

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015
ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

This is an asset transfer request made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Section 1: Information about the community transfer body (CTB) making the request about the land and rights requested

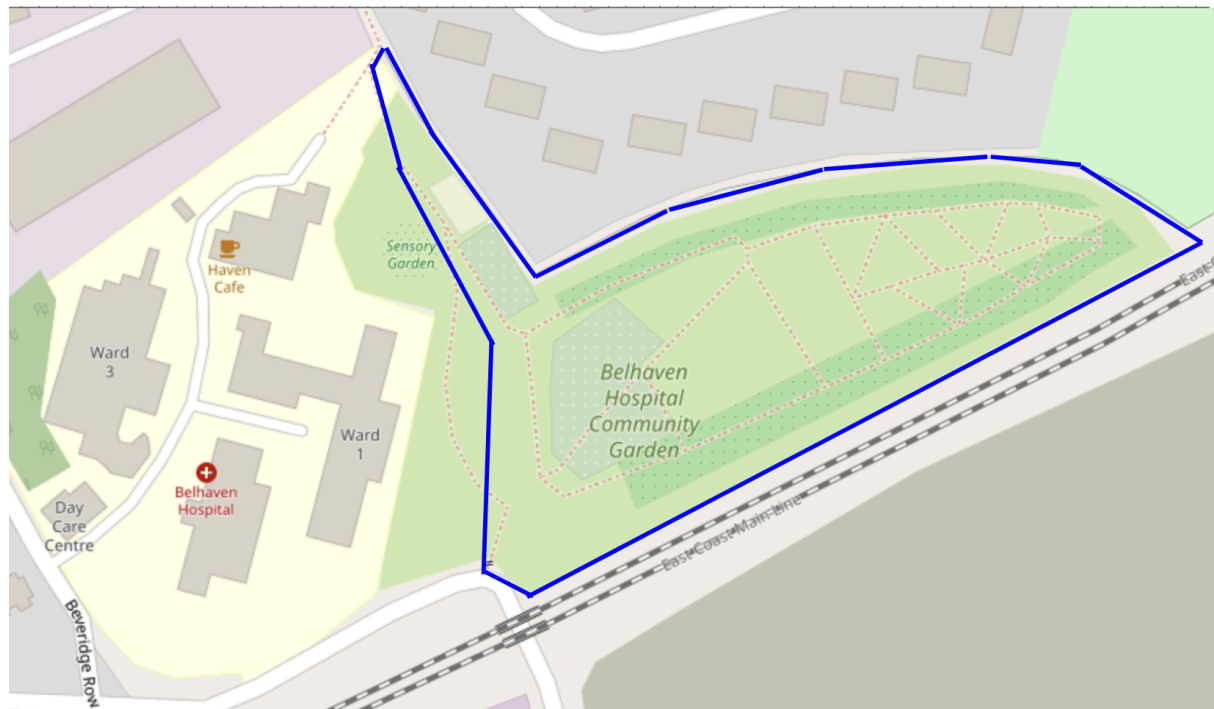
1.1 Please identify the land to which this asset transfer request relates.

You should provide a street address or grid reference and any name by which the land or building is known. If you have identified the land on the relevant authority's register of land, please enter the details listed there.

It may be helpful to provide one or more maps or drawings to show the boundaries of the land requested. If you are requesting part of a piece of land, you must give a full description of the boundaries of the area to which your request relates. If you are requesting part of a building, please make clear what area you require. A drawing may be helpful.

Belhaven Community Garden, Beveridge Row, EH42 1TR

The area being requested is outlined in blue in this map. This area is approximately 2.03 acres.



In 1905 the 7th Baronet of Lochend, George John Scott Warrender, made a bequest to the County Council of the County of Haddingtonshire and to the Provosts, Magistrates and Councillors of the Burgh of Dunbar of land for the purposes of a hospital for the treatment of infectious and contagious diseases. This subsequently became Belhaven Hospital and hence part of the NHS in 1948. Part of this original bequest states that the ground not used for building should remain as agricultural land and as pleasure grounds in connection with the hospital and that “the said hospital and said ground shall be put to no other use without the consent of the Superior”.

Since 2012, with the full support and cooperation of NHS Lothian (including some funding from NHS Lothian Charity), Sustaining Dunbar has been managing this area as a community garden for the benefit of hospital patients, staff and the health and wellbeing of the local community.

The hospital was once in the countryside, south of the village of Belhaven but, with the expansion of Dunbar, it is now surrounded by housing with the ‘Tree Scheme’ dating from the early 1950’s to the north and large new housing developments to the west and now also to the south of the mainline railway that forms the southern boundary of the site.

Section 2: Type of request, payment and conditions

2.1 Please tick what type of request is being made:

✓for ownership (under section 79(2)(a)) - go to section 3A

for lease (under section 79(2)(b)(i)) – go to section 3B

for other rights (section 79(2)(b)(ii)) - go to section 3C

Section 3: Community Proposal

3.1 Please set out the reasons for making the request and how the land or building will be used.

This should explain the objectives of your project, why there is a need for it, any development or changes you plan to make to the land or building, and any activities that will take place there.

The site of Belhaven Hospital was gifted to the community in 1905 for the purposes of supporting public health. In 2012, with the full support and cooperation of NHS Lothian, Sustaining Dunbar took over management of just over two acres of the grounds and established Belhaven Community Garden (BCG) under the auspices of the NHS Lothian Community Gardens Steering Group. Now that the hospital has closed, we are seeking to bring the garden into community ownership so as to maintain the legacy by supporting public health and wellbeing for the long-term.

The garden provides wide-ranging public health benefits for many individuals and groups and is well used as a public green space for dog walking and relaxation.

We are making this asset transfer request so as to be able to continue providing these public health benefits and, through having control of the site, to be able to expand these activities in future to reach even more people and groups across the local community.

Since 2012, we have relied on short-term agreements with NHS Lothian to manage the community garden. This lack of long-term tenure has severely restricted our ability to fundraise and establish more formal therapeutic activities

in the garden. This has been further exacerbated over the last three years by issues with the hospital water supply which means that we have had to operate without access to water or toilet facilities which has limited the groups able to make use of the garden during this time.

4.1.1 Vision and mission

Our vision sets out the long term change that we intend to make through Belhaven Community Garden.

Vision: Dunbar and East Linton will have a thriving community garden which supports good health, strong community, lifelong learning, and a diverse natural ecosystem.

Our mission sets out, at a high level, what we will do to achieve the vision. Our mission is to develop BCG as:

Our **mission** is to continue developing BCG as:

- A Therapeutic Space: for peace and relaxation, for all local people.
- A Growing Space: for herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetables, for anyone who wants to come together with others in a supportive, sharing environment.
- A Learning Space: for sharing practical food growing and regenerative land-care skills, for all ages and abilities.
- A Biodiverse Space: for developing the range and variety of habitats so as to enhance the number and variety of species in the garden and its soil.

4.1.2 Aims and objectives

Over the period of this plan we will continue and build on the activities and benefits that the BCG already provides – the ethos and nature of this successful project which has been operating for thirteen years will not change.

At the same time, community ownership of the site will open up new possibilities for us to expand services, reach more people, and deliver increased social impact. This section describes our planned development.

We have agreed four ‘aims’ relating to areas of change and development. These are:

1. Take the site into community ownership.
2. Develop infrastructure.
3. Reintroduce formal training programmes.

4. Develop green health services.

Under each Aim, we have agreed SMART 'objectives'. The Gantt Chart below sets out the aims and objectives which we intend to deliver over the first 3 years of community ownership. (Year 1 is the first year of community ownership).

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1. Take the site into community ownership				
a. Negotiate with NHS Lothian and submit asset transfer request.				
b. Submit SLF Stage 2 application				
2. Develop infrastructure				
a. Repair boundary wall				
b. Repair polytunnel and install fence				
c. Install water and utilities connections				
d. Install storage space for equipment				
e. Install composting toilet				
f. Install container office				
g. Improve path accessability				
g. Install outdoor classroom space / shelter				
h. Develop drop off area at the south entrance.				
3. Reintroduce formal training programmes				
a. Develop partnership with Dunbar Grammar School and the Ridge				
b. Introduce new training programmes				
4. Develop green health services				
a. Create new sensory garden				
b. Develop links with GP practices / mental health services				
c. Recruit worker to support health & wellbeing services				

Aim 1: Take the site into community ownership

Why: This is essential to secure the site and the continuation of existing services. Without community ownership, the site would be lost to development (contrary to the community's wishes). Community ownership provides security of tenure which enables us to improve the infrastructure.

What we will do: Negotiate with NHS Lothian and submit an asset transfer request in April/May 2025 with the intention of submitting the SLF form by the end point of August 2025.

Aim 2: Develop infrastructure

Why: We have operated for 2 years without access to water or toilet facilities – this restricts people visiting BCG. Post community ownership we will lose access to our current tool storage at the hospital, so we need an alternative store. As owners we will be responsible for the safety of the site – the boundary wall needs to be repaired to make it safe; and we need to secure the polytunnel to prevent

vandalism. We also want to provide some sheltered spaces to support learning activities.

What we will do: Upon transfer of the site we will repair the boundary wall; repair the polytunnel and secure this; install utilities connections; install a container unit for equipment storage; and install a composting toilet. Quotes for the work have already been obtained and further planning will take place over 2025 (Year 0).

Over the course of Year 1 we will add a containerised office/canteen, to enable volunteers to warm up / enjoy hot drinks, and to support activities in poor weather. We will also improve the accessibility of our paths to support access by people with mobility issues.

In Year 2 we will install an outdoor learning area – plans for this will be developed in collaboration with the Ridge and Dunbar Grammar School (see aim 3 below). We will also explore the possibility of a vehicle drop off at the South entrance, with disabled spaces. These are larger scale developments, so left until years 2 - 3 to allow further planning and to avoid overstretching the board and Steering Group.

Aim 3: Reintroduce formal training programmes

Why: Until 2024 BCG part-hosted the SQA accredited Rural Skills course, led by the Ridge and attracting participants from across East Lothian. The project has ended as funding for transport was cut. We want to fill this gap in provision for practical training by restarting the course for Dunbar based young people and by developing other accredited training programmes hosted at BCG.

What we will do: Over Year 1 and into Year 2 we will work with Dunbar Grammar School and the Ridge to develop and plan new accredited training programmes to be delivered at BCG. This will include discussion on the infrastructure they need (we plan to install an outdoor classroom space in Year 2, informed by their requirements).

We aim to launch accredited training programmes in Year 2. There is a longer lead-in time – this is to (1) ensure infrastructure improvements are completed; (2) to support fundraising if required; and (3) as any training programmes needs to be finalised in alignment with the academic year.

Aim 4: Develop green health services

Why: Over the course of this plan we want to develop more structured referral links with health & social care and be part of the green prescribing movement. This enables us to deliver further cost savings for NHS Lothian.

What we will do: Our current sensory garden is not included within the land to be taken into community ownership. As an initial step, we will create a new sensory garden within the site boundary.

Over Years 1 and 2 we will strengthen links with the three local medical practices in order to develop more structured referral pathways. We intend to launch these in Year 3. Our assumption at this stage is that funding will be required for a worker to support vulnerable volunteers, manage referrals from the NHS; and develop new services (such as mindfulness/ yoga in the Garden). This will be planned fully over Years 1 and 2, with the intention that a worker is taken on in Year 3.

4.1.3 Key Activities

This section describes the specific activities and services we deliver at BCG and how they will develop when we own the site.

The activities are:







1. Volunteer sessions and skills shares
2. Work with adults with learning difficulties
3. Visits from local groups
4. Community events
5. Workshops
6. Equipment hire
7. Accredited training at the Garden

The Garden also supports several 'outreach' projects. These largely take place at other sites, but they are managed by the BCG Steering Group and rely on ongoing practical support from Garden volunteers. Without BCG as base, they could not take place:

8. Beehive Garden at Dunbar Nursery School
9. Intergenerational Volunteers
10. Pledgehog Project

Service and description:	Future development:
<p>1. Volunteer sessions and skills shares.</p> <p>These run on Saturdays between 2-4pm. A second session runs on Wednesday afternoons during harvest time (July to October).</p> <p>We have 40 regular volunteers, with around 12-15 participants each week. Volunteers are diverse and include young people undertaking Duke of Edinburgh Awards; New Scots; and people experiencing challenges with mental health.</p> <p>Before each session, we offer skill shares for gardeners covering composting, sowing seeds, and organic growing tips.</p> <p>Sessions are sociable and involve physical activity.</p> <p>Volunteers carry out a wide range of activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate the communal growing areas all year round. • Harvest during the growing season. Volunteers take home produce; and further produce is distributed to other local initiatives. • Process compost - supporting the fertility of the soil. • Enhance habitats at the Garden, including our wildflower meadow; woodland area and hedges. <p>We also have a further 18 individual plots which are cultivated by volunteers.</p>	<p>Growth in the number of volunteers: we estimate total volunteer hours of 1664 in Year 1; 1880 in Year 2; 1896 in year 3.</p> <p>Other developments will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved planning to ensure more continuity of cropping. • Review bed layout for best soil productivity and to reduce couch grass issues. • Planting to ensure year-round supply of pollen. Reintroduce the bee school. • Create new habitats -willow bed and bog garden.
<p>2. Work with adults with learning difficulties.</p> <p>Our Green Team project brings adults with learning difficulties into BCG for light gardening and other nature based activities. They have their own allocated plot which they maintain. Activities include growing food, painting the benches and planters, mowing grass, and craft activities (indoors</p>	<p>Secure continuation funding so the service can continue.</p> <p>We want to involve more participants but will not set targets for growth – the Green Team is person centred and needs to be the right fit for</p>

<p>during winter).</p> <p>Green Team breaks down social barriers, helps participants develop new interests and gives them local recognition and dignity.</p>	<p>current and new participants.</p>
<p>3. Visits from local groups</p> <p>This has included local third sector groups supporting vulnerable people, including Dunbar Dementia Carers Support Group and Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project.</p> <p>It has also supported visits from groups working with young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Carrot Food Outreach worker delivers outdoor food and fire cooking sessions for young people at the Garden. • Beavers and Cubs: who work towards gardening badges. • West Barns Primary School. <p>Visits are arranged in discussion with the BCG Steering Group.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of group visits: 8 visits in Year 1 with an estimate of 96 participants; 9 visits in Year 2 with an estimate of 108 participants; and 10 visits in Year 3 with an estimate of 120 participants.</p> <p>We will build stronger links with a wider range of other local groups to create opportunities for visits and other collaboration e.g. Muddy Buddies, Dunbar FoodShare, Wilder Outdoor Education, Sunny Soups etc.</p>
<p>4. Community events</p> <p>We run events to draw people into BCG and to connect with each other, celebrating the natural environment and local food. Our most popular community wide events are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seedling Swap: a popular spring event in the garden. People bring surplus seedlings to swap and we hold a plant sale. • Apple Day: to celebrate the apple harvest. We offer tours of the garden, apple pressing, refreshments and activities for children. • Civic Week Events: each June. We run family friendly events at the Garden such as a wildflower hunt; “moth morning”, face painting, tours of the garden and 	<p>Increase in the number of attendees:</p> <p>7 events in Year 1 with an estimate of 210 attendees total; 7 events in Year 2 with an estimate of 224 attendees total; and 7 events in Year 3 with an estimate of 245 attendees total.</p>

<p>refreshments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wassailing in the orchard: an event to gather around a bonfire and sing wassailing songs. <p>These are coordinated by the Steering Group. Events rely on volunteers with enthusiasm to contribute their skills. Taking part is free of charge, though donations are accepted. Others have a fundraising element.</p>	
<h3>5. Workshops</h3> <p>Ad hoc workshops take place throughout the year, open to the public. Over the last year, workshops have covered propagation, scything, composting, bee keeping, foraging for wild herbs, ink making, wildflower ID. In the past, we have delivered art sessions at BCG, supported by a professional artist.</p> <p>These are run by the Steering Group or local people willing to contribute their expertise. We have applied for grant funding in the past to pay professionals to deliver workshops.</p> <p>Community participation is usually free, though donations are encouraged. The charging for services may need to change in the future.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of workshops:</p> <p>8 workshops in Year 1 with an estimate of 96 attendees total; 9 workshops in Year 2 with an estimate of 117 attendees total; and 10 workshops in Year 3 with an estimate of 130 attendees total.</p> <p>There will be a wider range of workshops. New ideas from volunteers and the consultations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wellbeing focussed: Art therapy, outdoor yoga, mindfulness, Tai Chi etc. ● Biodiversity related: e.g. making bug hotels, birdwatching etc.
<h3>6. Equipment hire</h3> <p>The Garden owns an apple mill and juice pasteuriser to be able to juice large quantities of fruit, mainly apples, pears and grapes which</p> <div data-bbox="212 1787 975 2033"> <p>Fruit Harvest Equipment Booking Available Equipment About Us Sign In</p> <h4>Available Equipment</h4> <p>Welcome to the Behaven Community Garden Fruit Harvest Equipment Booking site. Community equipment is free to hire with a suggested donation of about £30 that goes towards garden running costs. All equipment must be returned clean and ready for the next hire. Note we can only hire equipment in the East Lothian area. Find out more About us.</p> <div> <div>1 Select Select one or more items</div> <div>2 Availability Check Availability</div> <div>3 Book Sign in and confirm booking</div> </div> <div>       </div> </div>	<p>Slight growth in the number of groups/individuals hiring the equipment: 4 in Year 1; 5 in Year 2; 5 in year 3.</p> <p>We are currently supporting an amateur producer who is prototyping apple juice and cider production from the Gardens' apples. We aim to continue this support.</p>

<p>otherwise would go for composting. We also have a manual apple press and mincer.</p> <p>We have set up an online booking system to make these available for hire to community groups and local apple growers, in return for a small donation. This connects apple growers across the Lothians.</p>	
<p>7. Activities with school students learning practical rural skills.</p> <p>The Ridge is a local charity that provides social support while training or re-training young people. One of their SQA accredited courses is Rural Skills which attracts participants from schools across East Lothian. The course was run for a third of the year at BCG from 2021 - 2024 until funding for transport was cut.</p> <p>The skills and work experience gained during this course are practical and provided young people an outdoor environment and space to build confidence and self-awareness. As this course is no longer an option for Dunbar teens, this is something we intend to set up and develop in collaboration with Dunbar Grammar School.</p>	<p>This is described at Section 3.2 above. We intend to work with the Ridge and Dunbar Grammar School to reintroduce the Rural Skills course, and explore how the Garden can be used to provide other accredited training.</p>
Service and description:	Future development:
<p>8. Beehive Garden at Dunbar Nursery School</p> <p>This is a collaborative project at Dunbar Nursery School. We have established a growing space where nursery children can grow food and plants and connect with nature.</p> <p>It is also a base for Dunbar Grammar students on the childcare course to come and do work experience with nursery children to have practical experience for their National Qualifications.</p>	<p>Secure continuation funding so the service can continue. We've been funded by DELAP, the Mushroom Trust, Belhaven Brewery, The Robertson Trust & The Amos Trust.</p> <p>Currently seeking continuity funding</p>
<p>9. Inter-generational Volunteers</p> <p>An intergenerational volunteering project which provides positive experiences for S4-S6 students</p>	<p>Secure continuation funding so the service can continue.</p>

<p>at Dunbar Grammar school. Young volunteers undertake a dementia awareness training course and then weekly sessions with the residents doing a range of activities, and gardening.</p> <p>Young volunteers work towards a Saltire Award; but all participants benefit from the sharing of stories, the fun, camaraderie and bonds between older and younger people.</p>	
<p>10. Pledgehog project</p> <p>This is a biodiversity project which has spun out from the Garden. It aims to raise awareness of the plight of hedgehogs in Dunbar and to help reverse the downward trend of populations by demonstrating how best to create hedgehog friendly habitat and access to gardens.</p> <p>This is a self-contained project under Sustaining Dunbar, funded by DELAP, Viridor, Hugh Fraser Foundation, Safe Deposit Scotland, Coop & Belhaven Brewery and delivered by our Pledgehog Project Officer. It relies on BCG as a part of a wildlife corridor in the town where hedgehogs can forage.</p>	<p>Work with the Pledgehog Project Officer as a demonstration garden for what habitats suit wildlife and to encourage locals to garden for the benefit of wildlife.</p>

Benefits of the proposal

3.2 Please set out the benefits that you consider will arise if the request is agreed to.

This section should explain how the project will benefit your community, and others. Please refer to the guidance on how the relevant authority will consider the benefits of a request.

In this section we consider the benefits arising under the headings of:

- Public Health and Social Wellbeing
- Environmental Wellbeing
- Economic Development, Regeneration and reducing inequalities
- Strategic Benefits -fit with national and local policy outcomes
- Financial Impact

Finally, a logic model (adapted from NHS Lothian's Greenspace and Health Strategic Framework) summarises the key beneficial outcomes and social impacts from current and future activities at BCG in terms of our four missions.

4.2.1 Public Health and Social Wellbeing

Belhaven Community Garden is a community growing project in its widest sense.

The current health and wellbeing benefits provided by our community garden have been researched and documented in a number of student dissertations and reports and anecdotally from many of our volunteers. These benefits are recognised by NHS Lothian's Greenspace and Health Strategic Framework which states: "We are increasingly recognising the role and importance of greenspace and therapeutic interventions in greenspace on our health and wellbeing. Indeed, greenspace is often now described as our natural health service."

"There is compelling evidence that green exercise improves not only our physical health but also our emotional and mental health as well."

Dr Gregor Smith, Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Our volunteers report greatly valuing working outdoors, collaborating together to enhance a local space, creating new and stronger social networks and growing their skills and understanding, as well as benefiting from the shared harvest. Here are a few of our volunteers sharing their experience of the garden.

	A. <i>"I've got dyspraxia, aspergers and anxiety. Coming to the garden is so great because the people help me here. They are like a second family. I've been coming here for 8 years. I'd miss the garden if it wasn't here."</i>
	B. <i>"We use the garden on a regular basis. My son, has developmental delay and mobility issues as well as autism. The garden is a safe haven for him and walking here helps him with his exercise regime. He's obsessed with the plants and flowers and loves the trains passing by. The garden is a huge asset in our lives."</i>
	C <i>"I enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the community garden. I had been unwell in 2022 (with severe depression that had me signed off work for 9 months) and going along helped give me purpose. I would say it was a turning point in starting to feel better. It was also good to feel I was helping</i>

	<p>maintain the garden as well, giving something back to the community. I'd recommend getting involved. The people were great company."</p>
	<p>D "I feel really passionate about the Community Garden and taking it into community ownership for the future. I'm a single mum and this is the place I bring my son to burn off energy. We are always welcome here, it's safe, it's beautiful and it's very important to me. I've learned so much about food growing, the no-dig technique, and wildflowers from people here. If you don't have a background where your parents share this knowledge, what do you do? This is where I've learned. I've benefited from the 'Seed Swaps' and created my own garden at low cost. I love this garden - it brings me so much happiness."</p>
	<p>E "I moved to Dunbar in the middle of the pandemic to a flat without a garden so when I found the community garden it was the first place I started to meet people. Everyone here is very accepting of my difficulties with my mental health and I can work calmly by myself or chat to others. It's been an absolute life line for me. There's something magical about working together on the land that opens up conversations. I hit a low point and had to take off 11 months off work because I was suicidal but when I came to the garden, it always felt like a safe space for me to be - friendly, welcoming, no judgement. I can't emphasise enough how that helped me get through my struggles and get back to work. Last year I got married and everyone here helped grow the flowers, herbs and salads for my wedding - it was such a celebration, I felt like all my garden friends were there too."</p>
	<p>F "We used to have an allotment before we moved here 8 years ago. I was very happy to find the community garden and share my experience - there's not a right way or wrong way to grow but I'm old so I've probably tried it before! One of my ideas is the dead hedge here - it's great for insects. Being here has its own benefit, with the skylarks in the background, out in the open. Being outside does you good."</p>
	<p>G "I wasn't the sharpest tool in the box at school. Through volunteering at the community garden and the time on the Rural Skills course, that is what got me where I am today. I</p>

	<i>am worried that we would lose a huge asset to the community if we lose the garden. We need the Belhaven Community Garden.”</i>
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The population of Dunbar has expanded hugely over the past twenty years and new development is still continuing so that what was once greenspace on the edge of town is now covered by new housing. There are only a handful of allotments in Dunbar and no new allotments have been created by East Lothian Council in decades despite this being a requirement of the Community Empowerment Act. This act also required local authorities ‘to develop a food growing strategy, including identifying land that may be used as allotment sites and other areas of land that can be used by the community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers.’ As yet East Lothian Council has not done so and retaining and further developing BCG would therefore assist ELC towards meeting this legal requirement.

With ownership, and the provision of basic infrastructure, such as a water supply, that has been lacking in recent years we will be able to plan for the long-term so as to expand the activities that we can run and to reach many more individuals and groups across our community. Ownership will secure the public health and social wellbeing arising from the garden for decades to come and these will increase over time as we are able to expand our activities. The garden is easily accessible and open to the public at all times. Current and future planned activities support [NHS Lothian’s Strategic Development Framework](#) which has ‘**prevention**’ and ‘**support to stay well**’ at its core.

We consider that the benefits go well beyond purely cost savings through reduced demand on the NHS and other public services. We are therefore wary of putting a financial value on the public health and social wellbeing benefits arising from BCG. However, the cost-benefit analysis in this [Biodiversity and Climate Change Assessment for the NHS Estate](#) carried out for NHS Lothian in 2021 estimated that two existing therapeutic gardening activities run by NHS Lothian (with 350 participants annually), ‘...showed a Net Present Value (NPV) of the QALYs produced by this nature-based health intervention over a period of 50 years of £4.65 million’. The same study also highlighted the very significant benefits in carbon sequestration, air and water quality regulation arising from the natural capital of the current NHS Lothian estate. The financial value for all BCG activities is explored in more detail in section 4.2.5 below.

4.2.2 Environmental Wellbeing

When Sustaining Dunbar first started creating Belhaven Community Garden in the winter of 2012, the whole site comprised areas of lawn and modified grassland with limited biodiversity.

We have now been managing this natural capital asset on behalf of NHS Lothian for thirteen years and the site now comprises a range of habitats including areas for horticulture but also grassland, orchard, wildflower meadow, woodland, scrub, hedgerows and coppice. A recent biodiversity assessment (see appendix) concluded that area habitats within the site currently represent a value of 6.13 Biodiversity Units (BUs) and that the single hedgerow represents 0.57BUs. This compares with an estimate of 3.75BUs prior to the creation of the community garden. The conclusion from this study states:

Establishing a community garden at Belhaven Hospital has increased the number of habitats within the site and in turn increased area BUs by a very high margin (63.5%) as well as created hedgerow BUs where previously none existed. The gardens therefore represent a valuable resource to local biodiversity, and in line with NPF4 and the principles of the mitigation hierarchy, the site should be protected from development.

Traditional orchards in particular represent a rare and highly distinctive habitat which can support a wide range of notable fauna, and neutral grassland can develop into lowland meadow, which is another highly distinctive habitat which can support rare fauna and flora.

BUs calculated from habitats are a proxy for biodiversity, such as the presence of protected or otherwise notable species of e.g. mammals, birds and invertebrates, but replacing a single habitat type, lawn and modified grassland, with a much greater variety of open and wooded habitat is indeed likely to provide the structural diversity that will benefit a much greater range of both faunal and floral species.

The Biodiversity Metric is the best tool currently available to define baselines and quantify potential or realised gains in a transparent way. Moreover, it is a very useful tool for highlighting where further gains can be made through targeted site management. For example, habitats in the Biodiversity Metric workbook which are currently in a poor or moderate condition can be targeted for improvement to increase the condition. Some of this is also likely to happen automatically over time; e.g. as the orchard habitat matures, the condition is predicted to increase from moderate to good.

Our intention is to further diversify the range of habitats within the community garden, particularly through creation of a pond and wetland area and increasing the length of hedgerow. As noted above, the new habitats that we have created

over the past twelve years are still quite young and further improvements in their condition and biodiversity value should naturally increase over time.

4.2.2.1 The Pledgehog Project

The hugely successful Pledgehog Project is a spin out from Belhaven Community Garden, with events and activities taking place at the garden. It aims to inspire local people, of all ages and backgrounds, to become actively involved in and take positive actions for the conservation of hedgehogs within the Dunbar and East Linton ward. The aim is to improve public understanding of biodiversity, teach new habitat creation skills and an understanding of the plant and bug life needed for hedgehogs to survive so as to foster a life-long passion for nature and the environment. The project works across the community to:

- promote, advise & facilitate the creation of more wildlife-friendly gardens and greenspaces for crucial hedgehog habitat
- Create more wildlife corridors throughout the town where hedgehogs can take cover and forage
- Help people to connect with their neighbours in new neighbourhoods to create access points in and out of gardens



4.2.3 Economic Development, Regeneration and Reducing Inequalities

As outlined above, ownership of the community garden will enable us to expand our activities, including increasing the quantity of healthy, nutritious food grown on the site. This food will be freely available to all our community garden volunteers, distributed on a needs basis. As at present, surplus produce will be sold through our local, community-owned '[Community Carrot](#)' shop, on Dunbar High Street or will be donated to Dunbar Foodshare and crates of apples taken to Dunbar nursery school. This is already playing a small part in strengthening our local food economy and shortening supply chains and in making more, healthy, nutritious food available locally.

The intergenerational work that has grown out of BCG is also playing a part in building real-life skills and experience for students at Dunbar Grammar School as well as benefiting Dunbar's nursery school children and many older people.

Here are some examples of what we have put into action so far.

4.2.3.1 Reducing Food Waste

In July 2021, BCG purchased a Vigo Hydropress, an apple mill and juice pasteuriser to be able to juice large quantities of surplus fruit, mainly apples, pears and grapes which otherwise would go for composting. This equipment was in addition to the manual apple press and mincer that is also available for loan. In spring 2022, we set up an online booking system to allow community groups and local apple growers (including private householders) to borrow the equipment and process their own fruit locally for a donation to the Belhaven Community Garden. This has resulted in creating a small income stream for the garden and has connected many apple growers in the area, and as far afield as Edinburgh, the Borders and Mid-Lothian. These connections are valuable to support growers in their choice of apple and pear trees for cultivation, exchanging best practice for pruning methods and for sharing pruning techniques.



4.2.3.2 Adding Value Through Local Processing

Apart from the apple juice made available to local people through our community apple pressing, Sustaining Dunbar has supported a local cider maker prototyping the use of locally sourced apples. Using our Hydropress, apple mill and pasteuriser to process fruit from BCG and two other local spray-free or organic orchards he is prototyping local production of both apple juice and cider for local sale.



The July harvest of redcurrants and blackcurrants was abundant in 2024. We froze over 18 kilos of surplus fruit after garden volunteers had taken as much as they wanted. We organised a community preserve making day in the new catering kitchen at Belhaven Parish Church. Again, this is sold locally to generate a small income.



4.2.3.3 Intergenerational work with local children, teenagers and older people

Thanks to the ongoing support of BCG volunteers we created and now run the Beehive Nature Garden in collaboration with Dunbar Nursery School. With diverse grant funding we have been able to employ a Volunteer Coordinator who works with the nursery school staff to run gardening sessions for the children, all 250 of whom now have regular access to an outdoor learning space and food growing area. In collaboration with Dunbar Grammar School we also run a buddying project for S4-S6 students on the SQA Child Development Course. Each week, a group from the course designs outdoor activities and they buddy up with the nursery children to get hands-on experience working with them. This brings their course to life and gives the students valuable time in the outdoors building relationships with the nursery school children. This has been transformational for many of the students over the last 4 years and with the support of our Volunteer Coordinator many have gone on to find full time work locally thanks to the skills and confidence they have developed on this project.



"I was quite shy and anxious but you can't really be like that around little children, they don't give you the chance! After I volunteered in the Beehive, I did some extra volunteering in the school as well as a work placement which was also really good. My volunteering helped build my confidence and choose a career path. I am working in an after-school club now, I really enjoy it."

Beehive Garden Volunteer

Another intergenerational volunteering project which provides positive experiences for S4-S6 students at Dunbar Grammar school started out as a project for students to spend weekly sessions doing a range of activities, and gardening with the elderly residents of the Blossom Ward at Belhaven Hospital. The S4-S6 students worked towards a Saltire Award; but all participants benefited from the sharing of stories, the fun, camaraderie and bonds between older and younger people. With the closure of the hospital, this project has now transferred to Dunbar Day Centre but we plan to reintroduce such intergenerational work to BCG once ownership is secured.

"The project helped me gain lots of communication skills and feel more confident when talking to others. I found it incredibly useful as I can talk about it in interviews and applications as an example of a time I worked as a team, or worked with others. It was well organised and coordinated and I really enjoyed meeting all of the elderly people"



Duke of Edinburgh volunteers are a regular feature at our Saturday volunteer sessions at Belhaven Community Garden. Each year we take on 2-3 volunteers from Dunbar Grammar school who spend 3 - 6 months with us as part of their bronze or silver award for their community service.



Our partnership with Belhaven Brewery opened up an unexpected opportunity for young people. Sustaining Dunbar employs a horticulturalist with the sponsorship from the Brewery to look after a very old, formal 'secret garden' on the grounds of the Brewery. This project was set up in 2021. In collaboration with East Lothian Works, a horticultural apprentice, L (aged 19) joined the project for 1 year and was joined by another young volunteer, A (aged 21). Sadly, this project comes to an end in April 2025.

Partnership with The Ridge


The Ridge is a local Dunbar-based charity and social enterprise that provides social support while training or re-training young people. One of their SQA accredited courses is Rural Skills which attracts participants from schools across East Lothian. The course was run for a third of the year at the Belhaven community garden from 2021 - 2024 until funding for transport was cut. The skills and work experience gained during this course are practical and supported and provide young people an outdoor environment and space to build confidence and self awareness. As this course is no longer an option for Dunbar teens, this is something we are interested in setting up and developing in collaboration with Dunbar Grammar school.





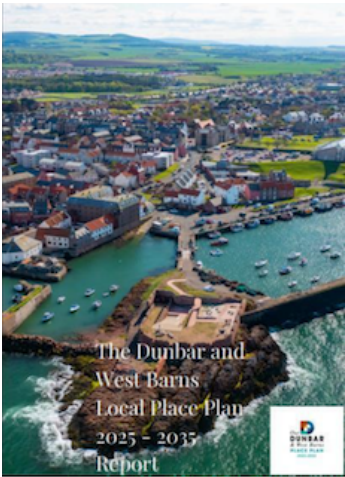
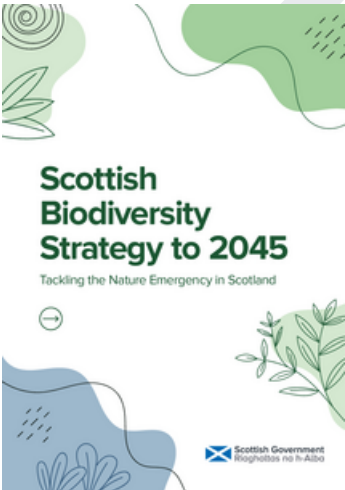
Ownership will also allow us to fundraise to employ a paid support worker who will be able to help us to recruit and support a greater number and a greater diversity of volunteers and establish a greater range of more structured therapeutic activities including for refugees, people with dementia and their carers etc. There will be increased opportunities for school students to volunteer (for example through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme) as well as for more participation by youth (uniformed) groups (such as


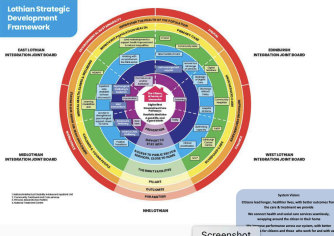
beavers, cubs, guides). Opportunities for formal and informal skill-sharing and active learning around growing/horticultural skills, pruning, foraging, scything, bee keeping, herbal plants and medicines, moth and wildflower id, biodiversity understanding etc. will be increased and, working with Dunbar Grammar School and The Ridge, we will also be able to restart and further develop the range of training opportunities in rural and regenerative landskills that we can offer from the garden. These opportunities will be for S4-6 school pupils as well as for young adults and, as well as training in specific land management skills, young people will gain soft-skills such as group working, self-confidence, communication, working with adults they don't know, all of which will enhance their employability.

4.2.4 Strategic Benefits

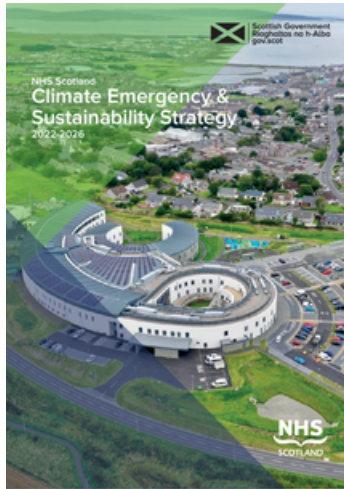
How our proposal fits with national and local policy outcomes	
Policy	How Belhaven Community Garden contributes
East Lothian Plan https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210603/performance_and_spending/12729/the_east_lothian_council_plan_2022-2027 	<p>BCG fits with all aspects of the East Lothian Plan, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow our Economy -through expanding existing skills training, particularly for young people • Grow our People -through increasing activities with young people and supporting health and wellbeing for all, including refugee families, vulnerable and older people • Grow our Communities -through all participants and volunteers having the opportunity to be involved in the running and development of the project.
East Lothian Climate Change Strategy https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/29179/climate_change_strategy_2020-2025	<p>BCG contributes to many aspects of East Lothian's Climate Change Strategy. Specifically ownership will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable us to build on the work that we have already started to develop a healthy, diverse natural ecosystem and greenspace that supports the biodiversity and wellbeing of our community and

 <p>East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020–2025</p>  <p><i>"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."</i> John Muir 1833–1914, pioneer of nature conservation, born in Dunbar and inspired by its natural environment</p>	<p>builds resilience to changes in climatic conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● create new opportunities for a wide range of people to develop general employability skills and train in specific skills for regenerative land management and organic food growing in the heart of our community and accessible by active travel. ● help people to develop a deeper connection to nature and understanding of nature's closed loop cycles -encouraging understanding of a circular, sharing economy. ● enable opportunities for healthy, outdoor, physical activity that enhances physical health and mental wellbeing, encourages social interaction between diverse participants, provides space for local food growing and for discussion around low carbon lifestyles and community resilience.
<p>East Lothian Community Wealth Building Strategy https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210699/community_wealth_building/12853/community_wealth_building</p>	<p>This commits 'anchor institutions' (such as NHS Lothian) to the Anchor Charter Mission Statement:</p> <p><i>"To commit to long-term collaboration between East Lothian Anchor Institutions, supporting shared Community Wealth Building goals to improve collective wellbeing and create a strong, resilient and inclusive local and regional economy. This includes a commitment to the embedding of Community Wealth Building principles and reporting on progress to the East Lothian Partnership."</i></p> <p>Community ownership of BCG will create an asset that is owned by and for the local community. It will also contribute to improving local wellbeing, including enhancing people's individual resilience (a key requirement for a strong, resilient and inclusive local economy) by creating a place where they can connect with others, feel useful, valued and listened to.</p> <p>The charter also commits signatories to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● make productive use of land and assets to support communities ● to support equitable land development and ownership models -including the imaginative use of assets for community and wider social and economic use ● support social and community enterprises ● take immediate and sustainable action to reduce

	<p>carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the nature emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and support strategies to support sustainable communities and our natural environment and biodiversity.
<p>Dunbar Local Place Plan</p> 	<p>Community ownership of BCG fits with the new Dunbar Local Place Plan:</p> <p><i>“One of the strongest messages we received in the survey was to protect green space and we should guard against further development of these in existing neighbourhoods. Another special case is the Belhaven Community Garden adjacent to the, now closed, NHS Belhaven Hospital. We must ensure it is retained as a therapeutic space for education, training, community connection, mental health and supporting biodiversity.”</i></p>
<p>Scottish Biodiversity Strategy</p> <p>https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-2045/</p> 	<p>BCG contributes to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, particularly Target 12:</p> <p><i>“Significantly increase the area and quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the provision of ecosystem functions and services.”</i></p>
<p>Scottish Government ‘Place Principle’</p>	<p>The Guidance on local-living and 20-minute neighbourhoods states that “The concept of local living ...is a flexible approach which can adapt to support the context, local needs and aspirations of communities.” It proposes that: “Access to good quality natural space provides a wide range of</p>

	<p><i>benefits for wellbeing and the environment and is a central aspect of delivering local living” and requires consideration, inter-alia of “supporting existing natural features and forms, ecosystems, and biodiversity, incorporating allotments and growing spaces, including community food growing.”</i></p>
<p>NPF4 https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/</p>  <p>The image shows the logo for the National Planning Framework 4, which includes four circular icons representing different themes. Below the logo is a map of Scotland composed of many small, colorful dots. The text 'National Planning Framework 4' is written above the map, and the Scottish Government logo is at the bottom right.</p>	<p>NPF4 obliges councils to allocate land for community growing and to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity. BCG is included in East Lothian Council’s map of local biodiversity sites. In community ownership, BCG will continue providing a space for community growing and to protect and further enhance the biodiversity of the site which has increased considerably over the thirteen years that we have been managing it..</p> <p>NPF4 also requires that any development proposals “<i>which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on health will not be supported</i>”. Clearly, protecting this space as a community garden will avoid the adverse effects that would arise if the land were to be built on.</p>
<p>NHS Lothian Strategic Development Framework https://org.nhsllothian.scot/strategies/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2023/05/LSDF-Summary-for-website-08042022.pdf</p>  <p>The image is a circular diagram titled 'Lothian Strategic Development Framework'. It features a central circle with various icons, surrounded by concentric rings of text and icons. The diagram is color-coded with a rainbow gradient. The text 'Lothian Strategic Development Framework' is at the top left, and 'Screenshot' is at the bottom right.</p>	<p>NHS Lothian’s Strategic Development Framework has ‘prevention’ and ‘support to stay well’ at its core.</p>
<p>NHS Scotland’s Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/</p>	<p>NHS Scotland’s Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy recognises the climate and ecological emergency as also being a health emergency and the responsibility of the NHS to support sustainable practices in our communities and neighbourhoods including: ‘supporting</p>

[cations/nhs-scotland-climate-emergency-sustainability-strategy-2022-2026/](https://www.nhs.uk/scotland-climate-emergency-sustainability-strategy-2022-2026/)



health and wellbeing’, ‘building community resilience’ and ‘engaging our communities’.

NHS Lothian Greenspace and Health Strategic Framework

<https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/nhs-lothian-green-health>



Sustaining Dunbar took over management of just over two acres of the grounds and established [BCG](#) under the auspices of the NHS Lothian Community Gardens Steering Group. Now that the hospital has closed, we are seeking to bring the garden into community ownership so as to maintain the legacy by supporting public health and wellbeing for the long-term.

Longer lives, better lived through our GreenSpace: Lothian’s ‘natural health service’

We fully realise the potential of the NHS outdoor estate and community greenspaces as a community health asset benefiting patients, visitors, staff and communities. Green health activities and services are recognised and resourced as vital tools for supporting health and wellbeing. Together, we are achieving the ambition of a health promoting health service

Community Empowerment Act

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment>

Part 9 of the Community Empowerment Act states:

“There is a requirement for local authorities to develop a food growing strategy for their area, including identifying land that may be used as allotment sites and identifying

<p>ent/</p>  <p>Published 6 October 2022 SP Paper 236 10th Report 2022 (Session 6)</p> <p>The Scottish Parliament Parliament on 6 July</p> <p>Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee</p> <p>Allotments and community growing: the impact of Part 9 of the Community Empowerment Act</p>	<p>other areas of land that could be used by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers.”</p>
<p>Scottish National Performance Framework</p> <p>https://www.gov.scot/collections/national-performance-framework</p> 	
<p>Children and Young People</p> <p><i>We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential</i></p>	<p>We will be able to expand our work and activities with young people to enhance their physical and mental wellbeing, their connection to nature and their knowledge and skills in food growing and regenerative landcare.</p>
<p>Communities</p> <p><i>We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe</i></p>	<p>The garden will be owned and managed by members of the local community, building skills and resilience</p>
<p>Culture</p>	<p>The garden will be used for a wide range of creative</p>

<i>We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely</i>	activities including celebrating diverse cultures and welcoming New Scots into our community
Fair Work and Business <i>We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone</i>	We will be growing healthy food for local consumption, selling surplus to our community-owned shop on Dunbar High Street whilst supporting local people to learn skills in food growing and regenerative land management
Education <i>We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society</i>	We will create formal and informal opportunities for skill sharing and learning about horticulture, regenerative land management, biodiversity, group working and more
Environment <i>We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment</i>	We will be further developing and enhancing the range of habitats on the site including the orchard, hedges, coppice, woodland, scrub, wildflower meadow and creating a pond and wetland area
Health <i>We are healthy and active</i>	We will provide opportunities for physical exercise, sharing and learning of skills in the outdoors - providing social connection and enhancing mental wellbeing whilst growing healthy and nutritious food.
Poverty <i>We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally</i>	We will provide opportunities for all local people to participate in growing food for themselves and their neighbours in a setting that encourages everyone to contribute and develop their skills

4.2.4 Financial Impact

The social value has been calculated using the social value portal¹ and amounts to:

- In year 1, we estimate the potential social value to be £665,457
- In year 2, we estimate the potential social value to be £681,872
- In year 3, we estimate the potential social value to be £728,542
- In year 4, we estimate the potential social value to be £731,327
- In year 5, we estimate the potential social value to be £768,199

Total: £3,575,398

In terms of activities, we estimate the following social value generated over the five years:

- Volunteering: £399,877
- Green team: £65,250
- Visiting group: £69,990
- Community wide events: £2,504,859
- Workshop: £147,155
- Accredited training: £388,267
- Total: £3,575,398

The community events activity is high because of our assumption that the high numbers of attendees will not be repeat visitors.

The value outcomes we have identified for each activity are:

- Volunteering: regular volunteering, gardening, feel belonging to

¹ <https://hact.org.uk/tools-services/social-value-insight/>

neighbourhood

- Green team: gardening
- Visiting groups: attend youth clubs, improvements in confidence (youth)
- Community wide events: feel belonging to neighbourhood, greenspaces are of a high standard
- Workshops: active in social group
- Accredited training: vocational training

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4.2.5 Logic Model

We know that BCG makes a significant positive impact because of the extensive research on the benefits of green space in urban areas, postgraduate research on the impact of Belhaven Garden specifically, and life story interviews from our volunteers. We want to formalise our approach to monitoring impact so that the full benefits of BCG are captured. The logic model below sets out the expected social impact from the activities that we will deliver. This has been informed by logic models produced by the NHS Lothian charity, although we have adapted the content for use by a volunteer led group. It is set out under the four parts of our mission:

- A Therapeutic space
- A Growing space
- A Learning space
- A Biodiverse space

A Therapeutic space:				
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Wider Social Impact	Local policy contribution
<p><u>People:</u></p> <p>Trustees; Garden Steering Group; Volunteer Leads and Plot Champions etc.</p> <p>Workers: Volunteer Coordinator.</p> <p>Partner organisations inc. Dunbar Dementia Network.</p> <p><u>Facilities:</u></p> <p>Growing spaces: inc. communal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly volunteering sessions estimate of 1664 volunteer hours in Year 1. • 5 carers groups will visit the Garden - involving 500 carers and 100 supported people annually. • 500 people will visit the sensory garden annually. • Local people who use the space to bring their children or walk the dog 	<p>Participant s have improved mental health</p> <p>Participant s have improved physical health</p>	<p>People in the area lead healthier, happier lives.</p> <p>Health inequalities are reduced.</p> <p>Cost savings to NHS Lothian due to preventative work at the Garden which supports physical and mental health.</p> <p>Improved health will enable some participants to return to employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lothian Plan: Outcome 3.2. • Dunbar & East Linton Area Plan. • NHS Lothian Charity: Green Health Programme Strategy. • NHS Lothian: Strategic Development Framework. • NHS Lothian Sustainable Development Framework. • East Lothian Good Food Charter: Goal 3.

plots. Sensory garden.	for a peaceful and safe enclosed space.		Discrimination and stigma relating to mental health is reduced.	
A Growing space. There are two parts: (a) Growing together as a community; and (b) Growing fresh produce				
(a) Growing together as a community:				
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Wider Social Impact	Local policy contribution
<u>People:</u> Trustees; Garden Steering Group; Volunteer Leads and Plot Champions; Local Good Food Alliance coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator; volunteers leading events and workshops. Partnerships including with Dunbar Grammar; Dunbar Day Centre, ELCAP, East Lothian Horizons. <u>Facilities:</u> As above. Growing spaces for heritage crops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly volunteering sessions estimate of 1664 volunteer hours in Year 1. 7 community wide events annually; attended by 210 people. 8 workshops annually; attended by 96 people. Intergenerational befriending involving 25 older people and 10 school pupils. 	Participants have improved social connections	There is improved social cohesion across Dunbar and East Linton. New and longstanding residents are brought together. Social connections are made across generations. Social isolation and loneliness are reduced – leading to improvements in health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Lothian Plan: Outcomes 2.1 and 2.2 Dunbar & East Linton Area Plan. NHS Lothian Charity: Green Health Programme Strategy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 people with additional needs take part in the Green Team - 208 therapeutic gardening hours annually. 15 people with 	People with additional needs are integrated into the community	Improved social cohesion. People with additional needs have more freedom, dignity, choice and control over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHS Lothian: Strategic Development Framework

	additional needs take part in regular volunteering.		their lives.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 New Scots participate in volunteering sessions - including growing heritage crops. 	New Scots are integrated into the community	<p>New Scots in Dunbar build diverse relationships and healthy intercultural bonds.</p> <p>The community respects the diversity and strengths that New Scots bring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lothian Plan: Outcome 2.1
(b) Growing fresh produce:				
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Wider Social Impact	Local policy contribution
<p><u>People:</u></p> <p>Trustees; Garden Steering Group; Volunteer Leads and Plot Champions etc.</p> <p>Workers: Local Good Food Alliance coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator.</p> <p>Partner organisations inc. the Community Carrot and Food Bank.</p> <p><u>Facilities:</u></p> <p>Growing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivation of 21 raised beds; 9 communal field plots; 15 individual field plots; Polyunnel; 2 soft fruit patches; 143 fruiting trees. • 237 kg of food distributed to individuals in the community. • 100 kg of food distributed to Dunbar Foodshare • 200 jars of preserves sold - value of £ 650 . • 8 outdoor 	<p>Greater opportunities for growing within the local community</p> <p>The community has access to fresh, locally grown, healthy produce.</p>	<p>People in the community value the food they eat, know where it comes from and how to prepare it.</p> <p>Food poverty (and therefore health inequalities) are reduced through access to low cost, nutritious produce.</p> <p>The community learns more about the links between food choices and climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunbar & East Linton Area Plan • East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy: Outcome 7 • NHS Lothian Sustainable Development Framework • East Lothian Good Food Charter: Goals 1,2,3,4,5 and 7. • East Lothian Partnership Poverty Plan

spaces: inc. communal plots. Orchard and nuttury.	cooking events, attended by 64 annually.		The community has a diverse and vibrant food economy which celebrates, promotes, and supports local food producers and land resources.	
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A Learning space:				
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Wider Social Impact	Local policy contribution
<u>People:</u> Trustees; Garden Steering Group; Volunteer Leads and Plot Champions etc. Workers: Local Good Food Alliance coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator; tutors/leads for workshops; staff at the Ridge and Dunbar Grammar. Partner organisations inc. local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 skills shares engage 120 participants - 24 hours annually. • 8 workshops annually; attended by 96 people. • 25 pupils attend dementia awareness training. • 20 pupils volunteer at the Beehive Garden each year. 	<p>Participants learn new skills</p> <p>People in Dunbar will have increased awareness of climate change and how they can respond</p>	<p>People in the community will be better-skilled, confident and empowered.</p> <p>This includes empowerment to contribute to the community, and particularly to local responses to the climate emergency.</p> <p>Other gardens and green spaces in the area will be enhanced as local people gain growing skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy: Outcome 7.4. • East Lothian Good Food Charter: Goal 4.

<p>schools, the Ridge CIC, East Lothian Works.</p> <p><u>Facilities:</u></p> <p>Growing spaces: inc. communal plots.</p> <p>Sensory Garden</p> <p>Outreach sites: the Beehive Garden and Dunbar Day Centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 participants gain Rural Skills SQA qualification • 20 pupils gain SQA Childcare qualification. • 30 participants gain Duke of Edinburgh and Saltire Awards. 	<p>Participants gain qualifications</p> <p>Participants grow in confidence</p>	<p>Local people will have high quality opportunities for people to learn, develop skills, and grow their potential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lothian Plan: Outcome 1.1 • East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy: Outcome 1.8 • East Lothian Local Economy Strategy Objective 2.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [250] children will participate in the Beehive Garden at Belhaven Nursery • [3] visits from groups of young people e.g. uniformed organisations, engaging [72] annually. 	<p>Children will learn about nature and growing</p>	<p>Engagement with natural environments at BCG supports increased levels of physical activity for children, lower levels of obesity, and improvements in mental health and cognitive performance.</p> <p>Children and young people will value local greenspace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Lothian Charity: Green Health Programme Strategy • East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy: Outcome 1.8 • East Lothian Good Food Charter: Goals 1 and 4

A biodiverse space:				
Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Wider Social Impact	Local policy contribution
<p><u>People:</u></p> <p>Trustees; Garden Steering Group; Volunteer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 large composting spaces. • Green manure growing and 	<p>Habitats at the Garden are enhanced.</p> <p>There is a</p>	<p>Biodiversity at the site increases.</p> <p>Improving habitats at the Garden leads to improved carbon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy:

<p>Leads and Plot Champions etc.</p> <p>Workers: Local Good Food Alliance coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator.</p> <p><u>Facilities:</u></p> <p>Growing spaces; sensory garden; orchard; hedges, coppice; woodland; scrub, wildflower meadow; beehives; composting spaces.</p>	<p>harvesting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 bee colonies in hives at the Garden. • Wildflower meadow with 47 types of wildflower identified; and 4 wild grasses. • 4 hedges and 3 dead hedges cultivated. • Creation of bog garden/ wetland area. 	<p>wider range of habitats at the Garden.</p> <p>Local people have opportunities to experience and connect with nature</p>	<p>sequestration and air quality regulation.</p> <p>Ecosystems are improved.</p> <p>Increased biodiversity helps to mitigate the impact of climate change.</p>	<p>Outcome 6.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Lothian Community Wealth Building Charter • NHS Lothian Charity: Green Health Programme Strategy • NHS Lothian Sustainable Development Framework.
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Restrictions on use of the land

3.3 If there are any restrictions on the use or development of the land, please explain how your project will comply with these.

Restrictions might include, amongst others, environmental designations such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI), heritage designations such as listed building status, controls on contaminated land or planning restrictions.

There are no restrictions on the use or development of the land that would prevent us from implementing our proposals for continuing to support the health and wellbeing of people across our local community and retaining and further developing the garden as a therapeutic, biodiverse, growing space and learning space.

Once the NHS disposes of the other part of the site with the existing hospital buildings, we will retain pedestrian access from Pine Street and vehicular access from beside the railway bridge on Beveridge Row.

Negative consequences

3.4 What negative consequences (if any) may occur if your request is agreed to? How would you propose to minimise these?

You should consider any potential negative consequences for the local economy, environment, or any group of people, and explain how you could reduce these.

Bringing the land into community ownership and protecting its future use as a community garden will permanently remove the option of using this land for housing.

This could be considered as a negative consequence if this prevented provision of the affordable housing that is urgently needed locally.

However, if the land were sold to a commercial developer, current local examples of commercial housing new-build suggest that it is very likely that there would be little if any affordable housing provided through this model of development.

Furthermore, retaining the community garden will be a positive benefit for existing and any future housing that may be built in the surrounding area including on the remaining land at Belhaven Hospital.

It could also be argued that NHS Lothian could have sold the land for housing development and so that selling it to Sustaining Dunbar at current use value will mean NHS Lothian missing out on a one-off, capital receipt. Our valuation of the site which, although zoned as a windfall housing site in the current Local Development Plan, does not have planning permission, suggests a residual land value of £470,000. By selling the land at a current use value of £45,000, NHS Lothian could therefore potentially miss out on a capital receipt of £425,000. However, there is no reason to believe that the garden will be zoned for housing in the next Local Development Plan which is due to come into force in Q1 of 2026. This is because:

- NPF4 does not allow land zoning to be rolled over from one LDP to the next
- NPF4 requires ELC to allocate land for community growing and biodiversity
- The garden is included as part of East Lothian Council's local biodiversity network map
- The Dunbar and West Barns Local Place Plan strongly recommends that the site be retained and further developed as a community garden.
- There is no current shortfall in land zoned for housing in the Dunbar area

It is therefore very unlikely that NHS Lothian would be able to successfully market and dispose of the site and for a developer to obtain planning permission in the time available. In any case, obtaining planning permission would require the developer to show how development would result in biodiversity net-gain and not cause any adverse health impacts. This would seem challenging at best given the existing high level of biodiversity of the site and the obvious health impacts that would result from loss of the community garden.

We strongly believe that selling the site at current use value will allow many decades of future public health and other benefits that far outweigh any possible, and likely illusory, loss of a one-off capital receipt. It is also likely that being adjacent to a thriving community garden would enhance the development value of the remaining land at Belhaven Hospital.

Capacity to deliver

3.5 Please show how your organisation will be able to manage the project and achieve your objectives.

This could include the skills and experience of members of the organisation, any track record of previous projects, whether you intend to use professional advisers, etc.

4.5.1 Legal structure

Sustaining Dunbar is a Company Limited by Guarantee (SC351910) with charitable status (SC040106).

This structure provides us with separate legal personality and limited liability for members. Charitable status will provide rates relief entitlement and access to charitable funding and other support.

The powers in the constitution are wide enough to cover the acquisition and further development of BCG.

Trading activity at BCG will be low level, but is likely to constitute primary purpose trading because it directly contributes to our charitable purposes. This will continue to be monitored by the board.

4.5.2 Governance

Membership:

Ordinary membership is open to any individual over 16 who is resident in the Community (Ward 6); entitled to vote at a local government election in a polling

district that includes the community or part of it; and supports the charity's purposes.

There is also associate and junior membership, but these members do not have voting rights. The ordinary members therefore control the charity.

We have 597 members in total, of which 570 are ordinary members with voting rights.

Board:

The majority of board members are Elected Directors, elected by the membership. The constitution also enables the board to co-opt an additional 3 directors to bring specific skills and experience.

At present, we have 8 directors.

Directors meet regularly to discuss progress and plan ahead and all decisions are fully discussed, minuted and approved before implementation.

The skills audit carried out as part of this business planning showed that trustees have strong skills and experience. No skills gaps were identified: the board has the capacity to take on and develop BCG and there is no overreliance on particular individuals. There is some potential to grow experience of asset development, but as the board already has some skills here, this is not a critical gap.

The board also oversees Sustaining Dunbar's membership of the Transition Network, Development Trusts Association Scotland, Scottish Communities Climate Action Network, Community Energy Scotland, Circular Communities Scotland and Nourish Scotland. These links provide further capacity.

Steering Group:

Our constitution allows the board to *"delegate any of its powers to sub-committees, each consisting of not less than one Director and such other person or persons as it thinks fit or which it delegates to the sub-committee to appoint"*.

Day to day management of the Garden is carried out on behalf of the board by the Belhaven Community Garden Steering Group. Its role is to: *"to oversee management and development of Belhaven Community Garden on behalf of the Sustaining Dunbar board, including liaising with NHS Lothian and creating plans and proposals that the larger group of volunteers can engage with"*.

In practice, the Steering Group's work includes planning the planting schemes, working parties, events and socials etc.

The Steering Group has 7 members, including one trustee. This provides a direct link to the Sustaining Dunbar board. In practice, another member of the Steering

Group also attends part of the board meetings to provide an update on BCG and the outreach projects.

As regular volunteers themselves, Steering Group members are in regular contact with other volunteers who are actively encouraged to share their ideas, opinions and knowledge. Volunteers' ideas are then brought to the Steering Group meetings.

The members of the Steering Group have different roles. These are: Meeting Facilitator; Plot-holder Lead; Treasurer; Outreach communications; and Social event lead as well as sharing responsibility for oversight of different areas of the garden such as the wildflower meadow, orchard, bees, hazel coppice, raised beds etc...

The Steering Group meets monthly. Meeting agendas and minutes are recorded in an online logbook document. This is saved on a secure Google Drive and available to the trustees.

In relation to skills, the 2025 skills audit showed that the Steering Group has appropriate skills and experience to manage the Garden post-acquisition, although building skills in relation to marketing would be helpful.

The Steering Group has operated in this way for around 5 years, so this is already working well. However, over spring/summer 2025 we intend to formalise the governance of the Steering Group in preparation for community ownership. This means agreeing and documenting:

- A formal scheme of delegation, setting out what must be approved by the Sustaining Dunbar board. This will cover, for example, delegated authority in relation to submission of funding bids, and the capital work at BCG (these will require signoff from the board).
- Composition of the Steering Group. This has developed organically as interested volunteers have stepped forward. We will agree and document how new members of the Steering Group can be reappointed, and also consider term limits.
- Code of conduct. Our Steering Group works well together and this has not been an issue to date. However, to support good governance, we will agree a code of conduct setting out expectations (including attendance at meetings etc), with provisions for removal from the Steering Group if the code of conduct is breached.
- Specific roles on the Steering Group. At present these are relatively informal. Role descriptions will be documented so there is clarity on what is required, and in order to support succession planning.

4.5.3 Staffing and volunteer structure

Volunteers:

These include the Sustaining Dunbar board, and Steering Group (described above). The other roles are:

- **Volunteer Leads:** We have a rota of 5 volunteer leads (all PVG checked). They plan and lead the weekly volunteering sessions which undertake the majority of garden work. We organise this through groupsio.com – this platform enables us to discuss activities, update volunteers, share files, photos and plans.
- **Plot Champions:** Each of the communal growing plots has a volunteer ‘champion’ that oversees the annual cycle of growing and caring for soil health.

All volunteers receive a copy of our volunteer agreement and must sign a form to confirm their acceptance. The agreement includes induction, conduct, practical information about tasks, health & safety responsibilities, and support, supervision and management etc.

There is also an agreement for Plot Holders which sets out responsibilities in relation to the individual plots.

Paid positions:

Activities at the Garden will be supported by two paid positions:

- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Currently a volunteer position.
- **Sustaining Dunbar Training Coordinator** – this is an employee position. Activities extend beyond BCG, but they help to deliver the Green Team volunteering sessions, Beehive Garden and Intergenerational Volunteers.

This plan sets out our intention to recruit a Green Health officer in Year 3. Line management responsibilities will be developed more fully in due course to support this role.

4.5.4 Operation, Policy and procedures

Sustaining Dunbar has been operating since 2008, and the necessary policies and procedures for BCG are in place. Garden specific policies have been drafted by the Steering Group for approval by the board. The board reviews all policies annually.

In preparation for community ownership, Garden specific policies will be reviewed by the Board to ensure that these remain suitable.

Policies and procedures can be supplied on request.

Sustaining Dunbar has a suite of employment policies in place – these are less relevant to BCG as present as there are no dedicated staff for the Garden. We will review these prior to taking on a staff member in Year 3 to ensure they remain suitable.

4.5.5 Partners

Over the 13 years of BCG, we have built up strong partnerships with local third, public and private sector groups.

This section sets out the key partnerships for service delivery at BCG and how we will develop these:

Organisation	How partners can contribute
Dunbar Grammar School	We work with them to provide work experience for pupils through the Beehive Garden and Intergenerational Volunteers projects. We will work with them to revive the Rural Skills course for their pupils. We also take on pupils on Saturdays who volunteer with us for their Duke of Edinburgh award.
Dunbar Primary and Nursery School	Hosts the Beehive Garden. We will continue to invest in this outreach project. We will continue to supply them with seasonal fruit in the autumn
Dunbar Medical Centre	Referral of individuals potentially using social prescribing in the future.
West Barns Primary School	We will continue to encourage regular visits from primary school classes.
The Ridge CIC	We will work with the Ridge so BCG continues to be used by them to support the marginalised young people they work with. We will work with the Ridge and Grammar School to reintroduce the Rural Skills course. We will also use trainees at the Ridge to carry out the

	necessary repairs to the site boundary wall.
Community Carrot	We will continue to supply them with fresh produce and preserves. We will encourage more use of BCG for outdoor food and fire cooking sessions for children, run by their Community Food Outreach worker.
Dunbar Foodshare	We will continue to supply the Foodshare with fresh produce. We will also seek to encourage referrals of people using the Foodshare who would benefit from therapeutic gardening activities.
Dunbar Day Centre	We will work with them to continue the Intergenerational Volunteers intergenerational befriending project.
Dunbar Dementia Network SCIO	With installation of running water and toilet facilities, group visits can restart. We will also encourage visits from individual members and their carers.
East Lothian Horizons	We have worked with them to support three Dunbar based refugee families – we will work with ELH to develop our support to displaced people.
Dunbar Shed	Contributes to ad hoc projects such as coppicing our hazel and willow. We will be able to work with their volunteers to support some of our capital work (like installing the container units).
Dunbar Community Woodland Group	We have a tree nursery for them and tool share as well as having common volunteers.
Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project	Visits with some of the vulnerable young people they support. Has also held a summer holiday club at the Garden previously. With improved infrastructure at the site we can consider bringing this back.
East Lothian Council Community Justice team	Supports us by mowing parts of the site. There may be potential for further support with parts of the capital upgrades.

4.5.6 Other Projects

Sustaining Dunbar is a Community Development Trust for the Dunbar and East Linton Ward of East Lothian, established in 2008. We aim to provide a structure that can enable, support and incubate local projects that help to build a more resilient community that will be better placed to face up to the many challenges facing us in today's world. We believe that local, community-led action that values and taps into local knowledge and experience has a key role to play in building a future in which everyone in our community can thrive within a flourishing natural environment.

We have a strong track-record of initiating and supporting local projects, some of which, such as Dunbar Community Bakery and Reuse Scotland have now become successful independent enterprises. Much more information about some of our past work and projects and current activity is available on our website (www.sustainingdunbar.org).



Apart from Belhaven Community Garden, some current projects include:

The Pledgehog project, a hugely popular way of raising awareness and encouraging people to create more wildlife friendly gardens and wildlife corridors.

The Dunbar Community Heat Team of volunteers, trained to carry out infra-red thermal imaging surveys of people's homes, targeting those most in need, to highlight potential sources of heat loss and to signpost people to expert advice and support.

The Bike Hub, part of the Dunbar Skills Partnership, which provides training in bike maintenance, cycle confidence training and which repairs and rehomes bikes, providing bikes for free to people in need.

OurLocality, a safe and secure website platform, powered by open source software, enabling local community groups, projects and individuals to set up and maintain their own web presence quickly and cheaply without intrusive adverts or pop ups or corporate interference with personal data.

Climate Action East Linton, a support network for people in the East Linton area who care deeply about the climate and biodiversity crises. They have a number of specific projects under way, and sub-groups working on particular themes.

Fixing for a Future, a spin-off from Climate Action East Linton, which runs a tool library, regular repair cafés and skills workshops in sewing and textiles, furniture repair, tool sharpening and much more and which is now expanding its activities across East Lothian providing employment skills training for young people as well as intergenerational skills sharing.

We work closely with other local groups and stakeholders including through local community planning structures and we have carried out a number of studies such as on the impact of tourism on local nature sites and improving local infrastructure for active travel.

Sustaining Dunbar was actively involved in establishing the East Lothian Climate Action Network and Hub which now supports sharing and learning between groups across East Lothian and which is taking forward a number of collaborative projects around themes of biodiversity, energy, food, climate adaptation and education.

Section 4: Level and nature of support

4.1 Please provide details of the level and nature of support for the request, from your community and, if relevant, from others.

This could include information on the proportion of your community who are involved with the request, how you have engaged with your community beyond the members of your organisation and what their response has been. You should also show how you have engaged with any other communities that may be affected by your proposals.

5.1.1 Evidence of support for community ownership

The Local Place Plan for Dunbar, prepared by Dunbar Community Council, West Barns Community Council, Dunbar Trade's Association, Dunbar and Area Local Partnership, Sustaining Dunbar and other organisations consulted with over 800 local people of all ages from across the local area. The Place Plan sets out that protection and retention of Belhaven Community Garden was an important priority emerging from their consultations. While there is a need for affordable housing and few sites for this, the protection of green space is a higher priority.

We have also carried out extensive consultations over 2024 and 2025 to understand whether the community across Ward 6 supports community ownership of Belhaven Community Garden.

2024 consultations

Survey and petition:

An online survey was carried out over summer/autumn 2024 – asking the community whether they supported community ownership of Belhaven Community Garden.

The survey was widely promoted on social media and Dunbar Online, an article in the Courier, through door to door collection of petition signatures, a stall on the High Street, and posters/leaflets. Consultations specifically included Ash Grove (the street bordering the Garden) to ensure that the views of immediate neighbours were considered.

928 people responded: Yes - I support community ownership.

699 respondents are in the EH42 postcode area (Dunbar). 37 respondents are in the EH40 postcode area (East Linton): so 79% of respondents are from the community of benefit (the Dunbar and East Linton Electoral Ward).

Some open comments;

This is a vital asset for our community

The garden is a gorgeous green space and is an asset to the community.. it should be kept and nurtured

The garden is beautiful and useful for the mental and physical well-being of both patients and volunteers. The NHS should be willing to transfer the land for a nominal price to the volunteers given that gardening is proven to be so beneficial to the patients

Seems only right that this wonderful space, that volunteers have spent so many hundreds of hours working on, should stay part of the community enjoyed by and available

A full list of comments is included as an appendix

A separate paper petition was circulated between June – October, asking “Do you support taking the site of Belhaven Community Garden into community ownership to protect this asset for the benefit of the community in the longer term?”

485 signatures were gathered, in support of community ownership.

Letters of support:

22 letters of support were received from local organisations supportive of the Garden being taken into community ownership. This includes:

- Schools: Dunbar Grammar School, Dunbar Primary School (which includes the Nursery), West Barns Primary School.



To whom it may concern

BELHAVEN COMMUNITY GARDEN
REQUEST FOR ASSET TRANSFER TO COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Dunbar Community Council has actively supported the work of Belhaven Community Garden since its inception in 2012. In that time, it has developed from a small sensory garden, for all to enjoy, to the established community garden it is today with planting of all types, largely focused on food production.

The team of volunteers and garden users reaches every socio-economic and age grouping and the benefits to all in respect of mental and physical wellbeing are patent.

Dunbar Community Council fully supports the application for a community asset transfer of the garden grounds to community ownership.

P.A. [Signature]

- Community Planning and Community Councils: Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership; Dunpender Community Council, West Barns Community Council, Dunbar Community Council.
- Local third sector groups: The Community Carrot CBS, the Ridge CIC, Dunbar Shed, Wilder Outdoor Education CIC, Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project, Dunbar Dementia Network SCIO, East Lothian Horizon Community Refugee Sponsorship,
- Networks /partnerships: East Lothian Climate Hub, Dunbar Medical Center (Lauderdale, Cromwell, Whitesands Practices), Dunbar and East Linton Health and Wellbeing Group.

Letters of support have also been received from Craig Hoy MSP, Martin Whitfield MSP and Paul McLennan MSP as well as local councillor Donna Collins and a number of other individuals

2025 survey

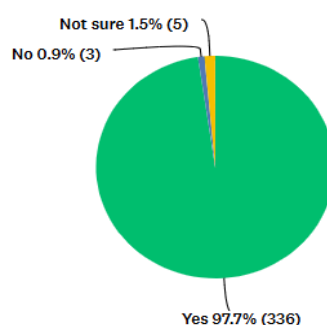
We carried out a further community survey in February 2025, to consult in more depth on the activities local people wanted take part in at BCG. The full survey analysis is in the Business Plan Appendix 2. The survey attracted 346 responses.

Support for community ownership:

There was almost universal support for community ownership – consistent with the findings of previous consultation exercises. 98% of respondents were in favour.

Overall, and if a viable future can be found for it, do you support the community purchase of the land from the NHS?

Answered: 344 Skipped: 2



Impact of community ownership:

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with the following statements: 'Developing the land into productive community space will...'. The majority of respondents strongly agreed with all statements:

- Strengthen the community and bring people together: 87% strongly agreed; 13% agreed.
- Develop health and well-being: 85% strongly agreed; 15% agreed
- Get people more involved in their community: 79% strongly agreed; 21% agreed
- Enhance the economic resilience of the community: 55% strongly agreed; 33% agreed. 12% neither agree nor disagree.

Negative consequences from community ownership

The survey also asked, “If you are not supportive of community ownership of the garden, please let us know why”. This was to determine whether there are any negative consequences from community ownership of the site (and how those could be mitigated).

Only 6 comments were received, of which 5 were supportive of community ownership.

The only comment which was not supportive of community ownership was “I think housing is a higher priority in terms of community need (especially affordable housing for rent)”. A larger number of comments were received elsewhere in the survey opposing more development or housebuilding.

This is consistent with the Local Place Plan consultations described above – there is a need for affordable housing, but overall, the community’s view is that protecting remaining green spaces (and particularly Belhaven Community Garden) is a higher priority.

5.1.2 Support and market demand

The 2025 survey provided respondents with a list of existing and proposed services at BCG. They were given options to select whether they (1) support the service and would use it themselves; (2) support but would not use it themselves; (3) do not support the service; and (4) are not sure.

The list of services was compiled following consultation with BCG volunteers on what they would like to see happen at the site.

Each of the suggested ideas was supported by more than 90% of survey respondents. Less than 2% were opposed to any of the suggestions.

The services are set out under the relevant part of the Garden’s Mission: a Therapeutic Space; Growing Space; Learning Space; and Biodiverse Space. We have included some additional evidence/statistics where relevant:

A Therapeutic Space

Service	Evidence of support / demand
Volunteering (e.g. upkeep of the garden, gardening for wellbeing sessions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% (160 people) support this and would take part. 49% support although would not take part themselves. • 40 additional survey comments noting the benefits of volunteering, including to wellbeing and confidence. • Existing volunteering numbers between March 2023 and March 2024 were 552 volunteers: 1,104 volunteer on site hours. • The Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership's Area Plan includes an action to support more social contact and friendship to support health. This is evidence of need.
Therapeutic gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% (119 people) support this and would take part. 28% support although would not take part themselves. • 18 additional comments were received noting the benefits to physical and mental health. • Letter of support from East Lothian Horizons – this charity has referred two refugee families to BCG: therapeutic gardening has helped reduce their social isolation and learn new skills. • Letter of support from Dunbar Medical Centre indicating interest in social prescribing. • The 2023 NHS Lothian Public Health Survey results for East Lothian found 12% of respondents reported low life satisfaction; 9% reported feeling lonely most of the time, 30% some of the time; and 15% experience low mental wellbeing. The NHS Lothian Green Health Programme Strategy sets out that exposure to natural environments supports positive mental health outcomes. • The Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership's Area Plan includes an action to support improved mental health for all ages, but especially young people, and recognises the contribution of BCG.
Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% (235 people) support this and would take part.

garden restful spaces	<p>64% support although would not take part themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 additional comments received, noting that this is valuable to the community as a peaceful space to support positive wellbeing; but there is particular value for young people with additional needs, older people (including those with dementia) and carers. • Letter of support from Dunbar Dementia Network SCIO notes the value of the garden as a therapeutic space for their members. • Letters of support from the Community Carrot: provides a calming space for them to support children who are neurodivergent, growing up in foster care or have food avoidance disorder.
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A Growing Space

This relates to growing herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetables; but also growing together as a community:

Service	Evidence of support / demand
Community growing together:	
Events such as Apple Day and Seedling Swap (i.e. centred on growing/ horticulture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was the idea with the highest number of people who would take part themselves: 77% (261 people) support this and would take part. 20% support although would not take part themselves. • 23 additional comments received, noting that previous apple days have been well received.
Community events such	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% (239 people) support this and would take part. 20% support although would not take part themselves.

as bonfire night and wassailing (i.e. community events in the green space not necessarily focussed on growing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 additional comments received, noting that these are valuable for families, as well as those without access to their own garden. • Continued population growth shows a need to support community cohesion (as per the Local Place Plan). • The Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership's Area Plan includes an action to develop a more connected community with a positive attitude. This is evidence of need.
Growing herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetables:	
Allotments and growing space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33% (113 people) support this and would take part. 65% support although would not take part themselves. • 58 comments received, noting the benefits of keeping an allotment to health and wellbeing. Several noted the long waiting lists for allotments at Thistly Cross, and there was interest in taking up allotment space or a raised bed at the Garden.

A Learning Space

Service	Evidence of support / demand
Workshops such as pruning and bee keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69% (236 people) support this and would take part. 29% support although would not take part themselves. • 22 additional comments received, noting that these are valuable in developing knowledge and learning from others. • An additional survey question indicated willingness from respondents to pay for workshops – although these should be affordable and accessible to all in the community.
Outdoor cooking e.g. kids cook club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% (119 people) support this and would take part. 63% support although would not take part themselves. • 23 additional comments received, noting that these are

	<p>enjoyable and help to develop life skills. There were several offers to help deliver the sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of support from the Community Food Outreach & Communications Lead, Community Carrot: who delivers these sessions – there is nowhere else locally these can take place. • Only 20.9% of people in East Lothian get the recommended amount of daily fruits and vegetables.
Tours and visits (for groups such as beavers and cubs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29% (98 people) support this and would take part. 70% support although would not take part themselves. • 14 comments received noting that young people/children have enjoyed these sessions previously. • Letter of support from Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project shows demand for more visits to the garden with the vulnerable young people they support. Letter of support from West Barns Primary School shows demand for more visits.
Employability and accredited training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18% (61 people) support this and would take part. 77% support although would not take part themselves. • 18 comments received, noting that these can benefit young people in particular. • Letters of support from Dunbar Grammar School and the Ridge– stating support for existing work and demand for this to grow further. The Ridge notes that the Garden “<i>has enormous value as a unique educational space</i>”. • 13.5% of the working age population of the Ward claimed Universal Credit in September 2024 – this is below the Scotland average of 14.8% but still shows a need for employability support.

A Biodiverse Space

The services above contribute to enhancing habitats and improved biodiversity at BCG. There were additional comments in the survey directly relating to biodiversity, such as “*Biodiversity e.g. native wildflower pollinator meadows; perhaps a small area of woodland; a pond*”.

Section 5: Funding

5.1 Please outline how you propose to fund the price or rent you are prepared to pay for the land, and your proposed use of the land.

You should show your calculations of the costs associated with the transfer of the land or building and your future use of it, including any redevelopment, ongoing maintenance and the costs of your activities. All proposed income and investment should be identified, including volunteering and donations. If you intend to apply for grants or loans you should demonstrate that your proposals are eligible for the relevant scheme, according to the guidance available for applicants.

6.1.1 Asset transfer and acquisition

The Community Asset Transfer bid will be submitted to the NHS offering a price of £XXX

Though there is a wide range of potential valuations depending on the use of the site, we are clear that this site has no live planning permission for housing and is likely to be de-zoned to green space in the next Local Development Plan.

A discount is appropriate because of the 13 years of impact already delivered by sustaining Dunbar in addition to projected impact that is set out in the financial impact section.

6.1.2 Fit with Funders Outcomes

We will seek a contribution from the Scottish Land Fund toward the purchase price for the site and associated legal costs of transferring ownership. There is a strong fit with the SLF outcomes:

Outcome 1: Our communities will achieve more sustainable economic, environmental and/or social development through the ownership of land and buildings

Building a sustainable economy:

- Democratic and inclusive business models will be supported through trading activity at BCG, and through support to the Community Carrot community benefit society.
- Benefits to mental health from participation at BCG will enable people to return to the workforce. At least two of our volunteers have been able to take up employment again, partly due to the therapeutic benefits of volunteering at BCG. Research from the Mental Health Foundation sets out

the economic value associated with nature-based interventions for mental health².

- Dunbar Grammar School pupils are supported into the workforce through the Intergenerational Volunteers and the Beehive Garden projects: participants report benefits to their confidence, employability and sense of purpose. Some have gone on to find employment in childcare: provision of childcare delivers further economic benefits.
- Young people will gain qualifications: we supported an SQA National 4 level Rural Skills course for 3 years and plan to revive this in partnership with the Grammar School. This also helps to improve participation rates for 16-19 year olds which is a priority within the East Lothian Plan.
- Distribution and sale of fresh produce at the site supports a vibrant local food economy and shortens sustainable food supply chains (in line with the East Lothian Good Food Charter).
- We support economic participation through production and sale of preserves, and hire of our fruit pressing equipment to support amateur producers.

Sustainable environmental outcomes:

- Biodiversity at the site will be protected and increased as habitats at BCG mature and as we create new habitats. Before we took on the site it had an estimated value of 3.75 biodiversity units, and by 2025, had a value of 6.13BUs. Without community ownership the site will be developed into housing, and its biodiversity lost.
- BCG is one of the last remaining green spaces in Dunbar: others have been subsumed by housing developments. It provides ecological connectivity with other green spaces marked for protection in the Local Place Plan.
- BCG provides formal and informal opportunities for skill sharing and learning about horticulture, regenerative land management and biodiversity. This gives participants confidence and skills to cultivate their own gardens.
- BCG provides a means to engage the community around low carbon lifestyles and community resilience to the climate emergency. We educate about food growing which helps to demonstrate the links between food choices and climate change.

2

<https://www.thrive.org.uk/how-we-help/social-therapeutic-horticulture-resource-centre/evidence-of-the-benefits-for-sth/economic-value#>

- We practise organic farming at BCG: this contributes to improved soil health which supports healthy ecosystems (this is an outcome within NPF4).
- Our Beehive Garden outreach project gives nursery children opportunities to grow food and plants – increasing their engagement with nature and understanding of the value of nature through outdoor learning.

Social development:

- We support community cohesion. The Local Place Plan notes a 60% increase in population between 2001-2021 and that traditional patterns of community have changed as a result. Our activities enable new and longstanding residents to meet, contributing to a strong resilient community where people respect and support each other.
- We help to mitigate the impact of food poverty through distribution of surplus food and support to Dunbar Foodshare and directly to nursery schools. This is vital, with a 137% increase in number of children referred to foodbanks across East Lothian between 2020 and 2023; and only 21% of people in the region getting the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables.
- We tackle social isolation and loneliness. Activities at BCG bring together a diverse range of people, with the impact that people here are more connected, and have opportunities to develop meaningful relationships. Interviews with participants describe the life-changing impact of connection with others at BCG.
- People from marginalised groups such as New Scots or people with additional needs are supported to take part at BCG: this breaks down social barriers and supports participation as equal members of the local community.

OUTCOME 2: Our Communities will have a stronger role in and control over their development

- Consultations over several years have shown overwhelming support for BCG to be saved; and for green spaces to be protected ahead of further development. Community ownership of the site delivers on these aspirations.
- BCG is volunteer-led: last year there were 552 volunteers and 1,104 volunteer on-site hours. This means local people control the delivery of services and are directly involved in supporting each other.

- BCG will be owned by Sustaining Dunbar: a charity with open membership for everyone in Ward 6. This contributes to the Community Wealth Building pillar of inclusive/plural ownership.

OUTCOME 3: Our communities own well managed, financially sustainable land and buildings

Well-managed

- A skills audit was undertaken as part of this business plan, showing a high degree of skills and experience across the Sustaining Dunbar board and the BCG Steering Group. Members of each are passionate about the positive impact of BCG.
- BCG has operated successfully for over 12 years. Our structure of management by the Steering Group (supported by Volunteer Leads and Plot Champions) works well. BCG is referred to as an exemplar in two public sector strategy documents.
- We have longstanding partnerships with local third, public and private sector groups (evidenced by the 22 letters we received in support of community ownership). These partners contribute further skills and capacity.

Financially sustainable

- The financial projections within our business plan show that BCG can continue to operate sustainably, with a small surplus. It has already operated sustainably for 13 years.

6.1.3 Sustainability

Approach to sustainability:

Our approach is that BCG and the services we provide should be free and open to all. We have historically not put pressure on people to pay for events or workshops, although we do collect donations and run fundraisers. The majority of work at BCG is delivered by our volunteers, willing to share their time and skills.

This approach fundamentally will not change, although we recognise that ownership of BCG will bring additional costs.

Running costs:

Expenditure has been low in previous years: £1,502 in 2023; £1,304 in 2022 and £4,056 in 2021 (of which £2,600 was purchase of our fruit press). Public liability insurance will also need to be added.

We anticipate that expenditure will be higher once we take the site into community ownership – largely due to the additional infrastructure which we will install:

	Annual	Notes
Rates	£0	As a charity Sustaining Dunbar would receive 80% mandatory rates relief. We assume that the additional 20% discretionary relief will also be obtained given our contribution to East Lothian Council strategies.
Water rates	£0	We assume that the Water and Sewerage Charges Exemption Scheme will apply ³ .
Electricity	£800	Rough estimate – we do not currently have an electricity connection. Usage likely to be low.
Waste collection	£360	
Growing costs - plants, seeds, compost etc.	£300	Low as we produce our own compost etc.
Equipment - repair and replacement	£800	Based on previous years.
Site maintenance and repair	£2,000	To cover repairs to the new infrastructure such as container units, as well as the polytunnel etc.
Volunteer expenses	£1200	Though currently only £300, we have increased this to allow us to attract more volunteers and more who may be on a low income and need expenses to attend.
Marketing	£400	Increase in previous years to support increased donation and fundraising income.
Contribution to COG	£300	i.e. Community Outreach Growing, such as the Beehive Garden at Dunbar Nursery School.

³ <https://www.mygov.scot/water-sewerage-exemption>

Contribution to Full Cost Recovery	£300	i.e. contribution to insurance, accountancy, website hosting costs etc incurred by Sustaining Dunbar. Based on previous years.
Sundry / Misc.	£250	
Total:	£7710	

Our financial projections include a 3% inflationary increase from year 2 onwards.

Income generation:

Income in previous years has been modest: £2,522 in 2023; £2,213 in 2022 and £4,177 in 2021 (although £3,103 of this related to grants for purchase of the fruit press).

Income to cover increased costs from community ownership will be generated from:

Trading income:

	Income in Y1	Notes
Community events	£1,520	<p>We run a range of events – some are free, but others have a fundraising element.</p> <p>We have estimated 7 events in Year 1; with an average of 30 attendees plus peaks for particular events; and average donation per person of £4. We assume that direct costs for events will be 20% of income.</p> <p>These are averages only, and intended to reflect the diversity of events we run.</p>
Workshops	£1950	<p>As with events, these vary widely in content and formality.</p> <p>In Year 1, we estimate 8 events, with an average attendance of 12. The average price per workshop is £15.</p> <p>Direct costs for each workshop are £80 for a tutor; and £20 for materials.</p>

		These are averages and are intended to capture the diversity of the workshops.
Equipment hire	£390	A small income stream, based on 13 hires per year, with an average £30 donation per hire in Year 1.
Donations from plot holders	£500	£250 secured in 2023. This increase in future years with a more deliberative marketing plan for donations form visitors but it is still modest.
Sale of produce	£1000	We estimate £1,000 per year in sales. This is based on the growth over previous years - £1,033 in 2023; £650 in 2022; and £876 in 2020. Direct costs are £70 for kitchen hire; and £130 for labels / printing etc.
Total trading income	£2,736	

Fundraising and donations:

This includes:

- £1,500 donations. This is based on the growth over previous years, of £1,488 in 2023; £949 in 2022. We have included a larger marketing budget to support this.
- Modest revenue funding – i.e. small grants from local fundraisers. In practice, this could be exceeded.

Excluding capital funding (addressed below), this amounts to £7500 income from fundraising and donations in Year 1.

From Year 3, we have included revenue funding of circa £35,000 for a Green Health officer role – to develop social prescribing and wellbeing services. In the event that funding for this role cannot be secured, we will aim to take forward these services as best we can through volunteer effort, supported by our local partners. Existing services and wellbeing activity would carry on as at present.

Summary:

A summary of the 5 year financial projections is shown below. Note that the summary includes:

- Capital developments – described below. These are grant funded and if funding cannot be secured, we are able to continue our services without these.
- Revenue funding for a Green Health officer role, hence the peak in year three. Again, if funding cannot be secured, existing services and wellbeing activity would carry on as at present.

This shows that BCG breaks even, with a small surplus being built up over the 5 years shown. Full cash flows can be seen at appendix 1.

Summary					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Income					
<i>Trading</i>	£3,046	£4,173	£4,358	£4,453	£4,548
<i>Donations and Funding</i>	£79,641	£16,400	£52,500	£40,000	£40,000
Total	£82,687	£20,573	£56,858	£44,453	£44,548
% trading	4%	20%	8%	10%	10%
Expenditure					
<i>Salaries</i>	£0	£0	£31,650	£32,600	£33,577
<i>Running costs</i>	£7,710	£7,941	£8,172	£8,425	£8,678
<i>Capital development</i>	£72,121	£10,000	£15,000	£0	£0
Total	£79,831	£17,941	£54,822	£41,024	£42,255
Surplus/deficit	£2,856	£2,632	£2,036	£3,429	£2,293
Balance carried forward	£2,856	£5,488	£7,523	£10,952	£13,245

Signature

Two office-bearers (board members, charity trustees or committee members) of the community transfer body must sign the form. They must provide their full names and home addresses for the purposes of prevention and detection of fraud.

This form and supporting documents will be made available online for any interested person to read and comment on. Personal information will be redacted before the form is made available.

We, the undersigned on behalf of the community transfer body as noted at section 1, make an asset transfer request as specified in this form.

We declare that the information provided in this form and any accompanying documents is accurate to the best of our knowledge.

Name

Address

Date

Position

Signature

Name

Address

Date

Position

Signature

Checklist of accompanying documents

To check that nothing is missed, please list any documents which you are submitting to accompany this form.

Section 1 – you must attach your organisation’s constitution, articles of association or registered rules

Title of document attached:

Section 2 – any maps, drawings or description of the land requested

Documents attached:

Section 3 – note of any terms and conditions that are to apply to the request

Documents attached:

Section 4 – about your proposals, their benefits, any restrictions on the land or potential negative consequences, and your organisation’s capacity to deliver.

Documents attached:

Section 5 – evidence of community support

Documents attached:

Section 6 – funding

Documents attached: