

Edinburgh, March 11 2021

To whom it may concern in the City of Edinburgh Council

We, Nourish Scotland, would like to express our strong support for progressing the work of the Granton Community Gardeners towards securing community ownership of their gardens at Wardieburn Road.

We have accompanied this project from time to time over the years and we are aware of **their ambitious achievements** to date from their start in 2018 (e.g. the supported gardening, the chicken co-op that resides there, the community events it organises, the swap shop, and more).

We are particularly impressed by the **strong basis they have in their local community** and their commitment to making it work for them. This is evident from the number of people they have succeeded in engaging voluntarily with their work for so many hours over these many years, the range of people they support in many rich ways, and their perseverance and success around establishing this range of strong community initiatives in what is undoubtedly a challenging context.

Their work to date clearly addresses a wide range of important local priorities. They offer anyone who shows interest within the community the opportunity to engage in active discussion and hands-on activities around a range of topics such as food poverty and access to fresh veg, health inequalities and diet-related disease, the role of green space for mental health, the loss of biodiversity, and the need to create spaces for wildlife. All of these topics are huge issues in this community.

There are few opportunities in this area of this kind: The Gardens are almost unique in this area (alongside NorthEdinburghArts) in allowing local residents of all ages to participate in food growing, engage in hands-on food education, discuss the links between health and sustainable food production, and see for themselves the results of efforts to restore biodiversity. This area of North Edinburgh does not have much green space, and especially not green space such as these gardens that is developed and protected and brings people together for safe engagement around this important work.

The Community Gardeners also have a key role in an active network of local organisations that engages with the community around these and other community challenges. Additionally, they have established themselves as an important link for organisations that are based outside the area that wish to work with this community.

We fully support their ambitions for furthering this work on a more serious footing. Securing the basis of their achievements by applying for a Community Asset Transfer of the Gardens is a logical next step that would ensure longer term commitment and continuity. It will also provide the basis they need to attract funding and take their activities forward into a more long-term, professional direction and possibly on a larger and wider scale. We are excited to hear about their more detailed business plans. We fully agree that securing the plot acknowledges the importance of their work and establishes it more formally as a local strategic asset, whether this be in terms of the food it produces, the access it provides to gardening and growing, or a community meeting place focused around a range of important educational and well-being activities.

We are keen to continue our support for this ambitious project, directly and indirectly, as they develop, for example with publicity and networking, support with management or other operational matters.

We hope very much that The City of Edinburgh Council feels able to support this project as well, in ways that it can thrive and produce early exciting outcomes.

If we can help things along with further information or otherwise, please feel free to contact Nourish Scotland at info@nourishscotland.org.uk