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

Communities and Culture Network+ Interim Report

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

Executive Summary

This project focuses on the potentially transformative value of connecting two currently disparate communities: allotments growers and the open data community. Based on comparative research in Manchester and Sheffield, the project explores the potential effects of digital engagement and open data for allotment holders and those on waiting lists to build stronger, more active communities, benefit local economies and improve environmental sustainability and food security.

To date, the project has:

- Researched and engaged with key participants at Grow Sheffield, Kindling Trust (through Feeding Manchester) and the open data groups in Manchester and Sheffield
- Undertaken a pilot mapping exercise of vacant plots in Trafford (with plans to undertake similar work in Sheffield)
- Compiled a database of allotment provision in both cities, based on an analysis of Council websites and Freedom of Information requests
- Begun work on co-creating a 'toolkit' for other communities who wish to engage in similar projects
- Explored various options for opening up data on land ownership
- Started to plan a 'Grow Your Own Data' hackday
- Begun organising a concluding 'Really Useful Workshop' (including a documentary film).

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 the suggestion that it will lead to better-informed citizens. All of these claims 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 subsequently addresses these issues by focusing on two discrete, yet connected communities: allotment, *growing communities* (plot holders; allotment societies; those waiting for plots; allotment governing bodies) and the *open data community* (open data activists; developers; local government; data journalists). Allotment and open data communities may initially seem unconnected, but they share many concerns: around ideas of knowledge sharing, exchange, collaboration, 'the commons', and access to shared resources (digital and land)

This project focuses 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 in 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?

It critically engages the government's open data agenda, central to current ideas of digital transformations. Open data methods are used to connect two communities, making an active intervention in the current allotment waiting list crisis and huge interest in growing your own (Crouch and Parker, 2003; Bramall, 2011; Ginn 2012). It does this by seeking and enabling citizen-led solutions.

This interim report highlights the work we have undertaken so far, between 15 February and 15 May 2013, which is exactly halfway through our pilot study. This offers us a good opportunity to reflect on the work we have done and how this is line with the research questions we originally asked. Since being awarded this funding, our project team has grown. Appendix A includes detailed descriptions of the nine people now involved in the Everyday Growing Cultures project. This report is structured as follows: we will first give a brief overview of the two communities, then highlight our data collection and methodological strategy, before moving on to explain the important role our project events play and which events we have organised so far. The report concludes by given an overview of dissemination already undertaken and discussing our future plans, including securing additional funding for future work.

Mapping the communities

So far we have paid considerable attention to the growing communities in both cities and have sought to get a better understanding of their history, their make-up, funding, size of the organisation and their goals. For a detailed narrative of Grow Sheffield, please see Appendix B-C and highlights below.

I. Grow Sheffield

Founded in 2007, Grow Sheffield received initial funding from the Community Champions Fund and the Arts Council. Anne-Marie Culhane (founder of Grow Sheffield) programmed an initial autumn/harvest season of events and activities that included:

- Initiating the Abundance project with food grower and artist Stephen Watts and the commissioning of the Abundance Cart from local craftsmen
- A networking, open space and film screening at The Showroom
- Reclaim the Soil Guerrilla planting in urban planters with Richard Clare
- The first Allotment Soup multi-arts event at Highcliffe Allotments.

- A collaborative poetry event walking across the city out to allotments on the city edge with Off the Shelf Festival and Paul Conneally:

As the group states on its website: ‘we went on to grow as a community group meeting regularly at gatherings in people’s houses which included talks and creative activities (films, poetry readings) and practical workshops. It was around this time that we decided to constitute as a voluntary group’ (<http://growsheffield.com/our-story-so-far/>)

Grow Sheffield is now constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors. The board comprises 10 volunteers (as at 27 April 2013).

2. The Kindling Trust

The Kindling Trust in Manchester is a much larger organisation than Grow Sheffield with an extensive website, highlighting ten different projects, including Feeding Manchester and lists ten people as part of its team. On the website they describe themselves as follows:

The Kindling Trust is a fledgling not-for-profit social enterprise with charitable aims. We are working to establish a radical and pioneering social change centre and enterprise zone in the rural Northwest of England, to practice and demonstrate sustainable production, living and activism, and to support others working towards an ecological and just society. In the meantime we are also working on a number of exciting projects here in Manchester. (<http://www.kindling.org.uk/about-us>)

3. The Open Data Communities

In terms of the open data communities, Open Data Manchester (ODM) is constituted as an association and has been holding regular meetings for three years. They have an active website (<http://opendatamanchester.org.uk/>) that includes information about its membership and highlights various activities and projects. They hold regular meetings, last Tuesday of every month, in MadLab, Manchester’s Digital Laboratory (<http://madlab.org.uk/>).

Open Data Sheffield (ODS) is more loosely organised and we could not identify a website for this group. There is a Google mailing list and they hold regular meetings, though perhaps not monthly. More research is ongoing but, from their contribution to Open Data Day earlier in the year in February, it seems that they have big plans for the future (<http://opendataday-2013-sheffield-eorgf.eventbrite.com/>), which may include becoming constituted as an association.

There also seems to be some cross over between these two communities already. For example, the key person doing the mapping in Grow Sheffield is also an active member in ODS and knew quite a lot of people in ODM as well. At a project level, the project lead investigator too connects across, being both a keen allotment grower and a founding member of Open Data Manchester. In the next phase of the project we will firm up this mapping of the communities as it feeds into the final phase of data collection: through surveys and in depth interviews with community members.

Data collection

The idea of opening up allotment data and creating a data base which would contain information about the most pressing issues around allotments, such as rent charges and waiting lists, required us to collect all necessary information. The first port of call was

council websites where we searched for the information in question – number of allotments sites, rental and water charges, discount rates and waste removal costs. However, the data was patchy, often ambiguous and would not allow for building a well-informed database (for earlier work see Vis and Manyukhina, 2011a; 2011b; Campbell and Campbell, 2011). Freedom of Information requests were submitted through the whatdotheyknow.com website in order to collect the aforementioned data about council allotment sites for years 2012-2014.

The requests for information were sent out in April 2013 to a total of 267 councils nationwide – this number is less than the total number of councils in the UK as we only targeted those councils who have the responsibility for allotments (this had been identified during the first stage of the data collection in 2011, see Vis and Manyukhina, 2011a; 2011b). At the time of writing, all except 11 councils have provided responses. A database reflecting all collected information has been created and constantly updated as more responses are coming in (see Appendix F for full details of the request). The database contains all information provided by the councils in a concise form as well as a direct link to councils' responses, which are published online and available for anyone to see. This data will subsequently be released as one easy to navigate dataset (through Swirrl: the Linked Open Data company, who are part of our project).

In addition to the data collection through FOI a re-examination of council websites proved a useful exercise as it has revealed that allotment web pages are often poorly constructed and under-informed making it difficult, time-consuming and at times impossible to find information about allotments.

We therefore decided to re-visit the websites with the purpose of assessing them in terms of availability, comprehensiveness and accessibility of information about allotments. A ranking system has been developed where each council is awarded a point for having a range of information on its allotment webpage (see Appendix D for the full details).

The councils are then ranked according to a simple points-out-of-ten system. The rating will be made public allowing each council to see how many points it has been awarded, what its information gaps are. In order to help councils make their allotment websites more informative, accessible and user-friendly, we aim to develop a set of guidelines based on our analysis and assessment. This will also be of benefit to the general public as councils may potentially reduce allotment-related information requests, thereby saving resources currently spent on dealing with these requests.

In terms of other data collection, several activities have been delayed in happening for various reasons or are happening slightly later in the project. E.g the surveys and interviews are happening closer to the end than at the start, as had previously been envisioned. This may be of benefit to the project so partners can build trust through the project activities and participants can reflect on what has happened, what they have learned and what difference the project has made and draw from knowledge created through the website, social media and the film to illustrate it.

In the second half of the project we will collect data in the following ways:

- Conduct a short survey with people on Trafford Council allotment waiting lists. This will give us a better idea of how they have experienced the provision of information by the council, which data they would like to see on the website. We are also interested in how having an allotment is valued. Why do people want one?

- Complete a short survey with members from both communities to get a better sense of key topics to address in the in-depth interviews.
- Eight in-depth interviews with members from both communities.

Project events

Events form a central part of our project as this is where the connection and discussion between the two communities and our project most productively takes place. For a six month project we have planned a lot of events, (seven in total), including events in both cities. The events are as follows and described in more detail below:

1. Mapping for food growing walks [two completed, one more planned]
2. Co-creating a toolkit [one planned]
3. Bring your own data hackday [two planned]
4. Really useful workshop [one planned]

Mapping for food growing walks

Both The Kindling Trust (through the Feeding Manchester project) and Grow Sheffield have engaged with various forms of mapping to date. Most notably this has focused on providing people with easy-to-use online directories to find outlets where 'sustainable food' can be bought (both), as well as mapping the location of allotment sites in the city (Feeding Manchester). Both organisations are interested in identifying and mapping new growing spaces in light of the explosion in interest in people growing their own food. Feeding Manchester had already sought advice from Open Data Manchester to do this. As this connects neatly with the overall objective of the EGC project to make 'an active intervention in the current allotment waiting list crisis by seeking and enabling citizen-led solutions' this became a key focus early on.

Facilitating mapping for food growing walks also directly addresses our first three research questions:

- 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?

As Feeding Manchester was already ready to start mapping we focused on having our first mapping events in Manchester. As Trafford Council is nationally recognized as a council that has keenly embraced the open data agenda they were contacted to explore how they might feed into the project. Specifically as we would like to help build communities around these vacant plots so that they can be used for food production. Mapping alone is only a first step. Once a space has been identified, further information is required, most notably who owns the land. If the land is owned by the council, there may be an incentive to allow a community growing project to be established.

Our first mapping walk took place on 1 May 2013 in a small area of Old Trafford, which had been chosen because it would be relatively easy to walk and already had a large residential population who might be interested in such initiatives. The event was advertised on social

media, on the Kindling Trust’s website, invitations were distributed via email and word of mouth (see poster, Appendix G). Thirteen people attended the first event and they were a mix of project members, the Kindling Trust, academics, gardeners, local residents and other interested people. People were given instructions about what to look for and we each assigned a specific section identified on a printed out map. They were given instructions what to look for in a potential growing space: how to measure its size, aspect, and what general things to look out for (risk of vandalism, close to the road, potential problems with litter and fly tipping) and to take clear photographs that could then be uploaded online along with their notes.

Each group then reported back their findings so that their notes and images could be collected and uploaded on to the online mapping platform used. The platform we have used so far 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, Ushahidi 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. As a project we will further explore what it means to draw on specific 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).

Figures 1-2 (website: <https://growingoldtrafford.crowdmap.com/>) show highlights of our Old Trafford map, including both an overview of the area as a satellite image and the second screenshot highlighting the type of information that can be added to each mapped area. We also highlight on the map if the information is added by a ‘trusted’ source or not, that is to say someone who has been involved in one of our mapping walks.

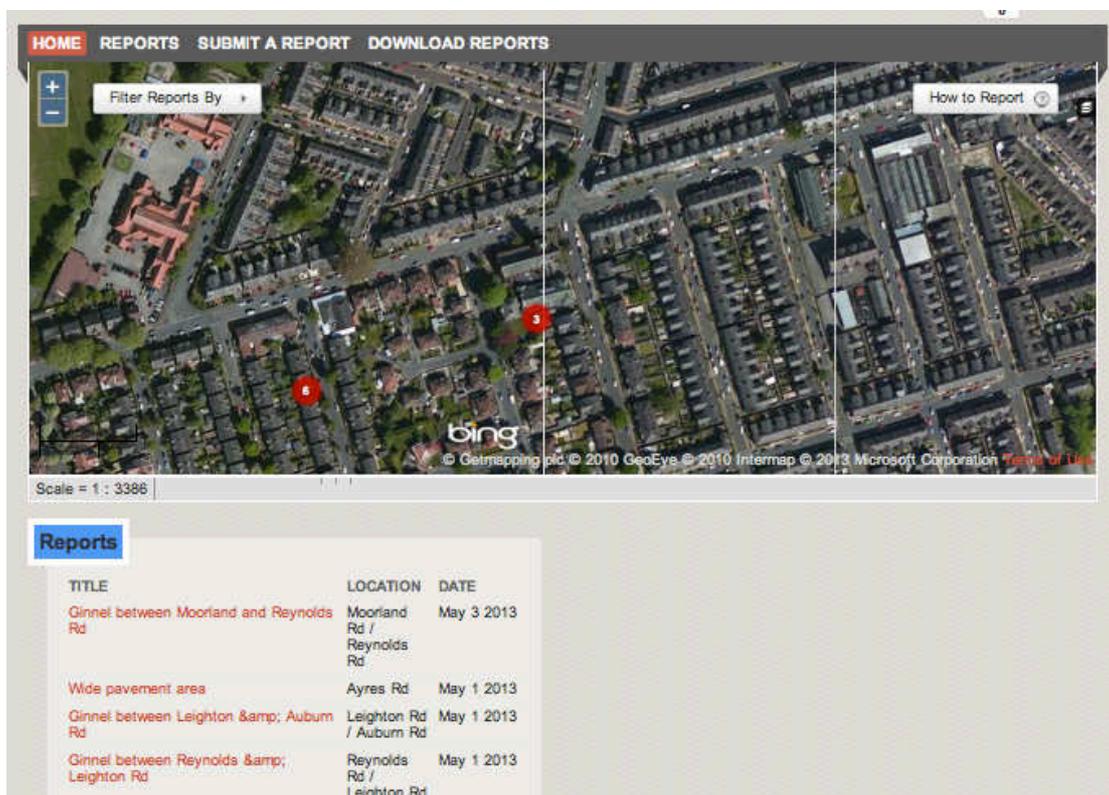


Figure 1: highlight of areal view of Grow Old Trafford map

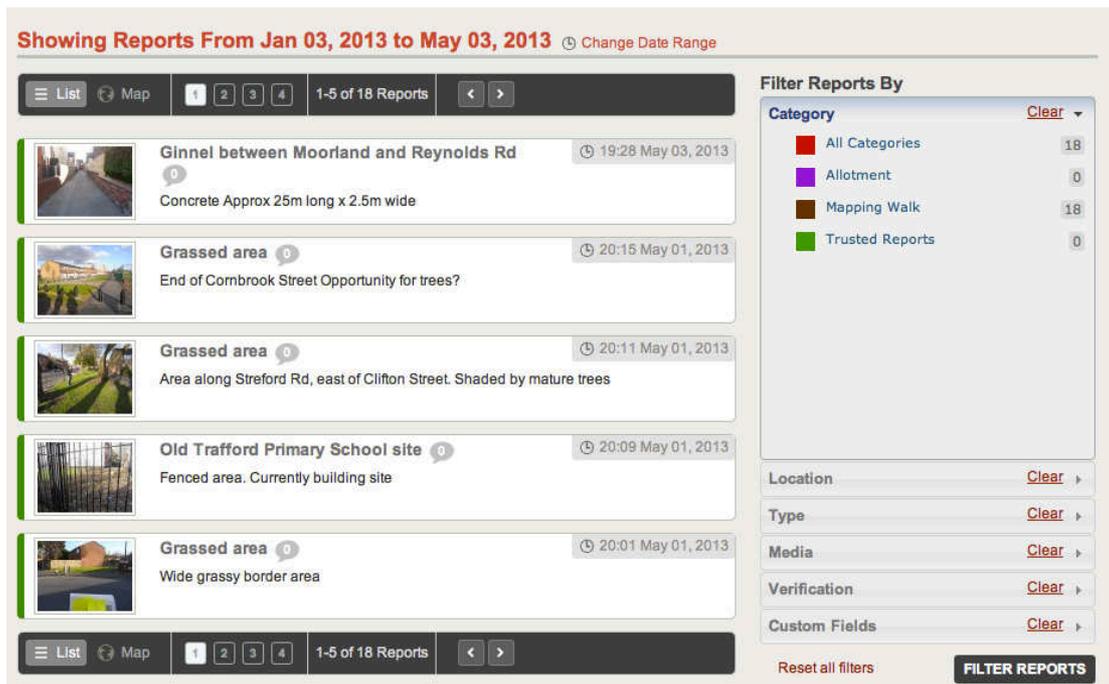


Figure 2: highlight of notes and pictures in Grow Old Trafford map

In preparation for the second walk, 15 May 2013, the map highlighted in Figure 3, was made, simply to get a quick overview of where previous groups had already mapped and which areas still needed to be completed. It is clear that the area is quite large to walk and we will reflect on this when we plan our third walk in Sheffield in June.

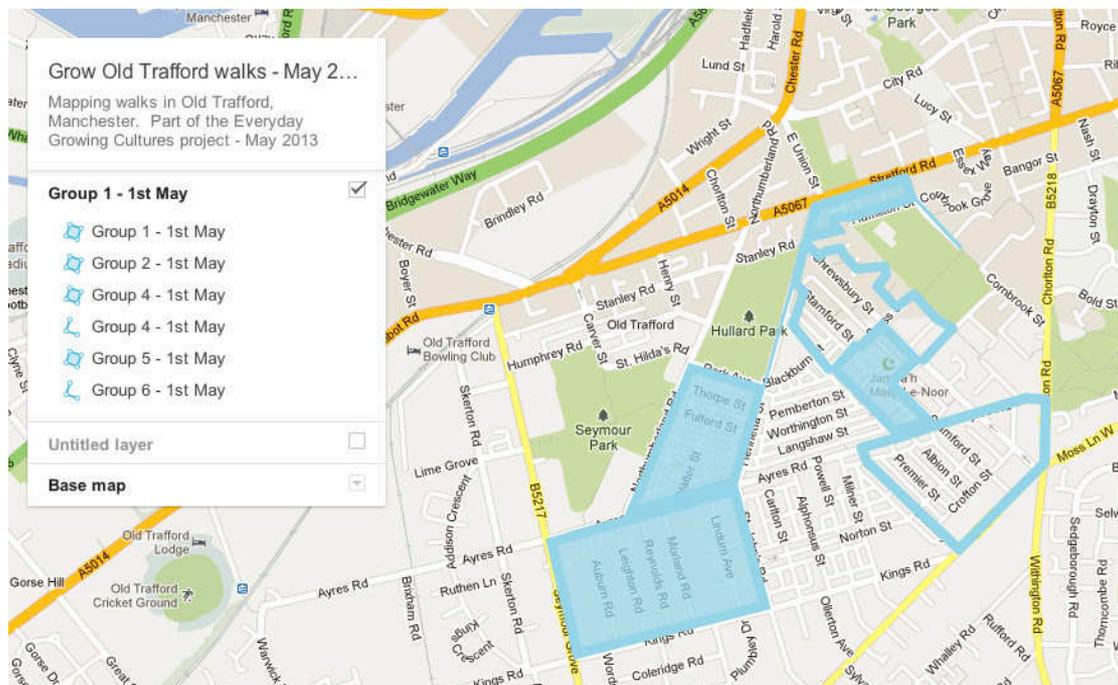


Figure 3: highlight of areas walked and mapped as part of our Grow Old Trafford walks.

Overall the mapping events have been a success and it is clear that all involved enjoyed it. The second walk even had a waiting list. This may tell us something important about these events and that is their value in terms of getting like-minded people together. This then calls into question the role of technology. In many ways technology plays a relatively small part in the event, as a large part is spent on talking to each other, eating soup together, walking or cycling around the neighbourhood, taking pictures and notes in paper note pads, discussing what we have found (Pink, 2008). It is clear however that once information ends up on an online map it provides something tangible to look at, a place to record our information as well as to show others what we are doing. We intend to say more about the role of mapping and the use of digital technologies in the later phases of the research. We collect our mapping pictures here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/95770888@N04/>

Co-creating a toolkit

This event will take place on 29 May 2013 and will bring back together some of the people who took part in the first two Manchester walks, along with at least one person from Grow Sheffield. This event will allow us to collectively discuss what type of toolkit can now be created. Both growing organisations have strongly expressed the value of a toolkit that would allow citizens to replicate the mapping, but more than that, would give them clear and easy to understand advice about what to do next with an identified plot of land. The toolkit will be co-created and further updated after our Sheffield mapping for food growing walk, planned for mid June.

Grow Your Own Data Hackday

Following on from these two data collection strategies, opening up and collecting further data on allotments and creating new data in order to identify possible growing spaces, the project will also organise a 'Grow Your Own Data' hackday where we can explore how to best make use of these different data sets and how we can best tell the stories of this data. This is very much about co-creation and thus a direct extension of the collectively created toolkit. With the support of local councils we are keen to add various relevant 'grow your own' data to what we already have planned for the hackday. This could be to find out who owns what land across the council (to help identify further growing spaces); location of supermarkets (highlighting 'food deserts'); transport links (highlighting problems with access to fresh produce), health data and so on.

One data set that has become a key focus of the project outside of the allotment data is data concerning land ownership. Knowing where all the council owned land is would mean that potential food growing spaces could be identified easily and efficiently. Releasing this data could in the end be a very cost effective act on the part of the council, given the potential use value for citizens. The project is thus interested in exploring cost benefits of doing this, seeing how citizens in turn can be made aware of these data sets, use them, which would directly address these research questions:

- 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?
- How can we rethink received ideas of participation and enacting citizenship in light of these?

Really useful workshop

Our end of project event consists of two elements. The first part of the day will bring together key stakeholders to discuss the outcomes of the project and look to the future. This will be done in the form of a 'really useful workshop' where different teams comprised of a range of different people will discuss these issues throughout the day. The second part of the day consists of a Public Engagement event that is open to the wider public. After a presentation of the main research findings, workshop members will present their key points. This part of the day will close with the showing of the short project documentary, which will help with disseminating our work further. Our really useful workshop will also centrally address some of the more critical aspects of our project:

- 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?

The workshop will be held on 23 July 2013 in the Showroom cinema complex in Sheffield (up to 280 people). The workshop part of the day is by invitation only, but anyone interested in attending the part of the day that is open to the general public (up to 250 people) is of course encouraged to get in touch with us (f.a.vis@sheffield.ac.uk).

Dissemination

So far we have disseminated our work in a number of different ways: by engaging with lots of people through our events, by giving presentations, and most recently through our website: <http://everydaygrowingcultures.org/>. Some of the team are also active on social media and when discussing anything relevant to the project we have used the #growingcultures hashtag on Twitter. We intend to use social media more in the second half of the project and we are experimenting with other social media platforms like Pinterest (see Figure 4) as a way to share information about what we do and use the boards to 'pin' information and images about, in this case, our own every day growing activities. All individually pinned images lead back to our project website.

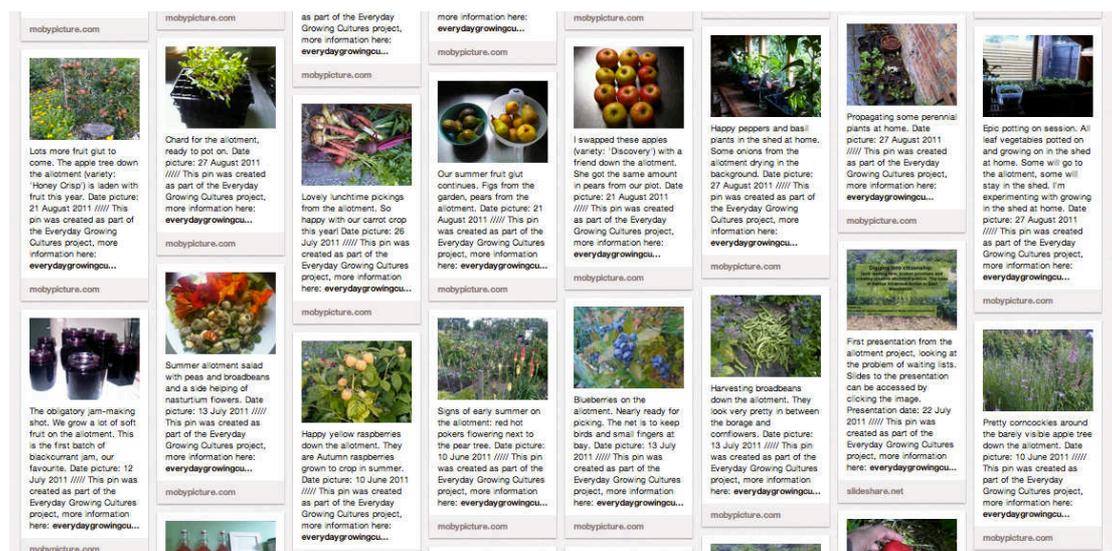


Figure 4: Example of a project pinboard

Presentations

We have presented work from the project at the following events/occasions:

- CCN+ Brighton Symposium – 21-22 February 2013
- LSE Lecture – Farida gave an hour long lecture on the project to students on the Media Futures MSc, as part of their week on 'Participatory Movements, Data, and State Authority: 'Open' Movements' (26 February)
- SURF Research and Innovation Event 2013 – Farida was invited to give a talk as part of the Citizen Science and Social Media panel and presented on 'Everyday day growing cultures: connecting communities through data' Slides: http://www.slideshare.net/Stichting_SURF/everyday-day-growing-cultures-connecting-communities-through-data
- TEDx Huddersfield – Farida was invited to present on the project, but unfortunately lost her voice and had to cancel (8 March 2013, part of international women's day).
- Open access to research data: opportunities, risks and implications event at the University of Sheffield – Farida was invited to talk about open data and discussed the EGC project (28 March 2013)
- Open Data Manchester – Farida gave a presentation on the project as part of the April edition of Open Data Manchester. A write up for the website is to follow.

We plan to submit abstracts to the following events:

- We are preparing a proposal for a workshop as part of the 4th Digital Economy conference (4-6 November, abstract deadline 4 June)
- Open Knowledge Conference, OKCON (<http://okcon.org/>, deadline 24 May)

Film

A short documentary (5-10 mins) exploring the past, present and future of community food growing with stories and ideas from people involved in Old Trafford and Sheffield. The filmmakers are Caroline Ward and Erinma Ochu who run not for profit social enterprise, Squirrel Nation and work with communities and researchers to make inspiring films to imagine the future together. Whilst the film is commissioned as part of the Everyday Growing Cultures project the film will be licensed as creative commons share alike, which means anyone can use and share the film. Erinma is also a co-investigator on the research team and exploring how making and sharing the film can contribute to widening the impact of the research.

Engagement and impact

Engagement with a range of different stakeholders is crucial to the success of our project and a strong dissemination, engagement and impact strategy has always been implicitly part of the project. There has been considerable sharing of resources (financial and in-kind) through the project, networking beyond current partners, which is important for creating an environment conducive to impact and adding value. This will be worth exploring further in terms of creating socio-economic value, perhaps articulating it in terms of a social business model.

For far we have engaged with the following people:

Growing Communities

- Kindling Trust
- Grow Sheffield
- Eat Your Streets (Manchester)
- Allotment holders (Manchester and Sheffield)

Open Data Communities

- Open Data Manchester
- Open Data Sheffield
- Wider open data community

Central and Local Government

- Cabinet Office
- Trafford Council
- Sheffield Council

Academic Beneficiaries

- School of Architecture at Sheffield University
- School of Journalism at Sheffield University
- Students (through LSE guest lecture)
- SURF (Dutch Educative ITC organisation)
- Other CCN+ projects, Storystorm in particular

General public

- Grow Your Own online forum discussions
- Through social media engagement

Other

- Co-Op
- PROUD (People Researchers Organisations Using Design)
- Mozilla (through their Hacking Popular Culture Liaison)

Some of the stakeholders who we have engaged with so far have already expressed a desire to implement some of the recommendations the project will make. For example, Trafford Council will change its current allotment website to reflect our recommendations so to better engage with citizens in its council interested in growing their own. We hope that this in turn will encourage other councils to do the same.

Publications

We envisage publishing two academic publications from this work: one focused on the mapping activities and a second on highlighting what we have learned from the surveys and interviews. We envisage to publish these in accordance with gold standard open access, so that we can make sure that everyone interested has an opportunity to read about our work.

Further funding applications

We have applied (or are in the process of applying) for additional funding to extend the current work from the following sources:

- AHRC Cultural Values grant application submitted on the cultural values of digging (whole team, led by Farida Vis) – under review
- ESRC CASE PhD Studentship for Ava Shakleford to work with Grow Sheffield (co-supervised by Peter Jackson) - awarded
- ERA-Net application on 'Food, Convenience and Sustainability' (with colleagues in Sweden, Germany and Denmark), submitted to the Sustainable Food (SUSFOOD) programme (Peter Jackson) – under review
- Financial support from the Co-Op for the Manchester hackday – unsuccessful
- Additional financial support through Erinma Ochu's Wellcome Trust Engagement Fellowship - awarded
- We are preparing a small funding application to host an event highlighting our work as part of the ESRC's Festival of Social Science (deadline: 3 June)

Applying for further funding will allow us to contribute further as well as forge additional connections within and beyond the CCN+ network.

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 look forward to the next three months of the project and will report back in due course.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Project team

Farida Vis (principal investigator) is a Research Fellow in the Social Sciences at the University of Sheffield. Her research focus includes social media, data journalism and citizen engagement. Findings from the '[Allotment Data](#)' project, research developed with PG student Yana Manyukhina was published in The Guardian (2011) and has since received widespread coverage in the UK print media and has attracted interest from the wider international growing, open data and policy communities. She is a founding member of Open Data Manchester (ODM), has had an allotment for nearly 12 years and has served as her site's allotment secretary for ten of these. Twitter: [@flygirltwo](#)

Peter Jackson (co-investigator) is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Sheffield whose research focuses on commodity culture and the geography of consumption, including work on food commodity chains (funded through the AHRB-ESRC Cultures of Consumption programme); 'Consumer anxiety about food' (funded through the European Research Council); 'Changing Families, Changing Food' (funded through Leverhulme). Creative dissemination of these includes: 'Food Stories' website (hosted by the British Library) and the 'Food Glorious Food' exhibition at Weston Park Museum (in Sheffield) and the V&A Museum of Childhood (in Bethnal Green).

Andrew Miles (co-investigator) is Reader at the Centre for Research on Socio Cultural Change (CRESC), at the University of Manchester and convenor of the Centre's Trajectories of Participation and Inequality research theme. He is the PI on 'Understanding Everyday Participation', a large project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under its Communities, Culture and Creative Economies scheme. Twitter: [@AGMcat](#)

Erinma Ochu (co-investigator) is a Wellcome Trust Engagement Fellow at the University of Manchester, exploring the relevance of citizen science to biomedical research. Previously Erinma managed Catalyst, an EPSRC-funded initiative at Lancaster University bringing together academics and communities to carry out transformative research on the theme of citizen-led social innovation. She also coordinated '[Turing's Sunflowers](#)' a citizen science initiative led by MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester) to explore mathematical patterns in nature and to raise awareness of Alan Turing's legacy in his centenary year. The experiment had a global reach of 62.8M people, created the biggest dataset exploring fibonacci numbers in sunflowers and engaged the public through a crowdsourced film, photographic exhibition and learning resources. Twitter: [@erinmaochu](#)

Ian Humphrey (Research Associate) is a final year PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield (Geography department) conducting a year-long ethnographic comparison of two nascent and contrasting Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes in Wales and Yorkshire. His research seeks to interrogate the transformative potential of CSAs to effect socio-cultural and political change in the UK.

Yana Manyukhina (Research Associate) is a first year PhD student at the University of Leeds where she is conducting research into food labelling and EU policy around this. She previously worked on the Allotment Data project with Farida and was responsible for collecting the data through the use of the Freedom of Information Act.

Steven Flower (key tasks: community liaison, toolkit, technical assistance) has a long history of working in the field of non-profit technology. Currently this involves working with governments and organisations to assist with the publication of open data to the [International Aid Transparency Initiative](#) (IATI), which requires liaison around data schemas, quality and accessibility. Alongside this, Steven works with charities and civic organisations to promote the usage and production of open data. More widely, Steven also organises [Manchester Net Squared](#) - a series of regular meetups, discussions and surgery events around a variety of topics pertinent to social-good organisations utilising technology. Alongside this, he also co-ordinates the annual [Young Rewired State](#) event at MadLab, and sits on the [Global Leadership Council](#) of NetSquared. Twitter: [@stevieflo](#)

Ric Roberts (key tasks: open data release and technical assistance) is the CTO of [Swirrl](#), a company whose aim is to make the promise of Linked Open Data a reality. Swirrl are currently concentrating on their Linked Data publishing platform, [PublishMyData](#), and related projects. With Julian, Steven, Ben, and Farida, Ric founded OpenDataManchester. Ric is a motivated, inquisitive, experienced software developer with over 10 years in the industry. He has a passion for technology and is always striving to improve and learn. He has a broad range of software development and web application design skills, and has been responsible for the design, development and operation of several complex web-based products, both at Swirrl and in previous roles. In particular he has expert-level knowledge on Ruby on Rails and Javascript. Ric is an active member of Manchester's technology community. He regularly attends the North West Ruby User Group ([NWRUG](#)) meetings and has run two Ruby on Rails training courses at Manchester Digital Laboratory ([MadLab](#)), and he also co-founded [Manchester Bootstrap Club](#). Twitter: [@ricroberts](#)

Caroline Ward (key task: project documentary) is a filmmaker and works part-time as a project manager at the BBC. She has a background in film, archives and knowledge organisation with roles at the BBC, the British Film Institute and with Brixton-based arts organisation, B3 Media. She has directed and produced several short documentaries as part of filmmaking collective, Squirrel Nation, including Cote D'Azur, which screened as part of the Cultural Olympiad. She also produced The Sunflower Diaries, a crowdsourced short documentary as part of the Turing's Sunflower project. She is passionate about urban food growing and writes the local and seasonal food blog, [JJASONWHATINSEASON](#). Twitter: [@noveltyshoe](#)

Appendix B

Mapping the Growing Communities: Grow Sheffield Narrative

'Grow Sheffield was founded by Anne-Marie Culhane in 2007. Anne-Marie is an artist, sustainability campaigner and permaculturalist. Grow Sheffield was designed to connect people to each other, to their environment and the seasons using food and food growing'.

'Art and creativity were at the heart of this aim with the belief that art has a key role to play in facilitating cultural shift and 'creating new stories for us to live by'.

<http://growsheffield.com/our-story-so-far/>

Other key individuals also assisted in the foundation of Grow Sheffield.

Funding was received from the Community Champions Fund and the Arts Council and Anne-Marie programmed an initial autumn/harvest season of events and activities that included:

- Initiating Abundance project with food grower and artist Stephen Watts and the commissioning of the Abundance Cart from local craftsmen
- A networking, open space and film screening at The Showroom
- Reclaim the Soil guerilla planting in urban planters with Richard Clare
- The first Allotment Soup multi-arts event at Highcliffe Allotments.
- A collaborative poetry event walking across the city out to allotments on the city edge with Off the Shelf Festival and Paul Conneally

Grow Sheffield is now constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors. The board comprises 10 volunteers (as at 27 April 2013)

Vanessa Senger John Schofield (Membership Secretary), Jake Harries, Diane Cocker (Treasurer), Julie Sadler, Lucy Corcoran, Ruth Davenport , David Combie & Kiran Mahli.

Since its inception Grow Sheffield has focussed on four key arenas of activity:

- 1) *Growing and harvesting*
 - 2) *Volunteers*
 - 3) *Social and Political*
 - 4) *Arts*
- (see plan in Appendix C)

Growing and harvesting

In 2009 Grow Sheffield applied to Environment First, a component of the Sheffield First Partnership within Sheffield City Council, and was awarded 10K. The money funded a pilot Community Growers project (see below). Despite funding cuts, Grow Sheffield was successful in securing for a further 5K in 2010 to continue the project in a curtailed form for another year. This pilot scheme in part formed the basis of the subsequent funding bid to the Local Food Fund for the 'Grow' project (see below)

In 2010 Grow Sheffield applied to the Sheffield City Council Community Assemblies Fund and received 8.8K for capital funding of infrastructure for four pilot Community Growers projects and an Abundance hub (see below). This also assisted the aforementioned Local Food Fund bid that subsequently match-funded the existing Community Growers hubs established with the Community Assemblies Fund.

Grow

In 2011 Grow Sheffield was successful in gaining funding from the Big Lottery Local Food Fund for its 'Grow' project that runs from 2011-2014. The award of 250K has enabled Grow Sheffield to recruit two Project Co-ordinators (Coralie Hopwood and Naomi Douglas) to support three projects under the umbrella of 'Grow'. Both are employed 0.4 FTE. The three 'Grow' projects are:

- a) *Community Growers*
- b) *Abundance*
- c) *Sheffield Food Network*

Community Growers is a 2-year project that consists of a Project Leader (Ruth Hepworth) employed 0.5 FTE and 5 growers each employed 0.2 FTE. Their role is to initiate growing projects in predominantly low-income and disadvantaged areas of Sheffield.

Community Growers project: Wisewood Estate, Wisewood



Photo: *Grow Sheffield*

The intention is to seed projects that will become self-sustaining, once the Community Grower Coordinators withdraw. The project has already been running for one year and has resulted in the following hubs being established:

- Sharrow
- Walkley/Crookes/Uppertorpe
- Common Ground, Abbeydale Road
- Meadowhead/Greenhill/Norton
- Westfield/Beighton
- Hillsborough/Wisewood
- Highfield
- Hollins End
- St Mary's Bramall Lane

In addition 'Grow' has assisted other growing projects to attract funding of £6500 to become sustainable in their own right:

Beighton Cafe
St. Mary's
Hollins End

Abundance is the second strand of the 'Grow' project. This builds on the existing voluntary network that was established at the outset of Grow Sheffield. The Abundance strand of 'Grow' has a Project Leader (Daniele Rinaudo) employed 0.4 FTE who coordinates the pool of volunteers. Abundance currently draws on over 100 volunteers in the harvest season.

The Abundance Project



Photo: *Grow Sheffield*

Grow Sheffield has published an Abundance Handbook:
<http://growsheffield.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/abundbkbooklet.pdf>

The Abundance project has been replicated across the UK spawning an Abundance Network: <http://www.abundancenetwork.org.uk/>

Cities in the network include: London, Manchester, Cardiff, Glasgow and Oxford.

London and Glasgow have multiple projects. There is also an Abundance project in Nottingham that is not currently affiliated to the network.

The Abundance strand of 'Grow' successfully made a bid to Trees4Cities:
<http://www.treesforcities.org/>

Abundance was awarded 5K that has facilitated the planting of 200 trees across more than a dozen locations in Sheffield during the preceding winter with the help of approximately 50 volunteers.

Sheffield Food Network This project is mapping food producers and outlets in Sheffield. To qualify for inclusion the produce must be local and fair; the outlets must be independent:
<http://www.sheffieldfoodnetwork.co.uk/>

The project developed out of the now defunct Green Map Project. The Sheffield Food Network was initiated by a previous Grow Sheffield chair (Leon Ballin); each year Grow Sheffield collaborates on a project with Year 5 & 6 students from the Department of Architecture at the University of Sheffield. Students helped to devise and pilot the mapping project. Funding as part of the 'Grow' project has allowed the project to become an interactive publicly accessible website. The project has a Project Leader (Danny Antrobus) who is employed 0.2 FTE. Five ambassadors volunteer their time to gather information for the website.

'The Big Dig'

In 2012 Grow Sheffield was successful in becoming the Sheffield partner for the 'Big Dig' volunteering project. The Big Dig is co-ordinated nationally by Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming and is funded by the Social Action Fund:

<http://www.sustainweb.org/>

The Big Dig is a nationwide project which aims to engage over 10,000 people in community food growing projects across cities in England: <http://www.bigdig.org.uk/>

Other cities involved include London, Brighton, Coventry, Manchester and Middlesbrough.

The Grow Sheffield 'Big Dig' project has a Project Leader (Tom Sutton) who is employed 0.2 FTE until September 2013. Approximately 150 volunteers have been associated with Grow Sheffield's 'Big Dig' project.

Volunteers

Grow Sheffield actively encourages volunteering across the whole gamut of its projects. The 'Big Dig' project Project Leader (Tom Sutton) volunteers his own time to coordinate the Grow Sheffield volunteering effort:

Grow Sheffield volunteers



Photo: *Grow Sheffield*

Each volunteer is inducted by Grow Sheffield and is covered by their Public Liability insurance during the course of their activities.

Social and Political

Grow Sheffield holds regular social events for its membership and volunteers such as its recent Spring Social pub meet: <http://growsheffield.com/event/grow-sheffield-spring-social/>

Grow Sheffield has lobbied Sheffield City Council to increase the land available for allotments and to look at opening up more land for growing as well as integrating food growing into their future city-wide planning.

This resulted in Grow Sheffield having representatives on the Steering Group that devised the Sheffield Food Plan. An ex-chair of Grow Sheffield (Leon Ballin) was engaged as a freelance food consultant to write the draft plan:

<https://www.sheffieldfirst.com/the-partnership/health-and-well-being-partnership/food-plan.html>

Arts

In 2009 Grow Sheffield commissioned an artist in residence, Bob Levene to work with the pilot Community Growers project: <http://wintergardentrail.co.uk/>

Grow Sheffield has received small grants from Sheffield City Council of between £200 and £300 for its annual Allotment Soup event. The Allotment Soup event includes artistic components such as story-telling, haiku poetry, installations, music and interactive cinema.

Allotment Soup is now in its sixth year and was most recently held at Morley Street Allotments:

7th October, 2012: Allotment Soup at Morley Street Allotment, Walkley



Photo: *JeremyAb on Flickr*

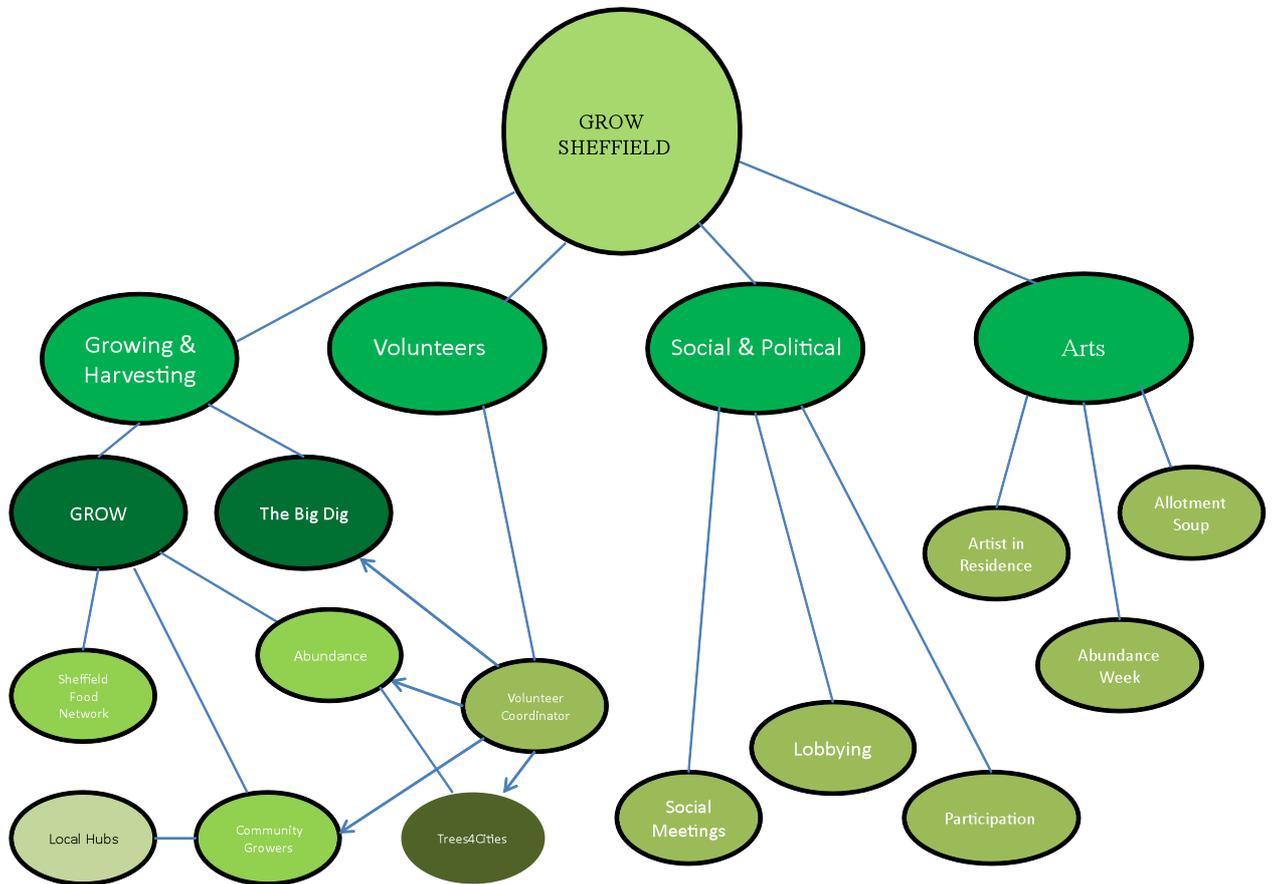
Grow Sheffield organises an Abundance Week that also mobilises art to engage a broader public with its ethos.

(All quotes are attributable to the Grow Sheffield website:

<http://growsheffield.com/our-story-so-far/>)

Appendix C

Grow Sheffield Conceptually Mapped



Appendix D

Council run allotments – website analysis questions

1. Does the website contain information about how many plots the council has? (Only give a point if it is clear from the information which ones are council run!)
2. Does the website contain information per site: name, location and so on?
3. Does the website list contact details for individual site secretaries/contacts?
4. Does the website include a map of where the allotments are located?
5. Does the website include total waiting list data for council allotments? (Here we are looking at quite specific data – so total number of people waiting across the council or an estimate of the waiting time expressed in years. Please make a note of the statement, so anything else they say about waiting lists) Extra column: for comments
6. Does the website include waiting list data per individual site? (So that it is clear how many people are waiting per site, highlighting which sites have especially high waiting lists)
7. Does the website include information about how to apply for an allotment?
Extra column: for comments (send an email/online form etc.)
8. Does the website include information on the site about where you can track your place in the waiting list queue?
(Good example: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/allotment-waiting-list>)
9. Does the website include information about how plots are allocated?
10. Does the website include information about the cost of renting an allotment?
(Including size of the plot) Extra column: for comments

Appendix F

FOI requests to UK councils that have a responsibility for allotment provision. All requests can be accessed here:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/user/farida_vis_and_yana_manyukhina

1. How many council allotment sites are there within your Council?
2. How many council allotment plots are there in total in your Council?
3. Can you please send us the cost of an allotment within your Council for the years: 2012 and 2013 and what they will be for 2014. Please state clearly if this is for a full or a half plot and what size these are.
4. Can you please send us the cost of using water as charged to individual plot holders within your Council for the years: 2012 and 2013 and what they will be for 2014.
5. Can you please send us the rate of the discount available for renting an allotment plot within your Council for the years: 2012 and 2013 and what they will be for 2014.
6. What has the cost of waste removal been to the Council in relation to allotment sites for 2012 and what are they likely to be for 2013 and 2014.

Appendix G

Poster for Old Trafford Mapping walk in partnership with The Kindling Trust and Open Data Manchester.

Mapping Trafford for Food Growing



The Kindling Trust are working with the Everyday Growing Cultures project and Open Data Manchester to run 2 mapping workshops in Old Trafford, looking for land which is suitable for growing fruit and vegetables.

If you would like to see a more foody Old Trafford and would like to learn how to use technology to make it happen, join us!

How to grow veg in urban areas - walking the streets & identifying spaces - collating data - map presentation.

When: 1st or 15th May, 5.30 - 8pm. Supper provided.

Where: St John's Centre, St John's Road, Old Trafford, M16 7GX

The Centre is on St John's Road, behind the big red church (St John's) on Ayres Road in Old Trafford.

Agenda

- 5.30 Welcome – project objectives
- 5.40 What are we looking for?
- 5.50 How to record the data
- 6pm Supper! and Q&A
- 6.15 Walking the streets – data collection (in pairs)
- 7.15 Return to St John's Centre – upload data – feedback
- 7.45 Presentation of populated map – Q&A
- 8pm Finish

Please contact Kirstin at Kindling for more information and to register a place:

kirstin@kindling.org.uk or 07947 715715

See 506acres.org in New York for an idea of what we're getting at!

