

# Generations Growing Together

## Intergenerational Neighbourhood Growing Areas



Together We Inspire!



# Generations Growing Together Toolkit

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## 1. Introduction to Generations Growing Together

More than ever, allotments are playing a vital role in connecting people to the process of food production and healthy eating, enabling them to grow fresh, cheap food whilst reducing food miles. They provide valuable urban green space and wildlife habitats. It is a century since the Allotment Acts were passed, but they continue to provide pleasure and benefits to their communities.

Everyone benefits from allotments and there is a rising demand, as well as many different pressures on space in our communities.

The objective of Generations Growing Together is simple, introduce and develop an intergenerational approach to social activities, actively encourage the ‘breaking down’ of barriers and challenge negative stereotypes and behaviour.

Intergenerational activities can actively demonstrate that older and younger generations have a great deal to offer each other in terms of knowledge and experience. It can also demonstrate that most young people are in fact knowledgeable, respectful and well behaved when engaged with older generations, contrary to common depictions in the media.

Age UK believe that “encouraging intergenerational positive contact may be the key way of tackling ageism against people of any age” and can also be hugely beneficial for building more cohesive communities.

Generations Growing Together has the opportunity to;

- Introduce people to new activities
- Navigate and signpost to information and advice points
- Support the transference of key skills and knowledge between young and old on gardening and other subjects such as photography and digital technology
- Promote team work across the generations
- Increase the feeling of wellbeing and the sense of achievement
- Reduce stereotypical barriers
- Encourage the forging of new bonds & friendships

**Together we INSPIRE!**

## 2. Background

In 2009 Central Government announced their plan to release funding to encourage young and old people to volunteer together. Twelve Projects around the country were successful in grant funding; unfortunately Essex County Council (ECC) was not however is still committed to delivering new ground breaking services. It was agreed, therefore, that ECC should develop a project to run alongside and directly compliment the Generations Together initiative, thus Generations Growing Together was born.

In addition to this, Essex County Council wants Essex to be a great place to live where people can realise their potential in safe and prosperous communities and the Essex Strategy, agreed by the public authorities within the Essex County Council area, sets out our ambition for the County. Our priorities for 2010/2011 are outlined in the *EssexWorks* Pledges, number two is - *We will increase opportunities for residents to adopt a healthier diet and to undertake more physical activity, in partnership with the NHS and District and Borough Councils* and Pledge number six is – *Promote the establishment of a new generation of community orchards and allotments in Essex.*

The Community Wellbeing Strategy seeks ‘To encourage and support individuals and groups to take responsibility and action to improve their health and wellbeing’, encouraging partners to consider the impact of wellbeing, maximise collaborative working and develop joined up responses.

The ‘Generations Growing Together’ project provides an exciting opportunity to combine these strategies, and compliments the Governments initiative. It enables an excellent basis for improving health and wellbeing within the County and encouraging intergenerational volunteering on equal terms in a bid to break down generation barriers.

### 3. Work Involved

The work involved varies depending on the location of the allotment, its soil type and whether it is an on going concern or a new venture. Many allotments became neglected in the last twenty years or so as people chose supermarket convenience over the benefits of fresh, local food. If this is the case then the allotment may need preparatory work such as clearing out rubbish and undergrowth, creating planting beds, building paths and erecting sheds and shelters.

However, each site that Generations Growing Together is working with is surveyed to ensure that attention is paid to the needs of the community. Many physically and sensory impaired people are keen to get involved so we encourage community paths and planting areas to be wheelchair accessible where possible and have raised planting beds making it easier to use for elderly members and children. They will also provide ample seating areas, weather shelters and have amenities within easy reach.

Each community allotment has its own approaches but members will generally allocate tasks and draw up a rota. Maintaining an allotment requires a lot of time and labour throughout the year. Members can join in with digging, planting, weeding, watering or landscaping in whichever areas their skills and abilities best suit them. The idea behind a community allotment is that everyone joins in, young and old, and contributes what they can, which doesn't have to be the same for each person.

### 4. Benefits

Volunteers feel part of a team and can enjoy working together to achieve their goals. Retired people, young people, physically and sensory impaired people, children can all pool their skills with practical results, work outdoors in the fresh air and enjoy being a part of nature and the environment.

There is the chance to learn more about community gardening from more experienced horticulturalists. Encourage native wild flowers and plants to grow and learn about local wildlife. It is a green space for everyone to enjoy including those who have no gardens, plus all of this helps to increase a sense of community.

Above all it provides an opportunity to grow healthy, fresh organic produce. Volunteers can grow traditional British varieties such as apples, potatoes and carrots as well as more exotic vegetables. It helps the environment by saving on food air miles. Recycling with home compost is environmentally friendly too.

It enables people to grow their own food cheaply. Allotments are often rented from the local council who are usually very supportive. Memberships vary but are usually low, in the region of a few pounds. Members can grow more expensive vegetables such as artichoke and asparagus for a low cost. The combined resources of membership often mean that seeds, bulbs, fertiliser and even equipment can be sourced more cheaply than if bought individually. In addition allotments can be run as a social enterprise with produce sold to fund local charities and good causes.

ECC is working alongside Professor Jules Pretty and the University of Essex. Prof. Pretty is researching the effects of 'Green Exercise' namely physical and outdoor activity on health and wellbeing.

To learn more about this visit the web link in section 7 Useful Links (pg 9).

## 5. Informal Learning and Skills Sharing

Informal learning is learning for its own intrinsic value and encompasses a huge variety of activity which can take place almost anywhere, allotments included.

Although informal learning can be a good way of developing work related skills in this instance it is primarily focussed towards part-time, non-vocational learning where the purpose isn't necessarily to gain academic qualification and can be as simple as intergenerational skill sharing.

Many people participate for enjoyment and are driven by the desire for personal fulfilment and intellectual, creative physical stimulation. Learning also helps

develop vibrant, cohesive and socially inclusive communities, improving strength, health and wellbeing and building confidence and resilience. The social relationships that develop can provide networks of support and solidarity. For people who are low skilled or less confident, informal learning can provide an important stepping stone towards further learning and new skills.

Informal learning can, at its best transform peoples lives. Whether its personal fulfilment, keeping active and independent into older age, gaining increased confidence or opening a door to future opportunities, informal learning contributes hugely to health and wellbeing of individuals and wider society. It also impacts positively on mental wellbeing.

Informal learning within this type of environment doesn't need to be solely focussed upon gardening there are various activities that might be incorporated such as;

- **Photography and Digital Technology** – learn how to use digital cameras, how to upload your photographs on to a pc and then how to print them off
- **Web page design** – learn how to set up your own web site or weblog where you can talk about your own projects and inform people on your allotments progress
- **Carpentry** – learn about building new structures, sheds, raised gardening beds etc.
- **Exterior Design & Landscaping** – learn how to sculpt the landscape around you
- **Apple Pressing** – learn the age old technique of apple pressing
- **Cookery & Bread Making** – learn more about cooking the food you have grown, enjoy BBQs with your contemporaries and build an oven in the ground and bake your own bread
- **Art sessions** – learn about painting and drawing and even get involved
- **Reminiscence activities** – learn more about the local history of your area, how do the different generations remember it?
- **Grow exotic plants and vegetables** – broaden your horizons and diversify yourself by learning about vegetables and foods eaten by other cultures and how to grow and them in our climate. You can then learn new ways of cooking the food you have grown.

Share your skills with others, young or old and learn new and exciting skills in exchange, you never know you might even make some new, lifelong friends.

All of this will enable you to;

- connect with people around you, family, friends, colleagues and neighbours in your local community;
- keep active, exercise makes you feel good;
- take more notice of the world around you how it makes you feel;
- keep learning, rediscover old interests, set yourself a challenge and enjoy achieving it.

Your local allotment can tell you more about the activities that are currently available for you to join in with however, it's always good to hear new ideas and they are more eager than ever to get new people involved. With this in mind, why not share your hopes and aspirations and hopefully your local allotment leader will be able to help you to get new activities set up.

## 6. Getting started

With a 'credit crunch' in full swing and doctors urging people to eat 'five a day' home-grown fruit and vegetables have never been more appealing. First popularised during the scarcity of the First World War allotments were neglected and seen as old-fashioned until recently. These days demand is rising. Intergenerational Growing areas are increasingly popular.

Intergenerational Growing areas are a shared enterprise which is accessible to everyone regardless of age, background or disability. Anyone who wants to can get involved and get growing. By combining small membership fees and shared labour neighbours can unite to reap the benefits of fresh, organic produce grown on their doorstep.

Getting involved is easy, simply follow the links in section 7 (pg 9) to locate your nearest Community Allotment and contact them to find out more details.

## 7. Useful Links

### More about us!

- **Community Wellbeing** – Access ECC Community Wellbeing Website; Provides information about the types of activities ECC Community Wellbeing team are involved in  
<http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/ecc/ECCWebsite/dis/cnt.jsp?channelOid=19375&guideOid=138610>
- **Essex Pledges** – Access ECC 2010/2011 Pledges; Provides essential information about ECC Pledges for the coming year  
<http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/ecc/ECCWebsite/dis/ned.jsp?channelOid=124288&guideOid=124161&oid=146991>
- **Essex County Council;** even greener.com – gardening at home, information on accessories to make you and your home greener  
<http://www.essex.getcomposting.com/>

### Legal Statutes and Local Government Information

- **Allotments Act 1950** (c.31) – Office of Public Sector Information - Revised Statute from the UK Statute Law Database  
[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1950/cukpga\\_19500031\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1950/cukpga_19500031_en_1)
- **Department of Health** – Policy, guidance and publications for NHS and Social Care professionals; Providing useful links and information with reference Health and Social Care services  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

- **Central Government Cabinet Office:** Generations together News release 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009; Cabinet office newsletters, background information  
[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third\\_sector/news/news\\_stories/090417\\_generations.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news/news_stories/090417_generations.aspx)
- **Local Government Network;** link to the ‘Can You Dig it’ publication identifying the benefits and positive outcomes to be gained from allotment usage  
<http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/can-you-dig-it.pdf>
- **Learning through Landscapes;** helping schools and early years make the most out of their outdoor spaces for play and learning  
<http://www.ltl.org.uk/>

## University of Essex

- **University of Essex** – Green Exercise research, Prof. Jules Pretty; Provides useful data and research into to the benefits of green exercise on physical and mental wellbeing  
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/ces/>
- **Professor Jules Pretty** - The author Jules Pretty is based on the Essex and Suffolk border in England. He lives in the Suffolk wool village of Nayland, and works at the University of Essex in Colchester. He writes on the importance and relevance of nature for people, and explores the relations between people and the land  
<http://www.julespretty.com/>

## Your local Neighbourhood Growing Areas – What’s happening near you?

Already involved in Generations Growing Together and working with the Community Wellbeing Team, ECC

- **Action For Family Carers (AFFC)** - The aim of Action for Family Carers is to provide support to Carers in the way of one-to-one support, Carers Support Groups, Information, and Carers Breaks by looking after their Cared For at one of our day centres. At the moment, the growing area is for users of AFFC only.  
<http://www.carers.org/local/east/maldon/>
- **Ashlyns Organics** – Brentwood based Farm shop, Training Kitchen and Growers & Producers; Small, caring farm based business involved in the supply of good food and support to schools in the provision of a high quality school meals service...  
<http://www.ashlyns.co.uk/organics/index.shtml>
- **Digs It – Clacton** Intergenerational Growing areas; Provides information about Clacton ‘Digs It’ Community Allotment and how to get involved  
<http://sites.google.com/site/clactondigsit/home>
- **Digs It – Colchester** Intergenerational Growing areas; Provides information about Colchester ‘Digs It’ Community Allotment and how to get involved  
<http://www.northeastsexpct.nhs.uk/default.aspx.locid-ocjnewob1.Lang-EN.htm>
- **EastFeast** - Eastfeast is a team of professional gardeners, artists and teachers that helps schools deliver more effective learning based on working a school allotment through the seasons, culminating in a community feast. We work with students and teachers to develop the outdoor classroom, cultivating shared learning about the world in which we live, through food and art.  
<http://www.eastfeast.co.uk/index.html>
- **Epping Forrest District Council** – Active Health is an exciting new project to provide physical activity and healthy eating sessions to people aged over 50 in Epping, Harlow and Uttlesford  
[http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/leisure\\_services/sports\\_development/Active\\_Health.asp](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/leisure_services/sports_development/Active_Health.asp)

- **Epping Forrest District Council** - Residents of a Loughton sheltered housing scheme are getting active and eating a more healthy diet  
[http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/news/2008/tenants\\_get\\_active.asp](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/news/2008/tenants_get_active.asp)
- **Roundwood Garden & Visitor Centre** - Delightful garden centre, tea rooms, pensioners lunches Mon-Wed. Unusual shrubs, wildlife area, wide range of seasonal bedding plants, country craft shop, excellent facilities for disabled. Children's play area, aviary and arboretum – Community Allotment in development, why not get involved!  
<http://search.visitbritain.com/nb-NO/Details.aspx?ContentID=130514>
- **The Wilderness Foundation UK** – Chelmsford Intergenerational Growing areas; Provides information about Chelmsford 'Grow Together' Community Allotment and how to get involved  
<http://www.wildernessfoundation.org.uk/social-programmes/grow-together>

### **Finding your local Allotment and Neighbourhood Growing Area**

- **Allotments UK** - Directory of allotment sites, this will help you find, manage and get the best from your allotment, it also lists other allotment related sites  
<http://www.allotments-uk.com/>
- **Allotment Vegetable Growing** - Online diary / weblog where you can ask questions and get additional information with reference to gardening  
<http://www.allotment.org.uk/>
- **The National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Limited** - NSALG is recognised as a national representative body for the allotment movement in the UK. Provides advice and information about allotment or home gardening  
<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/>
- **Webring** - find in this ring all manner of sites, personal, academic and commercial devoted to the topic of vegetable growing  
<http://q.webring.com/hub?ring=allotmentring>

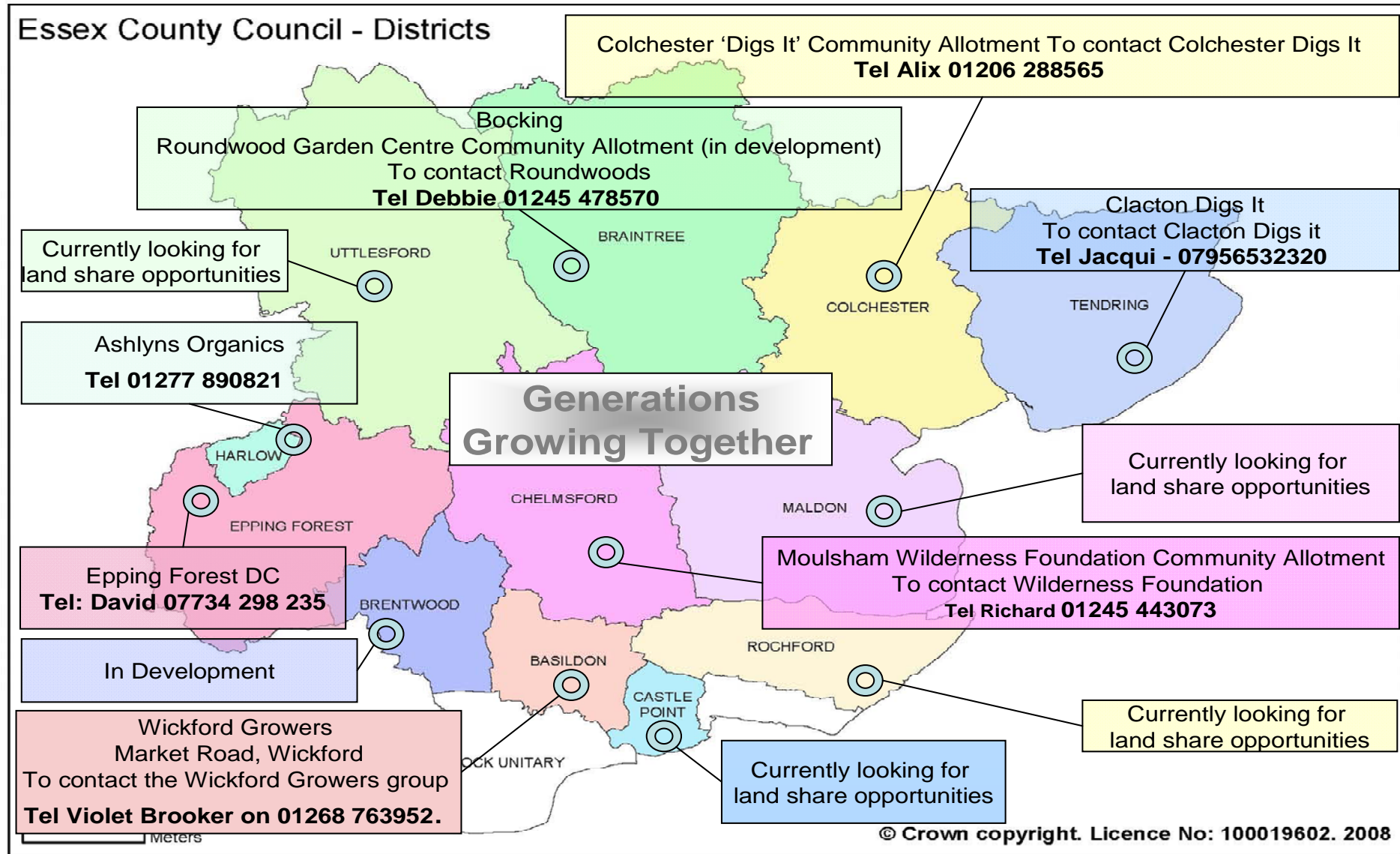
- **Tagish** – The Essential List / Directory of UK public sector organisations covering the UK and local Government (including parish & town councils), UK Healthcare Providers and UK Universities  
<http://www.tagish.co.uk/esslist/>

## 8. Contacts

- **Action For Family Carers**  
Maldon  
Gemma – 01621 851 640  
<http://www.carers.org/local/east/maldon/>
- **Ashlyns Organics**  
Brentwood  
Telephone: 01277 890 821  
[info@ashlynsorganics.co.uk](mailto:info@ashlynsorganics.co.uk)
- **Community Wellbeing Team, Essex County Council**  
[community.wellbeing@essex.gov.uk](mailto:community.wellbeing@essex.gov.uk)
- **Digs It**  
Colchester  
Alix – 0800 731 3133  
[Colchester.digs.it@gmail.com](mailto:Colchester.digs.it@gmail.com)
- **Digs It**  
Clacton  
Jacqui – 07956 532 320  
[Clacton.digs.it@gmail.com](mailto:Clacton.digs.it@gmail.com)

- **Epping Forest District Council**  
Epping Forest  
David – 01997 564 269  
[http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/leisure\\_services/sports\\_development/Active\\_Health.asp](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/leisure_services/sports_development/Active_Health.asp)
- **Roundwood Garden & Visitor Centre**  
Braintree  
Paul – 01376 551 728  
[paul.murrils@essex.gov.uk](mailto:paul.murrils@essex.gov.uk)
- **Wickford Growers**  
Wickford  
Telephone: Violet Brooker - 01268 763 952
- **Wilderness Foundation – Grow Together**  
Chelmsford  
Richard - 01245 443 073  
[info@wildernessfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@wildernessfoundation.org.uk)

## 9. Locality Map



**This booklet is issued by**

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