

# Growing together for Enterprise

Encouraging volunteers in schools



Growing session taking place out in the school garden

## The project...

Garden Organic developed a pilot training programme for two schools in Flintshire to develop volunteer engagement and support for school organic growing projects.

Garden Organic visited schools to:

- Identify the current level of volunteer engagement, skills and knowledge and assessed activities suitable for school volunteers.
- Determine each school's long term plan for volunteer involvement and help them design an action plan to achieve this.

## Ysgol Gwynedd School

The school wanted to extend the existing volunteering activities using growing to achieve this.

Since 2009, the school have welcomed neighbouring schools and the Flying Start Centre who deliver a programme of support to families with children under 4 years of age. Broughton hosts a variety of events, but notably 'Family Fun Friday'.

These days are aimed at giving parents, grandparents and carers the opportunity to find out how things are taught in their child's school, as well as a chance to share ideas with other parents to support and develop their own skills.

The topics covered include; healthy eating, IT and digital inclusion, outdoor learning/ forest school, first aid etc. These events are well attended and having other schools and community groups involved in the fun adds to the vibrancy of such a wonderful location.

The school enjoyed delivering growing sessions during these fun days so much that they felt they wanted to extend the use of the gardens to enable growing activities throughout the year.

The school set up a new PTA in September 2014 and wanted to encourage more of the 'Family Fun Friday' participants to get involved in further growing activities within the school.

Organic Centre Wales had an initial meeting with the school and following on from this the school worked with Garden Organic to develop a volunteer training day. Key areas that were identified as needing support were:

- Getting more staff and volunteers involved.
- Incorporating enterprise in to the growing activities
- Working around seasonality
- Developing horticultural skills
- Working and communicating with pupils (risk assessment, health and safety).

Delivered by:



## The school...

Ysgol Gwynedd is a County Primary School in Flintshire catering for both boys and girls between 3 and 11 years of age (Early Years, Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2).

The school, built in 1949, stands in an elevated position overlooking the town of Flint and has breathtaking views over the Dee Estuary and towards the Wirral.

The number of children currently on roll is 443. The school is lucky to have large grounds which consists of established growing areas in both the foundation and junior gardens, mainly consisting of raised beds, composting areas and butterfly and bee friendly planting.

In addition to this they have a large forest school area that has been planted with a variety of fruit trees.



## Three word workshop summary...

INSPIRING  
INTERESTING  
INFORMATIVE



Training session outside

Funded by:



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig; Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig  
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



The school are progressing with their growing space

## The Workshop

The school promoted the workshop via their Family Fun Friday Group, PTA and school newsletter.

Overall 21 people attended; 4 staff members and 16 parents and grandparents. The event was also attended by a local horticulture tutor who is involved with local project; 'Growing the Future' which is delivered in the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

The current volunteers were delighted to have been a part of this training day and were glad to have come along to express ideas and talk about how the growing space could be developed. The Headteacher also joined for sessions to participate in conversations being had.

The training was very practical, with discussions around the benefits and challenges of growing and volunteering in school; seasonal planning and how to fit growing in with the school year and curriculum; developing horticultural skills; enterprise logistics and how to add value to produce in order to fund-raise. The workshop was designed to cover the following topics;

- ✂ Setting the scene; what's involved with food growing in schools, gardening with children, getting the best out of the curriculum.
- ✂ Linking with other programmes and growing for enterprise.
- ✂ Getting the best out of our site and making it work.
- ✂ Seasonal growing; planning what to grow around the school and top 10 crops for schools.
- ✂ Creating a cropping plan including an activity creating a chart with what can be produced at different times of the year.

- ✂ Developing horticultural skills; activity looking at basic skills, seed sowing, propagation, containers, growing media.

- ✂ Planning for volunteers in school.

## Highlights

The workshop inspired potential volunteers, who following the training, were looking forward to getting stuck in to the school growing project.

It gave staff and volunteers the opportunity to voice lots of new and inspirational ideas whilst discovering skills from one another. The school lead for this project, Zoe Cottam, who also leads the 'Family Fun Friday' sessions, thoroughly enjoyed the day;

*"I loved everything about the day and it will help to further our organic work and volunteering in school... the parents they have loved every minute and can't wait to help in our school. A big thank you."*

Zoe Cottam, Classroom Assistant

It was great to see everyone working together towards a brilliant project. Foundation and junior teaching staff, who use the growing areas, attended to develop their knowledge about how they could fully utilise the growing space using a vital helping hand from the volunteers. All appreciated the need to work together on such a beneficial project.

Roy, a grandparent and regular volunteer who currently looks after the growing space, attended the training session, he offered knowledgeable advice which proved very useful for those who are keen to learn. Roy was very excited to have more people involved and was looking forward to having more people around to help maintain the growing space.

## What happened next?

Ysgol Gwynedd now have a bank of knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers that have grown in confidence and are getting involved in growing in school. A gardening club has been set up together with weekly volunteering sessions to develop the volunteers confidence, skills and knowledge.

More Family Fun Friday activities around growing and healthy eating have been arranged so the neighbouring schools can find out about the project and join in.

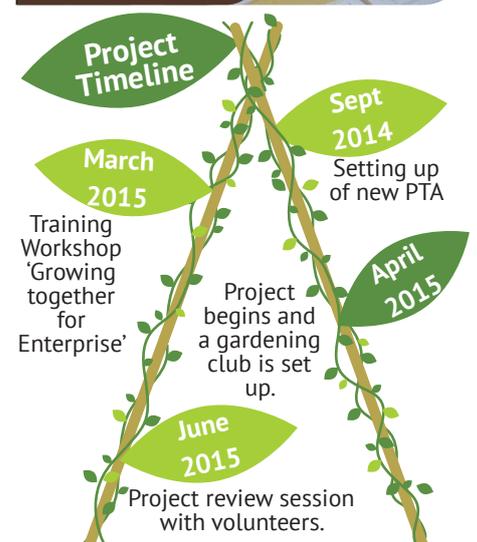
Ysgol Gwynedd have already identified some areas to grow more fruit that would be accessible for parents to harvest.

There are discussions to create a cropping plan which can be tied in to other school activities such as cooking sessions and community events which will integrate growing further in to the school life. Classes are already being held in the school growing area and the hope its that there will be more cross-curricular classes held in the garden.

Some of the volunteers have even started their own growing areas at home!



Workshop delivery



Hands-on activities