



Deposited via The University of Leeds.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/114772/>

Article:

Vis, F., Jackson, P., Miles, A. et al. (2014) Everyday Growing Cultures in the North of England. Working Papers of the Communities & Culture Network+, 3. ISSN: 2052-7268

Reuse

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



Everyday Growing Cultures in the North of England: participation, citizenship and local economies

Communities and Culture Network+ End of Project Report

Dr Farida Vis, Prof. Peter Jackson, Dr Andrew Miles, Dr Erinma Ochu, Ian Humphrey, Yana Manyukhina, Steven Flower, Ric Roberts and Caroline Ward.



Introduction

Those supporting the government's open data agenda highlight the business case for open data, an economic argument about its moneysaving potential, along with claims it will lead to better-informed citizens. Both require close and critical examination. If money is saved, who benefits and makes money from these innovations? How exactly do citizens know about and become better informed through open data? Why should they care? Some within the wide and heterogeneous open data 'movement' subsequently point to the importance of 'really useful' data (Azyan, 2011), suggesting citizens might care and become better informed if open data was seen as useful in their daily lives. The methods and techniques through which open data is practiced are central to current ideas of digital transformations in the UK and highly relevant to the Communities and Culture Network+ (CCN+). This pilot study addresses these issues by focusing on two discrete, yet connected communities: *growing communities* (allotment plot holders; allotment societies; those waiting for plots; allotment governing bodies; those wanting to grow on alternative plots of council-owned land) and the *open data community* (open data activists; developers; local government; data journalists). It critically engages the current government's open data agenda, central to contemporary ideas of digital transformations. Open data methods are used to connect two communities, making an active intervention in the current allotment waiting list crisis by seeking and enabling citizen-led solutions.

Everyday Growing Cultures is a six-month pilot study that, between mid February and mid August 2013, focused on the potentially transformative value of connecting these two currently disparate communities. Based on comparative research in Manchester and Sheffield, this ambitious project explored the potential effects of digital engagement in order to build stronger, more active communities, benefit local economies and improve environmental sustainability and food security.

In partnership with Open Data Manchester, The Kindling Trust and Grow Sheffield, we ran events with communities in Manchester and Sheffield to identify potential food growing spaces. We have engaged local councils about taking some of our ideas forward and how this might happen. We requested allotment data through the Freedom of Information Act and examined how council websites provide information to potential allotment plot holders. As part of our impact and dissemination strategy, our project film, *Everyday Growing Futures*, highlights these important issues in an accessible way. Although the project officially ended in August 2013, we continue to engage with various project participants, partners and new connections made through the research. For example, through formal and informal engagements with land access advocates 596 Acres in New York. In order to allow people to better understand and possibly replicate or use some of the techniques from the project and at the request of the funders, we also produced a toolkit. This contains practical advice for those interested in getting growing in their own communities and at the same time highlights how we collected the data on allotments across the UK. We are interested in finding out how people end up using our toolkit and adapting it to their own needs. Our website (<http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/>) has become a rich information resource and we plan on tracking the impact the project has in the future.

This end of project report is structured as follows: the next section will briefly revisit the key research questions and aims of the project. We will then describe the methods we used, before moving on to discuss the findings of the allotment data collection and council website analysis. This is followed by a section that highlights the work we did in collaboration with our open data and growing partners, through the organization of a series of mapping walks in Old Trafford in Manchester and in Sheffield. Finally, we highlight how we disseminated our work, note a number of early impact indicators, and outline next steps.

Aims of the scoping study

This project focused on Sheffield and Manchester, which both have thriving open data and food growing communities. The comparative approach builds on work by Taylor *et al* (1996) who examined global change(s), local feeling and everyday life in these two cities. Keeping in mind the different aspects of the open data agenda: the economic dimension, its claimed contribution to a better informed citizenry, along with the methods through which open data is practiced, the project uses the allotment case and increased interest food growing to ask:

- What does digital engagement and transformation look like within these communities?
- How can these communities further the national open data agenda so that it benefits citizens?
- How can a more widely adopted and enacted open data strategy benefit local economies?
- If unsuccessful in these aspects, what might open data's unintended consequences look like?
- How can we think of forms of resistance, mobilisation of local histories and heritage identities?
- How can we rethink received ideas of participation and enacting citizenship in light of these?

These original research questions were in retrospect too ambitious for a six-month exploratory study. As our project started to develop it also became clear that the methods we had originally designed were not necessarily appropriate for a project that now included active involvement of a range of different partners, who each brought new ideas and approaches to the table. The project therefore took on a necessarily more flexible and adaptive structure, whilst still pursuing its original aims. Our methods are described in the next section.

Methods

We used a range of methods to engage with and collect several different types of data:

Allotment data

We used the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to collect data on allotments across the UK. Using FOIA for data collection is relatively rare for academic research, though offers an important mechanism (where appropriate) for social researchers to collect data on a national scale (Savage and Hyde, 2012). We collected this data in spring/summer 2013 and were delayed due to the new rules implemented on the website we used (www.whatdotheyknow.com/), which limits users to 10 requests in one 24 hour period. Each request that we made is available online and so all our requests, including any responses, can be viewed by visiting our profile: www.whatdotheyknow.com/user/farida_vis_and_yana_manyukhina To facilitate our own use of this data as well as future re-use as open data, we compiled a database containing all the information we received. This data came in a range of different formats and needed to be carefully checked, cleaned and standardised. Information on allotment rents for example required close scrutiny, as many still use archaic land measures to calculate the rent. Rents can be charged by 'the pole' or 'rod' for example, as well as by the square yard or meter. There are also differences between types of plots on offer across the UK: fruit and veg only (with or without water), or so-called 'stock plots' where plot holders are also allowed to keep a variety of animals (from bees to horses in some cases). Because we wanted to be able to compare councils, we standardised this data as follows: we calculated the cost for a standard 250 square meter plot (a traditional full size plot). We plan to share this allotment data as 'open data'.

The Open Data institute defines open data as follows:

Open data is information that is available for anyone to use, for any purpose, at no cost.

Open data has to have a licence that says it is open data. Without a licence, the data can't be reused. The licence might also say:

1. *that people who use the data must credit whoever is publishing it (this is called **attribution**)*

2. *that people who mix the data with other data have to also release the results as open data (this is called **share-alike**)*

These principles for open data are described in detail in the Open Definition. Good open data:

- *can be linked to, so that it can be easily shared and talked about*
- *is available in a standard, structured format, so that it can be easily processed*
- *has guaranteed availability and consistency over time, so that others can rely on it is traceable, through any processing, right back to where it originates, so others can work out whether to trust it (<http://theodi.org/guides/what-open-data>)*

We have been working with local SME and linked open data specialists Swirrl (specifically their co-founder Ric Roberts) to release this allotment data as open data. At time of writing we are still in the process of cleaning this data for release, but aim to do so by the end of February 2014. The data will be available on this website: <http://allotmentdata.org/>, which was set up in 2011 as part of the first allotment data collection by Farida Vis and Yana Manyukhina, as well as our own *Everyday Growing Cultures* site. We have been in contact with Margaret Campbell from Transition Town West Kirby to combine her allotment datasets with ours. Campbell uses the same FOIA techniques to collect data on allotment waiting lists and publishes annual reports and datasets. This new combined dataset will have substantial added value and will produce the most comprehensive data on allotments in the UK. It will be made available as open data via an API (application programme interface) so that further use of the data is encouraged and facilitated.

Council website analysis

Most city councils provide information on their allotments via a website. But often, the information is hard to find, incomplete/non-existent or not very useful to citizens interested in growing their own food. In March 2013, we reviewed the allotment information provided by **255** councils on their websites across England (214), Wales (18) and Scotland (23). As it turned out, not all of these had responsibility for allotments and not all had websites. This review was independent and not commissioned by the councils themselves.

Below we highlight the ten items we thought people might want to find on a council allotment website. For each 'information item' present on the website, we awarded a point and to keep things simple, we examined ten items in order to produce meaningful as well as easy to understand overall scores.

The ten items were chosen based on the shared judgement of the project team and on the principal investigator's years of experience as a committee member on a Manchester allotment site of which many were spent managing the site's waiting list. The ten points included in our analysis are therefore a combination of such well known 'frequently asked questions' along with a number of other information items we identified as good practice for different reasons, for example including a map of allotment site locations. The list below shows the ten information items in full.

1. Number of allotment plots in the Council
2. Information per site: name, location etc.
3. Details of site secretary
4. Map with allotment locations
5. Total number of people on waiting lists
6. Number of people on waiting list per site
7. Information on how to apply for an allotment
8. Information on how to monitor your place on waiting list
9. Information on how plots are allocated
10. Cost of renting an allotment

This innovative information collection strategy was closely linked to the FOIA request, as it allowed us to see whether this data was freely available via council websites or not. Based on our past research experience it was our assumption that it was not and this turned out to be the case. We discuss in more detail in our findings.

Participatory mapping

We arranged four ‘mapping for food growing’ walks in Manchester (three) and Sheffield (one). These walks were the result of a shared interest between the aims of the project and the Kindling Trust’s desire to map available council land for food growing in Manchester. Their inspiration had come from an American project called 596 Acres, which had started when the founder (Paula Segal) had come across a dataset of vacant lots in Brooklyn, mapped these and made the map available online. The project also hangs signs on vacant lots inviting residents to consider what else this lot might be used for. As 596 Acres highlight on their website:

Hundreds of acres of vacant public land are hidden in plain sight behind chain-link fences in New York City, concentrated in neighborhoods disproportionately deprived of beneficial land uses. We are building the tools for communities to open all these rusty fences and the opportunities within them to improve the areas they live in.

(<http://596acres.org/en/about/about-596-acres/>).

Getting access to land-use data is not straightforward in the UK, or at least similar datasets are not readily available (individual requests have to be made to the Land Registry). In the end then these mapping walks became more about walking around the chosen neighbourhoods and seeing ‘with fresh eyes’ what land might be available, what might be possible and discussing these together. ‘Making data’ therefore became a side product rather than a key goal of these walks. Not having the data up front thus gave rise to a series of interesting opportunities for different stakeholders to articulate their own ideas and growing visions and to explore how these might be facilitated and who could help. Some of these continued to be technology driven, but this is certainly not the case for all. In several cases simply meeting likeminded people was a key outcome. These events also contributed significantly to the development of the toolkit.

Project film

Although the project film was technically not part of our methods, and strictly speaking more part of our impact and dissemination strategy, the making of the film helped shape the project in interesting ways. Due to the narrative structure, starting with one story (Farida Vis’) and following different threads through connected stories and people it became an important focus and shaper of the project; not least because both the mapping activities and the film took us to New York, something we had not originally planned on doing. This trip was in two parts, consisting of two teams. The film-makers, Caroline Ward and Erinma Ochu went to film and captured a series of inspiring growing stories and Farida Vis and Steven Flower went separately to meet with 596 Acres and talk specifically about the technical side of the project and the possibility of using the 596 Acres code in the UK. Going to New York in the summer of 2013 was an important moment for the project and in many ways it is too early to trace all the impact this trip has had. It has certainly firmed up this international connection and through it made a myriad of new ones. The film has had five screenings in Old Trafford, Sheffield, Manchester, Bristol and Leeds (<http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/film/>). It was also shown at our ‘Everyday Growing and Digging Cultures’ panel at the 2014 MeCCSA conference.

We were successful in securing funding from the ESRC, as part of the Festival of Social Science and hosted a debate on open data and urban agriculture in November 2013. This funding paid for Paula Segal from 596 Acres to come over and present this work to a wider UK audience. During her time in the UK she visited the Old Trafford neighbourhood we had worked with and met some of the residents at a co-organised event to coincide with her visit. The project film was also shown. She was also able to meet with Danny Antrobus from Grow Sheffield before

the debate. Danny was one of four speakers at the ESRC event, alongside contributions from Paula Segal, Farida Vis and Julian Tait from Open Data Manchester and Future Everything.

Findings: Allotment data

Collecting allotment data through FOIA

UK residents are entitled to request land to grow food. Traditionally this growing has typically taken place on allotments, small plots of land (a standard plot measures 250m²) that are rented from the council on an annual basis. They are a public, often subsidized resource, available to tax paying residents of the council. Council allotments exist within a legal framework that makes local authorities responsible for providing land to citizens to grow their own food. The 1908 Smallholdings and Allotment Act, Sec.23 (2) states:

(a) On a representation in writing to the council of any borough, urban district, or parish, by any six registered parliamentary electors or persons who are liable to pay an amount in respect of council tax resident in the borough, urban district, or parish, that the circumstances of the borough, urban district, or parish are such that it is the duty of the council to take proceedings under this Part of this Act therein, the council shall take such representation into consideration.

(b) As the law states, if six citizens come together to make this request, the council needs to take this into consideration. Unfortunately there is no time limit within which the council can respond.

In response to the ongoing high demand for allotments and in order to help citizens, the Landshare initiative led by celebrity chef and 'real food' campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has since 2010 provided a platform ('LetsGrow') to use the Act to create more allotments:

'Can't get an allotment? You may be only 5 friends away from your perfect plot. There are laws in the UK that state that if six or more people join forces to request land for growing, then their council has a duty to provide them an allotment. ... If you want to lobby your council for land, LetsGrow helps you form a group of six. There is even a pro forma letter which you can send to your local councillor at the click of a button.

[\(http://www.landshare.net/letsgrow/\)](http://www.landshare.net/letsgrow/)

In the spring of 2011, the Department for Communities and Local Government issued a public consultation on nearly 1300 Statutory Duties pertaining to local authorities to see which ones were a 'burden' and could possibly be scrapped. These duties included Section 23 of the 1908 Allotments Act, causing some newspapers to set up a 'Dig for Victory' again campaign, highlighting that the good life was under threat. The Act remained unchanged however and in late spring of 2011 the government announced that it had received over 6,000 responses highlighting a 'considerable interest in retaining those requirements around services for disabled children, libraries and the provision of allotments' (DCLG, 2011). This response highlighted a significant public interest in the issue.

Government and allotment bodies have historically generated allotment data, but datasets are typically patchy, rely on traditional data collection methods like surveys and are often years out of date, making evidence based policy-making difficult. The last government commissioned national survey on allotments was carried out in 2006 (Crouch, 2011), though the report was not published at the time. It was eventually made available in 2011, straight after the DCLG announced it had 'saved' the Allotment Act.

In the absence of any subsequent government commissioned surveys, recent initiatives by active citizens have challenged these traditional approaches by employing some of the methods of open data including the use of FOIA, innovative mapping and data visualisation techniques. They have started creating alternative allotment datasets, reporting on these in the media, making data freely available for re-use (Campbell and Campbell, 2011; Vis and Manyukhina, 2011a;

2011b). As part of the current project, we used FOIA to collect data on the following five key items (reducing data collection in order to facilitate easier processing and reporting):

- The total number of sites and plots in the council
- Rents for the years 2012, 2013 and if available for 2014
- Water charges for the years 2012, 2013 and if available for 2014
- Any available discounts years 2012, 2013 and if available for 2014
- Costs of waste removal for the years 2012, 2013 and if available for 2014

We requested data for 2012 also in order to build up a pattern linking to the earlier data collection (Vis and Manyukhina, 2011b). So that we would be able to identify any specifically steep rent rises for example. Rent rises had become a significant issue in 2011 and given the cuts taking effects at the councils it was our contention that rents would likely increase further. The table below highlights the rent rises 2008, 2012-2014 for the ten Greater Manchester councils and Sheffield.

Table 1: Allotment rents 2008, 2012-2014 for Greater Manchester and Sheffield

Council	Rent 2008*	Rent 2012	Rent 2013	Rent 2014
Bolton	£37.50	£45	£46.50	Info N/A**
Bury	£103	£110	£112.50	Info N/A**
Manchester	£47.50	£55	£55	Info N/A**
Oldham	£40	£50	£50	£60
Rochdale	£55	£75	£87.50	Info N/A**
Salford	£32	£37.50	£37.50	£38.60
Stockport	£32.50	£32.50	£32.50	Info N/A**
Tameside	£42	£80	£100	£105
Trafford	£40	£48.50	£50.50	£78
Wigan	£37	£37	£37	Info N/A**
Sheffield	£24.20	£37.50	£70	£112

* This data is available from Vis and Manyukhina (2011b)

** This data was not available at the time of data collection (spring/summer 2013). For data that was not yet available the rent from the previous year was included in the table. This means that there are councils where the rent may have gone up in the meantime, specifically those where rents have steadily gone up such as Rochdale.

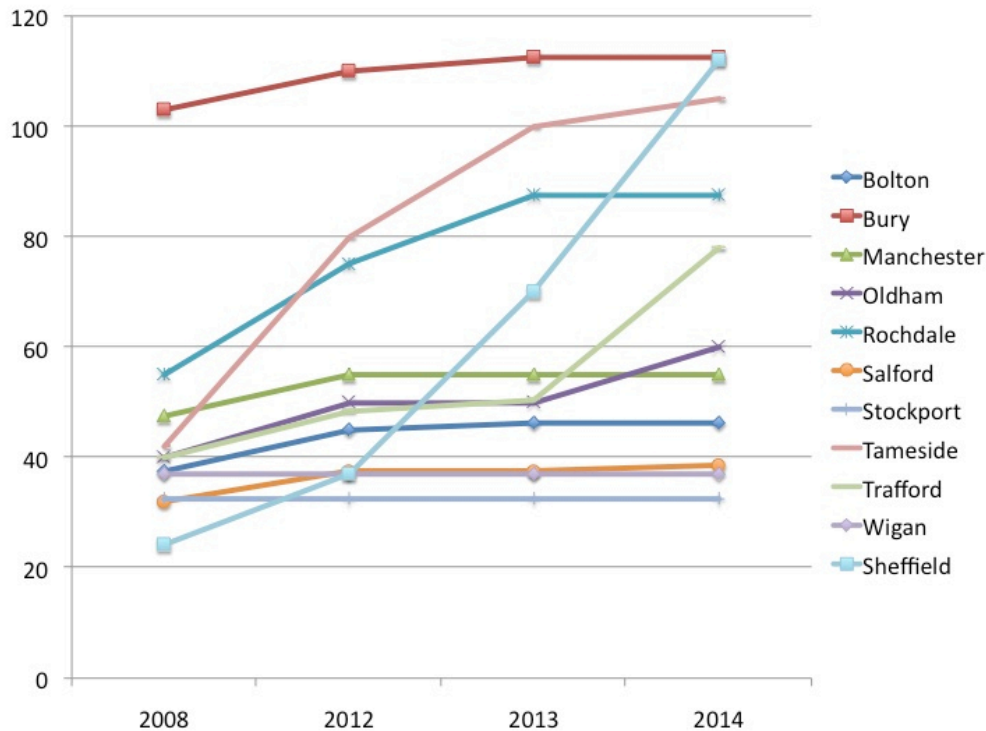
From this data it is clear that there are significant differences in the rents charged across the councils. In Greater Manchester Bury and Tameside stand out as the most expensive councils, the latter perhaps more so for having raised its rents so steeply over such a short period of time. Sheffield has also increased its rent significantly over the same period. At the time of writing an online petition has been started protesting these rent rises in the city. Further protests have been planned for outside the Town Hall in February 2014. We commented on these rent rises on our project blog in April 2013, highlighting the potential impact of the possible loss of an allotment to those on low incomes, such as OAPs:

According to Mr Ainsley, a pensioner currently paying £26.30 for their allotment would be expected to pay £120 in April 2014 if current Council proposals are implemented – on top of a near-doubling of rents in April 2013. Mr Ainsley highlighted the benefits of allotment gardening in terms of physical and mental health, arguing that the extra rental income would have to be offset against the cost of increased social isolation and vulnerability to illness. And then there are the environmental and amenity benefits which Mr Ainsley described in terms of allotment holders' unsung contribution as guardians of Sheffield's proud heritage of allotment gardens and open green spaces. For allotment holders are often responsible for restoring derelict land, their labour sometimes taking several years to reap a reward in terms of harvested food. At a time when major supermarkets have lost control of their supply chains, what price should be put on the provision of nutritious food of certain provenance, and how should we value the intangible benefits of allotments to health, environment and society?

[\(http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/2013/05/24/the-intangible-costs-of-soaring-allotment-rents/\)](http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/2013/05/24/the-intangible-costs-of-soaring-allotment-rents/)

Figure I below highlights just how steep these rent rises have been in Sheffield compared to the Greater Manchester councils. We also note the steep year on year increase in rents in Trafford council (from 2013 to 2014).

Figure I: Greater Manchester and Sheffield allotment rent rises



Website analysis

On the whole allotment council websites can do with significant improvement in providing information to prospective plot holders. In England 176 council websites (>80%) scored lower than 5 points out of 10; for Wales this was true for 16 (almost all) websites and for 13 (just over half) of the Scottish ones we looked at. Table 2 below highlights our findings for Greater Manchester and Sheffield councils. As we had developed a good working relationship with Trafford council (in part due to the mapping walks), we have so far sent a set of recommendations to this council first and will send similar short recommendation reports to the rest of councils under discussion here.

Table 2: Greater Manchester and Sheffield allotment website scores

	Information item	Bo	Bu	Ma	OI	Ro	Sa	St	Ta	Tr	Wi	Sh
1	Number of allotment in the Council											
2	Information per site: name, location											
3	Details of site secretary											
4	Map with allotment locations											
5	Total number of people on waiting lists											
6	Number people of waiting list per site											
7	How to apply for an allotment											
8	How to monitor place on waiting list											
9	How plots are located											
10	Cost of renting an allotment											
	Total	5	3	3	1	2	4	5	4	3	3	7

Bo: Bolton; **Bu:** Bury; **Ma:** Manchester; **OI:** Oldham; **Ro:** Rochdale; **Sa:** Salford; **St:** Stockport; **Ta:** Tameside; **Tr:** Trafford; **Wi:** Wigan; **Sh:** Sheffield.

It is clear that the Greater Manchester council websites in particular could be significantly improved. Most councils do not list information about their waiting lists, with Rochdale and Sheffield the only exceptions. Rochdale usefully highlights: 'There is currently a waiting list of between 3-6 years to get a plot and over 300 people on the waiting list. The length of time people wait depends on how specific they have been about where they want the plot - they don't come free very often.' (<http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2042>)

In general recommendations to councils may include:

- Providing the name of the allotment site and giving further information: a phone number of the site secretary, address, postcode. Where appropriate the website could link to individual allotment websites (if these exist) or give a more detailed location, including the address.
- Consider including a map of allotment locations. This could potentially contain further information per site, for example the number of people on the waiting list per site. It can be very useful to get a quick overview of where the very long waiting lists are, and where it might be possible to get an allotment more quickly.
- It is useful for people to understand how waiting lists are managed and how plots are allocated, either at council level or per individual site. Although it would involve some time to set up, an electronic 'ticketing system' is worth considering. Each person waiting is assigned a number (again this can be done at council level or site level) and the website could provide a central location to monitor your place on the waiting list. For example you would then be able to see the number of the ticket of the person who was last offered a plot on the same site. This gives a good indication of how the waiting list is progressing. This would also mean that individual site secretaries or indeed the council allotment officer potentially has fewer 'follow-on' waiting list queries to deal with directly.
- It is useful to highlight the cost of renting an allotment and to clearly state if this is for a full size or half size plot. It is also useful to inform people if they are likely to first be given a half size plot or have access to a full size plot straight away. Other costs, such as water rates and possible discounts are worth stating clearly also.

We also draw attention to two examples of good practice by councils that ranked highly in our analysis: Cheltenham scored highest overall in our website analysis (9 points), and although Cambridge scored 7 points overall, we specifically note their waiting list 'ticketing system'. We will publish the full analysis in due course and will also make the complete dataset available for public inspection. Trafford council has already stated that they are keen to work with us and implement our recommendations.

Findings: Participatory Mapping

Thinking about mapping

In order to not simply point at the allotment waiting list crisis and blame councils, we were interested in critically engaging with possible citizen-led initiatives that were not necessarily centered on the creation of new allotment sites, but would allow alternative solutions such as identifying and growing on other council-owned land. With our project partners we developed a series of hands-on mapping walks that would help with the identification of such new spaces. We were also interested in the act of collective mapping and data creation and collection through these activities, as well as the end results. To think through how we might capture what we had done as part of our planned toolkit.

The cartographic tradition has a long and contested history. As Matthew Edney (1997) demonstrated in his study of the geographical construction of British India, mapping was deeply

implicated in the politics of Empire and often served military and imperial interests while presenting itself as an objective and disinterested science. Brian Harley's (1989) invitation to deconstruct the map was equally critical of cartography's claims to be an objective science, arguing that maps are ideological in the sense that they serve particular (economic and political) interests, as do other forms of cultural representation. A similar message about the intimate connections between maps and power can be inferred from Jerry Brotton's (2012) best-selling history of the world in twelve maps or from Danny Dorling's award-winning use of cartograms as a method for visualising global inequalities (<http://www.worldmapper.org>).

But, as some of these examples demonstrate, maps and mapping do not have to serve the interests of powerful groups in society. Their power can be appropriated for a variety of different purposes. We explore these ideas through an examination of the way mapping is being used in a range of community food projects, designed to promote access to fresh affordable fruit and vegetables, greater social justice, improved public health and greater environmental sustainability.

In recent years, mapping has been appropriated as a vehicle for advancing a wide range of community-based agendas. In the US, 596 Acres has mapped vacant city lots in Brooklyn as a first step in turning over unused land to a variety of community gardening projects (<https://596acres.org/>) and their mapping code (shared via Github) has been re-used by several other projects in other US cities (Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New Orleans) as well as abroad (Melbourne, Australia). A 'guerilla cartography' project based in Berkeley, California used crowd-sourced data from over 100 volunteers to develop an atlas of food (<http://guerrillacartography.net/home.htm/>), while on the Lower East Side in New York, artist and activist Wendy Brawer has been using the open-map system Green Map to encourage inclusive participation in sustainable community development (<http://www.greenmap.org/>). In the UK, the Landshare initiative uses an interactive map to connect growers with people who have unused land to share (<http://www.landshare.org/>), while the *Mission: Explore Food* project includes a number of mapping exercises, encouraging students to understand more about where their food comes from and how it is grown:

<http://thegeographycollective.wordpress.com/missionexplore/missionexplorefood/>.

Mapping for food growing walks

In Manchester, our partners were The Kindling Trust, a fledgling not-for-profit social enterprise whose aim is 'to work towards a just and ecologically sustainable society'. One component of the Trust's work is a project called Feeding Manchester, which aims to identify practical and strategic ways to increase access to sustainable food in Greater Manchester. Our collaboration with The Kindling Trust focused on a specific local authority, Trafford, where a group of participants came together to participate in a series of early evening walks to map potential growing spaces. Participants were asked to record the size of each potential site, details of the ground surface and aspect ratio (orientation to the sun), available water supplies and possible security issues. Here is how the project was described on the Kindling Trust's website:

During May we partnered up with Open Data Manchester and Everyday Growing Cultures to carry out a pilot mapping project in Old Trafford. The aim of the project was to produce a website with a toolkit to guide communities throughout the country to carry out their own mapping initiative with a goal of identifying unused plots of land for growing food... We specifically wanted to: develop a map we could integrate with our existing Feeding Manchester website; enable people to identify potential growing spaces; connect people interested in doing something on one or more sites; and more broadly try and change the way we think and talk about the unused spaces around us, particularly around council-owned land (<http://www.kindling.org.uk/node/1133>).

On two walking events, the group found 5.2 acres of potential growing land, which Trust members estimated could produce around 40,000kg of fruit and vegetables, with a market value of around £200,000. But the process of walking and mapping may have been as valuable as the more tangible outcomes. Here is how the walking tours are described from a participant's perspective:

The first mapping walk fell in that brief early summer at the beginning of May. We met at the St John's Centre in Old Trafford, talked through the varying techniques for growing food in urban spaces, then went on to look at the methodology of mapping. In pairs, participants walked a segment of Old Trafford, taking photos and recording vital statistics, such as aspect, water supply, security, and surface materials, for any site they thought could be used for food growing. Sites identified included ginnels [alleyways], grassed over areas, derelict plots and unloved nooks and crannies.

14 people turned up to help map for the first session, and at the repeat two weeks later, another 12 people turned out to pound the pavements.

On their return to the centre, their photos and data were uploaded to populate the map being created using Crowdfmap.com, a free online tool: www.growingoldtrafford.crowdfmap.com/

As a group we mapped around 166 acres of Old Trafford, and identified 82 sites, which the participants thought could be used for food growing. These totalled an impressive 5.2 acres (<http://www.kindling.org.uk/node/1133>).

On the first walk, it became clear that some participants struggled with notions of geographical orientation and had varying skills in terms of estimating areas or recording data on maps. The method of mapping data was simplified before the second walk was undertaken and clearer instructions were issued to participants, including a pro forma to record site data more systematically (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Recording field data for the Trafford mapping project.

The maps and other data then formed the basis for subsequent discussions with the local authority over issues such as land ownership and access to these sites (see Figure 3).

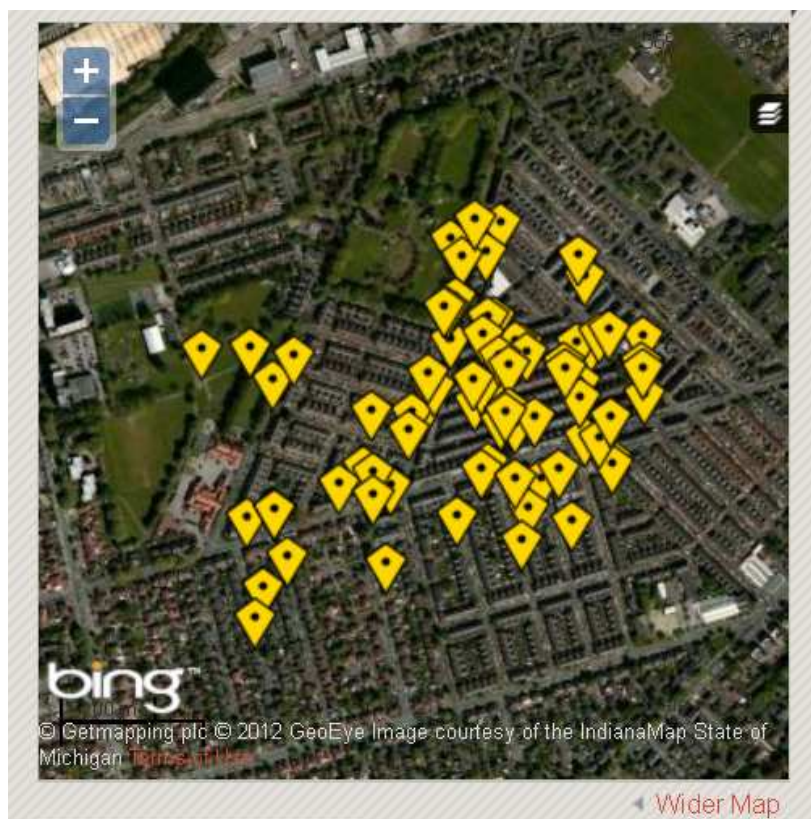


Figure 3: Interactive crowd-map displaying potential growing spaces identified by participants.

In Sheffield, we worked with an organization called Grow Sheffield, an NGO that ‘celebrates, inspires and raises awareness of the benefits of growing, harvesting and sharing food across our communities and city’. In this case, the project led to a different kind of mapping exercise including the identification of cherry trees and other opportunities for foraging unwanted food. As Danny Antrobus from Grow Sheffield commented:

It was useful to go to Manchester but mapping every bit of available space was not what we really wanted to do [in Sheffield]. We wanted to look at some spaces and think about how it could be turned over to community use... and work out what to do next with the information... What was unexpected [was that we] noticed cherry trees and social infrastructure - housing, schools... and that has moved my thinking on in terms of what does it take to make a successful growing space. Part of that is having the social as well as the physical infrastructure for growing. (quote from Everyday Growing Futures)

Grow Sheffield coordinates the Abundance scheme, which collects unwanted apples and other fruit from local gardens, redistributing the surplus to other local communities on a not-for-profit basis (<http://growsheffield.com/abundance/>). Here is how Grow Sheffield described the mapping walk, the route of which is illustrated in Figure 4:

On the 18th June, we ran a mapping walk in conjunction with the University of Sheffield’s Everyday Growing Cultures project. We started out at the Riverside [pub] and made our way around part of Pitsmoor, exploring patches of land which could be used for growing space, as well as sources of wild food (<http://growsheffield.com/mapping-walk/>).

The blog goes on to describe how the mapping exercise fitted in with their other objectives:

For Grow Sheffield, we are starting to think about how mapping could be used to help people to find growing spaces, food projects and wild food in their neighbourhoods, as well as helping connect people who are interested in organic food growing. So we used our guided group walk around Pitsmoor to stimulate our discussion about all the ingredients and steps required for communities to establish local food growing, and to get us thinking about the role mapping could play in Grow Sheffield's projects and wider work (<http://growsheffield.com/mapping-walk/>).

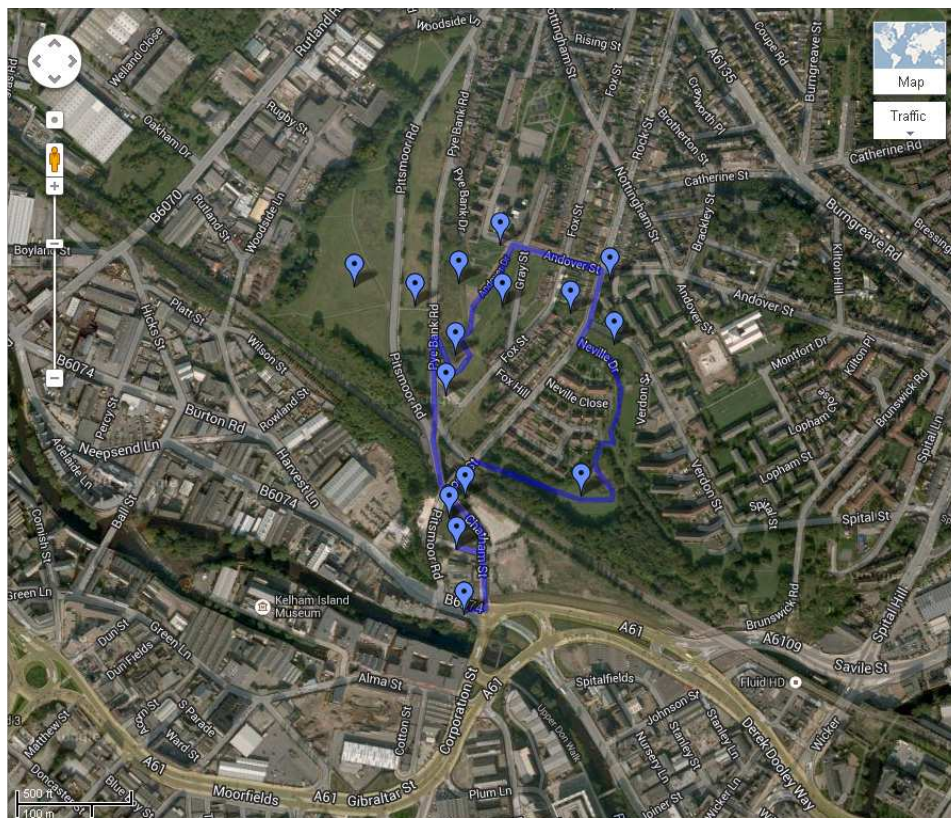


Figure 4: Route of Grow Sheffield mapping walk

Since these walks and following a further related event we organized in Sheffield in November (The Big Open Data Debate, as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science), Grow Sheffield have since included a Crowdmapper to the Sheffield Food Network project, with the following statement about encouraging involvement as well as thoughts on how people might use it:

We are hoping that people will get involved with this project in two main ways:

1. Add reports to the map. Do you know of a plot of land in your community which is disused or vacant and which could be put to better use? You can add information about the site to the map by filling in a simple form.

2. Start to organise activity around a site. If you see a site on the map which you'd be interested in trying to turn over to community use, you can start by commenting on the report on the map to notify people of your interest and start a conversation about it.

(<http://growsheffield.com/sheffield-food-network/>)

Mapping as metaphor and social practice

This brings us to ask why these community groups feel compelled to use maps to advance their agenda and how are their ambitions affected by the ideological baggage that accompanies the history of mapping? Our research suggests that mapping has been used by both groups in order to raise their profile and make their presence more visible to their local authorities and other potential funding sources. Maps serve as a way of legitimising community organizations, bringing evidence together in a powerful visual form, demonstrating unmet demand and coordinating local resources to a common end. Like surveys and other quantitative data, maps appear to command official attention and to be respected in ways that more anecdotal or qualitative forms of data representation may not be. This raises a question about whether the master's tools can be used to dismantle the master's house – but answering this question would require more research and goes beyond the scope of this report.

One of the objectives of the *Everyday Growing Cultures* project was to bring together the open data and allotment growing communities, culminating in a proposed data mash-up, where groups would share their knowledge and skills, bringing together data from different sources in order to advance their shared agendas. This plan proved over-ambitious to deliver within six months and on the limited resources of this pilot project, but we continue to facilitate opportunities for knowledge exchange as part of our ongoing impact strategy. Other project outcomes however were more successful than expected. These include a one-day workshop and film show at The Showroom cinema in Sheffield, which attracted an audience of more than 60 participants who shared their experience of various community-growing activities. We also screened the *Everyday Growing Futures* film and showed a film about urban gardening in Detroit, *Grown in Detroit* and part of David Crouch's BBC documentary about allotment in the UK, *The Plot*. Prior to the public event, we hosted a 'really useful' stakeholders workshop where we encouraged our invited participants (30) to engage with the project and explain their interest and connection to our work. We invited them to think about potential negative consequences of this project (for example: any there any issues with opening up this data in this way?). We encouraged discussion around the development of the toolkit and everyone was given the 596 Acres paper toolkit as a talking point (<http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/7-other-toolkits/>). Finally, we encouraged participants from each project team to think about possible future collaborations. Some of these are already developing productively (for example with the PROUD, People Researchers Organisations Using Design, through Ingrid van der Wacht, who attended the workshop).

The participants invited to the daytime stakeholder workshop presented summaries of their discussions as part of the public event in the evening. This proved highly productive as a way to connect people and collect stories about growing activities, but also facilitated goodwill and productive communication between a range of different stakeholders present, including members of the general public. This story telling technique was further explored in Erinma Ochu's invited TEDx City talk in Leeds in September 2013, as part of the global Cities2.0 event (<http://www.tedxleeds.com/erinma-ochu/>). It offered the possibility for Erinma to re-tell the story of the film, focusing both on the narrative as device as well as her own message about the future possible trajectories that could be opened up if more people are able to grow their own food.

Most revealing of all, however, was the way that practical activities like cooking and sharing food, as well as walking, talking and mapping, had such an energising effect in bringing people together to share their experiences, 'growing community' in a very tangible way. As one participant and project partner (Steven Flower) from Open Data Manchester commented:

I think it was interesting not just focusing on the data... we had nice food, we got out into the local neighbourhood and took photos and then we came together and discussed them – it was a nice activity that we did – it just so happened that we made data as well.
(quote from *Everyday Growing Futures*)

Reflecting on his involvement in previous Open Data projects, Steven suggested that this project had been different, starting with the community rather than with the data: ‘having some soup and having a more wholesome discussion around that’. Involvement in these very practical activities also helped change participants’ perceptions of vacant land and its potential for alternative uses as Kirstin Glendinning from the Kindling Trust remarked:

It’s the perception that there is nowhere to grow food in urban areas and mapping areas can help you see there are areas either vertical areas or small plots. Then once empty lots have been identified it’s changing the perception that we’re disempowered, that we can’t do anything about it... they belong to other people and we can’t do anything about it ... So specifically we’re trying to develop an attitude or a culture where we perceive council owned land as our land unless the council can prove they need it for another purpose, we should have access to it. We’re trying to change the rhetoric around publicly owned land... So we’re running this mapping project where we are inviting people to go out and map through walking. Finding unloved, odd spaces that community can start growing food in. Build a sense of community and appreciation for their area and then grow food for themselves.
(quote from Everyday Growing Futures)

For Danny Antrobus at Grow Sheffield, the mapping exercise was a ‘more social’ way of collecting information from the community and mapping was a good vehicle for enthusing and inspiring participants. This was particularly true when we shared a large-scale physical map of the Trafford area with participants in Manchester rather than relying on digital maps, displayed on screen. Participants crowded round the map, pointing out the specific area they had mapped and engaging in energetic discussion (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Participants crowding round the physical map of Trafford

Now, it seems, the UK Coalition government has also recognised the potential of role of community gardening as a way of producing more resilient communities in the context of the current economic recession. Its Big Dig initiative, for example, aims to provide training and advice to over 5,000 community food volunteers across the UK, focusing on people from deprived areas, also working with schools and through open days and other events in order to

create vibrant community food gardens which, officials claim, will reduce anti-social behaviour, provide fresh, healthy food and put pride into communities (<http://www.bigdig.org.uk>).

Like mapping, we conclude, digging is a metaphor and a social practice that can be mobilised for a variety of purposes. One need only think of the radical agenda of the seventeenth-century Diggers movement or of the wartime Dig for Victory campaign in the UK to see how the idea of digging can be appropriated for very different political agendas. We are exploring these ideas in a new project on 'The Cultural Values of Digging', funded by the AHRC, the initial findings of which will be publicised via our project blog (<http://culturalvaluesofdigging.wordpress.com/>). In conclusion, our collaboration with Grow Sheffield and The Kindling Trust has reinforced our belief in the democratic power of maps and mapping, especially when combined with other ways of engaging communities through walking, talking and eating together. The next section gives a detailed narrative of our engagement and dissemination strategy, and highlights emerging impact.

Public engagement, dissemination and impact headlines

Public engagement, dissemination and impact were integral components to the *Everyday Growing Cultures* pilot. One of the objectives of the project was to produce a research impact strategy by identifying the key channels, dissemination activities and impact indicators to enable the project to monitor and enhance its impact beyond the life of the grant.

The key activities to ensure stakeholder and users would hear about and engage in the research include:

- blogging on our own project site (<http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/>);
- guest blogs for relevant high-profile stakeholder the Open Knowledge Foundation (<http://blog.okfn.org/2013/07/18/the-transformative-potential-of-gardening-with-data/>);
- making and distributing the project film both online and at 5 events (Manchester, Old Trafford, Sheffield, Bristol and Sheffield) (<http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/film/>)
- disseminating via academic conferences, seminars and public events, including two Communities & Culture Network+ events, which were also distributed via the Communities & Culture Network+ newsletter;
- And, finally, the team has produced a toolkit to specifically apply knowledge beyond the life of the project. The toolkit can be found here: <http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/toolkit/>. It was developed and written collectively by the project team and partners and collated by Caroline Ward.

The blog and in particular, film screenings, public events and physical and online maps, have helped mobilise knowledge created through the pilot to ensure practitioners, policymakers and digital economy and social science academics are both aware of the project, its aims, methods, findings and outputs and able to access and apply the knowledge created by the researchers and community partners. This was further facilitated through our 'Everyday Growing and Digging Cultures' panel at the 2014 MeCCSA conference in early January.

To further mobilise, enhance and evidence impacts relating to *Everyday Growing Cultures*, it will be important to explore future opportunities and avenues to generate impact. In order to support these endeavours, Creative Commons licensing has been adopted to enable re-use of the content produced, including the film and toolkit. For the allotment data we will release this under an open data license via our SME partner, Swirrl.

Added Value

The project engaged a place based social innovation strategy to engage relevant stakeholders to exchange knowledge and generate impact across three cities - Manchester, Sheffield and New York. Whilst Communities and Culture Network+ funding supported one end of project event,

the project team has disseminated key findings and approaches via several additional events for which additional funding was secured internally or via external funding.

The film and public talks helped to spread ideas of open data, resilience, citizen-led social innovation and sustainability through storytelling, mapping and also online via social media (see for example this blog post on our website: <http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/2013/08/04/how-everyday-growing-cultures-told-its-everyday-growing-stories/>).

Academic impact

PhD studentships

- Peter Jackson (Co-I, Sheffield University) secured an ESRC collaborative PhD award (through the White Rose DTC) with Grow Sheffield.
- Farida Vis (PI, Sheffield) and Peter Jackson (Co-I, Sheffield University) have secured Project Sunshine studentship via the Faculty of Social Sciences at Sheffield University for a PhD on food data.

Additional Grant funding

- Farida Vis (PI, Sheffield) secured AHRC Cultural Values project funding, *The Cultural Value of Digging*, which included recruitment of a Research Associate as part of a six month pilot, and involves the same team of co-investigators.
- Erinma Ochu (Co-I, The University of Manchester) secured an industrial placement via sister network IT as a Utility (ITaaU) to apply knowledge mobilisation techniques to ITaaU digital economy research. This will include production of a documentary, 'The Social Life of Data' to be screened at an ITaaU network meeting in Summer 2014. This project begins in February 2014.

Academic talks

- Farida Vis (PI, Sheffield) invited to give guest lectures based on the project: LSE (February 2013, for public policy PGTs), MMU (May 2014, for Art and Design PGTs)
- Farida Vis (PI, Sheffield) invited and presented at SURF Research and Innovation Event (February 2013, The Netherlands)

Academic other

The project has been invited to submit this pilot work as a case study for the PROUD (People Researchers Organisations Using Design) project, an initiative of European organisations based in various sectors.

Non-academic impact

- A briefing paper was provided to Trafford city council with key recommendations to update their website, following web analysis of allotment sites across the UK. They are keen to apply the recommendations.
- The project has been invited to be part of the The Greater Manchester Data Synchronisation Programme (GMDSP). This is a collaboration between FutureEverything, the Connected Digital Economy Catapult and the Future Cities Catapult (funded by the Technology Strategy Board) that is developing a programme of work seeking to overcome a number of challenges around the areas of capacity, support and dissemination in the coordinated release of Open Data. Ongoing work with Open Data Manchester continues.

Upcoming Public talks

- The project has been invited to present at 'Turning Vacant Acres into Community Resources' event organised by 596 Acres in New York in April 2014

- Farida Vis (PI, Sheffield) and Danny Antrobus from Grow Sheffield were invited to give joint presentations at Open Data Sheffield following the Big Open Data Debate (November 2013). Danny was able to go and Farida will arrange a suitable date for 2014.
- Farida Vis (PI, Sheffield) invited to present work at Open Data Institute (was not able to go, but have been back in touch with them in January 2014 in relation to the food data PhD).

Impact Indicators

It is proposed that the following impacts, indicators of impact and evidence of impact are tracked over the next year to inform a future impact case for the *Everyday Growing Cultures* pilot. Whilst follow on funding to achieve this is desirable, there are a number of immediate actions identified to help generate impact. Note: *writing in italics are actions or evidence that have not yet happened but need to happen to generate impact.*

Internal Impact			
Impact	Indicators	Evidence	Immediate Action
Interest from a range of stakeholders (local residents, local councilors, businesses and voluntary sector) is stimulated by project activities or outputs	Approach from private sector collaborators result from project activities	Sustainable property developers present at TedxLeeds event & Big Open Data debate event keen to expand growing space to local residents in Leeds	<i>Share toolkit and follow up to explore relevance/ use</i> Create and <i>update</i> a database of all contacts
	Approach from policymakers in the public sectors result from project activities	Local councilors in Trafford and Manchester invite for follow up meetings after invites to additional event, Grow Old Trafford	Meeting with Council; Briefing paper produced with recommendations <i>Follow up to see actions taken</i>
	Approaches from voluntary sector result from project activities	Three cooperatives involved in sustainable food growing and mapping in Trafford area requested follow up meetings	<i>Arrange meetings</i> <i>Share toolkit and add information or case studies to the toolkit</i>
Additional funding is secured	Additional research funding is secured		<i>Maintain a list of funding secured</i>
	Additional public sector funding is secured		
Knowledge is mobilised and generating new opportunities in research, higher education, consultancy or technology transfer	High profile events secured e.g. major conferences <i>Citations of papers, film embeds or views, slide downloads or views</i>	ESRC Festival of Social Science event TedXLeeds Cities <i>Academic panel at</i>	<i>Submit full papers</i> <i>Track citations, slideshare viewings, film viewings, blog and toolkit visits –</i>

		<i>MeCCSA 2014</i>	<i>report on quarterly</i>
	Other academics become engaged with the lead or partner HEIs	Co-I at University of Manchester invited to join internal & external communities of practice Co-I at University of Manchester secures ITaaU industrial placement Feb-Jul 2014	<i>Share toolkit</i>
Increased institutional support secured for the project	Internal funding is secured to support impact and engagement activities	£2.5K Funding is secured from Sheffield University to support 'Really Useful' Event. £3K funding is secured from Wellcome Trust Engagement Fellowship to support US location trip for film and to cover some equipment costs	<i>Explore impact acceleration funding</i>
Increased external support is secured for the project	External funding is secured to support research and enhance impact activities	Sheffield, in partnership with Manchester University secures £40K as part of AHRC Cultural Value bid Sheffield, in partnerships with Manchester University secures £1.5K as part of ESRC Festival of Social Science bid	<i>Explore follow on funding from EPSRC Communities and Culture Network+ to further enhance impact</i>
Recognition results from project activities	Research team invited to take on high profile roles – invited keynote speakers – membership or relevant boards or committees	No of keynotes and public talks given	<i>Encourage all partners to communicate any news in this area & encourage partners to use the film and other resources</i>
	Community partner invited to take on high profile roles – invited keynote speakers – membership or relevant boards or committees	Community partners included and invited to participate in public events	<i>Encourage all partners to communicate any news in this area & encourage partners</i>

			<i>to use the film and other resources</i>
	Community partners are better engaged with The Universities as a result of the project	<i>Check what other opportunities might be relevant to community partners and make introductions</i>	<i>Encourage partners to communicate any news in this area & encourage partners to use the film and other resources</i>

External Impact			
Impact	Indicators	Evidence	Immediate Action
Activities developed with local communities benefit those communities and the individuals within them	Local Resident Group (Manchester) and Open Data Sheffield continue activities under their own direction and in partnership with HEIs and other stakeholders	Resident Group members in Old Trafford set up sub-group to explore growing spaces. One resident set a goal of being involved in 1 growing project by the end of the year Other residents running growing projects exchanged information and invited others to come and get involved – on an allotment and a youth allotment Continued use of physical map Funding application submitted	<i>Keep a record of meeting minutes</i> <i>Attend follow up meetings where possible or encourage people to feedback</i> <i>Explore what specific impact indicators might be relevant in more detail through the Cultural Values of Digging project</i>
Partners and other stakeholders apply or share knowledge from Everyday Growing Cultures project and achieve public recognition or public or personal benefit	<i>Awards or Funding secured</i> <i>New partnerships secured</i> <i>New knowledge created</i> <i>New job or course secured</i>	Grow Sheffield added as key UK project on 596 Acres website <i>Code from 596 Acres project used in UK</i> <i>Additional screenings / Additional films commissioned</i> <i>External partner expresses an interest in studying PhD</i> Local resident	<i>Share toolkit</i> <i>Encourage opendata partners to enable this</i> <i>Submit film to film festivals and monitor attendance/ feedback</i>

		secures growing space in the form of allotment through a connection to the project	Encourage and provide guidance
--	--	--	--------------------------------

Conclusion and points for reflection

Everyday Growing Cultures was a six-month pilot study that, between mid February and mid August 2013, focused on the potentially transformative value of connecting two currently disparate communities. We used open data methods to connect these communities, making an active intervention in the current allotment waiting list crisis by seeking and enabling citizen-led solutions. Based on comparative research in Manchester and Sheffield, we explored the potential effects of digital engagement in order to build stronger, more active communities, benefit local economies and improve environmental sustainability and food security.

From this project we draw a number of reflections that we will write up in more detail in our planned academic publications as well as in future conference presentations. A first point of reflection is to do with trying to unpick and think through the model of doing collaborative research, which assumes linearity. We wish to critically consider how research happens across different spatial contexts as ‘research encounters’ (The CRESC Encounters Collaborative, 2013). Due to many different, random, significant, failed, forgotten, serendipitous encounters and funding opportunities that preceded this pilot project it can be difficult to know when and where research begins and ends. More than that, in terms of the co-production and design elements of our work, including working with a large number of different project partners, it may be productive to reflect specifically on these elements in terms of:

(a) the productive tensions these (specifically the mapping for food growing walks) have raised through the blurring of boundaries between those who could be identified as researchers, as participants, as members of the community (or multiple communities), as active and creative citizens, as residents, and (b) how some of these boundaries continued to shift as people changed roles.

We are also interested in thinking critically about how different imagined futures and increasingly actualised trajectories are mapped onto what is typically defined as research ‘impact’. We note the fact that impact can become a problematic term in this context when outcome and activities cannot straightforwardly be ‘claimed’ as impact for the *Everyday Growing Cultures* project itself. Or where research, effort, labour was ‘gifted’ to the project, making a significant difference to the work. We suggest that this requires a more careful and less linear treatment of impact in the context of creative engagements between ‘researchers’, ‘citizens’ and ‘the community’ reflecting the life and after-life of such collaborative projects. Some of our work also highlights that impact is not always predictable (linear or sequential). Our project film for example shows how an output that was at first strictly approached as an impact activity was adapted, shaped and repositioned within the project through the considered practice of the film-makers. It was redefined by many research encounters. More than that, by allowing ourselves to depart from our original plan, this also allowed for and enabled exciting, unexpected and ultimately highly productive research encounters abroad. What is important here is that we had no way of knowing if going to New York was going to be productive. Accepting the possibility of failure is therefore vitally important. Allowing oneself to potentially fail is a rare, but seemingly undervalued part of the research process. It is simply not possible to know everything up front.

As a second point of reflection, we would welcome the opportunity to do more work on the popularity of participatory online mapping. Specifically on the inherent ideas of digital transformation associated with these practices. The Crowdfunder platform we have used is based on Ushahidi, which is well known to crisis mappers, but has been used widely for other mapping purposes as well. In contrast to other mapping technologies such as GIS, or even open platforms like Open Street Map, Crowdfunder allows for different objects to be added to the map, to add stories, images and so on and thus allows for different forms of knowledge creation. It is important to explore what it means to draw on specific online mapping technologies (Crampton, 2009; Dodge & Kitchin, 2013; Haklay, 2010). Specifically to think more closely about the kind of communities these different mapping techniques implicitly speak to and who that potentially leaves out as being able to map (Elwood & Leszczynski, 2012). More critical work is needed that puts the digital map in direct dialogue with the paper map. It is not a stretch to say that our A0 printed out paper map (cost: £11, seen in Figure 5 on page 15) was one of the most important artifacts/outcomes we produced. It allowed us to see the digital in a new light. We stood back in amazement as this piece of paper unlocked something in people, who had perhaps been uncomfortable about our chosen online mapping platform and choice of technical 'solution'.

Thirdly, in relation to our stated claim that this work may benefit local economies and improve environmental sustainability and food security, this is clearly not easily achieved in six months. It also raises a set of questions about how such activities can be made economically viable and beneficial to local communities. Having an allotment has long been associated with the potential to save money from growing your own food, though not many plot holders would recognize these money saving claims. Understanding how such claims about economic potential can be actualized will require more work and also a widening of the scope of research beyond the current focus on food production. This requires a much broader look at the wider structural advantages or disadvantages that may be relevant to the neighbourhoods included in this research.

Finally, in terms of our opening stated interest in making open data 'really useful'. It is worth considering the difference between 'data' and 'information' and what these two words might evoke in a range of different people. As a project we learned quickly to avoid the word 'data' almost straight away and instead speak about information. For those outside the open data community and especially those without the technical knowledge or indeed interest, the term 'data' can be very off-putting. More than that *data* is essentially only valuable for the *information* it can be turned into. In collecting both 'data' on allotments through FOIA as well 'information' on allotments through council websites it is important to draw the following distinction. In order for open data to be share-able it has to be standardized, well documented and more importantly *machine readable*, for example in a JSON format. This so that computer programs can communicate through APIs and query and ingest the required data. This may then be linked and combined with other data for further insights. This is a highly technical treatment, with a limited audience. The audience for any products of this data, for example an app to tell you where your nearest allotment is, what the waiting list is like, and given the long wait might point you in the direction of a community growing project, potentially has a very wide audience. We contend that the council websites are an important site for accurate information provision and could be an important site for the provision of what one might term 'open information'. That is to say *human readable information* that is the same or similar to the open data the council may also wish to release. We therefore welcome further collaborations with local authorities to explore this idea of useful open information, beyond the current stated and somewhat problematic claims by the government about open data leading to better-informed citizens.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the CCN+ Network for both their financial and collegiate support in funding this pilot study. Beyond the nine people directly involved in the Everyday Growing Cultures project we are indebted to the partnerships we have been able to forge with The Kindling Trust (Kirstin Glendinning and Chris Walsh in particular), with Grow Sheffield (Danny Antrobus) and with Trafford Council (Jamie Whyte). We also extend a warm thank you to all the people we met along the way, most notably Paula Segal, Ingrid van der Wacht, Eric Brelsford, Wendy Brawer, Daryl Marshall. A special thank you to Simon Faulkner for getting our big A0 map printed. We look forward to the next phase of the project and will report back in due course.

References

- Azyan, L. 2011. 'Let's not just make open data sexy... let's make it really useful!'. *LGEO Research Blog*. 27 May. 2011. <http://www.lgeoresearch.com/lets-make-open-data-sexy-and-really-useful/>
- Brotton, J. 2012. *A History of the World in Twelve Maps*. London: Penguin.
- Campbell, M., Campbell, I., 2011. 'Allotment Waiting Lists in England 2011', Transition Town West Kirby in conjunction with the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. http://www.transitiontownwestkirby.org.uk/files/ttwk_nsalg_survey_2011.pdf
- Crampton, J. W. 2009. 'Cartography: maps 2.0', *Progress in Human Geography* 33(1): 91-100.
- Crouch, D., 2011. *Allotments in England: report of survey 2006*. The report is still available here: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/report_of_dclg_survey_of_allotme#incoming-20956
- DCLG, 2011. 'Summary of the review of statutory duties placed on local government. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7541/1934356.pdf
- Dodge, M. and Kitchin, R. 2013. 'Crowdsourced cartography: mapping experience and knowledge', *Environment and Planning: A* Vol. 45: 19-36.
- Edney, M. 1997. *Mapping an Empire: the geographical construction of British India, 1765-1843*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Elwood, S., and Leszczynski, A. 2012. 'New spatial media, new knowledge politics', *Transactions*, doi: 10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00543.x
- Haklay, M. 2010. 'How good is volunteered geographical information? A comparative study of OpenStreetMap and Ordnance Survey datasets', *Environment and Planning: B: Planning and Design*, Vol. 37: 682-703.
- Harley, J.B. 1989. Deconstructing the map. *Cartographica* 26: 1-20.
- Savage, A. and Hyde, R. 2012. 'Using freedom of information requests to facilitate research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, doi: 10.1080/13645579.2012.742280
- Taylor, I., Evans, K., and Fraser, P. 1996. *A Tale Of Two Cities: Global Change, Local Feeling and Everyday Life in the North of England. A study in Manchester and Sheffield*. London and New York: Routledge.
- The CRESC Encounters Collaborative, 2013. '(Un)doing collaboration: reflections on the practices of collaborative research', CRESC Working Paper No. 127, available here: [http://www.cresc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CRESCEncountersCollective\(Un\)doingCollaborationWP127_0.pdf](http://www.cresc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/CRESCEncountersCollective(Un)doingCollaborationWP127_0.pdf)
- Vis, F., and Manyukhina, Y. 2011a. 'Growing back to the Future: Allotments in the UK, open data stories and interventions', *Data Driven Journalism*, 7 November. http://datadrivenjournalism.net/news_and_analysis/growing_back_to_the_future_allotments_in_the_uk_open_data_stories_and_inter [supported with a travel grant from the European Union]
- Vis, F., and Manyukhina, Y. 2011b. 'The English Allotment Lottery', *Guardian Data Blog*, 10 November. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/nov/10/allotments-rents-waiting-list>