

Grow, Cook and Eat

Lawrence Weston



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Lawrence Weston



Avon
Wildlife Trust

Tribute to Sara Venn, 1969 - 2025



Sara was a font of knowledge, and a powerful force for justice and community growing. She brought to the project not just a wealth of knowledge, but also an irreverent sense of humour, always putting local people at the heart of what we do, seeing access to growing food not just as a right, but as an act of rebellion and self sufficiency. She believed everyone should have access to healthy food.

She gave the project confidence to bring people together for a common good, and use public land for community growing. All whilst having a cuppa tea and a good laugh! She will be dearly missed.

Her son Noah is continuing her work in her legacy and has also set up the Sara Venn Project - to provide fresh fruit and vegetables to the local foodbank in Speedwell - see more info and donate here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-sara-venn-project>



'Grow, Cook, Eat Lawrence Weston' - Community Climate Action Demonstrator Project - Year one

Food (in)security, and healthy eating are huge issues for residents living in Lawrence Weston. Food is also a major source of carbon emissions with strategic importance to achieving net zero in Bristol by 2030. Lawrence Weston has a fantastic opportunity to tackle these issues with an abundance of green space in the form of urban greens, allotments and there being vast nature corridors on both sides. This project has helped Lawrence Weston residents to regenerate our underused local green spaces by building planters & veg beds, planting berry bushes & fruit trees and creating meadows. We have provided community-based training and skills sharing, which has given local people the opportunity to grow and cook their own sustainable fruit and vegetables and also create nature habitat. This has reduced food miles, enabled access to lower cost/healthier food options, all the while improving biodiversity and connecting people to the natural world and food growing.

This project delivered two primary workstreams:

- Growing to reduce carbon emissions:
- Reducing Your Carbon Footprint in the Kitchen:

We have captured the learning from these projects through this sustainable neighbourhood food plan framework, demonstrating a community scale response to the City's Food Equality Strategy to share with other communities in Bristol and across the country.

As part of this project we developed a community allotment, as well as focussed on street verges and greens around the local community, supported local residents to enhance their streets, and worked with local churches and schools to support their pupils in designing and looking after their school gardens and wild spaces. We also focussed on using the locally grown produce in our cooking courses and supper clubs, as well as learnt about foraging locally, what we could find and what the uses are for what we find.



Group photo at our 'Scare the crows' session where we made 'Lawrence' our new scarecrow

In November 2022, we began work on Plot 24 at the Atwood drive allotment site, a plot very kindly donated to us by a local resident who could no longer manage the plot. The site was covered in pernicious weeds (brambles, bindweed and marestail) and the first thing that we did was bring a brilliant group of volunteers from Clear Channel who over the course of two sessions cleared rubbish, put up our shed, dug a pond, dug out brambles, made paths and cleared and strimmed the area that is now our food growing space. As there were twenty five people at each session this had an enormous impact which likely saved us 12 weeks of clearing and made the allotment ready for growing faster than could have been achieved any other way. We then ran weekly open volunteer sessions for the general upkeep and growing on the site.

The aim of the allotment project has always been to grow more food for local residents whilst showing that vegetables can be grown locally and in ways that support carbon emission reduction. The added bonus of this type of growing is an increase in soil biodiversity, making healthy soil core to the whole project. Working with our community ecologist, Eric, the wildlife pond was central to this approach as it brings invertebrates and insects into the space, ensuring that there is an ecosystem ready to deal with any pests as they arrive. Over the project, the site has been home to slow worms, bees, hoverflies, wasps (including the fairly rare ruby tailed wasp - a solitary bee that parasitizes upon other solitary bees! A strong indicator of a healthy ecosystem), waterboatmen, dragonflies who laid eggs in the pond where their larvae are now overwintering, mosquito larvae which is vital as a food source for many larger insects, and birds aplenty including our own robin. This ecosystem will grow over the years, supporting biodiversity to grow on site, whilst supporting healthy food to be pollinated and grown for the community.

The allotment is fundamental in having a defined place where we can develop and enhance what we grow, a safe place for children and young people to come, and a teaching space for our courses. We have developed on the site a seating area which doubles as our cooking area and teaching space. You can read about the launch of our project here: <https://bristolclimatenature.org/news/grow-cook-and-eat-lawrence-weston/> or watch our launch video here which was filmed by We the Curious: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Vdj7AGfmbk

Meet the project team



Donna Sealey
PROJECT CO-
ORDINATOR



Eric Swithinbank
COMMUNITY
ECOLOGIST



Sara Venn
HORTICULTURALIST



Noah Venn
HORTICULTURALIST

Pond

Due to having more species per meter squared than any other habitat, ponds are the best way of boosting biodiversity in a growing space. Many insect species require water as part of their lifecycle, and a whole host of amphibians, birds and mammals will also benefit.

For a full guide on how to build a pond check out this wildlife trusts guide - <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond>. We ensured the pond was created in a location where it will receive plenty of light, and created a wild margin (including wildflowers, log piles, sandy beaches) all the way around creating cover and food for wildlife. We also spent time creating a wild margin all the way around the pond. We also planted aquatic plants to help provide cover and oxygenate the pond helping species thrive in the pond.

Adding a pond onto the allotment has brought a whole host of benefits. Firstly it has encouraged frogs, newts, dragonflies, hoverflies (larvae of which eat aphids) and a whole host of other wildlife which helps keep the ecosystem in balance and helps with pest control. As we have many volunteers and families coming down to the allotment it has also captivated the interest of everyone serving as a tool of inspiration and education, as well as a focal point for our nature area. The children who came to the allotment sessions would always run straight to the pond and start pond dipping hoping to capture dragonfly larvae, water boatmen and newts!

Learn more about the importance of ponds here: [https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/202103/Ponds%20booklet Web%20spreads 0.pdf](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/202103/Ponds%20booklet%20Web%20spreads%200.pdf)



March 2023 - Digging the Pond



April 2025 - Pond in all its glory

No Dig



No dig as a concept is not new and in fact recently it has been shown that the Aztecs used these methods over 7000 years ago.

No Dig means that rather than digging the soil over the lands is mulched with organic matter, which the ecology in the soil works into the soil, creating healthy, friable and easily workable soil. By adding this matter the process mimics that of the forest floor, and the feeds the soil with bacteria and fungi that healthy soil needs. This eliminates the need for chemical fertilisers and creates soil that is alive. The ethos is to feed the soil rather than the plants, and then allow the soil to feed the plants. This is a process that is now understood to also stop carbon being released from the soil by digging, and so an excellent choice for a project looking at reducing the carbon emissions in food.

To make our beds, we simply thoroughly weeded the ground where the beds were planned, placed cardboard onto the soil as a layer to stop any weeds coming through and add a layer of carbon to the soil, and then put 3cm of compost on top of the cardboard. At that point the beds are ready to plant into. As the compost is taken down into the soil, each year we will add a further 1cm of organic matter to keep the soil healthy and replenish any goodness taken by crops.

We do not use wooden bed edges as they are the preferred home of slugs and snails and whilst they will always be the biggest pest, we don't want to encourage them.

Peat and Pesticide Free

In recent years the campaign to ban peat in horticulture has shown the damage that horticulture as an industry has done to the peatlands across the UK. Peat has been used as a compost ingredient since the 1950s, but we now understand how important peat bogs are to capture carbon, and hold it in the ground, and there is a ban on peat use in compost from 2024. From the start of this project being peat free was an important part of how the project was growing food. With that we have been purchasing peat free compost from local company Beauport, whilst we begin a composting regime.

We also decided that being pesticide free was important, not only to keep the soil clear from chemicals, but also to ensure the pollinators and other wildlife coming to the site were safe.

Composting

Early in the project the Men in Sheds project built us a composting system made of 3 bays using recycled pallets. Bay1 is where organic material is first put to begin it's decomposition, and that then is moved to bay2 when it has broken down by half and bay3 when it is completely broken down. We are also utilising drown bins to drown any pernicious weeds prior to adding them to bay1 to ensure they don't end up back in the growing space.



Blaise Nursery Community Project

Since 2020 Blaise plant nursery, which belongs to Bristol City Council, has offered community groups growing food for their communities, the opportunity to receive seedlings and small plants to support their growing. We took up this opportunity and received chillies, aubergines, tomatoes, broad, runner and climbing beans, brassicas, peas, courgettes, pumpkins, rhubarb and celery, which once our beds were made were planted, and which have brought a very successful harvest in the projects first year. We hope that will continue next year. We also obtained several fruit trees which we planted around the community.

Welcoming people to the site

We have a lot of young families in Lawrence Weston, and recognised the opportunity we have here to inspire the next generation, connecting them with the natural world. During school holidays we have welcomed children and parents to the allotment each week. The children have made a scarecrow (called Lawrence Weston) painted stones, signs and made wildlife habitats to go around the pond. They have looked at soil through microscopes, spotting the life crawling around in the depths of the soil, pond dipped to find out which creatures were living there and generally played as well. Each week we have cooked on an open fire, with them enjoying pumpkin soup amongst other meals. It has been incredible to see these young folk blossom and gain confidence in being outside and a fascination with nature. We have seen girls who previously were terrified of any creatures befriending and naming slugs and caterpillars, and learning about their role in a healthy ecosystem.

GROW, COOK AND EAT LAWRENCE WESTON

CASE STUDY

Cooper, Evelyn and Maria



Maria, Evelyn
and Cooper
enjoying the
tomatoes in the
polytunnel

As part of the 'Grow, Cook and Eat Lawrence Weston' project, Ambition Lawrence Weston has been running outdoor sessions on our community allotment every Monday and Tuesday during the school holidays. Each week we have welcomed children and parents to the allotment. The children have made a scarecrow called Lawrence, painted stones and signs, and made wildlife habitats to go around the pond. They have looked at soil through microscopes, spotting the life crawling around in the depths of the soil and pond dipped to find out which creatures were living there.

We have cooked on an open fire enjoying pumpkin soup which was harvested straight from the plot! It has been amazing to see some of the same groups of kids that have been coming to the space since year one gain confidence. Some kids were scared or tentative to even hold insects are now rushing to the pond as soon as they arrive to find dragonfly larvae and newts or finding caterpillars and placing them on their preferred foodplant! We try to use this enthusiasm to sneak in some learning about nature, for example, identifying plants and insects and talking about what they need in their environment.

Cooper (aged six), Evelyn and Maria (both aged eight) have been regulars down the allotment for the last two years. Cooper says his favourite activity at the allotment is pond dipping and looking at what is growing and living in the pond. Maria likes looking after the chickens which live on the plot next to us, feeding them some veg and dandelion leaves, as well as harvesting the fruit and vegetables growing on our plot. Evelyn loves to take her shoes and socks off digging up the potatoes with her bare feet, loving the soil on her feet and between her toes, as well as craft projects like making bird feeders, tea light lanterns and making wooden signs.

All three of them enjoy coming down each school holiday, as well as to after school club on a Monday evening during term time. They all say its so nice to come down, have somewhere to play in nature and to have fun, and they all look forward to coming down 'even if its raining or snowing'.

Cooper, Evelyn and Maria have become peer supporters to other young people coming to the allotment, they know the space so well that they welcome newcomers and help them with what they need to know and where things are kept. They also come to our after school club on a Monday.

Here are a couple of blogs that were written about our adventures down the allotment:

<https://saravenn.substack.com/p/a-voice-from-the-garden-bf0>

<https://bristolclimatenature.org/news/grow-cook-and-eat-lawrence-weston-2/>



Maria and Cooper at our 'Bugs, Dirt and Slime' session where we used microscopes to look at the life on the allotment



We developed the area outside Lawrence Weston Youth Centre on the Long Cross, to act as an exemplar of how a roadside verge could be transformed from a lawn into a community growing space/wildlife habitat. We had a wildflower workshop sowing wildflowers and planting plugs, built multiple raised beds for community growing and planted a mini orchard of apple trees. In year two we are looking to replicate this vision across Lawrence Weston for example in partnership with St Peters' Church, the newly founded Meerkats Community Garden and also the new development at Century Park. We also had an Oak tree planted by Lord Lieutenant Peaches Golding MBE as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. We also ran workshops to help residents in a local retirement home to plant wildflowers in their garden.

Schools Work

To amplify our impact we have worked with schools to set up community growing spaces. We have worked with Oasis Academy Longcross, Our Lady of the Rosary and North star to help create wildlife habitat and growing spaces. This has included regenerating marginal and neglected areas of the schools into wildlife havens and learning spaces by planting wildflowers and creating wildlife habitat such as ponds, orchards and log piles. The feedback has been great and these areas have the added benefit of getting the students involved and learning about the importance of the natural world. Key learning lessons have been working in partnership (e.g. with Avon Wildlife Trust and Bristol Works) to achieve more as well as identifying and keeping communication up with the keen teachers. We also ran a 2 month programme with St Bede's, bringing students out into the community to learn growing skills, then taking what they had learnt back to their school to plant berry bushes around the school grounds.

Events

We have put on events in Lawrence Weston such as guided wildflower walks, wildflower workshops, nettle foraging and bumblebee walks. These have been attended by local people and aim to engage them with nature, and increase access to the outdoors by encouraging people into the green space around where they live. It's vital to engage people with the natural world and get people learning about nature.

Lessons learnt including lining events up with national or local campaigns. For example our walk attendance was greatly enhanced when we ran our walks as part of Bristol Walkfest.

We host a range of events and we post these on our Eventbrite page, you can see this here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/ambition-lawrence-weston-35013580323>

Cooking



To tie in all of our wonderful growing, we have been designing cooking courses to complement the produce, but also looked at what residents have been asking for, this is a list of what they said they wanted this project to focus on:

Cooking on a Budget - Batch Cooking - Slow Cooker Cooking - Preserve and pickle making - Seasonal Cooking - Plant Based Cooking - Cooking From Scratch - Foraging - Cooking For One - Meals For Families - Bread and Pastry Making - Field to Fork

Working with the Community Learning team in Bristol, they have been supporting local residents by running an 'Eat Well, Save Energy course'.

Date of course	venue	No off learners	Slow cooker	Hand Blenders	Jars of Spices (8 jars each)
04/11/22	Ambition L W	6	6	6	48
03/03/2023	Hope Cafe	6	6	6	48
06/06/2023	LW Farm	4	4	4	32
05/01/24	Ambition L W	5	5	5	40
11/3/24	Hope Cafe	6	6	6	48
7/6/24	LW Farm	7	7	7	56
10/09/2025	Ambition L W	5	5	5	0
14/2/25	Hope Cafe	6	6	6	0
		45	45	45	272 Jars

Grow, Cook and Eat have also produced three of their own cookbook, you can view the 2023 version here: https://www.ambitionlw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ALW_Cookbook_2023.pdf

And you can hear about our launch event here which was recorded for BBC Radio Bristol: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0gg96xh>.



Jay from Tiffins takeaway and restaurant with lord lieutenant of Bristol Peaches Golding OBE showing residents how to 'Fakeaway' your favourite Indian food

‘Grow, Cook, Eat Lawrence Weston’ - Community Climate Action Demonstrator Project - Year Two

The second Year of the Grow Cook and Eat project has used the foundations and assets formed in year one to then go forward and gain momentum. For example, we have continued to develop the community allotment whilst running events for families, and to deliver an expanded programme of bespoke workshops for Lawrence Weston residents. We have also taken our productive, nature-friendly street green model outside our community centre, and applied this template to various community groups, schools and residential areas to set up new growing spaces and nature habitat with local residents.

We continued to reach more schools, community venues and local residents, while expanding our offer by introducing an after school club and a friday night supper club.



Century Park Residents - sowing wildflowers alongside cycle track

Allotment & engaging the next generation

We have continued to develop our no dig community growing spaces running our Monday volunteer sessions. We have then used this space to run a series of events, every Monday, Tuesday at the community allotment to engage families with nature and growing. Activities have ranged from painting pots and planting herbs to walks to our neighbouring nature reserve. After the structured session we open the session up into general allotment work and bug hunting/observing nature. It has been amazing to see some of the same groups of kids that have been coming to the space since year one gain confidence. Some kids that were scared/tentative to even hold insects are now rushing to the pond as soon as they arrive to find dragonfly larvae and newts - or some of the children who were previously scared of creepy crawlies are now finding caterpillars and placing them on their preferred foodplant! We've also had a lot of new families join us this year which has been great; to see our regulars sharing their confidence in nature with newcomers is fantastic - this peer to peer learning is exactly what we want to encourage.

After successful willow weaving courses such as wreath making at Christmas, we gained permission to look after our neighbouring plot - an abandoned willow coppice - in February 2024. We had corporate and local volunteers help bring this area back into management by coppicing the willow back to ground level and removing the brambles. This will produce productive willow we can use for more workshops and also let more light in to promote more varied ground flora for nature. Our Monday volunteers have done a fantastic job of creating dead hedge habitats and continuing to improve this area after the initial efforts by the corporate volunteers.

This area is now being used as a teaching space, reducing the pressure of our family events on our growing spaces at the allotment, and providing opportunity to learn new skills e.g. bushcraft and learning about woodland management/ecosystems - as well as den building!

This video is a wonderful example of our work on the allotment:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cu8S57IQMH8>

Walks

Wild Forage walks with Martin

There's a super abundance of wild food in and around Lawrence Weston, largely due to the varied and wonderful habitats in existence. I've hugely enjoyed introducing folks to their local wild food larder and watching them switch on their green vision! Wild berries – sloes, blackberries, hawthorn, rose hips sorrel, mustards like jack by the hedge and black mustard, healing plantain leaves and yarrow...the list goes on. I'd encourage you to get out there with a good foraging guidebook and see what you can find.

I've loved teaching folks to forage for wild ingredients that grow all around us. It's been great sharing knowledge about seasonal wild plants we can use in teas and tinctures. This year we've also taught people how to make pestos and wild ferments. Horseradish and mustard leaves were favourites in these making sessions.

It's been wonderful to come together and share food too after recent walks. Sitting down to enjoy lunch with wild garlic pickles, mushroom pâté, fresh elderflower, linden and bramble flower tea. This is what it's all about!

If you're keen to learn more why come on one of our Grow, Cook and Eat walks. Martin also regularly leads his own walks in Bristol. These can be found at: www.goforaging.co.uk



Martin leading one of his walks at Kingsweston House

Tree, Plant and Wildlife Identification Walks with BRERC



Abi leading one of her walks at Kingsweston House



We have teamed up with Abi who is the assistant manager at BRERC ([Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre](#)) to led us on identification walks within the local community focussing on two locations, Blaise castle and Kingsweston House. We did one walk per season for two years so we can see the changes in the seasons. Abi led the walk and had all the info to what was growing and living around us and completed the walk with a handout of identifaction sheets and also how to upload your own finds to the website.

Community Ecologist Walks

'To get people to take action for nature they must first care about nature. and to care for nature they must learn about nature. This is why we've ran a series of walks, to get people out and about in the abundance of nature hotspots around lawrence weston such as Blaise Estate and Lawrence Weston Moor.

Each year in may we took part in Bristol walkfest - teaming up in this way really boosted our numbers having upwards of 20 people on some of these walks! The theme for these walks was based around local wildflowers: thier ecology, pollinators, folklore and uses.

We also ran specific walks looking at our local bee and butterfly species. And one of walks for example teaming up with Sustrans to observe the wildlife along the new cycle path.

This has been a great way to get people out and engaging with nature, but also getting people out, active, and meeting each other.



Community Growing areas

A really valuable aspect of the project that will have a strong legacy is helping existing and new community groups create space for nature/growing in their green space. We have worked with schools, churches and groups of residents and given them the confidence and means to enhance their growing areas for nature and people. All of the community growing areas will be left with a management plan specific for their area, so they can look after it and know what to do in the future. see examples of management plans at the end of this section.

North Star

At North Star School we have worked with the students to turn their plans of a fun, nature friendly growing space into a reality. This has included creating a large pond, planting in and around the pond, sowing wildflowers, creating a herb bed, installing hammocks, planting various fruit trees and generally tidying up. It has been great to engage teens from a range of different backgrounds who may not usually engage with nature. Also to get them to be more hands on and take ownership of improving their school grounds. They were particularly excited when the pond we had created in autumn (below) became overrun with many frogs the following spring! They have also come out to visit the community allotment to gain a wider perspective on green skills/community work.



Pond built by students of North Star 240 alternative provision secondary school in Lawrence Weston (2024, 2025)]

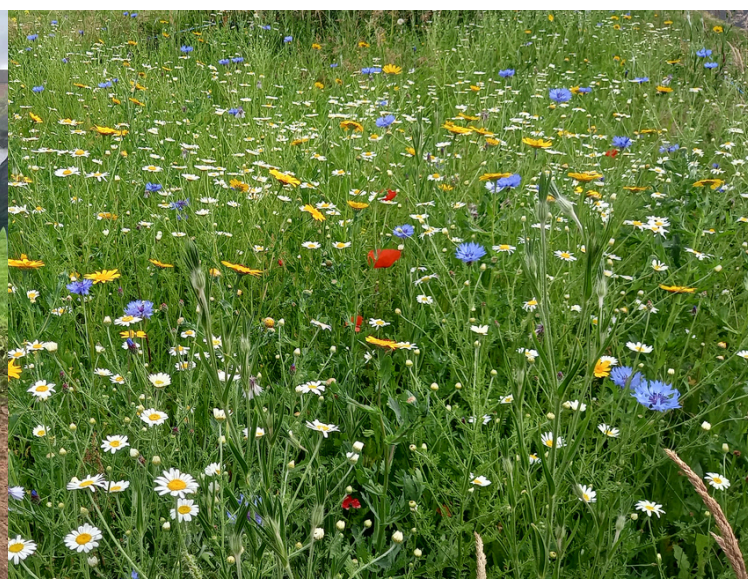
Meerkats

The Meerkats are a group of residents who live on Meerebank cul-de-sac and have created a community garden space, but needed more guidance especially when it came to creating wildlife habitat. After meeting with them and learning what their priorities were, we codesigned a community plan which included an 11m long willow 'fedge' (a woven living willow structure), bulbs and wildflowers. We then hosted several sessions to bring local residents together and improve their neighbourhood. This not only brightened up the cul-de-sac and massively helped create a positive sense of place, but also helped will social cohesion as residents, met each other and event provided food for one another



St Peters

We worked with St Peter's Church, who are situated right in the centre of Lawrence Weston, to plant a sizable area of wildflower meadow. This was achieved by using a turf cutter to prepare the ground, then the local community members and church goers helped sow all of the wildflower seed and rake in. St Peter's Church first delivered a small sermon and excerpt from the bible about sowing seeds before coming out and physically sowing seeds on their church grounds which I thought was a really nice link and we had about 30 people come out to help out so it certainly worked! This space has a good coverage of germinating seeds, a mix of native wildflowers, both annual and perennial, to ensure a show of colour then a sustained meadow in this area. The area is also very visible and right in the heart of Lawrence Weston which will make quite the statement when in bloom.



We also helped regenerate their vegetable and herb planters around their church and 'The Rock' Community Centre.



Hope Church and Cafe

Hope church and cafe had a visit from the Grow, Cook & Eat ecologist to recommend how they can manage their grounds for wildlife. They also expressed an interest in creating a wildflower area in their car park. With plugs from grow wilder and some plants grown by the church community we planted some areas in their car park for insects and also to create a pleasant visual impact on arriving at the church.



Century Park

Century park is a new housing development on the edge of Lawrence Weston. Some residents, who had been coming along to our allotment sessions, had shown interest in planting the soakaway area designed to manage run off water. We met up to discuss the area and realised it could also have a lot of wildlife value. The following spring we cut back the areas of rank vegetation e.g. docks and nettles, weeded a bit then replanted with wildflower plugs. We also added wetland wildflowers such as ragged robbin and yellow loosestrife around the pond margin to increase diversity. We also hosted a community BBQ to bring the new residents together and added some oxygenating plants into the pond to help improve the aquatic habitat. Whilst at the BBQ we listened to what the residents wanted to do to improve their new housing development and they requested to plant wildflowers along the cycle path. So in spring 2025, we planted 130m² of wildflower strips alongside the cycle path.



Lawrence Weston Road

A local resident who lives on Lawrence Weston Road wanted to enhance their street for community growing and nature. We set about leafletting all her neighbours to come out and form a plan for the space, and create a community group. We were encouraged by how enthusiastic people were, coming in with their ideas, and a commitment to look after the space and enhance it for the local community.

We created two veg planters, a lavender bed, and a large patch of wildflower meadow. It's fantastic to see the residents being proactive and self organising via whatsapp to maintain and develop their community garden for example planting up the planters with their own plants, watering, etc.



Ambition House

We have also been fortunate enough to secure funding and have a fantastic new community hub built at the heart of Lawrence Weston. We listened to what the groups and local residents that use the space wanted for the green space around the hub, and put this into action with the help of men in sheds, local schools, residents, and corporate volunteers. This included 800 square meters of wildflower meadow, 12 fruit trees, 110m of wildlife hedging, edible forest garden and sensory herb garden. Picnic lawn, accessible beds and seating are all in the works, and this whole area will be open access for the community to enjoy, and to serve as a space for workshops/forest schools for years to come.



Surveys

Lawrence Weston is sandwiched between an abundance of green space with Blaise Castle and Kings Weston Estate on one side, and Saltmarsh Drive and Lawrence Weston Moor on the other. To get people taking action for nature/growing we wanted to first get people learning and excited about it, so ran a series of walks throughout the project which then led into surveying at Lawrence Weston Moor.

Lawrence Weston Moor is a fragment of the ancient wetlands that would have spread from Lawrence Weston, all the way across the mouth of the Avon and down to the Somerset levels. Wetlands were once abundant throughout the UK, however now they are increasingly rare, and act as a refuge for some of our most endangered species.

As part of the Grow Cook and Eat project, we have run a series of nature walks looking at the unique nature of the site which includes many species of bumblebees and butterflies, rare wildflowers (such as pepper saxifrage), grass snakes, water voles (Britain's fastest declining mammal) and wetland birds such as snipe and herons.

This led to surveying, both for the water voles and rare plant communities on the site, engaging local people with observing nature and adding to local and national data. The results from this survey didn't just sit on a shelf. The observations that local residents made directly effected the land management on the site, as our links with Avon Wildlife Trust and Bristol City Council (who manage the site) meant that our data directly impacted the management for water voles by clearing vegetation on the rhines, and also fed into the grass cutting and hedgerow management of the site.

Our surveying efforts were also featured by BBC points west - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq521z5zge9o>



Management plans

Meerkats Community Garden Management Plan

Feature: Meadow areas

What to do	When
Water if dry	First-year only, when dry
<p>Cut Meadow</p> <p>Cut meadow with scythes or mower. Remove cut grass/flowers and compost in the woods.</p>	<p>The first year, scything workshop. (Thereafter conversation about whether parks will be cut once per year, or residents will)</p> <p>Every September</p> <p>(Optional extra cut in late Feb/early March to reduce grass Vigor)</p>

Feature: Willow Fedge

What to do	When
<p>Water if dry</p> <p>(Occasional/rare complete soaking is much better than little & often)</p>	First-year only
Weeding	As needed
Mulching	Every year late winter/early spring
Pruning/weaving new growth	<p>Only in winter months</p> <p>As needed to maintain shape (creative license granted! Can cut back to the original framework or weave new bits in)</p>

St Peter's Church Management Plan

Feature: meadow areas

What to do	When
Water if dry	First-year only, when dry
<p>Cut Meadow</p> <p>Cut meadow with scythes, strimmer, or mower (feel free to call Eric on 07719 088065 if you need advice with this).</p> <p>It's best if you can remove the cut material off of the meadow and compost. This will ensure the meadow will come back in good form year after year</p>	<p>Cut every September.</p> <p>(Optional extra cut in late Feb/early March to reduce grass Vigor)</p> <p>First year Eric's happy to scythe, thereafter the church grounds maintenance team will cut at the end of each summer.</p>

GROW, COOK AND EAT LAWRENCE WESTON

CASE STUDY

Iain Stevens



Iain Stevens - 'How grow, Cook and Eat Lawrence Weston' cooking courses has changed the way i eat' - written in his own words

My name is Iain Stevens and i am a single person living in Lawrence Weston and i am part of the Lawrence Weston planning group and i am classed as disabled living on my own, and cooking for one was no fun until i discovered the the **'Eat Well, Save Energy'** and **'Creative Cooking'** cookery courses that were being ran locally as part of the Grow, Cook and Eat Lawrence Weston project.

I have gone from takeaways and ready meals to actually enjoying learning to cook on these cookery courses, and now what i have learnt about food preparation, food storage and food usage has been a great help to me, as well as shopping hacks and tips as well as how to reduce my energy consumption whilst cooking as well as reducing food waste. At home i am now cooking casseroles, i do steak, hash browns, and other things like soups and cook as i go which is nice and fresh, i have learnt a lot.

Every cookery course that comes along i try my best to get booked on to it, so i would recommend these cookery courses to everyone, even if you think you know how to cook, you will learn new recipes as well as hints and tips that will you save you money as well as reduce the carbon you are producing from purchasing and cooking.



Iain with Beulah on our creative cooking course. This session they were making Chicken, butternut squash and vegetable soup

Workshops

To tie in all of our wonderful growing, we have been designing cooking courses to complement the produce, but also looked at what residents have been asking for, this is a list of what they said they wanted this project to focus on:

- Cooking on a Budget
- Batch Cooking
- Slow Cooker Cooking
- Preserve and pickle making
- Seasonal Cooking
- Plant Based Cooking
- Cooking From Scratch
- Foraging
- Cooking For One
- Meals For Families
- Bread and Pastry Making
- Field to Fork

Grow, Cook and Eat have also produced their own cookbook, you can view it here:

https://www.ambitionlw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ALW_Cookbook_2023.pdf

And you can hear about our launch event here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0gg96xh>



Maria, Evelyn and Cooper enjoying the tomatoes in the polytunnel

Community Climate Action

Let's make change with
Ambition Lawrence Weston

GROW, COOK AND EAT LAWRENCE WESTON

CASE STUDY

Liza Echevarria



In partnership with Community Learning, Ambition Lawrence Weston ran an **EAT WELL, SAVE ENERGY** cooking course in 2024 as part of the Grow, Cook and Eat Community Climate Action Project. We had a learner on this course called Liza Echevarria. Liza enjoyed the course so much and used every opportunity to help and support other learners. During the course, she missed one session as she had a bereavement and had to go back to Peru. Liza said that at the funeral, she used the carrot, orange, and lentil soup recipe, and people attending enjoyed it so much she was asked for the recipe. Liza also brought some cakes she had baked to the last session and everyone tasted it and was so impressed. At the end of the course, Liza said she wanted to continue doing some structured cooking, and Ambition Lawrence Weston was happy to sponsor a course and pay for the ingredients as part of our Grow, Cook and Eat project. Liza worked with one of the Community Learning volunteers to produce a plan, and they went on to deliver a six-week course of their own. The Group also put together a WhatsApp group from the class so they could share ideas.

Following conversations around access to culturally appropriate food, Liza hosted an event for Food Justice Fortnight 2024 with a community meal for around 30-40 people celebrating culturally diverse foods and cuisines.

Liza has since gone on, with support from another local resident Beulah Thomson, to set up RITMO COLOR Y SABOR LTD which is her own catering company, and as part of her commitment to supporting residents, she runs a community Friday Night Supper Club monthly. With support from Feeding Bristol's household support fund and Grow, Cook and Eat Lawrence Weston we are able to offer 50 people a three course meal for a donation (if they are able to). Each three course menu celebrates food from around the world and different cultures.

Our Friday night supper club is about the celebration of food from around the world and bringing people together socially. The food that is used is as local as possible with most fruits, vegetables and herbs harvested from our community allotment. All food waste is taken back into our community composters that is used to grow on the allotment.



Impact of Grow, Cook and Eat Lawrence Weston

Total carbon savings to date		
Total for Land-Use Change:	0.31	tCO ₂ e
Total for Community Fridge:	4.83	tCO ₂ e
Total for Dietary Shift:	19.87	tCO ₂ e
Total for Zero Waste:	4.33	tCO ₂ e

Over the course of our three year project, the centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) have calculated what the carbon saving of Grow, Cook and Eat is. Over the three years our project has a total saving of 30 tCO₂e.

tCO₂e stands for tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent (e), putting 30 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e) into perspective with relatable UK-based examples helps a lot. Here's how you can break it down with everyday activities:

Car Travel

- Average UK petrol/diesel car emits ~0.17 kg CO₂e per minute of driving
- (based on ~180g CO₂e per km and an average speed of 50 km/h)
- 15-minute journey = ~2.6 kg CO₂e
- 30 tCO₂e = ~11,500 of these 15-minute journeys

UK Household Energy Use

- Average UK household emits ~2.7 tCO₂e per year from:
 - Heating
 - Electricity
 - Cooking
- 30 tCO₂e = equivalent to the annual energy use of ~11 UK households

Flights

- Return flight London to New York = ~1.7 tCO₂e per passenger
- 30 tCO₂e = ~17 return flights

Beef Consumption

- 1 kg of beef = ~27 kg CO₂e
- 30 tCO₂e = equivalent to eating ~1,110 kg (over 1 tonne) of beef

Fashion

- Typical fast fashion outfit (jeans, t-shirt, trainers) = ~25 kg CO₂e
- 30 tCO₂e = ~1,200 fast fashion outfits

Online Deliveries

- Each next-day delivery = ~0.5–1 kg CO₂e
- 30 tCO₂e = ~30,000–60,000 next-day parcels

How Much Carbon Have We Saved?

Car Travel



≈ **11,500**
15-minute journeys

UK Household Energy Use



≈ **11** annual energy
use of UK households

Flights



≈ **17** return flights
London–New York

Beef Consumption



≈ **1,110**
kg of beef

Fashion



≈ **1,200**
fast fashion outfits

Online Deliveries



≈ **30,000–60,000**
next-day parcels

Some Quotes From the Community

'I've learned how veg grows and loved watching this process. I loved the pond dipping & walk at Lawrence Weston Moor' - Naevia

'I have loved watching my children learn about nature and the allotments in a safe nurturing environment. They are so free when we are there! Happy, curious, always learning. This project is truly a blessing! Thank you! We feel more connected to nature and our local community.' – Roxy

'If you go to residents, explain what can be done, say there is advice and some help, then they turn up [and] meet each other! Surprise themselves and make their locality better' Rog

'[I have learned] About nature & how to grow vegetables and about the creepy crawlies in the pond.'

'It's been amazing to get my small son to grow veggies and herbs on our street - his joy at seeing transformation on his doorstep'



Donna and Sara in the Guardian Newspaper 2022, read the full story here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/dec/18/bristol-lawrence-weston-guardian-observer-charity-appeal-2022>