

Unity Garden Padiham Design Proposal

PADIHAM COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

Payback Pathways to Employment and Food Security

BACKGROUND

Increasing demand for surplus food due to the cost of living crisis, together with improved supermarket efficiencies and labour shortages are all reducing the food supplies available to food banks and community pantries, so many are now seeking new sources of fresh food and new income streams to bulk-buy non-surplus food to supplement the dwindling supplies of surplus food available to them.

Padiham Community Garden Project aims to meet this need by working with the Probation Service to grow seasonal fruit, veg and salads in the grounds of Padiham Unitarian Chapel and donate it to food banks across Burnley whilst also raising funds for the food banks to bulk buy non-surplus food supplies wholesale.

THE PROJECT

- To provide opportunities for women and male offenders subject to Unpaid Work Requirements (Community Payback) to grow seasonal fruit, veg and salads for donation to food banks across Burnley under the supervision of the Probation Service.
- To provide opportunities for offenders on Community Payback to grow commercial cash crops and produce other food-related products and services, the profits from the sale of which will be donated to food banks to help them bulk-buy non-surplus food supplies wholesale.
- To provide training in horticulture and hospitality for offenders on Community Payback.
- To provide qualifications and certificates of achievement that will build self confidence and routes to employment.
- To develop pathways into employment and self employment in the hospitality and wider food sector for offenders on Community Payback.

PROJECT DELIVERY

Partners:

Community Payback/Probation:

From Stephanie Baxter, UPW Operations Manager – East and Central Lancashire, “As discussed Community Payback would be keen to be involved in the project from the start, getting the site ready, installing the fence and then creating the garden/growing areas and then continuing to work on the project going forward. We are able to offer a long term commitment to this project.

I feel that this is a unique project for us in the area that meets a number of our delivery aims and aspirations. Not only is this a great project to meet the Community Payback criteria -Community focused, rigorous and demanding- it also offers wide opportunities for learning and skill development. Also, the potential opportunities for our People on Probation to gain qualifications in horticulture and food hygiene are a key factor. The development of team building skills and community integration are also prevalent in the project, which again allow us to meet our ultimate aim of rehabilitation.

We also discussed the real potential for us to offer women only Community payback sessions which is crucial in terms of our provisions for women in the area.

Burnley Football Club in the Community

- have agreed to be the 'accountable body' for funding of the project
- have agreed to lead on acquiring funding for the project
- are the largest food bank provider in Burnley and are keen for donations of fresh seasonal fruit, veg and salads from the project
- have co-produced the Burnley Food Poverty Strategy with Burnley Council.
- together with Burnley Council are setting up 'Burnley Community Grocery' a food cooperative with membership open to all Burnley residents, supplying surplus and discounted non-surplus food to its members to provide a route out of food poverty, eventually ending the need for food bank emergency food-aid provision in the first place.
- have agreed in principle for the project to donate fresh seasonal fruit, veg and salads to the Grocery and raise funds for its wholesale non-surplus food provision through the project's commercial activities.
- have a fully equipped Teaching Kitchen they wish to donate to the project

Preliminary work: all undertaken by Probation-supervised Community Payback workers.

- Make good the steps
- Fencing to block access to the river
- Install full perimeter security fencing
- Landscaping
- Raised beds for growing vegetables for the Community Payback growing area.
- Secure customers (e.g. Food Banks, community groups engaged in distributing food) to receive a free food supply within the wider Burnley area.
- Develop full cash crop business plan

The overall plan is to convert the grounds behind the church from derelict wilderness to a productive and attractive garden which will provide:

1. a much wider range of habitats for wildlife
2. fruit, vegetables and herbs for the community
3. resources for traditional crafts e.g. coppiced staves and laths for basketry or hurdle-making
4. a quiet space for contemplation surrounded by nature with access for disabled people
5. to provide locally grown flowers for church services, and weddings etc. in a sustainable, carbon-neutral manner
6. a lasting memorial to mark the 150th anniversary of the church's foundation in 1874.

To achieve this, we plan to install terracing and raised growing beds on the steep slope directly behind the annex of the church, a polytunnel (a steel-framed temporary structure with no foundations), a pond to encourage a much larger diversity of wildlife, paved pathways to enable disabled access,

Terracing and Raised Growing Beds

The terracing will make the steep slope usable and accessible as a growing space. The walls will be around 1m tall made from concrete blocks and clad with a material to best match the fabric of the existing church buildings. There will be four such walls going across the slope, creating flat spaces for four large growing beds in which we intend to grow edible produce for the community. The walls will not be visible from the public road, and will not obstruct any view of the listed building.

Polytunnel

The site for the structure was carefully selected for several reasons:

1. to provide as much direct sunlight as possible
2. to minimise the number of mature trees which would need to be felled or pruned
3. so that the structure can not be seen at all from the public road
4. the slope at this point is not too steep

The structure will serve multiple purposes, allowing us to grow a much wider range and quantity of produce, in the following ways:

1. to extend the growing season at both ends of the year
2. to provide a stable environment to grow crops like tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, grapes, etc.
3. to provide a sheltered nursery space in which to germinate and grow on seedlings, for the terraced growing beds, the annual polytunnel crops and general plants for the rest of the site.
4. to provide an all-weather workspace and somewhere for volunteers and visitors to shelter from heavy rain showers

Replacement of Selected Trees

Much of the site is currently under mature trees - mainly sycamores. Some of these are so overgrown with ivy as to be unsafe and very likely to fall in a storm (if not immediately, then in the near future). There are several similarly ivy-clad trees along the property border in the Memorial Garden which also need close inspection as to their safety. Sycamores are not native trees, and whilst they do provide habitat and food for a few native species of insects, they make for much less bio-diversity than true natives.

The plan is to integrate heritage fruit trees and native willows and hazels for coppicing, all of which will increase bio-diversity on the site, and in the area as a whole. Any pruning or trees deemed to be hazardous by the tree experts would be shredded and the woodchip used as mulch for growing beds, to create paths, and as a component of the home-made compost to be produced on site.

The fruit trees would provide edible produce to benefit the community, and the coppiced trees would provide materials for traditional crafts such as basket-making, woven fence panels and trellises, as well as providing a regular source of sustainable material for dead hedges and Hugelkulture beds.

**Nazareth Unitarian Chapel
Unity Garden
Heritage Statement
Design and Access Statement**

Heritage Statement

The Nazareth Unitarian Church is a significant landmark within Padiham's townscape and is set within generous grounds contained by mature trees which provide an attractive backdrop. It is adjacent to Memorial Park where the church participates annually in both Civic Remembrance and Padiham on Parade services. The church was built in c.1870 to the design of notable local architect, Virgil Anderton. It is constructed on a sloping site from coursed sandstone and sandstone ashlar dressing in the gothic revival style. Most notable is the tower and octagonal spire reaching to around 100 feet.

The building is a heritage asset of high national significance reflected in its Grade II listing. The nature of this significance lies chiefly in its architectural and historic interest. On the first count it holds value as a notable example of Victorian religious architecture, which retains much original detail both externally and internally. The building possesses a high level of architectural interest for its external qualities including its embellishment and degree of intactness. The building's historic values are associated with that of Unitarianism and the congregation of local families that have worshipped there over time. The building is also a well-known landmark within the local community with its street presence having remained virtually unchanged for over a century.

The garden site is located down the hill behind the church and unlisted church hall. It cannot be viewed from the street and the only access is down the path to the car park behind the hall. The drive and car park are owned by the church and not open to the general public unless participating in services or activities in the hall. This adds to the seclusion of the site. While hidden from view the garden will enhance the site, which up to this point is just derelict land. With care and as appropriate self seeded trees will be replaced with heritage trees along with flower beds both formal and wild, vegetables and attractive seating areas further enhancing the site. The garden once completed will utilise local volunteers and the community payback team to maintain the garden. The aim is for the garden to be a community asset.

Design and Access Statement

The proposed Polytunnel is a necessary part of the proposed community garden at the Unitarian Chapel. It will be constructed from Supertherm 200 Micron Polythene over metal hoops and timber framed gable end. It will measure (40 feet Length) by (14 feet width) by (2489 height). Please see drawings below. The enclosed structure will allow garden activities all year round and in inclement weather. This will allow community payback and volunteers to be engaged in meaningful growing year round. It is proposed to be located to the rear of the Church on a site that slopes steeply away from street level and which is screened from public view by being placed to the side of the car park. The site is noted in the Padiham Conservation Area Appraisal as a significant area of open/green space. The proposed polytunnel is considered to reflect the nature of its use and respect its immediate setting such that it would not appear incongruous within its surroundings. In addition, the low-level nature of the structure does not present a prominent feature within the immediate setting of the church grounds or a prominent feature/element visible to surrounding neighbours. The site does not require vehicular access for servicing. Pedestrian access will be via the drive to the side of the church to the car park, which is the only access. The needs of disabled users will be accommodated through a ramp from the car park as necessary.