advice sharing
- Discussions on political motivations
- Sharing of ideas and solutions surrounding issues raised within the group

Challenges? –

- Motivating people to attend and making the event worth attending

Next steps –

- Building on the success of these events and hold more regular events in the coming year
- Good feedback given on the need for this type of event. Hopefully this working model can be replicated in other counties pan Wales

Cadwoli a Phiclo Gered... Yr Ardd –

Llinos Hallgarth, Pontweli, Llandysul

The idea was to host a series of practical events over an 8-month period which included gardening and growing workshops each month, once produce was ready to harvest and to also hold a cooking demonstration in the National Eisteddfod in Tregaron, and a pickling and preserving event. These events were open to all ages and abilities and were offered bilingually.

A total of 91 people (53 Adults, 38 Children) attended these x7 different activities over the 8-month period.

Improving access and removing barriers to Veg –

- Everyone was educated on the ethos of 'field to plate', removing misconceptions of growing, preparing, preserving and eating vegetables
- All sessions were open to anyone regardless of skills and any age
- All activities were free and supported

What went well? –

- Removing the misinformation and misconception that you need a lot of room to grow your own veg and fruit
- Getting local people involved with activities
- Creating bilingual recipe sheets



Challenges? –

- Growth of veg in Yr Ardd was not that great this year due to practical issues in the garden, such as no onsite water and volunteer support
- Had to purchase some produce due to lack of produce in Yr Ardd and therefore costs for the preserving and pickling workshop increased

Next steps –

- Plan a repeat of the growing, cooking and preserving events for the coming year
- Better planning with regard to growing, harvesting and preserving calendar

Global Gardens Project, Cardiff

Festival of Peas and Pulses

Activity:

Hosted a workshop on the dietary benefits of eating pulses and the role they can play for climate action and a workshop on cooking with seasonal and nourishing pulses.

How many people attended?

20 people.

Any other outputs?

Created a zine.

How did the project help improve access / remove barriers to accessing veg?

"Many of the people attending didn't cook with pulses very much and so we raised awareness of both the nutritional benefits of cooking pulses and their tasty qualities."



Next steps – how might the activity continue in the future, if at all?

"We are going to grow more pulses this year! We would also like to carry on workshops on cooking and nutrition in the garden."

Any other comments?

"It is great to be connected to a city-wide and nation-wide network. The financial support really helped us carry out this event."



Barnardos

Bridgend

Increasing vegetable consumption on a budget as part of a practical home management service

Activity:

Session to help staff and volunteers support families on a budget to increase their access to healthy foods, including vegetables.

How many people attended?

6 people.

How did the project help improve access / remove barriers to accessing veg?

“Sharing information about barriers to accessing healthy foods, including vegetables; raising awareness of tips that can be shared with families about ways to improve access to healthy foods, including vegetables, and; raising awareness of ways to support families to access healthy foods, and about local support that is available for people on a low income to access food.

Next steps – how might the activity continue in the future, if at all?

“We are developing a resource containing the information that was shared at the session.”



Swansea Community Growing Network

Swansea

Permaculture in Action

Activity:

Introduction to Permaculture and Networking Evening: An evening about Permaculture with an introductory talk and short films.

Permaculture in Action visit to a local Permaculture garden.

How many people attended?

26 people.

How did the project help improve access / remove barriers to accessing veg?

1. De-mystifying permaculture and explained how it can be explored in any site from a window box to a field to grow vegetables and fruit.
2. Demonstrating how permaculture principles can be implemented in a garden to grow and harvest food 365 days of the year."



Next steps – how might the activity continue in the future, if at all?

"Reviving the local Permaculture group, hosting more visits"

What went well?

Veg Advocate activities received really positive feedback and there were indications that the impact went beyond promoting veg consumption, such as how the events supported community connections, shared knowledge, provided fun experiences, increased language use and more.

"We received good feedback on the need for this type of event from other close by counties and across Wales... Hopefully this model of informal engagement can be replicated to achieve better results across different areas"

"It is great to be connected to a city-wide and nation-wide network. The financial support really helped us carry out this event."

"This small pot of money has made such a huge difference. We had to work with other organisations to make the events possible, but the £200.00 has been put to good use by buying the tools needed to repeat the workshop. Other donations of goods and monies from people in the community and our partners was used to buy produce that was needed to complete the workshops."

"Children were really keen to try different things and describe how they did or didn't like the vegetables e.g. cooked carrots taste nicer than crunchy ones. We felt we got the message across that it's fine to not like some vegetables but there will be some that you really like. Interestingly and understandably kids were more up for it than the adults, but the session which was attended mainly by adults, was really enthusiastic and people were excited to try things like chia seeds that they had previously heard about but never tried."

"We did a workshop on cooking with pulses – many of the people attending didn't cook with pulses very much and so we raised awareness of both the nutritional benefits of cooking pulses and their tasty qualities."

"Raised awareness of the local supply chain and how to utilise local veg within menu planning and a directory of local suppliers was handed out. Networking connections made for businesses to build working relationship with local growers."

Were there any challenges? And how they were overcome (if at all)? Or how could they be overcome in the future?

All Veg Advocates worked hard to make these events happen, by dedicating their time, expertise and resources on a voluntary basis. They overcame financial constraints, working with the seasons and weather, and limitations of venues. These challenges reflect the need for consistent support and funding for community activities. Grassroots activities rely on the dedication of volunteers, and need a lot of support and resourcing to continue and grow.

"Finding a suitable time for the session, to enable as many people as possible to take part."

"Finding the time to keep on top of the veg beds when the children were not around."

"Cost of hot drinks."

"Some areas of the event weren't accessible for wheelchair users and those with balance and walking issues."

"Limited seating and a few people who couldn't get a seat didn't stay."

"Attendance."

"Access to local 'produce' due to water issues."

"Timings of harvest and better planning of what we grow would have meant that more produce would have been used. This was more of a practical issue, and having the issues highlighted this year means that it can be avoided in the years to come."

"Promotion – it would be great to connect more with other community gardens and other networks to raise awareness of the work we are doing. 'Beyond the regulars.'"

"Marketing of the event."

"Possibly having a smaller group, to ensure that those at the back could hear what the guide was saying during the garden tour and recording the workshop somehow."

"Children were keen to engage but parents were a little bit harder. The venue that it worked better with adults was delivered in a 'to the audience' format."


"We couldn't access the 'need to reach' groups who weren't familiar with 'Healthy Start' – this could be tackled by moving away from 'Flying Start' hubs who are already good at getting that info out."

Next steps...

For many of the Veg Advocate events, these activities are just the beginning by reviving local networks, launching new ideas and producing resources, and plans are in place to expand their reach and get even more people eating veg.




"We are developing a resource containing the information that was shared at the session."



"We are going to grow more pulses this year! We would also like to carry on workshops on cooking and nutrition in the garden."



"We will be repeating this event in 2023 with more focus on the previous issues identified."

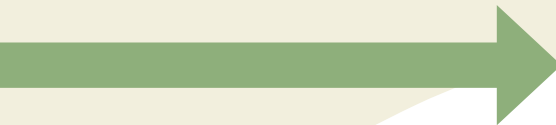


"Now that we have established the beds and have all tools needed we will be continuing to grow and learn from our crops in 2022. We have been donated seeds so will be using these to grow. We also managed to purchase blue berries and raspberries so hopefully these will have another crop this year."




"Reviving the local Permaculture group and offering more garden visits/field trips."

Next steps...



"Continuing workshops on food quality based on nutrient density and how to measure it."



"There will be a continuation of the work using the success of this project which were the interactive and easy recipes that got great engagement. I will be looking to working with more community groups that might be able to provide settings to host events like this."



"What was very evident was more of these events need to be planned and held, as well as other ideas needed to be developed. These ideas include things such as working in partnerships with other organisations such as foodbanks, schools, family centres, churches, growing clubs etc. Also more work is needed with regards to lobbying the local councils to help fund such events, making them accessible to all."



Synnwyr
Bwyd Cymru
Food Sense
Wales



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