

Monksdale Road Allotments in Bath

■ Summary



Allotments provide a number of health and social benefits but are often inaccessible for the people they could most benefit. The Council recognised there was no provision for disabled people. Local groups were invited to attend a meeting to gauge the level of interest and potential involvement in improving accessibility.

Property Services were approached to look at the feasibility of developing an area of unused ground on the allotments at Monksdale Road and to seek funding from the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) budget.

A scheme was put forward in the 2008/09 DDA programme and subsequently approved by the Corporate Equalities Group.

■ The problems and how we tackled them



Consultation took place from the outset, so that the new allotments met people's needs. The works involved re-grading the ground to provide level access, the construction of an access road and parking, the construction of raised beds at differing heights to take account of the needs of the wide spectrum of disabilities and the erection of an accessible compost toilet.

■ Who was involved?

Five groups were consulted; Headway, Community Options Team (Mental Health), Bath Area Play Project (Disabled children), Carrswood Day Centre, RNID and Mind. The groups were very keen to be involved with this project.

■ Outcomes and impact



Because some disabled people feel excluded from society by their differences the social aspects of allotment gardening have been valuable to them.

The project has been a success and now many disabled people are involved. A hospital Horticultural Therapist visits the site to help the user groups. The Probation Service and Young Offenders visit twice a week to dig the ground for some groups who are only able to sow seeds and plant. They also carry out minor repairs and any other manual work that is needed.

The local community and non disabled allotment holders often mingle with the groups helping and giving them advice as well as protecting the site from any potential vandalism.

Mike is an allotment user supported by Bath MIND. Mike says "it gets me out of the house and stops me staring at the same four walls. It gives me something to do". Mike was not involved in gardening before this. He has gained increased physical activity in a healthy outdoor environment along with improved knowledge of the benefits of growing your own fruit and vegetables.

■ Next steps

Since completion in 2008 the site has been developed further by the construction of a shed made from trees that had to be felled from the RVP botanical gardens and a poly tunnel donated by Lay Hill Prison and erected by the Probation Service.

There is scope to develop the site further to allow more groups and individuals to join by securing additional Council and/or private funding.

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