

## Ochil Community Garden Ben Cleuch Centre, Tillicoultry



**Where:** The garden is situated behind the Ben Cleuch Centre in Tillicoultry

**What:** The garden is part of the activities Adult Care Services in Clackmannanshire Council offers its service users. The garden moved to its current site in 2016 and before that it was at the Glenochil site in Menstrie next to the derelict Council plant nursery for 9 years. Adult day cares services share the new space with the Secondary School Support Service who supports young people still in School.

**Why:** The service users asked for an outdoor space and activities and the garden provides opportunities for service users and local community groups to experience practical gardening activities in a protected and supported environment.

### **Who is it for?**

- Service users from Adult Day Care Services – currently 15 on 3 days/week supported by 2 members of staff
- The Friends of Glenochil Community Garden who are volunteers supporting the garden project.
- Young people who are part of the Secondary School Support Service group
- The Men's Shed based in Devon Park Mills in Tillicoultry – help with building raised beds etc.
- People living in Tillicoultry

### **1. What are you most proud of?**

I'm proud of our close connection to Menstrie Primary School. The way we have worked with the PS has been truly joint and in the community not just a case of using the same facilities. Working with the children have also put our service users in a place of authority where they are teaching skills and imparting knowledge – not something that happens often to them.

We have taken part in the Gardening Scotland pallet competition and have come first for the past 3 years.

15 of our service users are working on or have achieved the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society (Caley) Grow and Learn Award. Grow and Learn is a horticultural award scheme that recognises individual progress and achievement through experiential learning and personal development.

## 2. What was hard?

It was hard to move into a new space and we are still working on establishing links with the local community and schools in Tillicoultry like we had in Menstrie. It doesn't happen overnight.

It is always difficult to find funds for plants and equipment. The Friends of Ochil Community Garden committee should be raising funds, but it's not functioning right now, so it's left to members of staff to do so.

It's a challenge that none of us are gardeners – we could do with some input from experienced gardeners sometimes.

## 3. What surprised you?

It was a good surprise to find that the council made the land for the new garden available when the old site was closed. The indoor facilities are better here than at the old site and the garden space is better than we expected.

Working with the Primary School is clear that there is a whole generation of gardeners missing – children refer to their grandparents when we talk about gardening and growing food.

It also surprises me that the service users still come out to the garden after some of them have been involved for nearly 9 years.

And members of staff who were hesitant at the outset are now the garden's biggest allies and organise their groups so they can use the garden. In the beginning staff said "I know nothing about gardening" now our attitude is "what is the worst that can happen – just try it"



## 4. What would you do differently?

I would like to have a larger proportion of my time dedicated to the garden in my workday/schedule and to have a garden coordinator or volunteer coordinator as a dedicated resource.

We would like to run a gardening group for adults where they could learn how to grow fruit and vegetables and then do it in their own gardens. This could get some new volunteers for the garden, but we would need some gardening expertise to deliver something like that.

## 5. What advice would you give to others?

Be stubborn – don't give up! Use connections and allies who will support you. Reach out via open days and launches and raise the profile of what you are doing. Adults with Learning Difficulties are not very high on the political agenda of local councillors, MSP & MPs, but gardens & sustainability is.

Our service users are often seen as always “taking from society” creating a garden that is open to the public is a way of being seen to give something back.

## 6. Contact

### **Ochil Community Garden**

Lindsey Brown, Senior Resource Worker, Centre Space, Adult Day Services, Tel: 01259 226826 / 226800

Email: [lbrown@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:lbrown@clacks.gov.uk)

### **Clackmannanshire Council**

Andy Macpherson, Development Officer (Sustainability), Tel: 01259 452 639

Email: [amacpherson@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:amacpherson@clacks.gov.uk)

Website: <http://www.clacks.gov.uk/community/growclacks/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/GrowClacks/?ref=bookmarks>

### **Federation of City Farms and Gardens (Scotland)**

Website: <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/your-area/scotland>



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