

FOOD GROWING INITIATIVE WITHIN FORTH WARD

1 Background

- 1.1 The priority for sufficient allotment space in Edinburgh has been the catalyst to assess the suitability of a number of green spaces within Wardieburn for food growing.
- 1.2 The Councils Allotment Strategy has an action to identify potential allotment sites through an audit of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land, which this piece of work contributes towards.
- 1.3 Edinburgh's allotment waiting list is at 2,367 for just 1,233 council plots, meaning it takes at least four years to get a plot.
- 1.4 The legal definition of the size of an allotment is 30 poles, or 10 x 30 metres. This was deemed sufficient to feed a plot holder and family of four with potatoes and vegetables plus a few fruits for a whole year. The average size in Edinburgh is 20 poles, or 10 x 20 metres.
- 1.5 The integration of allotments into public areas will challenge assumptions as to the best use for public open green spaces and will need to be handled carefully with full consultation of all stakeholders. The support and collaboration of users and local communities will be crucial to the success of new sites and effective communication will be required to promote the wider community and wildlife benefits of allotment sites.
- 1.6 Opportunities for community gardening are also promoted within the Allotments Strategy to provide alternative methods of food growing.
- 1.7 The use of the skills and knowledge of established organisations such as the Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association (ECBA) may be beneficial in the regeneration of back greens to improve the amenity and environmental sustainability of community growing initiatives. ECBA have already supported residents to establish 13 community gardens across the city.
- 1.8 Providing some training or support to new plot holders may be worth considering and work with other allotment holders, training providers (such as Oatridge Agricultural College) or training sessions at the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society demonstration plot at Bridgend may be helpful in developing skills in food growing at new sites.
- 1.9 Some sites may provide opportunity for a range of food growing styles such as allotment plots, community garden area and orchard/fruit growing areas or be best suited to a single style of food growing, which will be explored through consultation.

2 Project

- 2.1 This summary of public consultation has been prepared for the Forth Neighbourhood Partnership Clean, Green and Safe Action Group to assist with discussions around the food growing initiative within the ward initiated by Cllr Elaine Morris.
- 2.2 The Council's Allotment Officer assessed a number of potential sites in November 2009. This identified 13 sites that could be considered for further consultation regarding use for food growing. A list of the areas that were identified are included below and were suggested at the December 2009 meeting of the Forth Clean, Green and Safe Action Group meeting.



Site list

- 1 Granton Medway North
- 2 Granton Medway South
- 3 Granton Crescent Park East
- 4 Wardieburn Road (behind number 1)
- 5 Wardieburn Road (behind number 2)
- 6 Wardieburn Road (behind number 15)
- 7 Wardieburn Street West (behind number 1)
- 8 Wardieburn Street West (behind number 7)
- 9 Wardieburn Place North
- 10 Wardieburn Place South
- 11 Wardieburn Place East (behind number 14)
- 12 Wardieburn Place East (behind number 8)
- 13 Granton Primary School

- 2.3 The project establishes the principle that local residents on the allotment waiting list are given first refusal on any new plots provided.
- 2.4 An analysis of those on the waiting list in the Wardieburn and surrounding areas, taking into consideration Wardieburn, Royston, Granton, Pilton and Crewe area has identified 18 local residents interested in having an allotment, broken down as follows.

- Crewe Road North and Gardens 4
- Granton Crescent, Medway and Place 6
- Pilton Gardens 4
- Royston Mains Crescent 1
- Wardieburn 3

3 Initial site survey

- 3.1 Recommendations from the initial survey suggested that sites suited different styles of food growing initiative from orchards, raised beds, to community gardens and allotments or a combination of these.
- 3.2 Sites 2, 9, 10 and 11 were deemed to be most suited to being turned into orchard planted with a range of fruit and nut trees and shrubs. Reasons for this include sites that had a sloping topography or would require significant earthwork to create a level site for other initiatives.
- 3.3 Raised beds could be considered for the site 13, as they can be easily installed over the existing tarmac surface so that the school children can fully utilise some of the space for food growing. Easy access to growing food within the school grounds would help to encourage understanding of local food produce and education around the importance of fruit and vegetables in the diet. Raised beds can be easily included in other sites too.
- 3.4 Community gardens can be included in sites where allotments may not be suitable or included as part of a larger site accommodating other food growing initiatives. Sites that could include community gardens are 3, 9, 10 and 11. Issues with topography exist on these sites, allotment use is not ruled out but significant work would be required to make the whole area of each site suitable.
- 3.5 Allotment plots could be provided on many of the small sites as already mentioned but the following sites were deemed to have some or all of the site suitable at the outset; sites 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- 3.6 Site 12 was not suitable for any food growing initiative as it is currently used a drying green.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 The consultation consisted of door to door visits with residences immediately surrounding sites 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11.
- 4.2 Other sites were not consulted on at this stage due to issues over ownership and boundaries as a number of the properties in the blocks were private. Of those sites that may be suitable for allotments or community gardens this affected sites 8 and 10. Site 1 only part could be considered for any food growing initiative. Site 3 is part of the park site and could be considered for allotment use but the topography of the site could be problematic.
- 4.3 Copies of the questionnaire were left with residents who were not at home at the time of the visit to complete and return. Results include all returns. A copy of the questionnaire used is provided in Appendix 1.

Residents were asked:

- to consider whether they support plots being used as food growing areas and we will suggest a range of options such as allotments, community food growing, orchards, etc.
- to consider whether they would want to be involved in food growing if sites are available locally
- to provide information on other improvements they would deem appropriate especially if they are not supportive of the food growing project.
- if there are other areas not on the list that could be considered for food growing.
- if they would want to be involved in future discussions and provide contact information so that we can keep them informed of progress.

4.4 A summary of all results follows in section 4 and then individual site results are also included in Appendix 2.

5. Overall results from the consultation

5.1 In total 402 properties were consulted and 80 responses were returned (20% return).

5.2 A summary of all responses is as follows:

- 56% of respondents were in favour of food growing initiatives (45 out of 80 responses)
- Of the 56% of respondents who answered in favour of food growing:
 - The order of preference of food growing initiative was allotments (22), community gardens (21) and orchards (13).
- 64% of respondents would be willing to pay for growing food locally (29 out of 45 responses)
- 60% of respondents would be willing to get involved in this or any other food growing initiative (27 out of 45 responses)
- The order of issues affecting the project were vandalism (30), maintenance of area (16), awareness of project (3), growing skills (3). No one selected cooking skills.
- The two main improvements to make to the areas by those not supportive of the food growing initiative were to maintain areas better (16) and provide more for young people (15). Only 2 respondents wanted their area left as it was.

6 Options

6.1 The development of allotments or community gardens can be approached in different ways but the basic requirements are the same when creating new sites:

- Soil conditions – pH tests and other assessments need to be carried out to assess suitability for growing.

- Security – 2m high fencing is used to secure sites and limit potential for vandalism.
- Access – all new sites need to be accessible and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 compliant. Paths and access are important and some consideration for vehicular access may be required for deliveries of materials etc.
- Plot size – Standard full and half allotment plots would be considered for new sites, and where appropriate raised beds or other community designed layouts could be considered.
- Storage facilities – communal storage sheds or individual sheds or storage facilities should be considered.
- Water provision or conservation – some sites may need water to be provided or sufficient containers to capture water to be used.
- Composting – sites should allow for on site composting, storage of mulch and wood chip.

6.2 There are upfront costs with working with organisations, such as Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association, but it is possible to make sites self-sustaining over a few years that would allow local residents to use areas for growing but not generate an income from plot rentals for the Council. This may still be an option where sites are deemed to be unsuitable for allotment use and considering community gardening initiatives may be appropriate.

6.3 The following table gives rough measurements of area, perimeter and potential number of allotment plots that could be considered on each site if they were ideal candidates* (although exact configuration on sites may result in changes to numbers and is therefore purely indicative). Allotment plots are based on Edinburgh's average size. Also included is those sites that have been consulted and whether allotment (or community garden use) has been supported or not (initial site survey advice taking precedence over community consultation).

Site	Area (m2)	Perimeter (linear m)	Potential number of full allotment plots*	Consulted	Suitable for use as allotment or community gardens
1	1,250	165	(4)		?
2	3,593	800	(7)		N
3	3,823	424	11		Y
4	756	227	2	Y	Y
5	513	121	1	Y	Y
6	349	100	1	Y	Y
7	560	122	1	Y	Y
8	843	147	(3)		? land ownership
9	1,031	146	(4)	Y	N
10	1,053	146	(4)		N
11	483	105	(2)	Y	N
12	1,299	150	(4)		N
13	1,484	163	6		Y
Totals	17,037	2,816	22 suitable out of 50	6 sites	6 sites

7 Costs and budgets

- 7.1 The Council currently commits around £60,000 a year on managing and upkeep of its allotments. Of this figure £45,750 is recovered in rents. Appendix 3 shows the proposals for rental increases over the next 5 years. The rental would be requested only from allotment holders if sites are developed in this style.
- 7.2 It is estimated that it costs approximately £2,500 per plot for the creation of a new allotment site. Capital resources, along with external funding, will be required to enable the creation of any new allotment sites. Funding from the Mushroom Trust, Neighbourhood Environment Programme and other sources should be considered.
- 7.3 Working with organisations such as Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association will incur costs depending on what is required to develop individual sites.

8 Project progression

- 8.1 The Forth Clean Green and Safe Action Group will be presented with this paper at its October 2010 meeting for discussion with a view to make recommendations to the Forth Neighbourhood Partnership.
- 8.2 The Forth Clean, Green and Safe Action Group will be asked to consider:
- a) which sites should be considered for allotments
 - b) whether progression of community gardening and orchards should be considered
 - c) propose that sites agreed above are taken forward for detailed design layouts and accurately costed.
 - d) Any other items that are to be considered



**Community Consultation
Food Growing Initiative**



1 Do you think the open space could be developed for food growing?
 Yes (go to Question 2) No (go to Question 9)

2 Which of the following food growing styles would you prefer to see?
 Allotment (where people have individual plots that they care for)
 Community Garden (where people share plots to grow food)
 Orchard (where trees and shrubs that bear fruit or nuts are planted)

3 Would you be willing to pay to grow food locally?
 Yes No

4 Would you be willing to get involved in this or any other food growing initiatives?
 Yes No

5 Are there any other areas locally you think could be used for growing food?
.....
.....

6 Are there any issues created by having a food growing initiative that you think should be taken into consideration?
 Growing skills Vandalism/Theft/Damage
 Cooking skills Awareness of project
 Maintenance of area Other

7 Are there any other environmental improvements you would like to see locally?

8 Please provide your details so that we can keep you informed:

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Telephone number:

Only complete this question if the resident answered "No" at Question 1

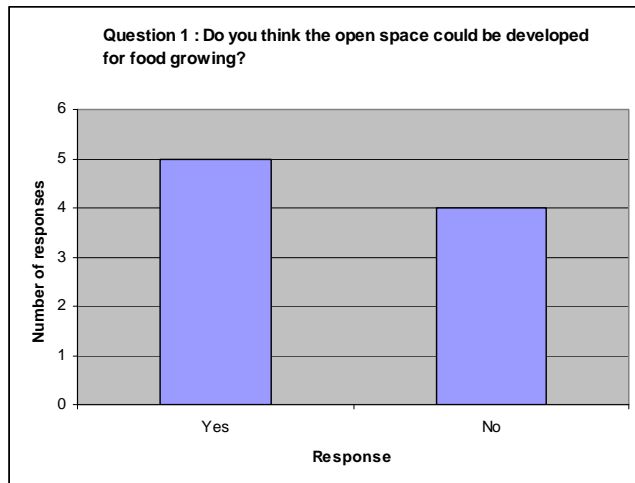
9 How would you like to see the area improved if it is not suitable for food growing?

- Leave as it is
- Plant more trees and shrubs
- Maintain it better
- Provide more for young children
- Other

Thank you for your time

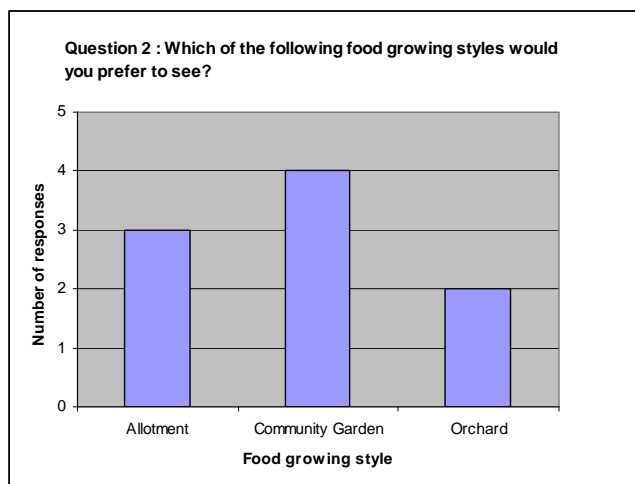
Site 4 - Wardieburn Road (behind number 1)

78 properties were included in the consultation. 9 questionnaires were completed (11% return)

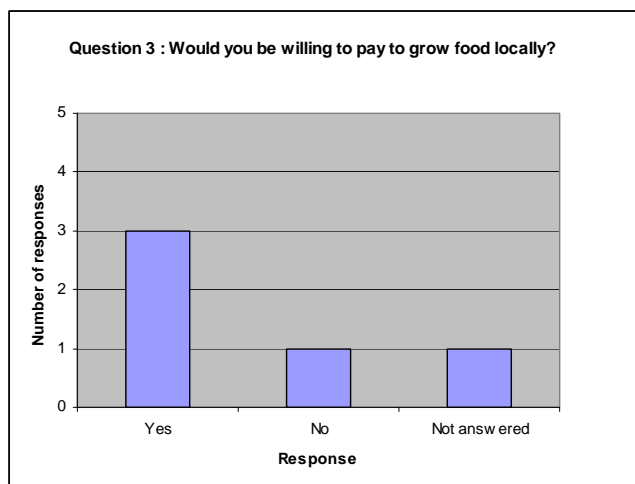


Those who answered yes to Question 1 completed all questions (except Question 9); those who answered no to Question 1 skipped all questions except Question 9.

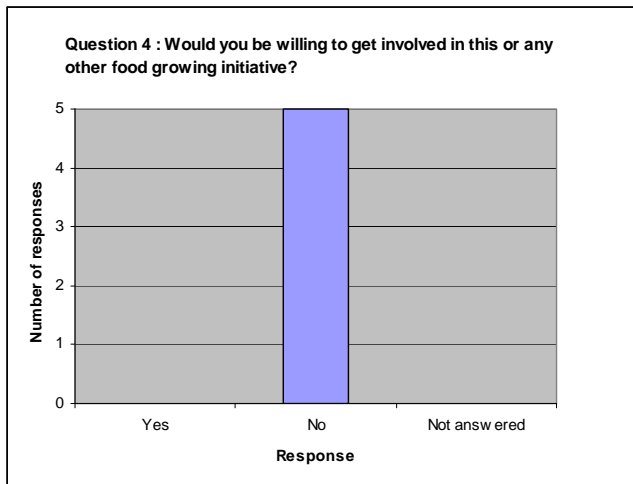
5 residents agreed to see the site developed for food growing, 4 said they did not.



Residents could pick any response. The cumulative results show slightly more support for community garden style, then allotments, then orchard.



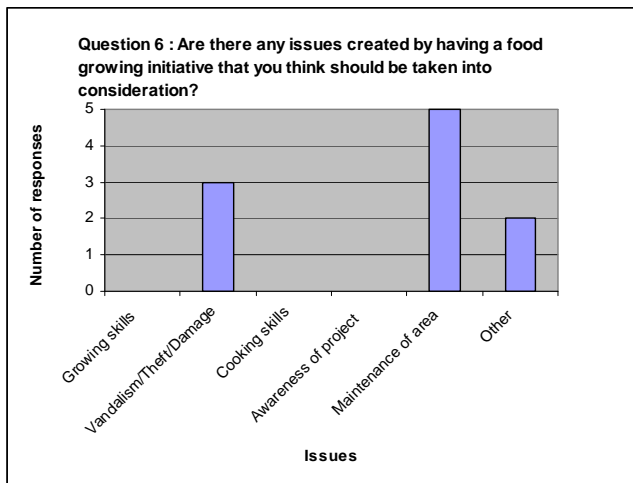
Over half of the five residents in favour of food growing initiatives were happy to pay to grow food locally.



The 5 residents who were happy to see the area used for food growing initiatives, none of them were willing to get involved.

Question 5 asked if there are any other areas locally you think could be used for food growing.

No other sites were suggested.



The results show the cumulative amount of issues raised by residents in favour of food growing initiatives. The maintenance of the area was the most suggested issue that should be taken into consideration.

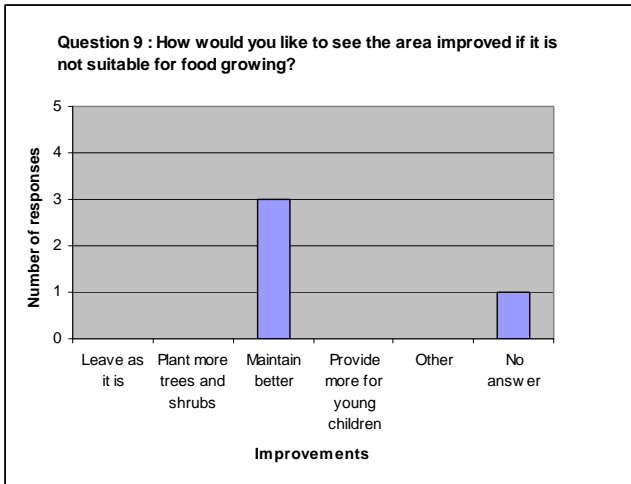
Two other issues were raised and related to dog fouling concerns.

Question 7 asked if there are any other environmental improvements that you would like to see locally.

1 resident referred to improved cleanliness of the area; another to new pavements, maintain the area better and more regular inspections; and one referred to dealing with dog fouling.

Question 8 asked for contact details.

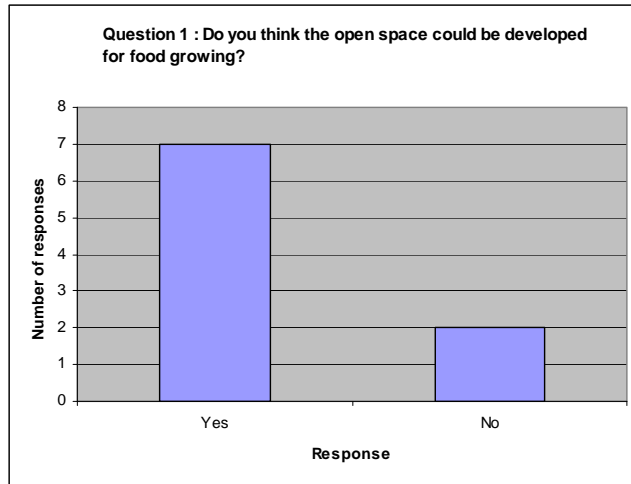
8 replies were completed.



This question was completed by residents who replied “no” to Question 1. The main improvement suggested for the site was to have it maintained better.

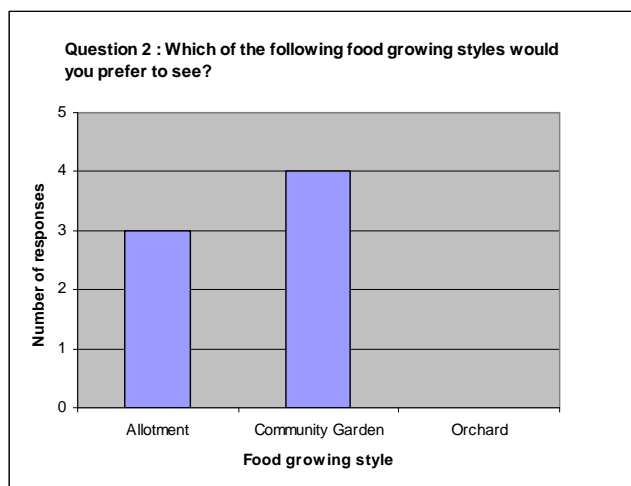
Site 5 - Wardieburn Road (behind number 2)

72 properties were included in the consultation. 9 questionnaires were completed (12.5% return)



Those who answered yes to Question 1 completed all questions (except Question 9); those who answered no to Question 1 skipped all questions except Question 9.

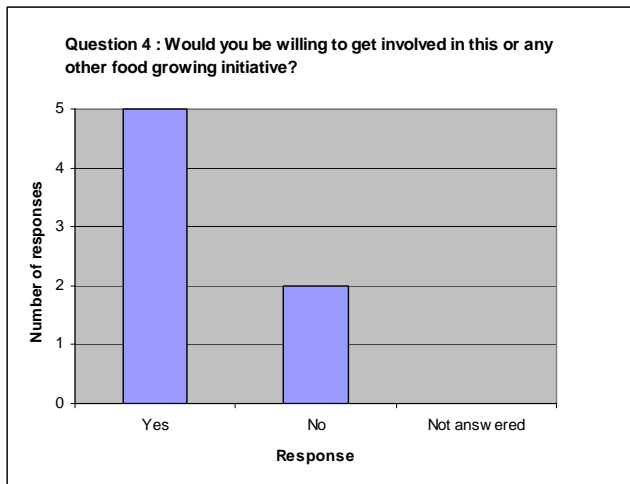
7 residents agreed to see the site developed for food growing, 4 said they did not.



Residents could pick any response. The cumulative results show slightly more support for community garden style, then allotments but no support for an orchard.



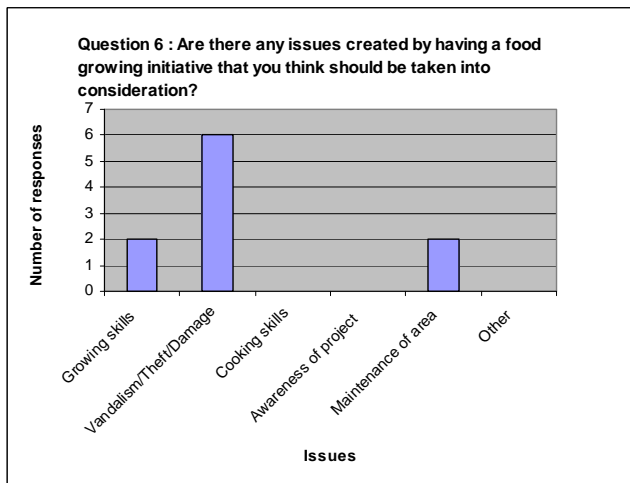
71% of residents in favour of food growing initiatives were happy to pay to grow food locally.



71% of residents who were happy to see the area used for food growing initiatives were willing to get involved in this or any other food growing initiatives.

Question 5 asked if there are any other areas locally you think could be used for food growing.

No other sites were suggested.



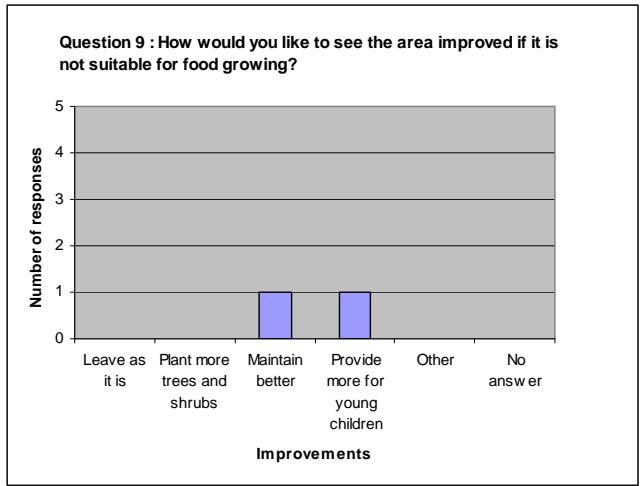
The results show the cumulative amount of issues raised by residents in favour of food growing initiatives. Problems associated with vandalism, theft and damage was the most suggested issue that should be taken into consideration.

Question 7 asked if there are any other environmental improvements that you would like to see locally.

No other improvements were suggested.

Question 8 asked for contact details.

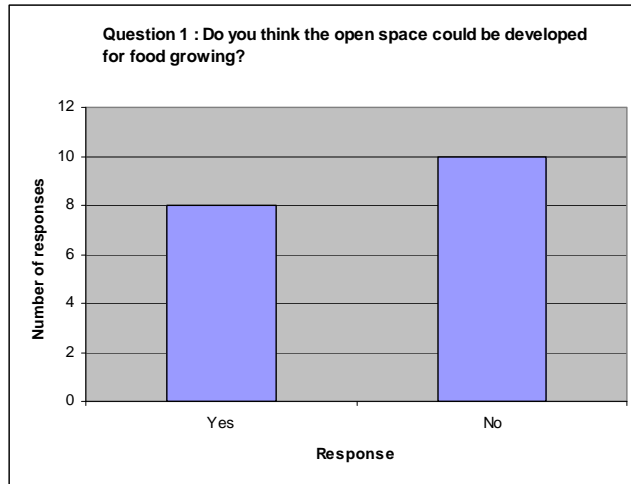
9 replies were completed.



This question was completed by residents who replied “no” to Question 1. The only improvements suggested for the site was to have it maintained better and provide more for young children.

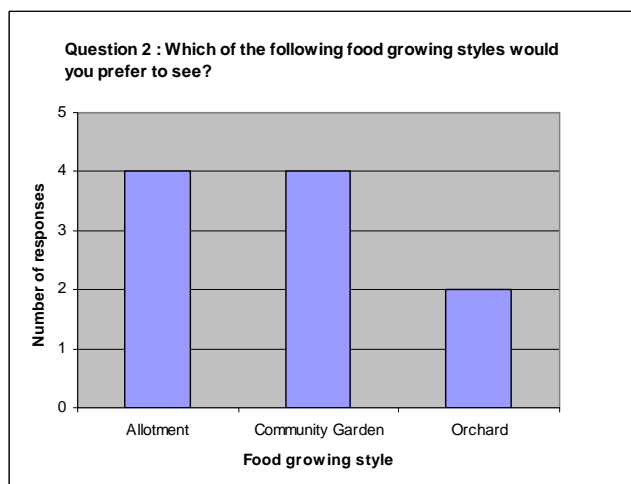
Site 6 - Wardieburn Road (behind number 15)

72 properties were included in the consultation. 18 questionnaires were completed (25% return)

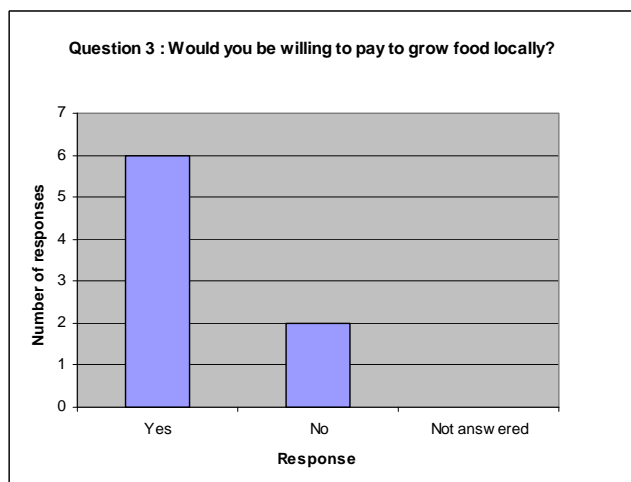


Those who answered yes to Question 1 completed all questions (except Question 9); those who answered no to Question 1 skipped all questions except Question 9.

8 residents agreed to see the site developed for food growing, 10 said they did not.



Residents could pick any response. The cumulative results show more support for community garden and allotments than use as an orchard.



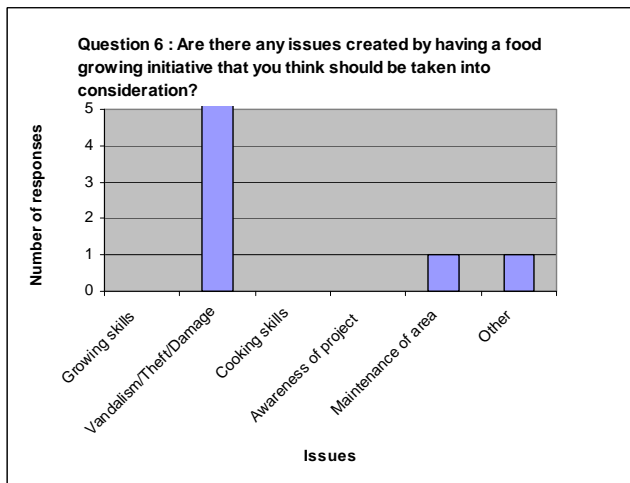
75% of residents in favour of food growing initiatives were happy to pay to grow food locally.



100% of residents who were happy to see the area used for food growing initiatives were willing to get involved in this or any other food growing initiatives.

Question 5 asked if there are any other areas locally you think could be used for food growing.

2 respondents mentioned back greens in general.



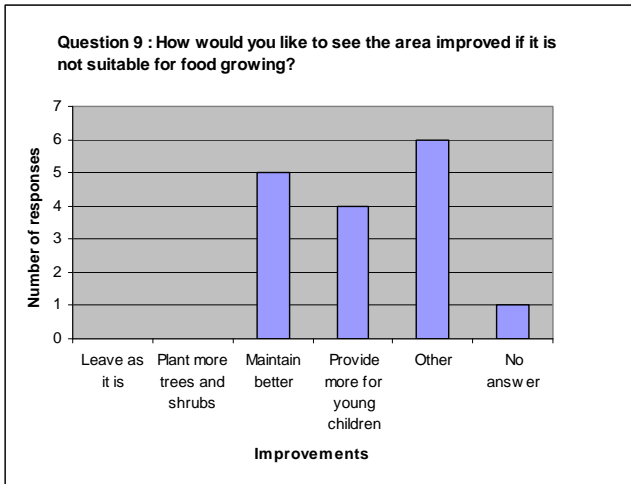
The results show the cumulative amount of issues raised by residents in favour of food growing initiatives. Problems associated with vandalism were the most suggested issue that should be taken into consideration. One resident made comments about dogs and cats being an issue.

Question 7 asked if there are any other environmental improvements that you would like to see locally.

One resident mentioned issues with dog fouling, unruly children, storage space for gardening implements and having one large green area; three residents mentioned dog fouling; one resident mentioned dog fouling, bins, provision of dog waste bags at community outlets and improve visibility of community wardens; one resident asked for more recycling points.

Question 8 asked for contact details.

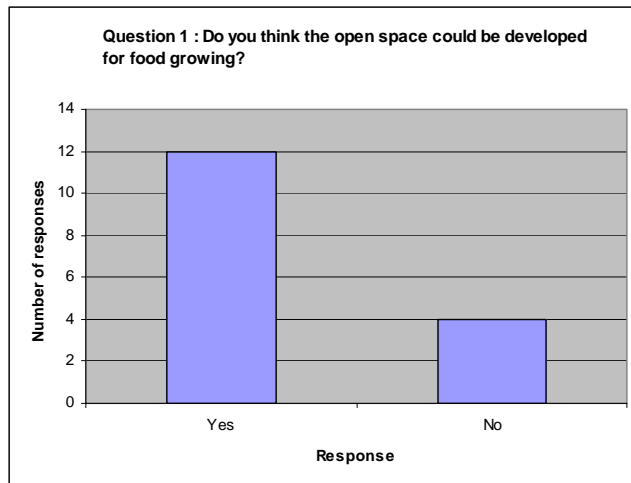
18 replies were completed.



This question was completed by residents who replied “no” to Question 1. Having the site maintained better, provide more for young children, and other selected as improvements. Those selecting other suggested: generally tidier, increased security, benches (2 residents), ban dogs, grass for communal area.

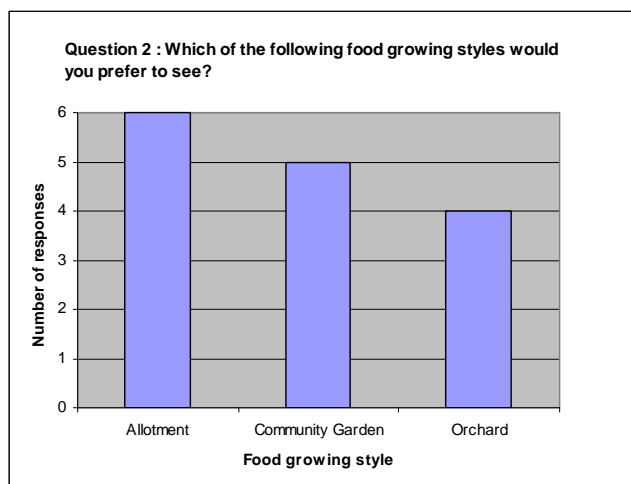
Site 7 - Wardieburn Street West (behind number 1)

64 properties were included in the consultation. 16 questionnaires were completed (25% return)



Those who answered yes to Question 1 completed all questions (except Question 9); those who answered no to Question 1 skipped all questions except Question 9.

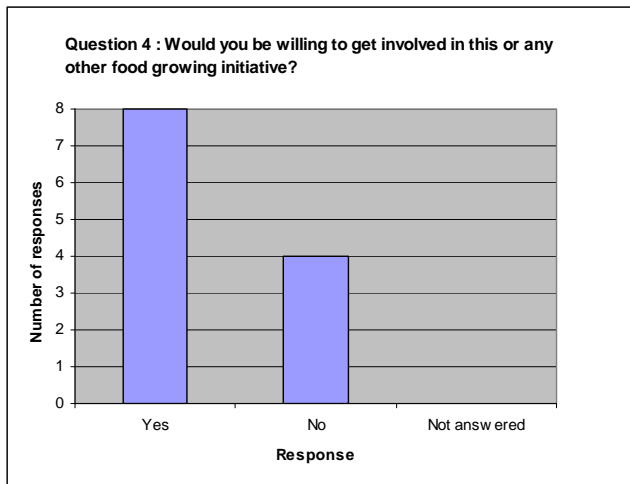
12 residents agreed to see the site developed for food growing, 4 said they did not.



Residents could pick any response. The cumulative results show slightly more support for allotments than community gardens. The use as an orchard was least popular.



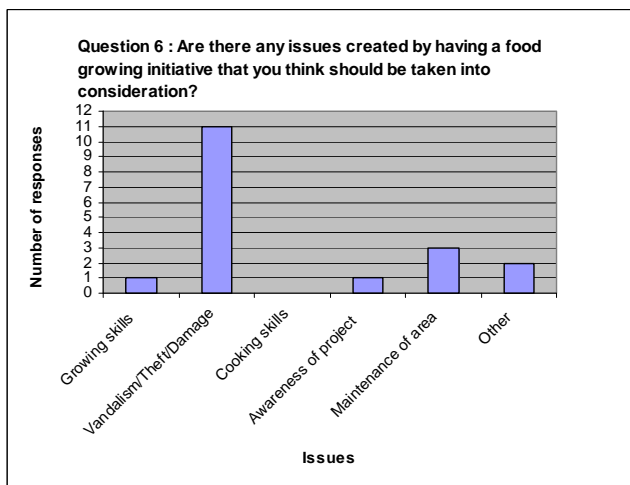
66% of residents in favour of food growing initiatives were happy to pay to grow food locally.



66% of residents who were happy to see the area used for food growing initiatives were willing to get involved in this or any other food growing initiatives.

Question 5 asked if there are any other areas locally you think could be used for food growing.

1 response green space Wardieburn Street West, 1 mentioned Granton hill, 1 mentioned sides of blocks and surrounding communal areas, 1 resident mentioned shared garden areas, another mentioned any back greens.



The results show the cumulative amount of issues raised by residents in favour of food growing initiatives. Problems associated with vandalism were the most suggested issue that should be taken into consideration. One resident made comments about disagreement over who owns what, another mentioned a training scheme.

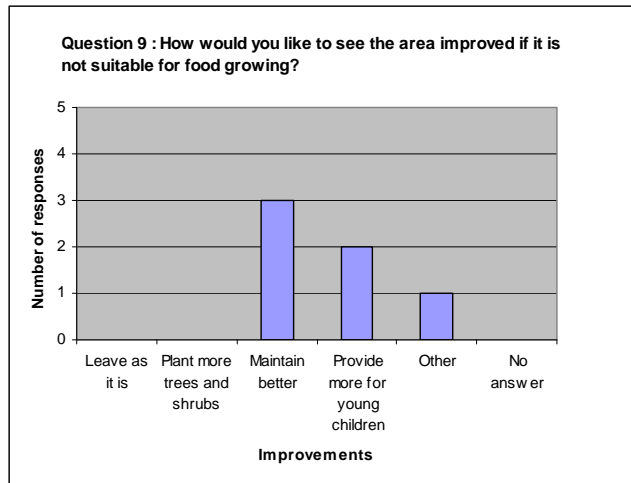
Question 7 asked if there are any other environmental improvements that you would like to see locally.

One resident mentioned issues with maintenance of back greens, one mentioned dog fouling and young people drinking, four mentioned dog fouling, one mentioned people taking care of their gardens, one mentioned bee hives and greenhouses/polytunnels, one mentioned more accessible recycling facilities for incapable, one mentioned cleaner/less

rubbish, one mentioned more plants.

Question 8 asked for contact details.

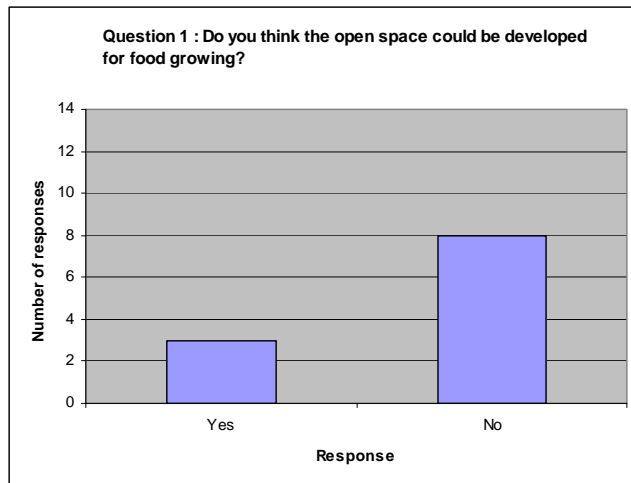
16 replies were completed.



This question was completed by residents who replied “no” to Question 1. Having the site maintained better, provide more for young children, and other selected as improvements. One resident selecting other suggested the area should be kept tidy.

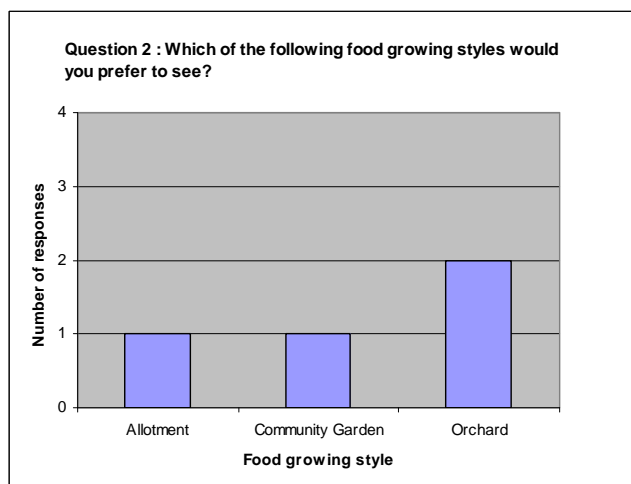
Site 9 - Wardieburn Place North

64 properties were included in the consultation. 11 questionnaires were completed (17% return)

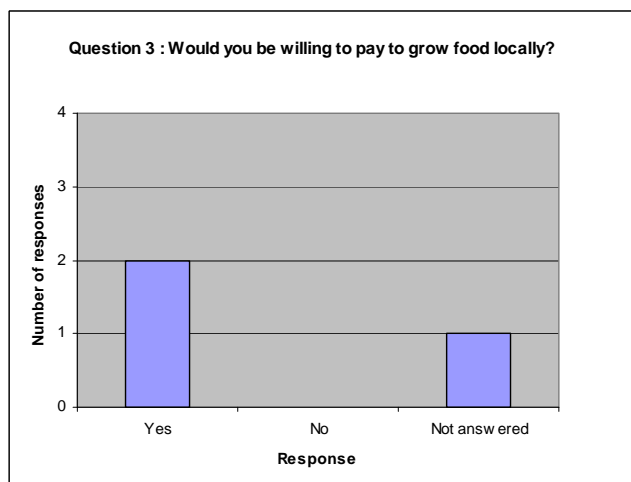


Those who answered yes to Question 1 completed all questions (except Question 9); those who answered no to Question 1 skipped all questions except Question 9.

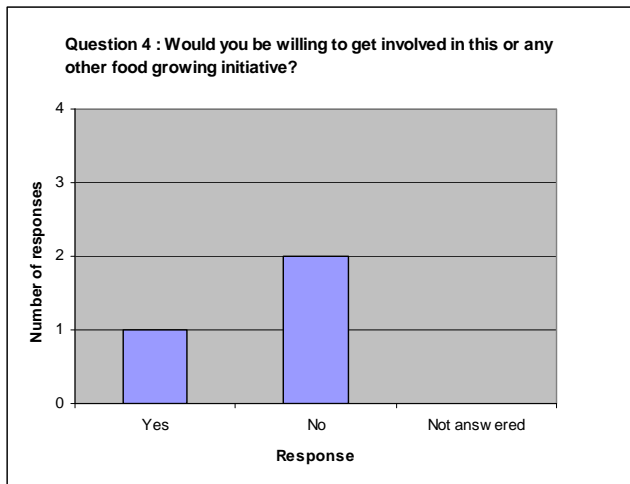
3 residents agreed to see the site developed for food growing, 11 said they did not.



Residents could pick any response. The cumulative results show slightly more support for use as an orchard than other uses.



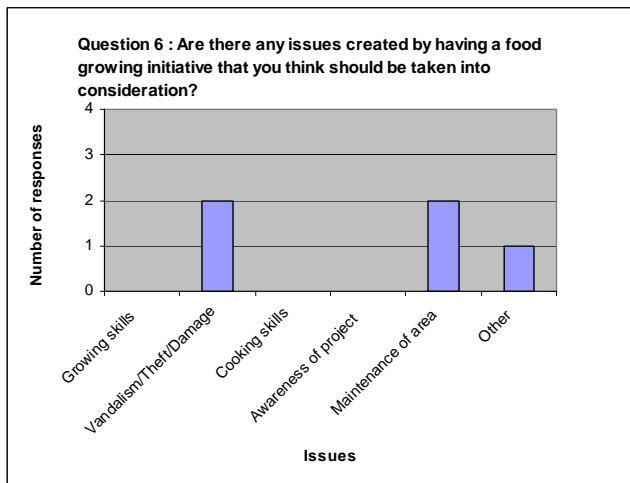
66% of residents in favour of food growing initiatives were happy to pay to grow food locally.



33% of residents who were happy to see the area used for food growing initiatives were willing to get involved in this or any other food growing initiatives.

Question 5 asked if there are any other areas locally you think could be used for food growing.

No responses.



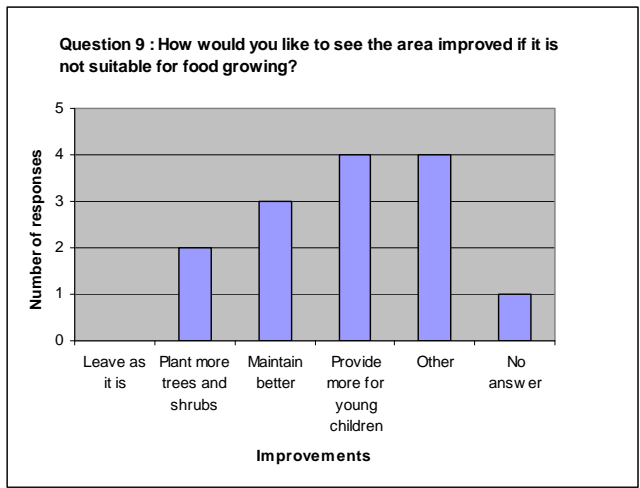
The results show the cumulative amount of issues raised by residents in favour of food growing initiatives. Problems associated with vandalism and maintenance of the area were the most suggested issues that should be taken into consideration. One resident made comments about dog fouling issues.

Question 7 asked if there are any other environmental improvements that you would like to see locally.

Two responses made reference to more for children (secure play area).

Question 8 asked for contact details.

9 replies were completed.

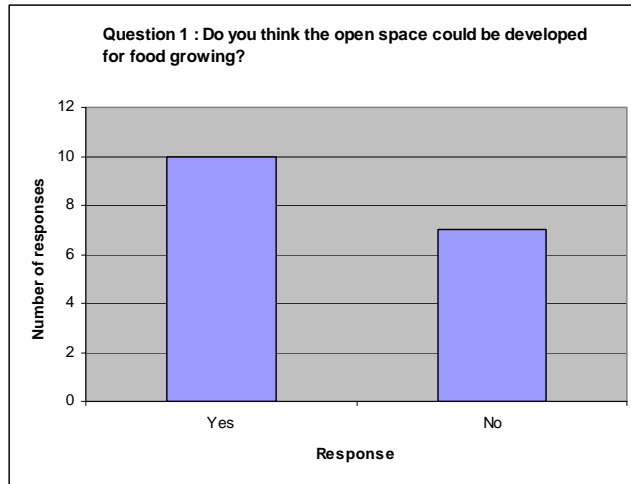


This question was completed by residents who replied “no” to Question 1. Providing more for young children and other selected as improvements.

Those residents selecting other suggested the area should be used more often, four residents were concerned about vandalism.

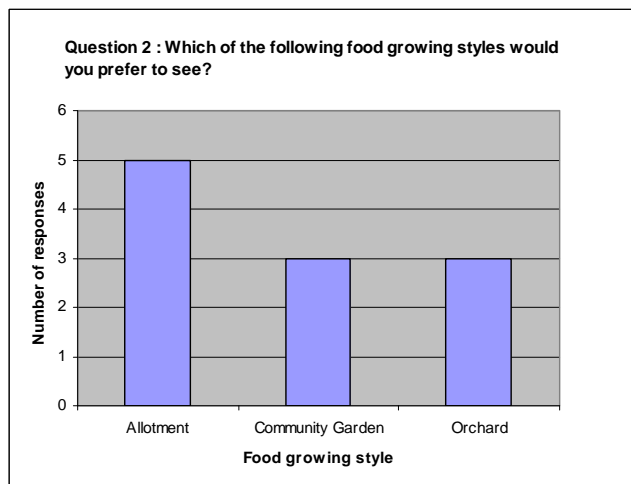
Site 11 - Wardieburn Place East (behind number 14)

52 properties were included in the consultation. 17 questionnaires were completed (33% return)

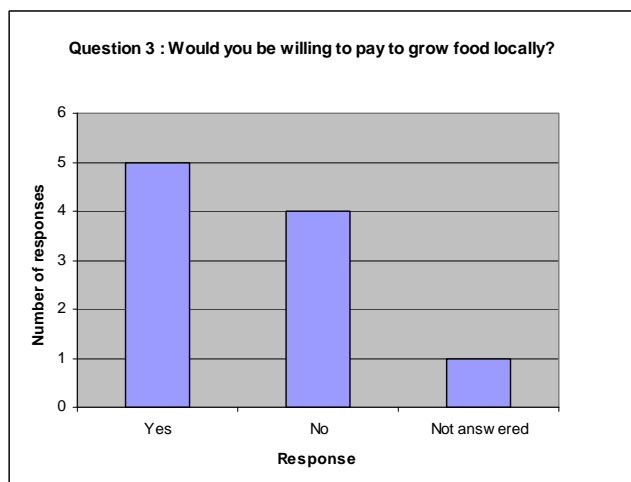


Those who answered yes to Question 1 completed all questions (except Question 9); those who answered no to Question 1 skipped all questions except Question 9.

10 residents agreed to see the site developed for food growing, 7 said they did not.



Residents could pick any response. The cumulative results show slightly more support for use as an allotment than other uses.



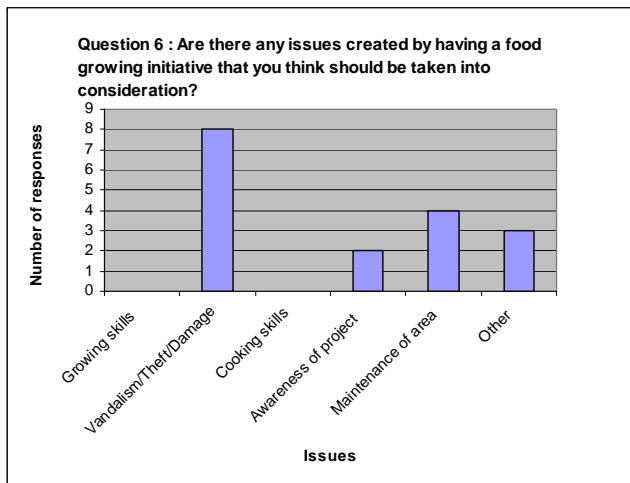
50% of residents in favour of food growing initiatives were happy to pay to grow food locally.



50% of residents who were happy to see the area used for food growing initiatives were willing to get involved in this or any other food growing initiatives.

Question 5 asked if there are any other areas locally you think could be used for food growing.

One response suggested greenspaces at corner of blocks.



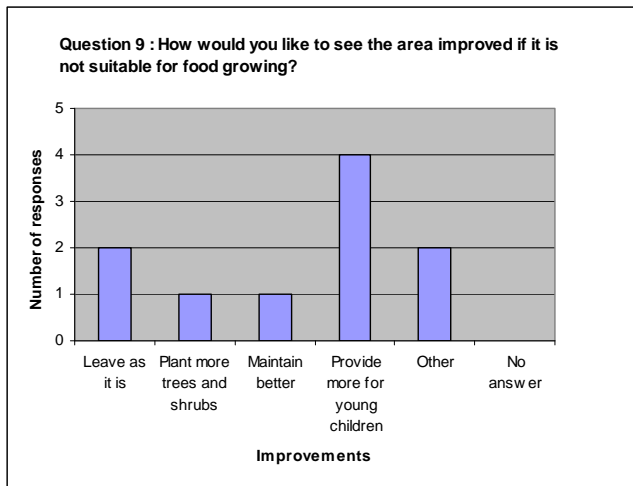
The results show the cumulative amount of issues raised by residents in favour of food growing initiatives. Problems associated with vandalism and maintenance of the area were the most suggested issues that should be taken into consideration. One resident made comments about dog fouling issues.

Question 7 asked if there are any other environmental improvements that you would like to see locally.

Responses made reference to dog fouling issues (3 responses) and more trees and plants (3 responses) and one response mentioned recycling units at corner plots.

Question 8 asked for contact details.

15 replies were completed.



This question was completed by residents who replied “no” to Question 1. Providing more for young children and other selected as improvements.

Those residents selecting other suggested the area should provide more for young people. One response asked for better fencing and one suggested that more garden space should be provided from the back green.

Appendix 3

Proposed allotment plot increases in rent for the next five years.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Full plot	70	80	90	100	100
Full plot with concession	35	40	45	50	50
Half plot	35	40	45	50	50
Half plot with concession	17.5	20	20	25	25