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PRESS RELEASE

Grants awarded to five small horticultural business in Wales to help increase vegetable production

Five small horticultural business in Wales will benefit from grants to help grow their edible horticultural businesses to serve communities across Wales.

In a bid to help smaller Welsh initiatives to increase their production and in turn, increase veg consumption, [Food Sense Wales](#) along with partners [Social Farms & Gardens](#), have awarded grants to five food enterprises with no more than 5-Hectares of production land.

These small grants, worth between £2,500 and £5,000 have been offered as part of the [Peas Please project](#), a UK National Lottery funded programme whose main aim is to drive up veg consumption. This support is being delivered in Wales by Food Sense Wales, which leads on Peas Please work in Wales, in partnership with Social Farms & Gardens.

The five successful projects who've received this funding are **Henbant Permaculture in Gwynedd; Troed y Rhiw Organics, Ceredigion; Angle Walled Garden, Pembrokeshire; Ash & Elm Horticulture in Llanidloes** and **Carmarthenshire-based Glasbren CIC**. All five businesses will use the funding to focus on providing different solutions that will enable their enterprises to grow in order to increase the amount of veg they produce for the communities they serve.

[Henbant Permaculture](#) in Gwynedd is a community centred, permaculture inspired farm that will use its funding to create a 'Veg Shed' – a building that will become the powerhouse of its operation and help improve its efficiency, profitability and accessibility. This will include a wash station and a pack and collection shed for its expanding CSA veg box scheme also allowing them to sell other farm and locally produced regenerative products to their local community.

[Troed y Rhiw Organics](#) in Ceredigion is a mixed organic farm whose ethos is built around a belief in the necessity of farming sustainably in the 21st century. It focuses on edible horticulture and serves its immediate community through a box scheme, local producer's market as well as selling to shops. The Farm will use the grant to contribute towards purchasing a tractor-towed windrow compost

turner, enabling them to make full use of, and to create higher quality farm-made compost – which will in turn, contribute to an increase in production.

The team at the [Angle Walled Garden](#) in Pembrokeshire is excited to be using its grant to erect a Polytunnel to help increase the duration of its growing and selling season. It will allow Angle Walled Garden to provide fresh veg to local communities year-round; grow low carbon winter vegetables; expand summer salad crops grown undercover; expand crops which depend on undercover propagation and provide a larger area for autumn ripening; increasing the amount of vegetable it produces and sells within its locality.

Llanidloes-based [Ash & Elm Horticulture](#) will be installing a borehole to provide water to the site. An agro-ecological social market garden, Ash & Elm already provides the community with locally grown vegetables, fruit and flowers and runs a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) box scheme as well as providing horticultural education and residential off-grid work experience. Each year Ash & Elm install more tanks to collect and store rain but still only have enough to last 3 weeks without rain - enough for the polytunnels only. This grant means that they can now look forward to installing a borehole this winter so that they're ready for the start of next year's growing season – further increasing the amount of veg they're able to produce.

[Glasbren CIC](#) is located in Bancyfelin on the outskirts of Carmarthen and in 2020, it fed 40 families in Carmarthenshire through its CSA veg box scheme. With a focus on communicating the value and realities of regenerative, small-scale food production, Glasbren also promotes health and wellbeing; a connection to nature and offers the opportunity to be directly involved in growing. The grant received by Glasbren will enable the team to extend its packing shed as well as installing an insulated walk in chiller. This extension will allow the company to increase its veg box numbers by ten. The grant will also contribute towards a second polytunnel, expanding its growing space and increasing production by 8%.

A recent [Tyfu Cymru Report](#) stated that of the 204 commercial fruit and veg producers in Wales, 117 of them are classed as small-scale, working under 5 hectares of land. Many of these small-scale businesses want to increase their production but a gap in Government support has meant that smaller producers have often struggled.

This report has since informed Tyfu Cymru's [Action Plan for the Commercial Horticulture Industry in Wales](#), which provides a roadmap and actions in-line with Welsh Government strategic objectives.

Led by Tyfu Cymru, a project managed by Lantra, and with funding from the Welsh Government Cooperation and Supply Chain Development scheme, the Action Plan for Wales outlines a multi-

stakeholder, whole supply chain approach to develop and sustain the commercial production of edible and ornamental horticulture produce in Wales for the long term.

At present, Wales only produces enough fruit and veg to supply $\frac{1}{4}$ of a portion per head of population per day. To produce '5 a day' for the Welsh population would mean Wales would need to increase the volume of land required for growing from 931 hectares to 26,991 hectares, equating to 2% of Wales' total land. And if Wales wanted to produce its own '5 a day' there would need to be a significant increase in the number of smaller scale producers - to 3,480.

The Tyfu Cymru [report](#) states, that the Welsh fruit and veg sector has great potential to develop with a core group of dedicated producers and plenty of demand for produce. Planning and investment in the sector could see numbers of producers and fantastic Welsh production vastly expanded to the benefit of local businesses and the health of the nation of a whole.

Katie Palmer, Programme Manager at Food Sense Wales is delighted that thanks to this partnership with Social Farms and Gardens, a funding scheme has been made available to help support small edible horticultural business that will help to increase veg production in Wales.

"This is a really exciting scheme that will explore the impact that small capital investments can have on these smaller scale horticulture businesses and we're looking forward to working with the five recipients across Wales to measure the success of the scheme," says Katie.

"For many years horticulture, particularly small scale production, has been under resourced as producers working land of under 5 Hectares have not been eligible for subsidy. However, evidence suggests that they could significantly expand sales and reach if investment in infrastructure was available."

Wales Manager, Gary Mitchell from Social Farms and Gardens is also pleased to be able to help deliver a funding scheme that contributes to the growth of horticultural enterprises in Wales.

"Local, sustainably grown food is absolutely key in tackling important issues surrounding our food system, climate change and biodiversity, and will be at the top of the agenda for many people in our communities," says Gary.

"The sites we are supporting, through this pilot are deeply connected to and supported by the communities in which they are based. These community food businesses are just a small part of Wales' diverse Community Grown Food sector. With over 970 community growing sites across Wales including allotments, CSAs, Orchards, community gardens and Incredible Edible style groups," he continues.

“Through developing smaller-scale business as well as investing in community growing initiatives, Wales will be able to increase the amount it produces and in turn, consumes, ensuring that growing models become sustainable and that our population can eat more, locally grown, sustainable, healthy produce.”

Both Food Sense Wales and Social Farms and Gardens are member of Food Policy Alliance Cymru, a coalition of organisations and stakeholders building and promoting a collective vision for the Welsh food system. The Alliance recently published its 2021 Manifesto in which it recommends the creation of a Food System Commission appointed to consider six priority areas:

1. Food for all
2. Food for public health
3. Net Zero food system
4. Farming for nature and climate
5. Sustainable Seafood
6. Sustainable food sector jobs and livelihoods

In terms of *Food For Public Health*, the Alliance calls for three-quarters of our recommended daily vegetable consumption to be produced sustainably in Wales by 2030. These grants offer small business in Wales the opportunity to upscale, increase their production, expand their sales and in turn, help increase consumption. This is a key element of enabling Wales to sustainably produce vegetables for its population.

The five successful grant recipients will be required to meet with researcher, Dr Amber Wheeler before and after the investment to evaluate what impact the grant investment can make in terms of production, sales and sustainability of the organisation.

This pilot has been designed with key stakeholders and the overall impact of the pilot will be evaluated and a case study report written highlighting areas of good practice, the findings of which will be shared with Welsh Government.

ENDS

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About Food Sense Wales

Food Sense Wales is working to create a food and farming system that is good for people and good for the planet. We want to influence how food is produced and consumed in Wales, to ensure sustainable food and farming is at the heart of a just, connected and prosperous food system.

To achieve this we believe that the environment; health and wellbeing; social justice, and the economy should be integrated in all policy thinking in Wales. We believe that this “food in all policies” approach can be achieved through research, cross sector collaboration and mobilising citizens and stakeholders as part of a “Wales Good Food Movement”.

Food Sense Wales is a fund within the Cardiff and Vale Health Charity and hosted by the Cardiff and Vale Public Health team. Food Sense Wales takes a systems approach to food and farming in combination with strong working relationships with public, private and civil society organisations operating in and cutting across the food space in Wales and the UK.

Food Sense Wales delivers a number of programmes across Wales – many as part of UK partnerships – including [Peas Please](#), [Food For Life Get Togethers](#) and [Sustainable Food Places](#).

Peas Please

Peas Please is a UK-wide initiative that’s all about getting people to eat more veg which Food Sense Wales leads in Wales.

Peas Please is a ground-breaking initiative focused specifically on veg. With our vegetable consumption levels declining, Peas Please aims to bring together farmers, retailers, and restaurant chains, caterers, processors and government departments with a common goal of making it easier for everyone to eat veg.

It’s not just our health that will benefit but the environment and farmers can potentially benefit from more veg too. A recent study showed that if we all eat an extra portion of veg and a little less meat we would reduce the UK’s diet-related greenhouse gas emissions by 17%.

Peas Please aims to secure commitments from industry and government to improve the availability, acceptability (including convenience), affordability, and quality of the vegetable offer in shops, schools, restaurants and beyond, and in turn stimulate increased vegetable consumption among the UK public, particularly children and those on a low income.

About Social Farms & Gardens:

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

SF&G:

- Advocate and campaign for greater recognition, funding and opportunities for nature-based activities.
- Provide expert advice, support and a free membership scheme to support communities to grow in sustainable ways.
- Design and deliver innovative training programmes which empower and enable communities to thrive and grow.
- Forge pathways for our members to access commissioned services and demonstrate that they deliver high quality provision

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