



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

**Submission for
Wicklow County Development Plan
2021 – 2027**

**Blessington Allotments Campaign
9th January 2020**



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Community benefits from having allotments	5
3. Climate Change	6
4. Food Poverty	7
5. Food Sustainability	8
6. All Ireland Pollinator Plan	9
7. Protection required	11
8. European Allotments & Community Gardens	13
9. Cost of allotments	14
10. Requirements for Allotments	16
11. Wicklow Allotments	18
12. Other Councils & Areas	19
13. Management of the Allotments	21
14. Conclusion	23



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

1. Introduction

Allotments have a long history in Ireland, with legislation passed within the first few years of the Free State in the Acquisition of Land (Allotments) Act, 1926. This act outlined the responsibilities of local authorities to seek land for the provision of allotments when representations have been made to them. Changes were made in 1934 to this act, to include provision for those who could not afford allotments.

More recent legislation which covers the provision of allotments includes the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 for local development plans, and the Local Government Act, 2001.

Amenity, recreation and other functions. **67.—(1)** In accordance with and subject to [section 66](#), a local authority may take such measures, engage in such activities or do such things (including the incurring of expenditure) as it considers necessary or desirable to promote the interests of the local community in relation to the matters indicated in *subsection (2)*.

(2) (a) The matters referred to in *subsection (1)* are—

(vi) allotments, fairs and markets, and related amenities, facilities and services,

Local Government Act, 2001, Section 67

‘allotment’ means an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres let or available for letting to and cultivation by one or more than one person who is a member of the local community and lives adjacent or near to the allotment, for the purpose of the production of vegetables or fruit mainly for consumption by the person or a member of his or her family;

Amendment of First Schedule to Principal Act.

77.— The First Schedule to the Principal Act is amended—

13. Reserving land for use and cultivation as allotments and regulating, promoting, facilitating or controlling the provision of land for that use.”,

and

(b) in Part IV by the substitution of the following for paragraph 8:

Excerpts from the Planning and Development Act, 2010, Section 77

The Blessington Allotments Campaign started their campaign in May 2018 when residents of Blessington contacted Wicklow County Council requesting the provision of allotments in Blessington. The discussions have continued since, with a formal presentation given at the Baltinglass Municipal District meeting in April 2019 requesting the provision of allotments in the Blessington area, which received the full support of the councillors in attendance.

Over 40 members of the Blessington community have registered their interest with the Blessington Allotment Campaign since we started seeking members of the community to register their interest. This number is as a result of local residents



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

emailing the campaign to confirm their interest in allotments, and by turning up at one of our 3 public meetings held in 2019. Several of our members previously utilised allotments in other local authority areas such as Kildare or South Dublin County Council.

Our campaign has received the support of the following:

- Councillor Gerry O'Neill (Baltinglass MD)
- Councillor Edward Timmins (Baltinglass MD)
- Councillor Avril Cronin (Baltinglass MD)
- Councillor Patsy Glennon (Baltinglass MD)
- Councillor Vincent Blake (Baltinglass MD)
- Councillor Jennifer Whitmore (Greystones MD)
- Councillor Steven Matthews (Bray MD)
- John Brady TD
- Stephen Donnelly TD
- Simon Harris TD
- Andrew Doyle TD
- Grow It Yourself founder, Michael Kelly

Our campaign strongly believes that allotments are good for individuals, families, the environment, pollinators and the climate throughout Wicklow, and recommends that Wicklow County Council puts into practice the recommendations contained within this submission.



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

2. Community benefits from having allotments

There are numerous benefits to the local community from the provision of allotments throughout Wicklow, including the following:

1. **Mental Health benefits:** It can be a haven to shelter from daily pressures and problems.
2. **Physical benefits:** It gets people out of their homes and into the fresh air. It also promotes healthy eating by providing organic uncontaminated fresh fruit and vegetables.
3. **Sense of achievement:** Allotment gardeners from the UK state that the use of allotments is very rewarding (even though it can be hard work!).
4. **Social inclusiveness:** It promotes a sense of community amongst everyone interested in allotments.
5. **Loneliness is a sad aspect of our society, but thankfully allotments can help with this.** By providing a space for communities to grow their own, allotments allow fellow holders to share experiences, which will ultimately help combat loneliness.
6. **Nature and the Next Generations:** It brings nature face to face with people who might not have been familiar with the growing season. Also, a plot is especially valuable to bring children up eating well and being aware of where food comes from.

The UK's National Association of Allotment Gardeners have details on the benefits of allotments.

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/allotment-info/benefits-of-allotment-gardening/>

They also include a case-control study of the health and well-being benefits of allotment gardening, with the following conclusions relevant for policy makers, such as Wicklow County Council:



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Conclusions

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that one single session of allotment gardening can improve both self-esteem and mood, irrespective of how long participants spend on the allotment, whether they have attended in the last 7 days and their overall length of tenure. Furthermore, allotment gardeners have a better level of self-esteem and mood and a reduced level of abnormal psychological functioning than non-gardeners. Thus, in order to improve health and well-being, people in the UK should be encouraged to take part in short bouts of allotment gardening. Health organizations and policy makers should consider the potential of allotment gardening as long-term tool for combatting the increasing prevalence of ill-health and local public authorities should seek to provide community allotment plots to allow residents to have regular opportunities to partake in gardening activities.

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/health-and-well-being-allotments.pdf>

3. Climate Change

The provision of space for allotments can help with climate change and biodiversity improvements to Wicklow.

As a benchmark, The Highland Council in Scotland have an allotment policy which was reviewed in Winter 2019 by their Climate Change team. Allotments are provided by The Highland Council, and their allotments policy has an equal aim to improve the local environments through increased biodiversity. The Highland Council acknowledge that new allotments sites will provide an increased diversity of habitats.

Aim 1: to increase the provision of allotments across the Highland Council area. Performance towards this aim will be measured by the number of new allotment sites established and the maintenance of existing sites. Our target is to establish at least 4 new sites and have identified suitable land for a further 4 sites by April 2014.

Aim 2: to improve local environments through increased biodiversity. New allotment sites will provide an increased diversity of habitats. This policy encourages planting of new hedgerows to further enhance biodiversity. Baseline measurements of hedgerow length will be performed on new allotment sites and reviewed annually.

Also, the Highland Council have highlighted the reduction of carbon emissions through the provision of allotments. By allowing members of the community and families to grow their own, our food travels less, and ultimately less journeys are undertaken by consumers.



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Local Outcome 6: Carbon emissions are reduced and communities are protected from the consequences of changing weather patterns

Reduced carbon emissions, both in terms of less produce transported from producers to shops, and fewer journeys to buy produce. By providing local allotment sites, we will minimise travel needs

From The Highland Council:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1210/environment/321/climate_change/10

A policy of encouraging all members of the community to grow local, eat local should be adopted by Wicklow County Council. This is particularly important given that Wicklow County Council became the first county in Ireland to declare a climate emergency (May 2019).

4. Food Poverty

The original legislation providing allotments in Irish law in 1926 were brought in to help with food poverty of the Irish people. An amendment made to the 1926 law in 1934 specifically called out that allowances be made for those who were unemployed and could not afford them.

As we enter the year 2020 with our many technological advances, food poverty in Ireland remains – recent estimates are that 10% of Irish people live in food poverty and are not getting enough nutritious food in their diet. In addition, obesity in children and adults is at its highest levels.

Research performed by Grow It Yourself has highlighted the positive benefits of allotments in helping to combat food poverty. Grow It Yourself estimate that a family can product 135kg of nutritious fruit and vegetables per year in one plot. The provision of allotments throughout towns and villages in Wicklow will provide local communities with the space to grow their own, which ultimately sets children up for success later in life.

Food poverty is a complex issue which requires many aspects to help remove it from society, but the provision of land for allotments will directly help with this.



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Grow Your Way Out Of Food Poverty

- 10% of People in Ireland living in Food Poverty
- Home-grown food could help lift people out of the Food Poverty trap
- Average sized vegetable patch can yield €500 worth of food each year
- GIY calls on Government to make more land available for allotments

From *Grow It Yourself* website: <https://giy.ie/archive/grow-your-way-out-of-food-poverty.html>

5. Food Sustainability

Food sustainability should be treated as a carrot, not a stick! There is nothing more sustainable than having the ability to grow local and eat local. Ireland's current supply chain for our supermarkets allows cheap fruit and vegetables to be imported from thousands of kilometres away.

It is common knowledge that nutrients in food start to break down after they are harvested, so the optimum solution for nutritional value is to grow, pick and eat when required. Seasonal fruit and vegetables also taste better than compared to strawberries grown out of season for Christmas, for example.

Allotments are not generally maintained by just one person – families often get involved. In Healthy Ireland's "A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan", a healthy diet is specifically called out as crucial for both adults and children:



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

2.1.1 Diet and nutrition

A healthy diet is crucial in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It plays a key role in maintaining a healthy weight as well as encouraging positive lifestyles generally.

The findings of Irish adult and children nutrition surveys over the last ten years show that eating habits are not consistent with optimal health. Excess consumption of saturated fats, trans fats, sugars and salt (especially from foods and drinks on the top shelf of the Food Pyramid) and low consumption of fruit and vegetables are the major problems in the Irish diet (IUNA, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d, 2012e).

Source: Healthy Ireland <https://assets.gov.ie/7559/2d91a3564d7e487f86a8d3fa86de67da.pdf>

By introducing children to the method of growing fruit and vegetables early, they have better diets and have “food empathy”, according to Grow It Yourself founder Michael Kelly: <https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/gardening-tips-with-children-3217359-Feb2017/>

6. All Ireland Pollinator Plan

The All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 was formally adopted by Wicklow County Council in November 2019. This is a milestone for helping protect our pollinators.

Community gardens & allotments are highlighted in A24 (detailed below) as directly helping protect our pollinators through the introduction of pollinator friendly garden actions, already promoted by the Community Garden Network.

A24. Pollinator friendly garden actions promoted within the Community Garden Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion to members • Uptake by members 	Community Garden Network
--	---	--------------------------

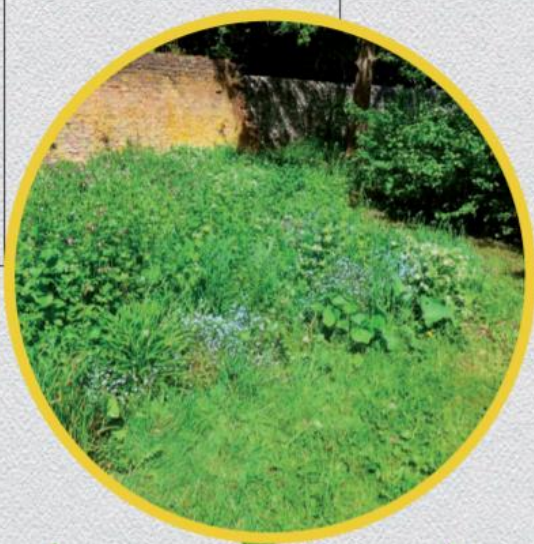


Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020: <https://pollinators.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Pollinator-Plan-2018-WEB.pdf>

Similarly, there are Council specific actions in relation to the Pollinator Plan which show the benefits of allotments in actioning the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, in particular where it applies to allotments:

2	Action	Areas where it might apply	Staff who could assist
	<p>Action 2: Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general council land</p> <p>Ensure these are mapped and/or audited so that they can be recognised and protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flowering hedgerows (food & shelter) Patches of wildflowers on disused ground (food) Short grass meadows (food) Small wild areas with bramble/ivy (food) Existing earth banks (shelter) Dry stone walls (shelter) Allotments <p>These areas can be very small. Signage could be used to identify these areas where appropriate.</p>	<p>Heritage officers, biodiversity officers or others with this remit to identify areas and communicate as appropriate to other council staff</p>



18	Action	Areas where it might apply	Staff who could assist
	<p>Action 18: Bee hotels for wild pollinators</p> <p>Incorporate small numbers of solitary bee nest boxes into the local community for cavity nesting solitary bees. Bee hotels can be useful and are a good awareness raising tool, but actions 16 and 17 are preferable ways to create nest sites. A number of small hotels is better than one large one in terms of minimising the risks of disease and predators killing the bees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any free common land where bee hotels could be kept (avoiding areas prone to vandalism) e.g., parks, allotments, schools <p>Bee hotels will only be used by bees if they are situated close to food sources.</p>	<p>Heritage officers, biodiversity officers or others with this remit to identify appropriate areas and encourage local community groups or relevant council staff to create/manage.</p> <p>Potential partners: Local community groups, schools etc.</p>



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

From the Councils: Actions to help pollinators leaflet:

<https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Pollinator-Council-Guide-FINAL.pdf>

Finally, the Junior All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 encourages our children to grow fruit and vegetables such as strawberries, raspberries, peas, courgettes or apples, which again shows the benefits of having a space for families to grow their own.



Junior All Ireland Pollinator Plan: <https://pollinators.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Junior-Pollinator-Plan-2018-WEB-1.pdf>

7. Protection required

In the past, there has been a tendency to remove allotments by local authorities for other purposes:

Liberties residents appeal to council over allotments closure

Housing crisis does not eliminate the need for 'more green space', say campaigners

© Wed, Dec 12, 2018, 22:07



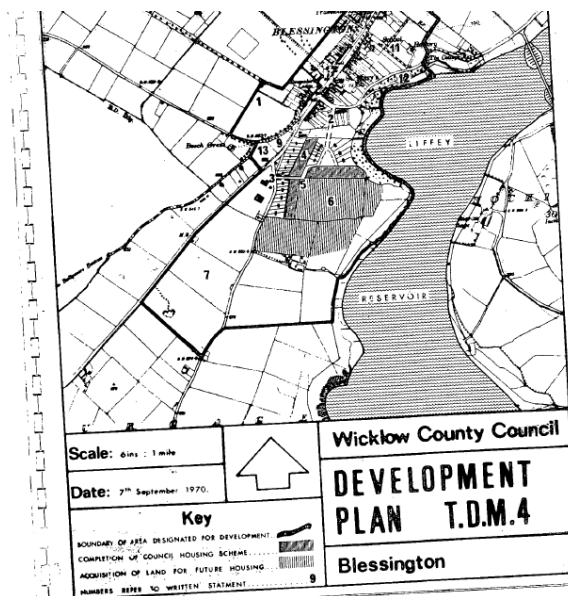
Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Source: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/liberties-residents-appeal-to-council-over-allotments-closure-1.3729403>

This is not a new issue – 50 years ago in Blessington, 5 acres of allotments and back gardens were removed for other purposes:

HOUSING:

4. Completion of Council housing scheme at present in progress on south side of village.
5. Acquisition of allotments and back gardens for future housing development (total area 5 acres) and provision of serviced sites for private housing development.



Wicklow County Development Plan, Page 51 & 60, 1970:

https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/Documents/Planning/Development-Plans-Strategies/National-Regional-County-Plans/Wicklow%20County%20Development%20Plan/Wicklow-County-Development-Plan-1970/County_Development_Plan_1970.pdf

There is a need to balance the need of the local community along with the benefits for future generations through the paybacks that allotments bring. Therefore, upon the provision of allotments within Wicklow, they should be acknowledged for the beneficial role they have for local families, the community, the environment and the climate. Adequate protection should also be placed on allotments by Wicklow County Council.



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

8. European Allotments & Community Gardens

Allotments and Community Gardens are not just a British or Irish phenomenon – there is a European federation of community allotments, called the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux.

According to the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux, there are affiliated federations who represent local committees of allotment holders or community gardens in the following countries:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Japan
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Sweden
- Switzerland

The office also organises regular newsletters – the newsletter in October 2019 included reference to the following benefits that come from allotments: social diversity, gardening diversity and biological diversity:



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Allotments – Oases of diversity

Stephanie Mayerhofer Bakk.phil.



Many nations have joined forces in the International Office to pull together in the same direction. Already for this reason alone, diversity is an important issue. However, great diversity can also be seen within the individual countries.

In his editorial, Roel Deseyn, President of Tuinhier, explained why the role of diversity is important for the

But what is meant by the term diversity in allotments? First, this only means that there is an abundance of different kinds, forms or the like. Basically, almost everything can be diverse. In this Hyphen and the next one we will, however, concentrate on three areas.

Social diversity

This often refers to the diversity of nations, which is frequently already apparent on the individual allotment site. People from different countries and cultures meet, exchange ideas and learn from each other.

However, also the wide range of social commitments, which are actively lived in many allotments, cannot be dismissed. Be it that the surrounding neighbours are given the opportunity to relax on the allotment site or the integration of the oldest and youngest people in our society or people with disabilities: The allotment gardeners prove again and again how important they are for the community.

Gardening diversity

However, diversity can also mean different garden forms, cultivation methods and projects that are implemented in the individual gardens. Different cultures often also mean a different understanding of the allotment garden in itself: What are the priorities of the individual gardeners, what vegetables do they grow, how they grow them or whether they grow any at all.

The different sizes of allotment gardens in the different countries also

many or Austria with often several 100 m².

Biological diversity

Last but not least: diversity also means diversity of species. This means not only plants, but also animals, microorganism and fungi. Biological diversity is what makes life on earth possible for us. Preserving biodiversity should therefore be a top priority for all of us, but especially for gardeners who can in particular ensure that diversity remains alive by gardening as close to nature as possible.

This year, the report on global diversity by the World Biodiversity Council, which comprises more than 1700 pages and in which more than 500 experts participated, was published and was widely discussed. The fact is that biological biodiversity is declining everywhere. This makes the allotment gardens, which have been proven to be green oases in the city and thus make a major contribution to diversity, all the more important – studies from Germany (2008) and Austria (2019) confirm this.

Allotments are diversity

In theory diversity in the allotment garden has many aspects. In summary, however, one can say: whether large or small gardens, young or old gardeners, in Europe or Asia, diversity are lived in the allotment gardens, under the umbrella of the International



From the Office de Jardins Familiaux website: http://www.jardins-familiaux.org/pdf/Archiv_hyphen/Bindestrich_68_en.pdf

9. Cost of allotments

The allotment holders will be contributing directly towards the running of the allotments in Wicklow, similar to other County Councils, through a yearly fee to be paid directly to the Council. The fee should remain affordable, and provision should be made for those who on limited incomes. This provision is already in place for some local authorities, such as South Dublin County Council, and aligns with the requirement that those who cannot afford should not be discriminated against.

The following costs were researched for benchmarking purposes:

Fingal County Council

Fingal County Council manages approximately 900 allotments at four different sites throughout the County, ranging in size from 50 square metres up to 200 square metres:

- Turvey in Donabate
- Skerries



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

- Balbriggan
- Powerstown, close to Mulhuddart in the Dublin 15 area.

The nominal fee is €1 per square metre, and there is an additional fee to the Allotment Association of €10 a year. All of the plot holders are required to become members of their Allotment Association.

Reference: <https://www.fingal.ie/council/service/allotments-management>

South Dublin County Council

South Dublin County Council has 425 allotments of varying sizes at 4 locations, ranging in size from 50 square metres up to 250 square metres:

- Tymon Park, Tallaght – 13
- Corkagh Park, Clondalkin – 39
- Friarstown, Bohernabreena – 297
- Mill Lane, Palmerstown – 76



Photograph taken by the Blessington Allotments Campaign during the Allotments Open Day at Friarstown Allotments, Bohernabreena, South Dublin County Council in August 2019



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

The nominal fee charged is €1 per square metre, but allowances are made for those on Job Seekers Allowance/Benefit, OAP Contributory/Non Contributory (if on private pension not entitled) or Disability Allowance/Benefit.

Reference: <https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/sport-and-recreation/allotments/>

UK Allotments

The UK offer allotments by law and the local authorities normally have waiting lists for the next available plots, given their incredible popularity. This law requires the local authority to provide allotments after 6 members of the local community to make representations to the local authority.

Generally, the UK plots are approximately 250 square metres each, and costs are very accessible at somewhere between £15 - 100 per plot. For example, Newcastle in England offers 3000 plots at an average of £50 per plot.

Reference: <https://urbangreennewcastle.org/allotments>

The UK also has a national allotment society with details here:
<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/allotment-info/>

10. Requirements for Allotments

Feedback was received from other local authority allotment groups regarding the amount of land that could be set aside for allotments, along with the facilities to accompany them, as follows:

- The UK National Society of Allotment Gardens, a country-wide association supporting and protecting the provision of allotments in the UK, recommends that 1 allotment plot be allocated per 50 residents.
- The aim of allotments should be to improve local environments through increased biodiversity. New allotment sites will provide an increased diversity of habitats.
- The location of the allotments should be close to the town centre for two reasons:

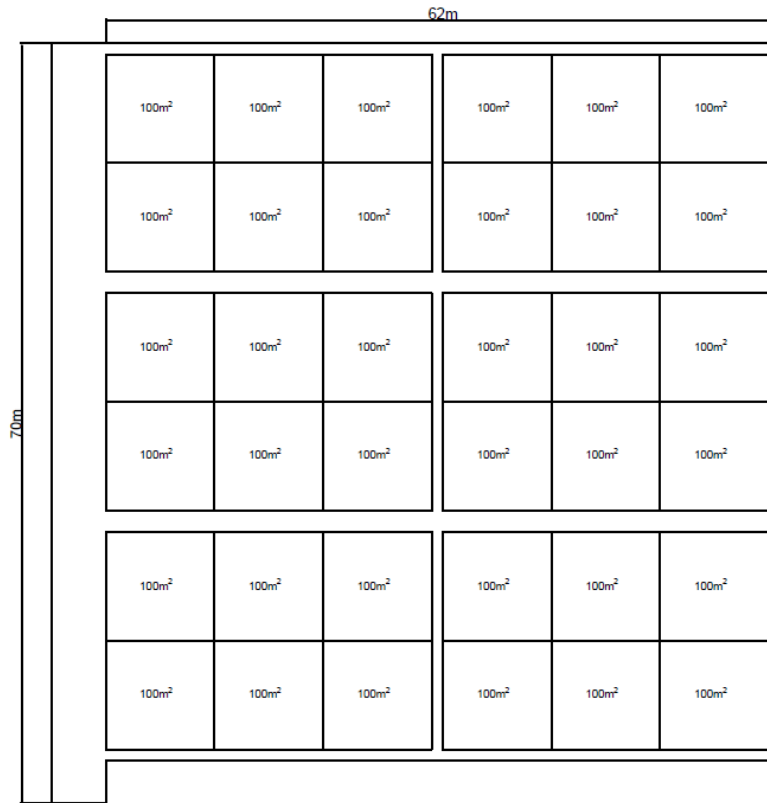


Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

- Those who do not have a car are not disadvantaged; and
- Less distances to travel means less fuel used by allotment holders, which is beneficial from a climate change point of view.
- Forward planning should be considered such that additional expansion may be required in the future, based on the success of the service. The experience of Irish County Councils would agree with this, given that Dublin City Council have highlighted that long waiting lists apply for the taking up of their allotments.
- Costs to be paid per year by allotment holders should be affordable.
- Allowances to be made for those unable to afford the yearly fee.
- An additional fee by allotment holders may be required to support the upkeep of the Allotments Committee in a similar fashion to Fingal allotments, and to allow the bulk buying of common seeds etc.
- The allotment area should be properly fenced off and gated to ensure the plot holders' tools/equipment are secure. Access is to be through one main gate which only the plot holders and Council Staff have access to.
- Individual plots should be marked out with fence posts/wire to make up the different sizes of plots.
- There should be access to water near each plot for plot holders – one tap approximately every 4 or 5 plots, and a 30 meter hose.
- Plot holders should be allowed to erect sheds/polytunnels as required.
- If available, a portacabin (large shipping container) split for use as follows: ½ to use for meetings and ½ to house shared equipment (this was provided by Fingal County Council for the Turvey Allotments).
- Road access to be close enough for delivery of items, manure etc. so plot holders don't have to carry items too far.



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)



Design of a “perfect” 1 acre site of 36 allotments @ 100 metres squared

11. Wicklow Allotments

In the 1940s, Bray Urban District offered the local community up to 241 plots to rent, while Wicklow Urban District had up to 222 plots.

District	1942	1943	1944	1945
	Total	Total	Total	Total
Bray	241	170	182	180
Wicklow	208	222	191	178

Source: 1946 Dáil record: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1946-05-23/32/>



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

In 1970, allotments in Blessington were acquired by Wicklow County Council to make room for other purposes.

In 2020, there are some towns with allotments present, but not all. Newtownmountkennedy have the very successful Season's Farm allotments.



Photograph taken by the Blessington Allotments Campaign during the Allotments Open Day at Season's Farm Allotments, Newtownmountkennedy, Wicklow in August 2018

However, there are no co-ordinated policies or strategies currently in place for allotments in Wicklow County Council, nor one department looking after it. As the "Garden of Ireland", more needs to be done to provide community gardens or allotments for the local residents in Wicklow.

12. Other Councils & Areas

A selection of allotments supported by local authorities and groups around the country are detailed below:

Kildare

Kildare County Council hosts several sites for allotments throughout the County. Kildare also have a dedicated allotment section on their website:

<http://www.kildare.ie/CountyCouncil/Environment/Allotments/>



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Fingal

Fingal County Council are the only local authority within the Greater Dublin Area which have an approved allotment strategy for how they are to improve the:

“quality and number of allotments in the Fingal area and to provide support for the development of allotments by identifying ways to give people the opportunity to grow their own food and promoting other food growing initiatives.”

<https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2019-03/Fingal%20Allotments%20Strategy%202012%20WEB%20VERSION.pdf>

Dublin City

Dublin City Council: Although Dublin City Council would be classed as the most built up area within Ireland, it offers allotments are numerous locations.

<http://www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-your-council-your-area-south-central-area/allotments-and-community-gardens>

In the past, the old Dublin Corporation had over 7000 allotment plots available for rent within Dublin, as detailed in the Dáil record below.

District	1942	1943	1944	1945
	Total	Total	Total	Total
County Boroughs:				
Cork	2,558	2,146	1,868	1,651
Dublin	7,125	6,992	7,058	6,710
Limerick	1,298	1,072	963	743
Waterford	699	548	625	556
Boroughs:				
Clonmel	436	362	373	340
Drogheda	377	377	377	377
Dun Laoghaire	705	686	559	436

Source: 1946 Dáil record: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1946-05-23/32/>

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown



Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council: Their website highlights that 2 locations are available for allotments in their jurisdiction, with over 200 allotment plots available in the area:

<https://www.dlrcoco.ie/en/parks-outdoors/sports-recreation/allotments>

Limerick

In Limerick, Ballyhoura Development Ltd have put together an advisory document (37 pages) for those in the area who may be interested in setting up allotments. According to Ballyhoura: *“Everybody benefits from allotments”*

Details of the recommendations are here:

<http://www.ballyhouradevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Ballyhoura-Development-Guide-to-Community-Allotment-Development.pdf>

Cork

Cork city contains over 50 allotments with numerous other allotments present throughout the county. Cork City website: <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/things-to-do/parks-outdoors/allotments/>

One community garden in Knocknaheeny Hollyhill, Cork City was recently highlighted as a “lifesaver” when it comes to the local community:

<https://www.echolive.ie/corknews/Cork-city-community-garden-is-a-lifesaver-9c9637f2-ca4c-4853-a064-7586c4352c3c-ds>

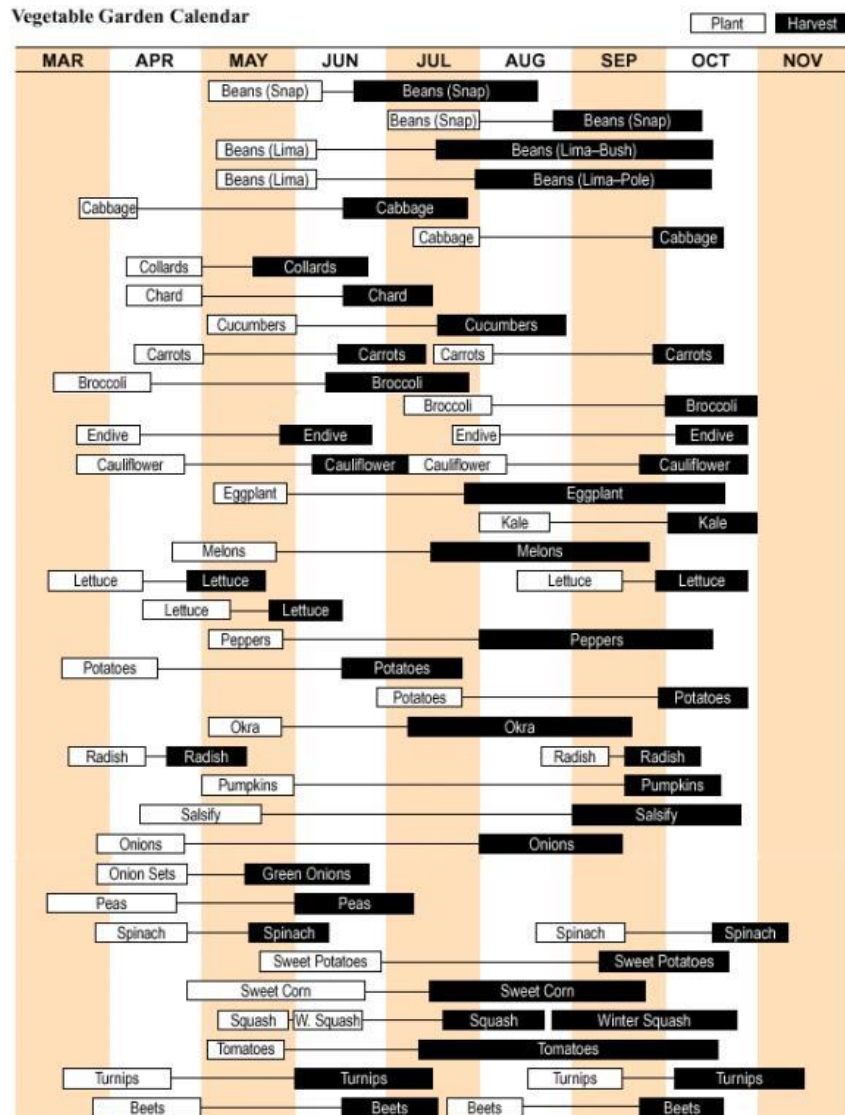
13. Management of the Allotments

It is proposed to have local Allotments Committees set up to help encourage new allotment holders with their plots, guide, and overall help all allotment holders thrive. Having a high turnover of allotment plots is to be avoided. Some local authorities set targets for high occupancy rates of approximately 75+%, while other local authorities retain a % for local residents that may have sensory issues. The local Allotments Committee would assist with the retaining of plots and reducing any high turnover.



Blessington Allotments Campaign
 Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
 Phone: 0862371290
 Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
 Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
 Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

An example of another role that the local allotments committee would provide is highlighted in the Fingal County Council Turvey Allotments, where they display what plants to put into the ground at what time of the year:





Blessington Allotments Campaign
Address: 9 Deerpark View, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0862371290
Email: blessingtonallotments@gmail.com
Facebook: [@BlessingtonAllotments](https://www.facebook.com/BlessingtonAllotments)
Twitter: [@BlessingtonGrow](https://twitter.com/BlessingtonGrow)

14. Conclusion

Our campaign strongly recommends the provision of allotments in every community in Wicklow.

The county of Wicklow is showing strong population growth and providing a service such as allotments is likely to increase in popularity given the estimated population growth. Other local authorities have seen strong demand for allotments, and have seen the need to expand allotments after they were very successful.

Given the local demand, numerous future housing developments, we believe this would be a valuable community amenity which would grow from strength to strength.

Our proposals for the Wicklow County Development Plan are summarised as follows:

Chapter 8 (Community Development) in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2021-2027 should be updated with the following:

- Wicklow County Council should adopt an official strategy for allotments.
- Wicklow County Council should adopt an official policy for allotments.
- Wicklow County Council should acknowledge the benefits that allotments bring to local families, local communities, the local environment and to the climate by providing suitable protection for allotments in Wicklow.
- Wicklow County Council should actively adopt a policy encouraging local communities, particularly families and children to grow local, eat local.
- Wicklow County Council should provide and encourage local communities at risk of food poverty to make use of suitable allotments in their area.
- Wicklow County Council should charge an affordable fee to allotment holders, while making provisions for those who cannot afford them.
- Wicklow County Council should celebrate the next European Day of Sustainable Communities by dramatically increasing the number of allotments that are open throughout Wicklow.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any additional information on this.

Best regards,

Dónal McCormack
Chairperson
Blessington Allotments Campaign



September 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Blessington Allotments Committee have asked Wicklow County Council to designate a site in the Blessington area for allotments and/or a community garden.

At GIY (Grow It Yourself) we are very supportive of the designation of council land for this purpose. The benefits of gardening and being physically active to an individual's mental health and well-being have been proven in numerous studies.

GIY feel that the provision of allotments and/or a community garden would be of great benefit to the mental health of the community. In addition, we feel that it would further promote an inclusive community in the Blessington area and provide an opportunity for personal fulfilment through the achievements obtained by caring for plants and vegetables.

All the best,

Michael Kelly
GIY Founder

