

# Ninewells Community Garden

Collaborative  
Strategy

- 2024 / 2028 -



# Our story

In 2009/10 NHS Tayside, Public Health directorate took ownership and responsibility for the development of the woodland around Ninewells as part of a national green space initiative. This quickly led to a group of interested volunteers working with NHST representatives to create a community garden within the adjoining area. The installation of a shed, beds planted out with a variety of shrubs, some raised beds for vegetables and a small Orchard. In addition, a wildlife area was created and bird feeders to attract different species. With the intention of being inclusive all ability access paths were created, seating areas installed and children's play activities.

In 2013 the garden was chosen to be part of the Beechgrove Garden Community Garden Project. This resulted in a designed expansion of the garden with a sensory garden, physic garden, vegetable plot, lawn more raised beds all connected with a variety of paths. Work took place to create this over the year culminating in the filming of the garden for the program in September of that year. The garden was granted charity status at the beginning of 2014, with the ethos to be one of a 'therapeutic garden' for the benefit of Ninewells Hospital and surrounding community.

Funding was successfully sought for a salaried facilitator to manage the garden and its Volunteers. This enabled us to provide managed group sessions for vulnerable groups and patient groups, along with workshops for the general public on garden related activities and much-needed help in running the garden.

During 2016 with funding from Scottish Forestry Commission and Tayside Health Fund an architecturally designed Garden Room, now called the Leaf Room, was constructed and opened by the then Minister for Public Health. Towards the end of 2018, with assistance from the Facilities team at Ninewells and generous funding donations, power and mains water was installed along with toilet facilities.

With a well established garden, providing therapy, social connections, skills development and a wide variety of fruit and vegetables the numbers of volunteers increased.

Ninewells Community Garden was chosen for national awards and described as a demonstration site for others in Scotland to emulate.

Progress was maintained and then in 2020 Covid-19 hit and Ninewells Community Garden was forced to shut just at the start of the Spring Season. With restrictions still in place or reintroduced in 2021 the consequences were significant for both the garden and the volunteers. Staff worked from home providing on line support, telephone calls and demonstration workshops.

From our own evaluations and borne out nationally gardening has the potential to improve health & wellbeing, especially during crises.

# Our story

In 2022 the garden celebrated its 10th birthday with an open event filled with camaraderie and enthusiasm gathering volunteers, service users and representatives from local businesses and organisations. With National Lottery Funding and NHS Charities Together funds, three members of staff are actively delivering our goals and objectives. The new Wellbeing Pavilion creates an additional outdoor space for yoga and mindfulness sessions and is another area of the garden for relaxation and contemplation.

Ninewells Community garden is testament to the power of a dedicated community who work hard to unite people, promote environmental sustainability and enhance a better quality of life for all.



## Consultation on the framework for the strategy development

Volunteers, trustees and staff came together for an in-person strategy development session in August 2023.

The group were challenged to share their ideas about the future of Ninewells Community Garden, which was framed as our 'big three questions':

- What are we doing well, that we wish to continue doing
- What do we want to stop doing, or do differently?
- Where do we want to be in 5-10 years & how will we get there?

Ideas, discussive points and actions were collated (see last page for details)

Additional input from key stakeholders and components from the 2019-2022 strategy were all compiled to present our new strategy for the next five years.



# Ninewells Community Garden exists to do the following:

## Community

We will provide a range of activities, experiences and opportunities for involvement for all those who use and enjoy the garden, in order to:

- Enhance knowledge, promote physical and mental wellbeing, and help reduce the inequality in our local communities
- Reduce social isolation by encouraging individuals, families and various groups to share learning and participate in activities together.

## Horticulture

We will continue to develop a thriving, biodiverse community garden which is accessible to everyone, by utilising and developing the skills, experience and knowledge of all those involved. We will do this by:

- supporting wildlife
- promoting horticultural activity as therapy, education or a means to improve wellbeing
- provision of workshops, training and garden-related activities

## Wellbeing

We will work with all stakeholders (i.e. groups and individual users and visitors, volunteers, staff members, committee members and other supporters) in a way which prioritises wellbeing; all activities and interactions which occur within and in promotion of the garden will take place in a culture of respect, support and inclusiveness.





**Our plans have been split into the following themes:**

**Space, People, Resources, Activities**



## Space

*"We will continue to maintain and develop this thriving, biodiverse garden to benefit people and wildlife"*

**We will develop a 'Masterplan' for use of the space (including indoor and outdoor):**

- The plan should consider various zones for gardening, relaxation, educational activities, and accessibility features.
- Consider current uses of space, and also potential future uses, including kitchen spaces.
- This should include a plan for ordering of plants/produce for growth to ensure resources and space are used effectively.
- Adjust the garden's 'Masterplan' based on feedback and evaluation and evolving community needs.

**Accessibility and Inclusivity of space:**

- We will continue to ensure the garden is accessible to individuals with disabilities by incorporating ramps, wide pathways, and sensory garden elements.
- Develop weather-proof, sustainable signage within the garden that helps visitors learn about the garden when volunteers/staff are not present.

# People

*“We will continue to emphasise a collaborative and inclusive approach in the work of Ninewells Community Garden, bringing together volunteers, staff and trustees. We will harness our collective skills and experience to achieve our goals.”*



## **Volunteer recruitment:**

- Design a targeted volunteer recruitment strategy to attract individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, and interests.
- Collaborate with other local organisations and community groups to promote volunteer opportunities.
- Highlight the inclusive nature of the garden and the potential for volunteers to share their unique skills and knowledge, as well as the health and wellbeing benefits of being within the garden.
- Connect people and nature.

## **Volunteer and staff training/skill sharing:**

- Assign experienced volunteers or staff as mentors to new recruits, fostering a supportive community.
- Provide ongoing learning opportunities and skill sharing opportunities for volunteers.

## **Subgroups:**

The board of trustees have overall responsibility and accountability for everything the charity does but the subgroups working on behalf of the Board, and contribute valuable work in development, design, finance and implementation.

- Define a very clear role for the sub groups specifying what they need to contribute or accomplish
- Invite diverse people into these sub groups
- Provide a clear sense of purpose and a well-designed work process with clear outputs and outcomes.

## **Community engagement**

- Continue to develop and strengthen relationships within the community, and with other community gardens.
- Ensure we reach our wider communities through different methods of communication

# Resources

*“We will work collaboratively to utilize our resources effectively, and explore opportunities for long-term sustainability of Ninewells Community Garden”*

## **Fundraising and Grant Access:**

- Identify potential funding sources, including grants from local authorities, environmental organisations, and philanthropic foundations.
- Develop a clear fundraising strategy, including timelines and targets.

## **Garden workload management:**

- Develop a ‘workload’ overview to monitor tasks related to the running and coordination of the garden and it’s activities.
- Ensure tasks are being undertaken by the right person, utilising the volunteer/staff member with the appropriate skills.
- Where skill development is identified, feed this into volunteer/staff skill sharing opportunities.
- Draw on local resources including generational skills and utilize and share knowledge that is already in the community.

## **Marketing and Communication**

- Build an effective marketing communication strategy



# Activities

*"We will continue to deliver a diverse range of activities, workshops and events to engage and educate a range of stakeholders"*

## Protect and Restore Nature

- utilise the garden to engage people in learning about sustainability and environmental considerations.
- enable and convene others around the development of ambitious and coherent actions to restore nature.
- Established strong life-long connections between people and nature.
- Continue to host Open Days and deliver outreach events to engage new users.

## Promotion and marketing:

- Use multiple communication channels to promote events, such as social media, newsletters and local newspapers.
- Create visually appealing flyers or posters to attract attention and provide essential details.
- Develop more artwork inclusion within the garden





# Post-it note responses from the day:

## What are we doing well now, that we should continue to do?

- Recognise the social element
- Good governance
- Create a relaxing space
- Friendly
- Linking up with others in the garden
- Sub groups
- Events/workshops

- Variety of plants
- An oasis
- Sharing our wealth of experience
- Good hospitality
- Sharing ideas
- Grow food that we can share
- Social media presence
- People gain employment
- Community engagement opportunities

## What do we want to stop doing, or do differently?

- Improve how we welcome people into garden when staff are not there
- Increase no of volunteers – variety of ages, skills, abilities
- Facilitator to stop admin work
- Sub group decisions re veg growing
- Remake raised beds
- Sort out leaf room and storage

- Clearer communications
- Communicate projects and systems
- Clearer signage in garden to aid engagement
- Internal skill sharing between staff/volunteers
- Long term plans for materials and sustainability
- Work collaborative on specific projects
- Staff knowledge of entire garden – knowledge and skills sharing

## Where do we want to be in 5-10 years?

- Focussed fundraising for specific purposes
- Pro-active volunteer recruitment
- Increased number and diversity of volunteers, with broader responsibilities within the garden
- More systematic skills and knowledge sharing within the garden amongst staff & volunteers
- Develop the garden's produce growth in order to feed the community
- Increased indoor space for learning/cooking
- An ongoing maintenance plan for the garden
- Art, theatre in the garden
- Write a book about the garden!

