

Leith Community Crops in Pots

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Land reform review,

This land is your land,

Leith Community Crops in Pots is in entire agreement with the “This Land is Your Land” petition (see <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/land-for-landless-scots-for-grow-your-own/>). We would also draw the LRRG's attention to:

- (1) The work done by Greenspace Scotland ( <http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/our-projects.aspx> ), including their Social Return on Investment analyses, which demonstrate the multiple benefits of access to greenspace for communities and individuals.
- (2) The considerable evidence of the benefits of contact with nature for children referenced from our website (see <http://www.leithcommunitycropsinpots.com/adventure-in-nature.html> ), not least this fact sheet on the benefits of gardening for children: <http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/CYefactsheet3gardening2009.pdf> .
- (3) The tremendous positive impact of such projects as Incredible Edible Todmorden ( <http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/> ).
- (4) The current plight of pollinating insects, and the role that such projects as the wildflower meadow planted in Inverleith Park, Edinburgh, can play in rectifying this.

Bearing these things in mind, we would like the government to encourage councils to survey the current use of their public parks and other greenspace. While lawn can provide valuable space for games and picnics, how much is really necessary? Lawns can be expensive to maintain and could be described as green deserts. Underutilised lawns, and even small patches of land bordering roads and on roundabout islands, could be advertised as available for community use, such as wildflower meadows, other wildlife habitats, community food-growing initiatives, allotments and to introduce schoolchildren to gardening and nature in general. Local groups could be invited to bid for the use of these spaces (in the sense that they would propose uses for the land, not in the sense that they would pay for this use), their bids being measured against a set of criteria that would take into account the range of benefits such initiatives would have for the greater community. Alternatively, groups' proposals could be submitted to public vote. As councils would save money on maintenance costs, it might even be possible for them to offer grants to successful bidders. The property could remain in public ownership and the projects reviewed periodically. Should they fail to deliver the benefits they promised, a new set of bids could be invited. Thinking more broadly, a national competition could be launched, to identify the best individual bids and the best councils with regard to their implementation of this scheme.