



To: The City of Edinburgh Council

2 April 2021

Dear sir or madam

*Re.: The Granton Community Gardeners' Asset Transfer Request for ownership of the Community Garden at 10 Wardieburn Road*

It gives me great pleasure to write to you in support of the Granton Gardeners' request for an asset transfer. As Founder and Chair of The Power of Food Festival, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Granton Gardeners are one of the main original inspirations behind the creation of Edinburgh's festival of community food growing. They have over the last 10 years been a remarkable force for positive change in the area.

I have watched them grow and turn several patches of land from unloved and uncared for uninspiring stretches of grass into beautiful and nourishing gardens. They have transformed the physical character of these corners of the neighbourhood and with that, brought joy to everyone who passes by.

Their way of working is such that they have been able to play on the strengths of everyone and to include some of the most isolated local residents. They have generated greater social connectedness, more social cohesion and a greater sense of pride in the area. Their innovative spirit and ingenuity have allowed a wide range of activities and events to take place for the enjoyment of all, their own members and the wider community. They have grown food, harvested, cooked, enjoyed and shared the fruit of their labour together. As well as the food-growing, they have ran regular community meals and events like the hugely popular annual Burn's night, the summer BBQ, and the Power of Food Festival celebrations. They have done this very successfully by building strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations. In more recent years, they have launched the Granton Community Bakery as a social enterprise venture, generating their own income and making the best bread in

Edinburgh available to the residents of Granton at whatever price they wish to pay for it. The integrity of their approach serves as an example for many.

Working at the heart of one of Edinburgh's communities facing the deepest socio-economic challenges, their action has been instrumental in reducing social isolation and loneliness, improving physical and mental health, addressing local and global environmental degradation, and of course offering a hyper local, seasonal, affordable, highly nutritious and super delicious source of food for local people.

The way the Granton Gardeners work and the outcomes of their efforts directly deliver on Edinburgh Council's and the Scottish Government's key strategic priorities.

During the Covid pandemic, they have stepped out of their usual activities and reached out to local people with emergency and vital support in the form of food deliveries and referrals for tailored support.

By investing in the Granton Gardeners' work through this asset transfer, the Council invests in Granton's capacity to recover from the crisis and for its longer-term resilience and sustainability.

The asset transfer would allow the Granton Gardeners to have greater control of their main site on Wardieburn Road. This control would increase their capacity to adapt flexibly and to respond to local needs without the delays caused by red tape and bureaucracy. A huge volunteer effort by and for the local community has gone into getting this far; the asset transfer would provide the Granton Gardeners with the long-term security and stability needed to make further improvements and investments into the site and optimise the community's shared ambitions for it. The garden is a strategic local asset for food production, education, and access to nature; it is critical that it is secured for the community's benefits for the long term.

I hope the above helps your consideration and deliberations about the Granton Gardeners' request. I wish them all the very best success for many years to come.

Yours faithfully,

Marie-Amélie Viatte

*Founder of The Power of Food Festival*

<https://poweroffoodfestival.wordpress.com/>