

Feasibility Study for an Urban Social Farm in Nenagh

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Abbreviations

ART: Attention Restoration Theory

BRS: Ballyhoura Rural Services

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

DS: Down Syndrome

LCETB: Limerick and Clare Educational Training Board

LTI: Local Training Initiative

NUSF: Nenagh Urban Social Farm

SA: Small area

SF: Social Farm

SICAP: Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme

SOFI: Social Farming Ireland

STH: Social and Therapeutic Horticulture

Executive Summary

The idea of Nenagh Urban Social Farm (NUSF) came about through the need for a therapeutic space based outdoors, open to the community and in nature. The board of NUSF comprises men and women who, for different reasons, have experienced the lack of appropriate Green Care services for themselves or people they care for, knowing as they do, that nature is a powerful healer.

This feasibility study encompasses the vision, which is

“Nenagh Urban Social Farm aims to promote the development of people, using therapeutic horticulture in a holistic manner, while respecting the autonomy of the individual in an educational and relaxing environment.” NUSF,2019

This firmly puts the person at the centre of the project. It puts nature as the healer, with the participation of services and professionals to support the vision of a relaxing, educational space.

The growth of Social Farms in Ireland and throughout the world is a response to a deep need to reconnect with nature. The term ‘Biophilia’ came about as a recognition of this, and many theories have since developed supporting the idea of Green Care, the umbrella term that includes any nature-based therapy. ‘Green prescriptions’ are increasing in the UK and other countries that have a longer history developing Green Care options. GPs prescribe this option where a link has been made with a local Green Care provider.

Nenagh is a large town, with nearly 9000 people living in it, and like many towns in Ireland has it’s own areas of deprivation (Pobal, 2016). As well as that, the many support services in the town have a catchment that goes beyond North Tipperary into counties Limerick, Clare and Offaly. The support services that were contacted in our survey cater for over 2000 service users in the Nenagh area. The majority see some of their service users as suitable for referral to NUSF. Those that do not have the finances say they would support the project with donations, management support and more. Section 5 covers the surveys and analysis carried out.

Having researched models similar to the idea of NUSF, it is fair to say that Nenagh Urban Social Farm will run along the lines of a THRIVE UK garden. Gardens such as Festina Lente in Bray have also developed using the THRIVE approach. THRIVE is the leading UK charity for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture in the region. There are over 600 Thrive gardens in the UK, in many different settings (e.g., hospitals or prisons), with three that operate as regional centres. Their remit is to run groups for service users, accepting referrals from individuals themselves as well as services. This is only a template, NUSF will forge their own path, responding to local need and supports.

Regarding the produce that comes from NUSF garden, the overwhelming response from retail outlets, including restaurants and shops, was that there is a big demand for locally produced, chemical-free fruit and vegetables, as well as other products such as honey, eggs and flowers. Commercially, NUSF will decide where it lies on the ‘Care versus Commercial’ spectrum, as

outlined under the models of social farms (Section 4). Where a social farm (SF) opts more towards a 'Care' approach, more social funding will be required from statutory bodies like the HSE and ETB, or organisations that have a care or education budget. If it adopts a more commercial approach, time spent guiding, directing and encouraging service users is directed towards production. Both models have merit and both models operate successfully. The vision and mission of NUSF will direct the evolution of the model.

Financially, NUSF must be viable. From surveys, partners in the community have shown support in principle, through resources such as funding, land donation, expertise, equipment and more. Other income sources are outlined under Funding and Finances in section 6.

Staff are core to this venture, and so the role of the manager, or head gardener, will include technical know-how, an understanding of social inclusion and good communications. An administrator will support the office-based supports required. Over time other roles can be developed, including the role of volunteers. The job of the board will be to work as a team, to work to their strengths and to recruit such supports that are needed to make NUSF a viable project. For this reason, good governance, such as structures, policies, a constitution and good communications, are what will keep this project safe into the future.

The development of the project is key, and planning a well-thought out garden will dictate what happens for years to come. Contracting professionals to design the area is highly recommended. Support for setting up are available through Social Farming Ireland (SOFI) and their handbook for Social Farming contains essential information (SoFAB, 2014.) There is an emerging support network for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture practitioners, referenced later.

The call of NUSF is to the community of Nenagh and surrounding areas, to respond in a way that creates vital links to the project. Funding through referrals and commercial sales are essential. Donations of time, land, tools, management supports, tutors, will enrich the whole community through a mutual vision. This vision, as outlined above, puts the vulnerable, the marginalised and the isolated person close to the heart of what matters to Nenagh Urban Social Farm.

Marian Clarke and Anne Maher, November 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Nenagh Urban Social Farm feasibility study has been commissioned because of a need for a space of social inclusion and therapeutic intervention based outdoors, in Nature.

This feasibility study examines the following:

- A survey of local service provider and client groups in the Nenagh area
- The rationale for an urban social farm in Nenagh
- The need for a social farm or similar based on a 1hectare site
- The willingness of local services to engage
- The funding available from all sources
- Financial projections and cost benefit analysis
- The market for fresh produce
- Cropping plans and Animal Therapy options
- Proposals for multi-purpose spaces on the farm
- Organisational structure including staffing and volunteers
- Visits to similar projects in the country
- Conclusions

The following study examines these and other related thematic areas, with surveys, financial projections, academic studies and site visits to similar projects in the country. For methodology, see appendix 3.

1. THE CASE FOR SOCIAL FARMS AND GREEN CARE

1.1. WHAT IS SOCIAL FARMING?

Social farming is a support offered by farmers and their families to people in the community looking for a way to improve health and social inclusion. This happens usually with a service provider, as part of a community approach to wellness and recovery. There are no internationally recognised definitions of social farming, however, in a 2009 study by Di Iacovo and O'Connor the following covers the concept quite comprehensively:

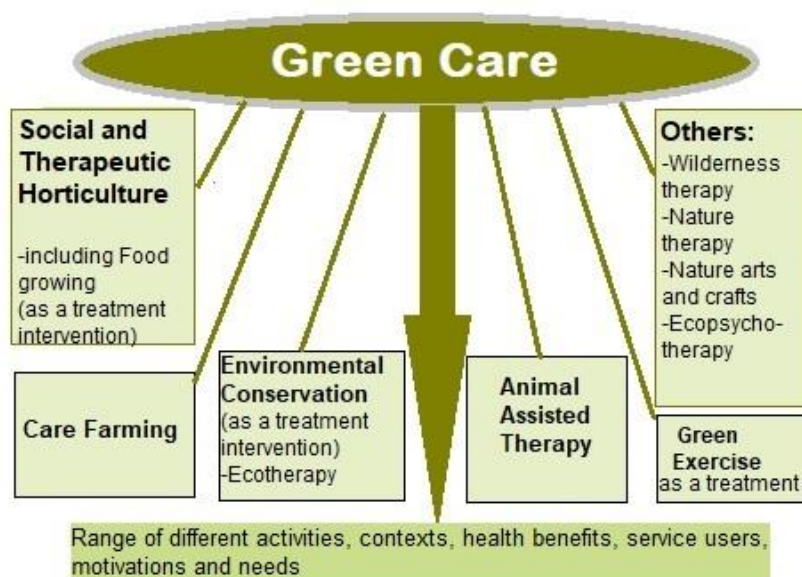
“Social Farming (SF) is both a traditional and innovative use of agriculture. It includes all activities that use agricultural resources, both from plants and animals, in order to promote, or to generate, therapy, rehabilitation, social inclusion, education and social services in rural areas. However, it is strictly related to farm activities where small groups of people can stay and work together with family farmers and social practitioners.” *Kinsella et al, 2014*

Social Farming (SF) is also known as Care Farming. SF, along with other therapeutic interventions, fall under the umbrella term of Green Care. Green Care includes any therapy related to nature, such as Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH), Forest Bathing (walking in forests or nature), Equine Therapy, Environmental Conservation, among other up and coming approaches to wellness and recovery.

There are three key aspects to Social Farming. They are:

- the need for meaningful activity
- in natural surroundings and
- within a social context.

The project at NUSF includes all three, with a strong leaning towards Social and Therapeutic Horticulture, or STH.



Green care as an umbrella term, adapted from Bragg and Atkins 2016

1.II GROWTH OF SOCIAL FARMS IN IRELAND

From a low base, predominantly in the border counties of the Republic, Social Farming has increased, especially in the last two years. In 2017, Social Farming Ireland delivered almost 1700 placement days to over 120 participants on 28 farms, across 11 counties in the country. 648 of these placement days were delivered to participants from mental health services. In 2018, there were over 2600 placement days for almost 300 participants across 22 counties. Approximately 35% of this activity was in the mental health sector. (Social Farming Ireland, 2019)

The Social Farming Across Borders (SoFAB) project was undertaken in the region encompassing the Border Counties of Ireland and all of Northern Ireland between October 2011 and September 2014. It was an EU INTERREG IVA funded project and was led by the School of Agriculture & Food Science, University College Dublin in partnership with Queen's University Belfast and Leitrim Development Company. The project had its origins in a previous EU project, known as the SoFAB Project1 (Supporting Policies for Social Farming in Europe, 2006-2008)

Though the Social Farming Across Borders project focussed on the border counties, in recent years, in the Munster area alone, there is increasing interest from farmers and service providers alike. As of October 2019, Social Farming Ireland have 16 social farms in Munster on their website, excluding Kerry, with the Kerry Social Farming website reporting 16 in the county. This gives a total of 32 in the province, and growing.

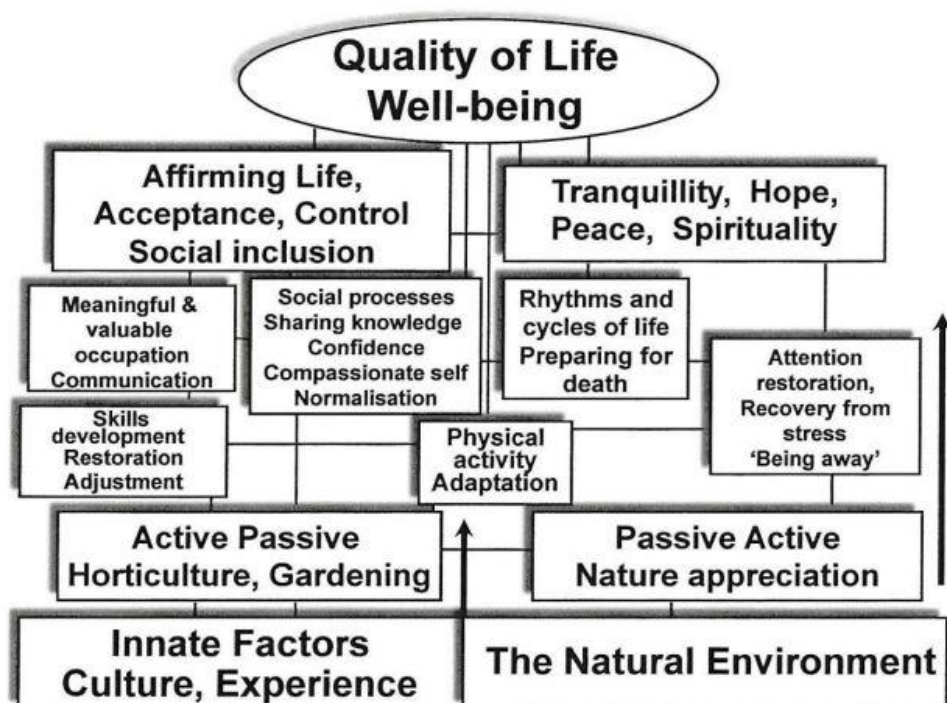
As the potential becomes more evident, and outcomes have been measured, local development agencies, for example, the Department of the Community and Rural Development, administered through LEADER programmes around the country, as well as the Department of Agriculture through the Rural Development Programmes, have invested in this up and coming socio-rural infrastructure.

It is evident that growth in social farms will continue for the foreseeable future. Trends in the UK show an increase from 180 social farms in 2012 to 240 in 2015, an increase of 33%. In Ireland, studies have yet to track the growth in numbers (Crowley et al, 2017), but it is reasonable to say that the trend will be similar here.

2. EVIDENCE BASED OUTCOMES OF SOCIAL FARMS

2.1. THE BIOPHILIA HYPOTHESIS AND A.R.T.

The Biophilia hypothesis (E.O.Wilson in 1984), proposes that exposure to nature is not only enjoyable but can also help us improve our focus and ability to concentrate. ART (Attention Restoration Theory) was a development of the Biophilia hypothesis, which suggests that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life.



The Biophilia effect, adapted from Sempik et al, 2003

A.R.T. has the added theory that *negative* consequences potentially follow from a separation from nature and that a wide range of positive outcomes are associated with seeing or spending time in green spaces (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989)

This theory has become one of the pillars behind the theories that support all forms of Green Care, including Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH).

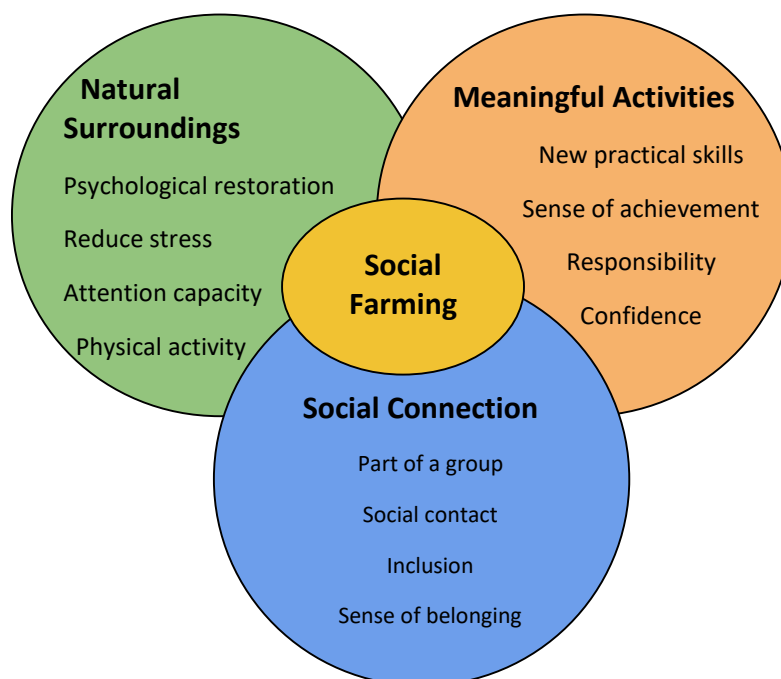
“STH is a process through which plants, gardening activities, and the innate closeness we all feel towards nature are used as professional vehicles in professionally conducted programmes of therapy and rehabilitation”. (Davis, quoted in Simson and Straus, 1998)

Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) itself has a long history, including the farms that were used for both physical and mental health in institutions since the 1800s. Since then, and with universities across the US and Europe investing in research, outcomes are being measured and published.

At present, the University of Coventry, and THRIVE UK run the diploma and Masters in Social Therapeutic Horticulture. In Ireland, STH is being offered as part of some Horticulture degrees, and as a module on some Occupational Therapy degrees. Organisations like NOTS (National Organic Training Service), Festina Lente in Bray, Co. Wicklow and GIY Waterford are also offering STH courses for practitioners.

2. II. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL FARMING AND SOCIAL AND THERAPEUTIC HORTICULTURE

According to Bragg and Atkins (2016), it is the combination of the three aspects named in Section 1 that make social farming a successful model of rehabilitation or therapy. Namely meaningful activities, in natural surroundings and in a social context.



The three essential aspects of Social Farming Adapted from Bragg and Atkins 2016

The benefits of Green Care, according to Bragg and Atkins, by which they specify Social Farming, Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) and Environmental Conservation, are:

- Psychological restoration and increased general mental wellbeing
- Reduction in depression, anxiety and stress related symptoms
- Improvement in dementia-related symptoms
- Improved self-esteem, confidence and mood
- Increased attentional capacity and cognition
- Improved happiness, satisfaction and quality of life
- Sense of peace, calm or relaxation

- Feelings of safety and security
- Increased social contact, inclusion and sense of belonging
- Increase in work skills, meaningful activity and personal achievement

Physical	Cognitive	Psychological	Social
Improve immune responses	Enhance Cognitive Function	Improve quality of life	Improve social integration
Decrease stress	Improve attention		Increase social interaction
Decrease heart rate	Improve goal achievement	Improve self-esteem	Provide healthier patterns of social functioning
Promote physical health	Improve Concentration	Improve sense of well-being	
Improve fine and gross motor skills	Stimulate memory	Reduce stress	
		Reduce anxiety	
		Improve mood	
		Alleviate depression	

Table 1: Benefits of STH

(Festina Lente website, 2019)

2.III. AROUND EUROPE

The movement of Green Care is spreading widely across Europe. Countries that have a longer experience running it include our neighbours in the UK and The Netherlands. With an eye on this, other countries are sharing their experiences and tuning in to the cost benefit of running such programmes, compared to existing health models. Quickly, Green Care is being added to the options that health services can offer in these countries. (For cost-benefit see section 6)

2.III.A UK

THRIVE is a UK charity, and is the organisation most linked to Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) in this part of the world, with 40 years of experience.

STH uses gardening to meet clinically defined goals. STH is particularly relevant for the promotion of independence, health and well-being amongst groups and communities of vulnerable people. This can be achieved through active as well as passive involvement. In

other words, sitting in the garden, or walking and observing plants, which is enough to enhance well-being.

THRIVE uses the occupational therapy model for measuring needs and outcomes. In January 2019, THRIVE reported that the NHS was recruiting 1000 staff to help GPs with *social prescribing*. Social prescribing is used for conditions that medication cannot mend, for example, isolation, loneliness and financial worries. (THRIVE, 2019)



Organised therapeutic horticulture programmes, by trained professionals, have shown increased self-esteem, social and work skills, improved literacy and numeracy skills, increased general well-being, confidence and social interaction.

Growing Health is another example of a project, run by Garden Organic and Sustain in the UK, to see how community food growing can be used for well-being. (Bragg and Atkin, 2016)

THRIVE UK

Growing Health encompasses all forms of community food growing in both urban and rural settings including any of the following types of projects: STH, community spaces, community supported agriculture and care farms, residential and care homes and shared gardens

2.III.B THE NETHERLANDS

Social Farming has a longer history in The Netherlands than in most other European countries. In Holland, Social Farming started in 1990s. Better funding was introduced from 1999 when formal connection was made at policy level between agriculture and the social care sector. Less than a decade later, there were almost 800 Social Farms and approx. 12,000 service users who had benefited from Social Farming (Jorgensen 2018, citing Hassink et al. 2007; Hine et al. 2008) See chart below.

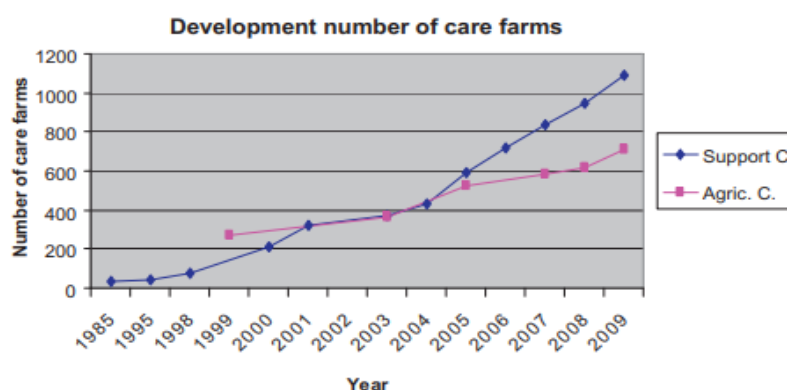


TABLE 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUMBER OF CARE FARMS IN THE NETHERLANDS BY THE YEAR 2009.

The graph shows the trend of the increase as recorded by the agricultural census that year (Agric. C) and as recorded by the database of the national support centre agriculture and care (Support c.) (Hassink et al, 2013)

2.III.C COMMUNITY GARDENS, BARCELONA

Urban gardens can be seen as urban spaces that act as connectors between people, between communities and between people and nature. They improve health and well-being. (Lisbon Report, 2014)

The study points to “the need to recognize the role of urban gardens in urban sustainability policies and initiatives”

Similar to the results presented for Barcelona, the study in Madrid identified 18 ecosystem services, most of them socio- cultural. Within these 18, the most valued benefits were “biophilia”, “environmental education”, “social cohesion”, “entertainment and leisure”, “provision of quality food” and “calmness and meditation”. As in the case of Barcelona, community gardens in Madrid offer the possibility to reconnect city inhabitants with nature and within themselves.

3. THE CASE FOR NUSF

Mental health statistics show a dramatic increase in anxiety in young people since the My World study was carried out in 2012 by University College Dublin and Jigsaw. The study found that the proportion of adolescents (aged 12 to 19) reporting severe anxiety has doubled from 11% to 22% since the first survey. (thejournal.ie, November 2019)

Levels of reported severe anxiety in young adults (aged 18 to 25) has seen an increase of 11%, from 15% in the first survey to 26% in the latest one.

Over the five years 2011 to 2016 the Central Statistics Office (CSO) reported a rise of 28.7% of people with a psychological or emotional condition. (iacp.ie, 2018)

Mental health problems cost Ireland over €8.2 billion a year (OECD report). Ireland rates joint third highest for mental health issues across 36 countries in Europe, with 18.5 % having a mental health issue at any one time, or 2 out of every 11 people in Ireland.

Our own mental health services are not coping with the numbers seeking support, with the Psychiatric Nurses Association reporting overcrowding in Waterford Hospital (pna.ie, Oct 2019)

The cost of mental health on people's lives is immeasurable, but in monetary terms the OECD report says it is costing 4.2% of GDP to the countries in Europe. From a financial point of view prevention is better than cure. Green care provides a treatment programme that is both effective and cost effective.

Both public and private sectors have justifiable connections to the vision of NUSF and need to be explored in detail as required.

3.1. TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL

In the 2015 Community and Social Inclusion Development Plan 2015-2020, under 'Actions arising from identification areas with poor community sustainability and the highest level of Social Deprivation', Nenagh is recognised as a priority area after Tipperary, Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel. (p.71) There is a population of 1977 living in Small Areas clusters with a disadvantaged or very disadvantaged score (p.69). These figures fall mainly in the Nenagh East Urban and Nenagh West Urban small areas (SAs) (p.68), most of these being in Local Authority housing estates throughout the county (p.70)

As part of its key findings regarding sports and community facilities, Tipperary County Council says that facilities for those with a disability are limited. The perception that improvements are not needed may be a reflection of a failure of understanding of need rather than a reflection of the adequacy of facilities in this regard. (Tipperary County Council Plan, 2015)

This indicates the need for more social inclusion as part of an overall plan as laid out by Tipperary County Council, especially in the area of public amenities, such as an urban social farm or therapeutic garden.

The Acquisition of Land (Allotments) Act, 1926, enable local authorities in urban areas to "provide land for allotments with the intention of assisting the urban poor."

The benefits are outlined in sections (1 and 2) and are fast becoming a pillar of social capital, ecology and sustainability, not only in Europe, but worldwide.

Suitable areas for a community garden or allotment must first be audited for aspect, soil suitability (preferably fertile soil), access to water and services as well as proximity to the town of Nenagh.

3.II. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROGRAMME (SICAP)

There is strong evidence that Social Farming and SICAP have the same goals, values and activities. Individuals that engage with local development companies will find “tailored and individualised programmes” that suit a diversity of needs. (Social Farming Ireland, 2018)

“SICAP is a social inclusion programme which assists both individuals and groups through a two-pronged approach; supporting communities and supporting individuals. The task of Programme Implementers (PIs) is to reflect the broad scope of the programme in their actions and use programme funding to strengthen communities and improve people’s lives. SICAP aims to address high and persistent levels of deprivation through targeted and innovative, locally-led approaches. It targets and supports those who are disadvantaged in Irish society and less likely to use mainstream services” (Pobal, 2018-2022)

Client groups that have successfully participated in social farms, with positive outcomes include youth (Pobal, 2017), those living in rural isolation (SoFI, 2018) and those dealing with mental health difficulties (SoFI, 2018)

3.III. THE HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE (HSE)

In line with key policy documents in recent years recognising the role of community initiatives for health to give the widest choice and options, supports are being mobilised currently for vulnerable sectors of society including people with disabilities. Emphasis on person centred initiatives along with personalised budgets provides a policy framework in which NUSF can operate. Set out as standards there are many angles in which NUSF can address identified areas of priority such as the New Directions policy document, 2012:

Standard 2.12: Premises and facilities are designed to support the delivery of community-focussed, high quality, person-centred, and safe services and supports.

Standard 4.1: The service provider develops and promotes a culture of quality, person-centredness, community inclusion and active citizenship throughout the service. (Dept. of Health 2012)

One in four people will avail of a mental health service at some stage of their lives. Statistics on suicide identify a 10.9 per 100,000 rate in Ireland (Connecting for Life 2015) A holistic view of mental illness with an emphasis on meaningful integration and participation in community life and autonomy of care are the recurring themes of policy documents including the Vision of Change policy document and The Mental Health Commission Strategic Plan 2016-2018 (MHCSP 2016). Person centred approaches which build on local resources and immediate social networks are acknowledged. NUSF can facilitate community integration through

collaboration with care co-ordinators to identify the community systems that will best support social inclusion and self-determination for the service user. Priorities for mental health outlined in Vision for Change policy document, include supporting local communities' capacity to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour and improve access to effective therapeutic interventions.

Integrate service users into their local community supports so that social support is provided in normative community facilities. (Dept. of Health, 2006)

3. IV. LEADER

Since 1991, LEADER has supported rural communities in the European Union with the resources for local development. of their area. Currently, local community groups in Ireland can apply for funding under the €250 million budget of grant aid under the LEADER Programme for 2014-2020.

As a social enterprise, in a rural town, with a focus on social inclusion and local biodiversity, NUSF falls into all of the LEADER themes until 2020. Many social farms in the country have availed of LEADER funding, see SOFI. See also North Tipperary Development Company <http://www.ntdc.ie/programmes/rural-development-programme-leader-2014-2020/>

Grant Aid is awarded under the following themes:

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation	Social Inclusion	Rural Environment
Rural Tourism	Basic Services targeted at hard to reach communities	Protection and sustainable use of water resources
Enterprise Development	Rural Youth	Local Biodiversity
Rural Towns		Renewable energy
Broadband		

TABLE 3: LEADER PROGRAMME 2014-2020

3. V. DEPARTMENT OF RURAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In recent months the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland has been developed (NSEPI 2019). This will bring forward funding opportunities.

Community Services Programme (CSP) The Community Services Programme (CSP) supports community companies and co-operatives to deliver local social, economic and environmental services that tackle disadvantage by providing a co-funding contribution towards the cost of employing a manager and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. (Pobal website)

3. VI. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Nenagh boasts some unique corporate businesses that have built the local economy including Abbey Machinery, Carey Glass and Mackey Plant Construction. Many large companies now have active CSR initiatives which are aligned with voluntary groups visions for projects. Corporate Social Responsibility is increasingly recognised as a tangible benefit for communities and can be actively linked with the vision of NUSF. CSR is a process with the aim to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere who may also be considered as stakeholders.

4. MODELS FOR NUSF: COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE VERSUS CARE AGRICULTURE

THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE COMMERCIAL AND THE CARE FARM

4.1) SOCIAL FARM MODELS OF PRACTICE

As models of Social Farming differ across the country, three main models have emerged.

They can be classified as: Mainly Care farms, Both Care and Commercial, Mainly commercial.

When it comes to the focus of the interventions, there are what are called four 'orientations' (Crowley et al citing Sempik). These are the care approaches taken. They are:

1. Healthcare: Focus is treatment and therapy including sheltered workshops
2. Social Rehabilitation: Life skills and reconnection to the community
3. Education: of primary school children, or other cohorts
4. Employment: Community Gardens, Social inclusion, skills training

Based on the Irish experience, local communities have been inspired by social farming models to create bespoke projects adapted to their own needs. In consultation with these groups there is much inspiration to be drawn from their experience.

Model of Farm	Profile of Service Users	Example	Orientation	Sources of Income
Mainly Care Farm	Mental Health, Youth Adults with Intellectual disability Adults with Down Syndrome Disability: Children and Adults	Galtee Clinic, South Tipperary Ferrybank Allotment Holders Field of Dreams Festina Lente	Education & Healthcare Social Rehabilitation Employment Education Healthcare	HSE, Tusla, philanthropy Social capital exchange for work, an extension of Belmont Social Farm National Lottery, Dept. of Agriculture, Pobal Ability programme, fundraising HSE, ETB, Pobal
Equally care and commercial	Youth not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) Mental Health, residential	Doon Social Farm	Education	ETB, Pobal, sales, donations HSE, Philanthropy, Farm

		Sli Eile, N.Cork	Social Rehabilitation	sales
Mainly Commercial Farm	All client groups, mainly adults.	Belmont Social Farm Most family social farms	Employment Social Rehabilitation	Dairy herd, HSE/Brothers of Charity Dept. of Agriculture Pilot scheme 2014-2020 Farm sale, Service providers e.g. Daughters of Charity

TABLE 4: MODELS OF SOCIAL FARM PRACTICE

4. II. COMMUNITY GARDENS AND SOCIAL AND THERAPEUTIC HORTICULTURE

4.II.A. BELMONT SOCIAL FARM AND ALLOTMENTS

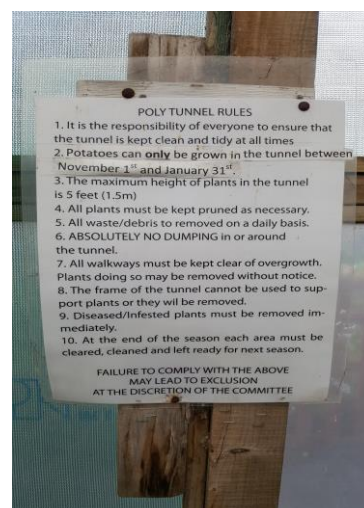


Entrance to Ferrybank Allotments

Belmont Social Farm operates as part of the Brothers of Charity social enterprise. It's client group is adults with intellectual disabilities. Belmont provides training opportunities like cooking, horticulture and farming, along with other supports to prepare service users for jobs and independence.

Alongside the farm is Parkside Nurseries. This provides training and occupation for service users in commercial nursery techniques, like potting up and taking cuttings. It is in receipt of subsidies from the

HSE, the nursery falls into the 'Care Farm' model, where the therapeutic aspect is the focus. The farm also hosts Ferrybank Allotment Project. This is an area of one hectare that is divided up into 40



The allotment holders work with the service users, and right, polytunnel rules for all allotment holders

the Allotment group, allotment holders work with the service users. This happens once a week on a Tuesday. Service users will carry out seasonal jobs with the guidance and support of the allotment holder. This in turn builds social capital, with allotment holders making positive relationships with a population that they would not normally interact with. Allotment holders in this case are all Garda vetted, as required by Tusla when working with vulnerable adults.

The polytunnel space is shared equally among allotment holders, with benches divided and numbered into potting-up areas, as well as the main bed which allows small growing area also.

Kitchen facilities are in a communal canteen area, here home and hygiene lessons take place and food is eaten together.

4.II.B. FIELD OF DREAMS CORK & LAOIS

In September 2017 The Field of Dreams Cork held its official opening following a very busy few months from the sod turning earlier in the same year. A significant achievement from a group of dedicated people who had the clear vision to utilise a care farm model in developing a solution to address the problem of providing real learning opportunities and employment for adults with Down syndrome. A feasibility study was carried out to find out what the parents wanted for their families and the concept of the therapeutic horticulture was followed through as the platform to support the adults. Plans to support 8 adults with DS through the learning programmes to employment were identified and adhered to. Establishing realistic and achievable objectives for the service users was a critical key to its success.

Now in its 3rd year of operation the trajectory of development and learning from this unique project is noteworthy. The benefits of SF as outlined in evaluation reports are echoed here also. Noted particularly is the physical resilience of the learners who have become more active and built more stamina to maintain concentration on tasks. Mental wellbeing has also

improved incrementally in the group as a result of the programme. Outcomes have exceeded expectations with the original group of 8 now all employed.

Ensuring a great board managed the project was pivotal with diverse skills and networks to call on through Down Syndrome (DS) Cork. It is acknowledged that DS Cork was long established before this project and was therefore at an advantage for leading a unique project.



Participants on the Life and Work Skills programme at Field of Dreams Cork at work in one of the polytunnels. Here they are working towards QQI L3 in Planting & Potting by hand.

Skills of construction and project management were fortuitously provided pro bono and this led to other company networks responding in tandem. Liaison between the Association and Project Manager was an area that had to be managed well though effectively a steep learning curve for the individuals involved. Planning for these roles has to be factored in for building projects. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) aspect of local companies has proven to be a valuable resource for voluntary hours when working on the build, development and maintenance of the site. It is recognised that Cork has a bigger pool of support to draw from and how the momentum built from the incremental activity on site helped to build support and enthusiasm for the project.



Fundraising for Laois Field of Dreams Tractor Run

Funding has been received from the National Lottery, Department of Agriculture, Pobal Ability programme and local fundraising efforts. A fee structure is also in place for the students which works out at an average of €26 a day. Attendance has been remarkably consistent attributed in no small way to the buy in fee structure. Plans are in place for addition of animals such as sheep and chickens as part of the care farm vision. It is envisaged that in time The Field Of Dreams will be centre of excellence for adults with DS and will be a direct channel for individualised funding models.

Building on these insights to becoming a sustainable business has Laois Down Syndrome launching their own Field of Dreams project. They also echo the same problem of meaningful and purposeful work for adults with DS through integration in society. However, they are taking a longer view of a cradle to grave strategy with a strong emphasis on sustainability.

They have secured a 4acre site through Laois County Council. Initially they had been offered a site in the grounds of the mental hospital but refused. Following a well thought out strategy to enlist the support of their local councillors they were able to demonstrate the commitment of the families to the concept. Securing the land for a long term lease has now given them the freedom to think big and have plans to provide a range of services including horticulture, arts and crafts, cafe and charity shop. Enlisting core tenants on site to secure a rental income is also part of their sustainability strategy. Fundraising initiatives are underway.

4.II.C. DOON SOCIAL FARM



Doon Social Farm started operating in February 2019, and sprang from the need to address rural social isolation. Looking for innovative ways to tackle this issue, Ballyhoura Rural Services

(BRS) were inspired by the SF model. They were fortuitous to be gifted buildings and land through a local Mercy convent. This has shaped the direction of the model being utilised.



They run an LTI (Local Training Initiative) and this is funded by the LCETB. Two full time positions, as well as materials receive funding. Starting in February 2020, it will provide QQI Level 4 Horticulture to its service users, who are 18 to 25 year olds who are not in education, employment or training.

Doon Social Farm finds itself halfway along the 'Care or Commercial' spectrum of social farms. As a social enterprise it must generate enough income to keep running. A small percentage of costs is covered by commercial sales. The rest depends on securing funding.

While the vision and objectives of BRS were broader than the Field of Dreams model this did open a gateway to accessing many resources from which more defined objectives could be implemented. As NUSF does not currently have the resources to guide the objectives it is feasible to maintain a broader vision with a view to channelling this when the time is appropriate.

4.II.D. FESTINA LENTE, BRAY

Festina Lente, which means 'Hasten Slowly', is situated just outside Bray, Co. Wicklow. It has an old Victorian walled garden, ornamental gardens, garden centre and stables. Horse riding and Equine therapy are well established. Social and Therapeutic horticulture (STH) happens informally here, while staff and others await the Level 6 STH training course starting in March 2020. When this happens, client groups can be referred in to the gardens for STH as therapy.

Currently there are various workshops and training opportunities running for the general public, which is a source of revenue, but also the Transition Training Programme, which is a level 3 QQI award. To be eligible for this course you need to be over 18, have a learning disability and are physically able for the different modules, you will complete a Level 3 General Learning Award.



Vegetable gardens, Festina Lente.

The gardens now include a sensory trail in nature designed by a landscape gardener and planted up with staff and volunteers.

Funding for the social inclusion part of this project comes from Pobal, The Department of Rural and Community Development, the HSE and Kildare. Wicklow Educational Training Board (KWETB) fund training programmes. Other sources of income are horse riding, the garden centre which also sells manure from the horses, events like birthday parties, a snack bar, and they offer 3 workshops which people can book into, including Kitchen Gardening, Plant Workshop and Soap making. These cost €10 including tour of the garden.

4.III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AS THERAPY

The concept of Environmental Conservation as a health intervention is happening formally in the UK through organisations like The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and the Natural Health Service in Liverpool. The National Trust also runs some STH programmes for its volunteers, and the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) has started a GP referral service in Dorset.

Irish Conservation Volunteers





The Wildlife Trusts in the UK also provide a green care service. Research with Wildlife Trusts <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org> volunteers showed that 95% of participants with low wellbeing at the start of a volunteering programme reported an improvement in 6 weeks.

THRIVE UK: Environmental Conservation as therapy

4. IV. ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY (AAT)

Animal-assisted therapy is another umbrella term which includes pet-therapy and equine therapy. According to Psychology Today,

“A meta-analysis of 49 studies reporting on animal-assisted therapy found positive outcomes and overall improved emotional well-being in those with autism, medical conditions, or behavioural issues. Another review of randomized, controlled studies found that animal-assisted therapy can be helpful for those battling illnesses like depression, schizophrenia, or addiction”

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ie/therapy-types>

Anyone who dislikes or fears animals or is allergic to them, is not a likely candidate for this particular intervention.

Options for Animal Assisted Therapy on NUSF are to:

- a) keep animals on the farm for the purpose of AAT or
- b) to contract in organisations with an AAT visiting service

4.III.A TO KEEP ANIMALS ON THE FARM FOR THE PURPOSE OF AAT

AAT options with animals depend on factors such as land, acreage, sheds and buildings, health and safety and on-site or off-site management. Each factor will dictate the feasibility of AAT options.

Livestock require, generally, 24 hours, 7 days a week care, and this is a limiting factor when it comes to selecting the most suitable AAT option for an urban farm situation.

- **POULTRY:**

In general, poultry will take up less land than larger animals and commercially can produce a good return in a short space of time.

Hens can make super therapy animals, according to Geraldine Walsh,

“I’ve suffered anxiety and depression and can honestly say there is an unexplainable calm in keeping hens” (Irish Examiner, 2018)

Egg-producing poultry like hens and ducks offer a quick return on investment. However, egg production requires registration with the Department of Agriculture and all eggs for sale must have an egg number.

All poultry are a source of high nitrogen manure, very welcome in horticultural settings.

- **GOATS:**

As a source of dairy, for grazing on rough or smooth terrain. Also as a source of mutton, fibre, leather and manure. Mohair goats offer an alternative, and wool production is a both a craft and commercial option.

- **ALPACAS:**

A source of high value fibre, also a source of manure, see www.alpaca.ie Alpaca wool is a high-end alternative to sheep’s wool.

- **HORSES:**

Horse can form part of Equine Assisted therapy programmes, and if they form part of the services of the social farm, will need the expertise of a trained or experienced equine therapist.

For the purposes of a horticultural social enterprise, horses can also plough and harrow the soil for planting. Again, an experienced ploughman or woman, or someone trained in these skills will be necessary.

Mucking out stables, feeding and watering horses, all form part of a regular equine therapy programme. See table 4 and section 4.iii.b for more on this subject.

- **DONKEYS:**

A traditional load-bearing animal, as a guardian to flocks of sheep, goats or alpacas, for equine assisted therapy and as transport. Donkeys are reputed to have a calming effect on nervous horses, and people. Source of manure. See <https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.ie>

TABLE 5: ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY OPTIONS

Animal Therapy options	Commercial value	Requirements & considerations	Therapy option
Hens	Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fencing & housing ● Grazing: 80 hens per acre ● Predators eg, the fox ● Dept. of Ag 	Boost mood Combat loneliness and isolation Calming https://www.yourchickens.co.uk/news/how-chickens-can-

		requirements like flock no. and egg numbers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fodder • Mucking out • Bedding 	help-in-therapy-1-5608647
Goats	Dairy products Mutton Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing • Shelter • Grazing • Fodder • Mucking out • Bedding 	Helping social, emotional and cognitive functioning https://backyardgoats.iamcountryside.com/ownership/therapy-goats-from-hoof-to-the-heart/
Alpacas	Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing • Shelter • Grazing: 1 acre per 5 Animals • Fodder • Mucking out • Bedding 	Emotional well-being Stress reduction https://www.thatsfarming.com/news/alpaca-joe-feb
Horses/ Equine	Ploughing Riding lessons Manure for garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter • Fencing • Grazing: 2 acres per horse • Fodder • Mucking out • Bedding 	Assertiveness. Emotional awareness. Empathy. Stress tolerance. Flexibility. Impulse control. Problem-solving skills. http://www.crchealth.com/types-of-therapy/what-is-equine-therapy/
Donkeys	Transporting loads Manure for garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • A pair of donkeys (need company) • .5 acre per donkey 	psycho-social and emotional support develop an empathetic relationships https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/what-we-do/donkey-assisted-therapy/what-is-dat

- DOGS AND CATS

As pets, dogs and cats provide companionship. Advocates of animal-assisted therapy say that developing a bond with an animal can help people develop a better sense of self-worth and trust, stabilize their emotions, and improve their communication, self-regulation, and socialization skills (psychologytoday.com)

- BEES AND HONEY PRODUCTION

Beekeepers will say that beekeeping requires calm and trust. As a therapy not much has been written about this but honey bees are generally accepted as more aggressive than their solitary bee cousins.

Honey production can be seen as a complementary activity to horticultural production. Honey bees can pollinate fruit and also use the pollen and nectar for raising a healthy hive. Consideration can be given to stocking the native Irish Bee variety, *Apis mellifera mellifera*, on conservation grounds.

Current estimates are that one hive of honey can produce an average of 20kg of honey. Expert beekeepers can produce more. Market rates for locally produced Irish honey are from €4 to €7 per 500g jar. That makes the average sales per hive at €160 to €280 per annum, less costs. For grants in this sector check: beekeeping@agriculture.gov.ie. See also: https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/1996/honey_production.pdf

4.III.B CONTRACTING IN ORGANISATIONS WITH AN AAT VISITING SERVICE

- **Elista Education** is a private provider of education and training opportunities in animal assistance and therapy. Animal assistance and therapy programmes encourage the ethical utilisation of animals for the promotion of improved physical, mental and social well-being of all people.

- **Animal Therapy Ireland** is a charity based in Co. Louth. They visit schools and nursing homes with small pets such as dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs.

- **Irish Therapy Dogs (ITD)** similarly runs a nationwide network of volunteers. Training to volunteers is provided on a regional level. Again, itd visits schools, nursing homes and hospitals to offer animal assisted therapy programmes. <https://irishtherapydogs.ie/>

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) is the use of horses to assist people explore their mental health and behavioural issues. This is a process of self-discovery with a licensed therapist, the horse and the client. Centres near Nenagh are: 1. Boskill Equestrian Centre, Caherconlish, Co. Limerick. Contact Wesley Ryan at wesleyryan9909@gmail.com; <http://www.limerickhorseriding.com/>
2. JP Equine Therapy , Ballina, Co. Tipperary. Contact Joe Slattery at joe@jsequinetherapies.ie; <https://jsequinetherapies.ie/>
3. Tory Hill Equine Centre , Tory hill, Croom, Co. Limerick. Contact info@toryhillequineassistedtherapy.ie; <http://www.toryhillequineassistedtherapy.ie>






4. V GREEN PRESCRIBING

“Populations that are exposed to the greenest environments also have lowest levels of health inequality related to income deprivation. Physical environments that promote good health might be important to reduce socio-economic health inequalities.”

This is according to Dr Richard Mitchell and Dr Frank Popham writing in The Lancet, as promoted by the UK’s Natural Health Service (NaHS)

(<https://naturalhealthservice.org.uk/wordpress/nahs-product>)

OUR FIVE EVIDENCE BASED PRODUCTS

-  **HEALTH WALKS**
-  **HORTICULTURAL THERAPY**
-  **MINDFUL CONTACT WITH NATURE**
-  **FOREST SCHOOL**
-  **HEALTHY CONSERVATION**

Services offered by the NaHS, UK

The mission of Natural Health Service (NaHS) is to improve mental and physical health and reduce health inequalities by increasing access to and use of the natural environment. They work with local health bodies, and organisations through the structure of a consortium. Partners sign up to a clear set of principles, values and a model of governance.

Members of the NaHS consortium in Merseyside and North Cheshire, for example, include The Woodlands Trust, Cheshire West and Chester Council, The National Trust and many more. Through building links with local health providers, and with more evidence-based health outcomes being measured, prescriptions are increasing year on year. (Bragg and Atkins, 2016)

Type of green care	Number of sessions per year		
	Mental ill-health	Dementia	Total
STH	142	0	142
Environmental conservation intervention	262	21	283
Green exercise intervention	89	42	131
Nature-based education/ training	47	0	47
Nature arts and crafts	21	0	21
Bushcraft	85	0	85
Wildlife surveying	28	0	28
Total	674	63	737

TABLE 6: THE NUMBER OF AND TYPE OF GREEN CARE SESSIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILL-HEALTH OR DEMENTIA RUN BY WILDLIFE TRUSTS (BRAGG AND ATKINS, 2016, QUOTING WOOD AND BRAGG, 2015)

In many cases it will be a hybrid operation to move forward from the experience of other community’s efforts and build a bespoke arrangement that truly meets Nenagh’s needs, is flexible to change and can become sustainable in the long term.

5. SURVEYS AND ANALYSIS

5.1. SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service providers were surveyed from the Nenagh area, and range from public sector organisations like the HSE to private nursing homes, including disability services, rehabilitation, homeless and community development services.

Service providers were contacted once by phone in most cases, explaining the survey, their email address was requested, and then the survey was sent. Reminders were also issued. Out of 20 service providers surveyed, 13 responded.

Of the 13, 2 are from the healthcare sector, 4 community development, 1 environmental, 2 educational and 8 from other sectors.

Of those who marked 'other', 4 are from the disability sector, which includes a children's disability service, 2 from the homeless sector, 1 family support and 1 animal welfare.

In total, the organisations who responded support 2865 clients a year between them. Of this number, the total number of suitable clients that could participate on a social farm, according to the service providers who responded, came to 325. Two organisations did not give a number. One of these commented that it could not answer for others. The other is an animal welfare organisation.

They were asked if they had heard about Social Farming before, and if they had not, a short video was included in the survey to explain the idea.

61% of respondents knew something about social farms.

Of the respondents, nearly two thirds are in Nenagh (61.5%), 23% were located further than 20 kilometres away. The rest lie within 20 kilometres of the town.

Payment: When asked if they were likely to pay €60 per day per client to attend a social farm, only 1 organisation said they would be likely to pay. 8 of the 13 service providers said they were very unlikely to pay this. The biggest barrier named by respondents to referring clients to a social farm is cost, followed by transport and accessibility.

When it came to supporting a social farm in other ways, 5 respondents said they would contribute with Board of Management supports, 4 said they would give donations of land, tools and equipment and 2 said they could offer business and marketing support. See chart below. One organisation said they could not fund clients to participate, but could offer finance and equipment, while another offered fundraising support. Other replies include the following:

"wouldn't have the income to directly support participants as we are not funded in that manner. Could donate equipment, finance, support"

“Fundraising”

“Yearly annual donation”

How else could your organisation support an Urban Social Farm project?

7 responses

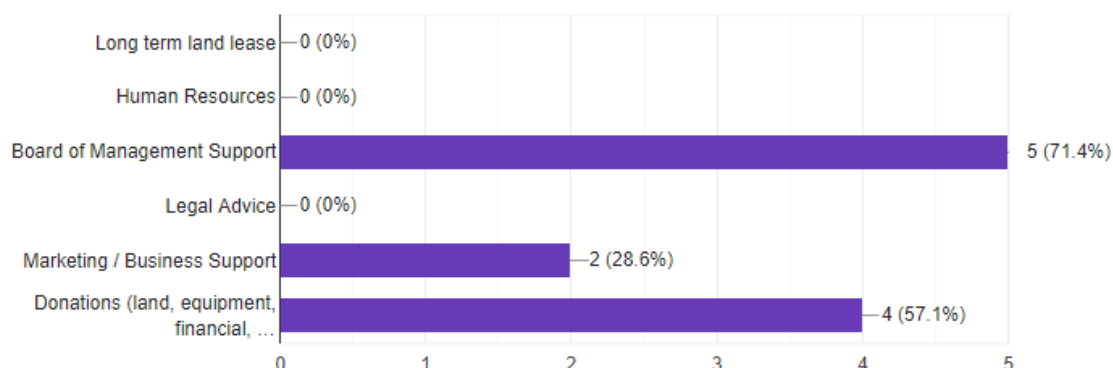
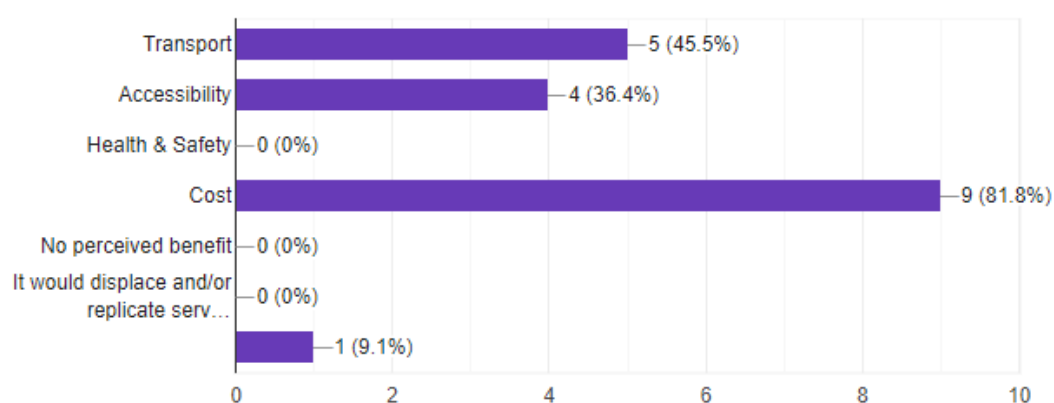


TABLE 7: HOW ORGANISATIONS CAN SUPPORT NUSF

In the question of barriers to using an urban social farm, cost was the overwhelming barrier, followed by transport then accessibility.

What barriers would prevent you from using an Urban Social Farm?

11 responses



5. II. SERVICE USERS

The survey to gather information first hand from potential service users is one of the most critical parts of this study. However, with new GDPR regulations, the access to service users has been carried out through the organisations themselves. Half of the respondents are

currently using Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) service in Cork and currently and pay €20 per day. The rest are from local services.

The profile of service users who responded to this survey are:

- 4 adults with Down Syndrome
- 1 adult with Intellectual disability
- 2 rural/community development service
- 1 unknown

There is some awareness among service users of what is meant by a social farm, and less about what is meant by Social and Therapeutic Horticulture. However, when it comes to actual experience, most said they *had* used either a social farm or an STH garden.

When asked if they would consider using the services of either a SF or an STH garden in the future, 100% say they would.

When asked what they would like to get out of a SF or STH experience, the top five reasons are:

- To be happier
- To be healthier
- To meet others
- To garden
- To work with animals

Regarding costs, out of 8 respondents 5 said they thought a payment over €20 per day was fair. 3 responded that no payment was fair, and 1 of the 8 added that a payment would be too much for them.

5. As part of your treatment or therapy, what would you consider a fair payment per day to the social farm or garden?

8 responses

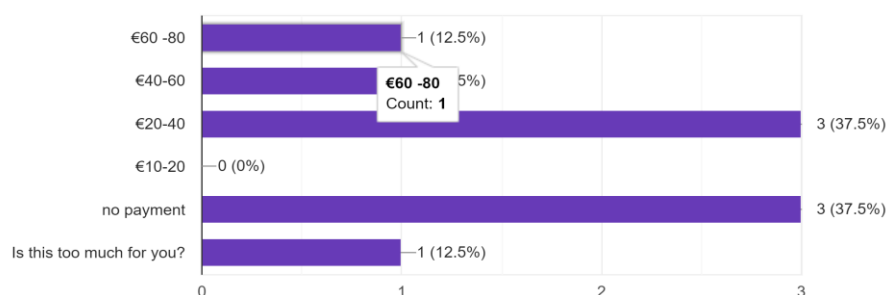


TABLE 8: BAR CHART OF RESPONSES FROM SERVICE USERS REGARDING FAIR COST

5. III RETAIL OUTLETS

Twelve local shops and restaurants were surveyed, with eight responses. Four of these were shops and three were restaurants. One is both a shop and a restaurant.

The area included in the survey includes outlets in Nenagh (5), Ballina, (1), Birdhill (1), Limerick (1)

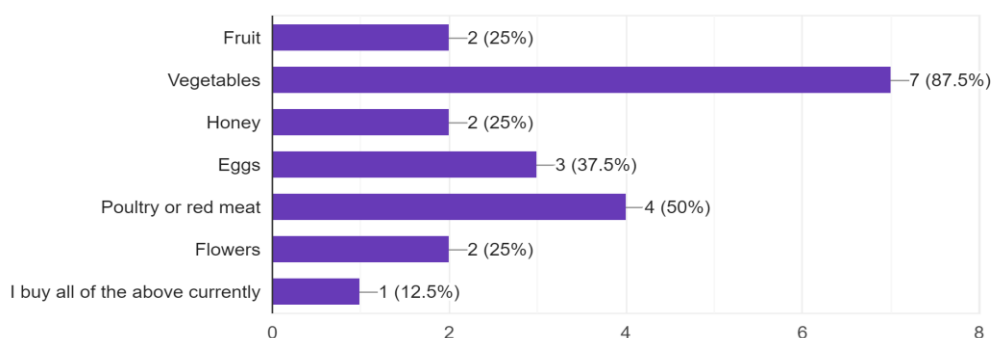
The survey asked if retailers were willing to buy local, organic produce, if they would pay a premium, how they like it packaged and presented and the most important qualities they want from a supplier.

In response, 5 of the 8 surveyed said they were extremely likely to buy from local producers. Overwhelmingly, all retail outlets contacted in this survey said that there is room for more locally produced food in the area.

When asked about paying a premium for local, organic produce, 5 respondents said they were likely or extremely likely to pay a premium.

5. Currently, do you have local producers supplying your outlet with:

8 responses



Regarding presentation, again 5 of the 8 prefer produce presented in loose, labelled boxes, with none of them opting for produce in plastic bags.

1. As a retailer how likely are you to buy products from a local producer?

8 responses

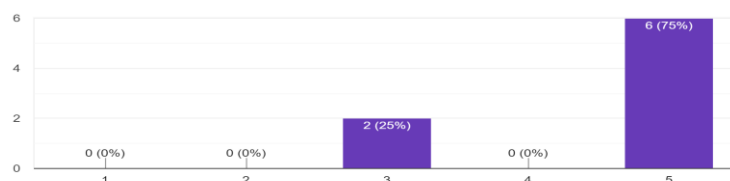


TABLE 9: IF RETAILERS IN THE NENAGH AREA ARE LIKELY TO BUY FROM LOCAL PRODUCERS

Half of all respondents (50%) ticked the following three qualities from producers as the most important:

- Regular supply
- Top quality
- Locally produced

The next most popular preference was for organic/chemical free produce and reliable delivery (37.5%) each.

5. Currently, do you have local producers supplying your outlet with:

8 responses

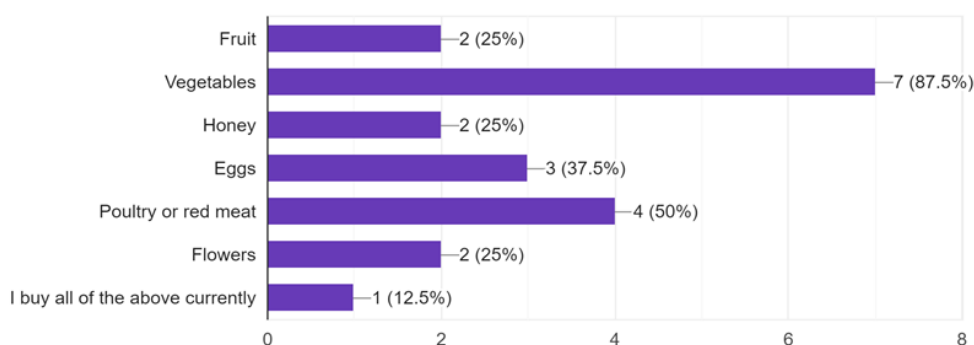


TABLE 10: WHAT RETAILERS CURRENTLY BUY LOCALLY FROM PRODUCERS

Pricing came in as the 6th most important quality required from producers. Respondents were asked to tick the top three qualities looked for in suppliers. Retailers show an overwhelming preference for local produce.

The following comments were added by the retailers to the survey:

- . We sell products from as many local producers as is feasible
- . I love to get fresh local produce when available
- . Already buying any produce available in locality
- . We are in partnership with Musgraves and therefore have to stay within a loyalty figure which restricts us greatly.
- . We support Doon Social Farm and it is within our ethos to support SFs
- . If produce is good and can provide enough

5. IV SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

While the surveys represent a small section of the community of 9000 living in the town of Nenagh, the service providers between them have nearly 3000 service users within the catchment area of Nenagh. Other themes that have emerged are:

- Social & therapeutic farming is not fully understood by the potential cohorts that can most benefit. More education is needed here.
- Service users have a strong interest in the concept, however, half of the respondents are from outside Nenagh.
- The narrative regarding the value for money must be communicated well to service providers in order to enlist their financial commitment.
- Where service providers state categorically that funding is restricted, they show a willingness to support NUSF in alternative ways.
- Demand for local produce is prominent. Focus on systems to ensure continuity to market must be factored in when planning outputs. Focus can easily be concentrated on the process of personal support in the development of the farm and not on the end product user.

6. FUNDING AND FINANCES

Financing this project will be an ongoing effort and exploration of options. We will summarise the options currently available.

6.1 COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The question of value for money underpins the rationale for pursuing this type of initiative. Research has confirmed that there are clear benefits for using the SF model as a cost effective option for therapeutic support. It is estimated that for every €1 invested in SF there is a threefold return (Costs & Benefits of Social Farming, 2014). Rather than a monetary return, the opportunity to measure the social return in monetary value proves a useful model.

The Social Return on Investment model (SROI)

“systematically charts the social benefits of social farming. Every contribution to the project is considered an investment. SROI measures, accounts for and communicates a more complete concept of value by incorporating all social, economic and environmental aspects. The focus is on impact (added value) rather than outputs. SROI determines a basis for formulating indicators that convert output into impact and for placing a monetary value on outputs in order to determine social value” (Dessein and Bock, 2010; Leck, 2013)

In one such study carried out in the UK in 2011, 83 service users on a care farm paid between £30 and £40 per day. The social return on investment for this care was calculated at £3.77 of social value was created for every £1 invested in this care farm. (Leck, 2013)

Taking account of the actual costs recorded for the pilot farms in the provision of supports, the comparative costs for broadly similar services, need to deliver a fair return for the provision of public resources, value for money for individuals acquiring services, and rewarding farmers for their efforts, then, in order to deliver these supports farmers providing social farming activities will require a payment per service user per day of approximately €55-€65 in Northern Ireland and €60-€70 in the Republic of Ireland.

Further to this, the concept of a ‘transitional innovation’ is applied to social farming, which means a change on multiple levels, affecting multiple groups in society. One group being those with physical and psychological health issues, and the other being the farming community, who are currently facing more pressure economically, socially and environmentally. When two struggling groups come together to provide a mutually positive outcome, the result is transitional innovation. (Buist, 2016 cited in Crowley et al, 2017) These outcomes fall under the SROI model with a holistic model for measuring outcomes created by Leck (2013) .

In terms of capital costs, SoFI covers some costs and will currently cover €40 per participant per visit.

Core costs in 2012 for sheltered and employment support, activation and day support, as well as work like activities delivered in HSE and non-HSE providers were estimated at €66.50 per day for minimum to low support service users, and €76.10 a day if moderate support needs were included. The SoFAB project in 2013/2014 had core costs of €66.11 per participant per farm visit, which fits within the range of HSE and non-HSE providers core costs in that year. (Kinsella, 2104 cited in Crowley et al 2017)

Johnston (2016, cited in Crowley et al 2017) suggests a daily fee of £180 for three participants over a 6 to 20 week programme in Northern Ireland. This fee includes proportionate costs such as insurance, materials and the farmers time. This averages at £60 per day per participant, or €70.

6. II FUNDING PARTNERS AND PRIORITIES

For any funding, the main priority is to secure land. LEADER, for example, requires a minimum of 5 to 7 years lease to grant funding to projects. For example, The Field of Dreams projects having secured land donations through CSR and Local Councils have been able to progress their visions rapidly.

The following organisations are potential partners for securing tenure, in either lease or donation of land:

- Tipperary County Council
- The religious orders
- Private philanthropists, for example, JP McManus Benevolent Fund, The Tony Ryan fund, Tomar Trust
- SoFi (Social Farming Ireland)
- Parish land
- Agricultural Societies

6. II. A TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL

Potential funding opportunities include:

- Land: For security of tenure, long term leases can be sought with Council land in line with the strategic vision of the local council plans.
- Service Infrastructure: Drainage, sewerage, water, lighting, service road and carpark.
- Community Environment Action Fund 2019 (previously known as Local Agenda 21 Grant) Typically up to €500 per annum
- Community Enhancement Programme (e.g., Men's and Women's Sheds)
- Community Amenity Grant Scheme: for improving local amenities
- Tidy Towns grants for enhancing local areas

6. II. B LOCAL PHILANTHROPISTS

- Land donation
- Tools and Equipment
- Capital costs for setting up project, including buildings.
- Social Innovation Fund: An agency for philanthropy and dormant accounts funding: For capital costs and for running programmes. A focus on social enterprise development and social impact.
www.socialinnovation.ie

6. II. C GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

- Social Farming Ireland (SoFI); Capital grants for start-up as well as capitation grants of €40 per day. However, SoFI have strict criteria about social farms being working, family farms.
- HSE: HSE and lottery funding <https://www.hse.ie/services/national-lottery-grants/national-lottery-grants.html>
- ETB
- Community education facilitates community based, adult education services. NUSF can solicit tutor hours this way.
- Local training initiatives can be staffed.
- Department of rural and community development
- LEADER funding - social inclusion strand. Capital expenditure
<http://www.ntdc.ie/programmes/rural-development-programme-leader-2014-2020>
- Community Services Programme - for cost of staff contribution
<https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/community-services-programme-cs>
- Social Enterprise Development grants
- Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine - under CEDRA and Dept. of Agriculture 2014-2020 pilot programme in Social Farming
[_https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/agri-foodandtheeconomy/cedraschemes/](https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/agri-foodandtheeconomy/cedraschemes/)
- Social Farming Ireland: To fund placements.
- Department of Social Protection - Community Employment Schemes
<http://www.ntdc.ie/programmes/community-employment/>

Good governance systems underpin the journey forward in developing and growing this project. Defining the appropriate legal structure, policy development and financial management are all important aspects to factor in as the project proceeds. Useful resources to refer to include:

<https://socialenterprisetoolkit.ie/>

https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/managing_better_01_governance.pdf

6.III INCOME

6.III.A SERVICE USER FUNDING

Based on other models it can be anticipated that a daily/ weekly/ annual fee base can be accrued from service users. We estimate that between €20 and €70 is an acceptable range. For the purpose of the financial model we have used €30 as a baseline daily cost with 40 days per year attended. While it has been acknowledged as a barrier to participation in the surveys in advance of set up, it has also been attributed to higher attendance/participation rates on established farms.

6.III.B SERVICE PROVIDER FUNDING

Building relationships with service providers will be really important in the early years of this project, as the aim would be to achieve service agreements with the HSE and other partners, like the ETB who would fund health and education outcomes respectively.

6.III.C SALES FROM PRODUCE

The direct sales of produce will form an income stream if carefully managed. Plans must take into account seasonality and distribution efforts.

Apart from sales to outlets in the area, there also exists the possibility of farm gate sales.

Community Based Agriculture (CBA): This concept relies on the community to invest up-front in the farm. For an agreed price, families or individuals will receive an agreed amount of produce during the year. CBA encompasses the idea of vegetable box schemes. These schemes operate successfully around the country, for example, Annie's Farm Cashel. Customers can pay upfront or on the day of purchase. Paying upfront raises important capital and guarantees sales for the quarter or the year as per agreement.

6.III.D FUNDRAISING

Due to the costs and staffing, fundraising will make up income especially in the beginning. See projections.

6.III. E GRANT INCOME: Service agreements with partners such as the HSE and the ETB, as outlined in Funding partners, p. 33 and 34.

6. IV PROJECTIONS FOR 6 YEARS

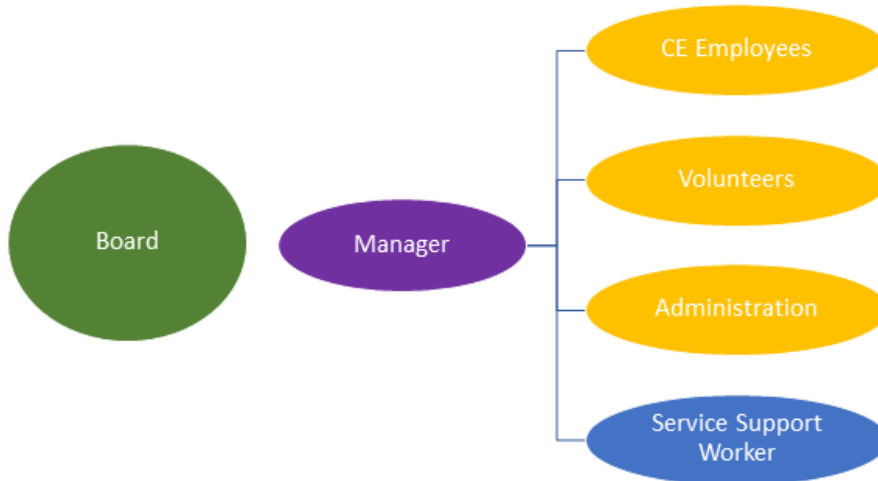
Nenagh Urban Social Farm	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Income						
Sales of Produce		€800.00	€1,800.00	€3,600.00	€ 3,600.00	€ 3,600.00
Service User Income		€4,800.00	€9,600.00	€19,200.00	€ 19,200.00	€ 19,200.00
Service Provider Income		€2,000.00	€5,000.00	€10,000.00	€ 20,000.00	€ 25,000.00
Fundraising Income	€ 50,000.00	€10,000.00	€10,000.00	€15,000.00	€10,000.00	€ 15,000.00
Grant Income	€ 80,000.00	€60,000.00	€70,000.00	€70,000.00	€ 50,000.00	€ 50,000.00
	€ 130,000.00	€ 77,600.00	€96,400.00	€117,800.00	€102,800.00	€112,800.00
C/F			€11,540.00	€17,850.00	€41,680.00	€14,780.00
Total			€107,940.00	€135,650.00	€144,480.00	€127,580.00
Direct Expenses						
Cost of Sales		€100.00	€200.00	€400.00	€400	€400
Delivery		€200.00	€400.00	€800.00	€1,000	€1,000
Building Costs	€ 120,000.00					
Overheads						
Insurance	€ 400.00	€1,000.00	€1,400.00	€1,500.00	€2,000	€2,500
Employee Costs		€51,000.00	€61,200.00	€73,440.00	€100,000.00	€100,000.00
Employers PRSI		€7,000.00	€8,400.00	€10,080.00	€ 15,000.00	€ 15,000.00
Rent & Rates		€500.00	€1,000.00	€1,000.00	€ 1,000.00	€ 1,000.00
Equipment Hire		€500.00	€500.00	€500.00	€ 500.00	€ 500.00
Gas/Electric/Fuel/Oil		€300.00	€1,000.00	€1,200.00	€ 2,000.00	€ 2,000.00
Service Charges		€300.00	€450.00	€450.00	€ 600.00	€ 800.00
Office Costs /IT Costs		€250.00	€500.00	€700.00	€ 1,000.00	€ 1,200.00
Telephone/Broadband		€360.00	€400.00	€400.00	€ 600.00	€ 600.00
Bank Charges		€250.00	€300.00	€300.00	€ 500.00	€ 600.00
Training		€100.00	€600.00	€1,000.00	€ 2,000.00	€ 2,000.00
Equipment		€2,000.00	€300.00	€300.00	€ 500.00	€ 500.00
Consultancy Fees	€ 10,000.00	€1,000.00	€500.00	€500.00	€ 1,000.00	€ 1,000.00
Repairs & Renewals		€200.00	€400.00	€400.00	€ 600.00	€ 600.00
General Expenses		€1,000.00	€1,000.00	€1,000.00	€1,000.00	€1,000.00
Totals	€ 130,400.00	€66,060.00	€78,550.00	€93,970.00	€129,700	€130,700
P/L		€11,540.00	€17,850.00	€41,680.00	€14,780.00	-€3,120.00
Assumptions						
Efforts made to fundraise/Source Grants in Year 0 to establish farm						
Staffing costs sourced through CE, CSP, ETB tutors						

CE = COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT CSP= COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMME ETB = EDUCATION & TRAINING BOARD

Note: A loss appears in year 6 as a reference to the potential of losing CSP funding. Efforts to make the project sustainable should be a focus from the beginning to ensure dependency on one strand of funding does not undermine the project if funding support is removed.

7. STRUCTURES AND DESIGN FOR A 1 HECTARE SITE

7.1 STAFFING



PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL CHART

7.1. A THE MANAGER

This role is pivotal, as the manager has responsibilities to funders, service users, staff, retail outlets and their clients.

Clear communications is probably the most important skill, and other requirements are listed in Appendix 1, under the job description for the Farm Manager.

7. I. B VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are involved in virtually every aspect of society including health, education, social services, youth, sports and recreation, culture, the arts and the environment (Volunteer Ireland website), and the success of volunteers depends on good organisational structures, clear job description, the suitability of the volunteer for the job and the appreciation of the organisation for the work of the volunteer. For a job description for a volunteer on NUSF see Appendix 3.

For more on successful volunteer experience see the Volunteer Ireland website <https://www.volunteer.ie/organisations/quality-in-volunteer-management-iv/>

Citizens Advice also has clear guidelines at

http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf

Leads for sourcing volunteers include:

- Volunteer Tipperary
- Transition Year students
- Woofers
- Probation Service

7. II SITE DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Good garden design looks to the user, and asks “How do we design a functional garden for the safety, comfort and enjoyment of this person?”

The American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) says that a therapeutic garden is

“a plant-dominated environment purposefully designed to facilitate interaction with the healing elements of nature. Interactions can be passive or active depending on the garden design and users’ needs. There are many sub-types of therapeutic gardens including healing gardens, enabling gardens, rehabilitation gardens, and restorative gardens.” (AHTA, 2019)

Prior to the development of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture gardens in rehabilitation settings were adapted to specific client groups, e.g, wheelchair users only. The concept of Universal Design now includes designs inclusive of all abilities and disabilities. Some concepts of Universal Design can be seen in Table 11 below:

1.	Features are modified specifically to improve accessibility to plants and gardening techniques: users can interact with plants regardless of ability or disability
2.	Activities are scheduled and programmed: a series of clinical sessions or events are designed to welcome and occupy people in the garden
3.	Perimeters are well-defined: boundaries, paths and spaces are clearly defined for all users, clinical and non-clinical
4.	There is a profusion of plant and people interaction: users experience garden plants as the focus of activities and of the spaces
5.	Conditions are comfortable and supportive: the garden is safe and free of hazards. Garden lighting, for example, may be necessary in winter.
6.	Universal design principles are used: the garden is usable and enjoyable for all users and all abilities.
7.	The garden is recognisable as a garden: the garden is distinguishable from it’s surroundings.

TABLE 11 : UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR A THERAPEUTIC GARDEN (SIMSON AND STRAUS,1998)

Looking at client groups that will potentially use the gardens at NUSF will indicate the design spec needed. For example, with people with dementia a circular or figure-8 path will lead

them back to the start point. Even if this is not the client group in mind for now any hard landscaping plans can factor in future changes of purpose which is what Universal design is about.

Path design is very important when planning a therapeutic garden. Wide paths, 1.2m or more are needed if wheelchairs are used, with a turning space of 1.8m. Paths for wheelchairs are best paved with a solid material. Gravel paths are not suited to wheelchairs, especially motorised ones.



A path that leads from the reception area into the garden and back, surrounded by greenery (American Society of Landscape Architects)

Raised beds, of different heights cater for anyone with mobility issues, where open beds at ground level allow for the gardening tasks of digging and creating seasonal raised beds. This task is so important for building physical strength, and cardiovascular exercise. Any exercise that leads to sweating allows cortisol out of the body, thus reducing stress. Sweating is a way of discharging toxins that accumulate in

the system. So strength-building work can form a part of the weekly tasks, so important for anyone in addiction recovery, or those with mental health issues.

Garden design is of paramount importance to creating a welcoming and safe garden for users to interact with. So much so that the services of a therapeutic garden designer is highly recommended.

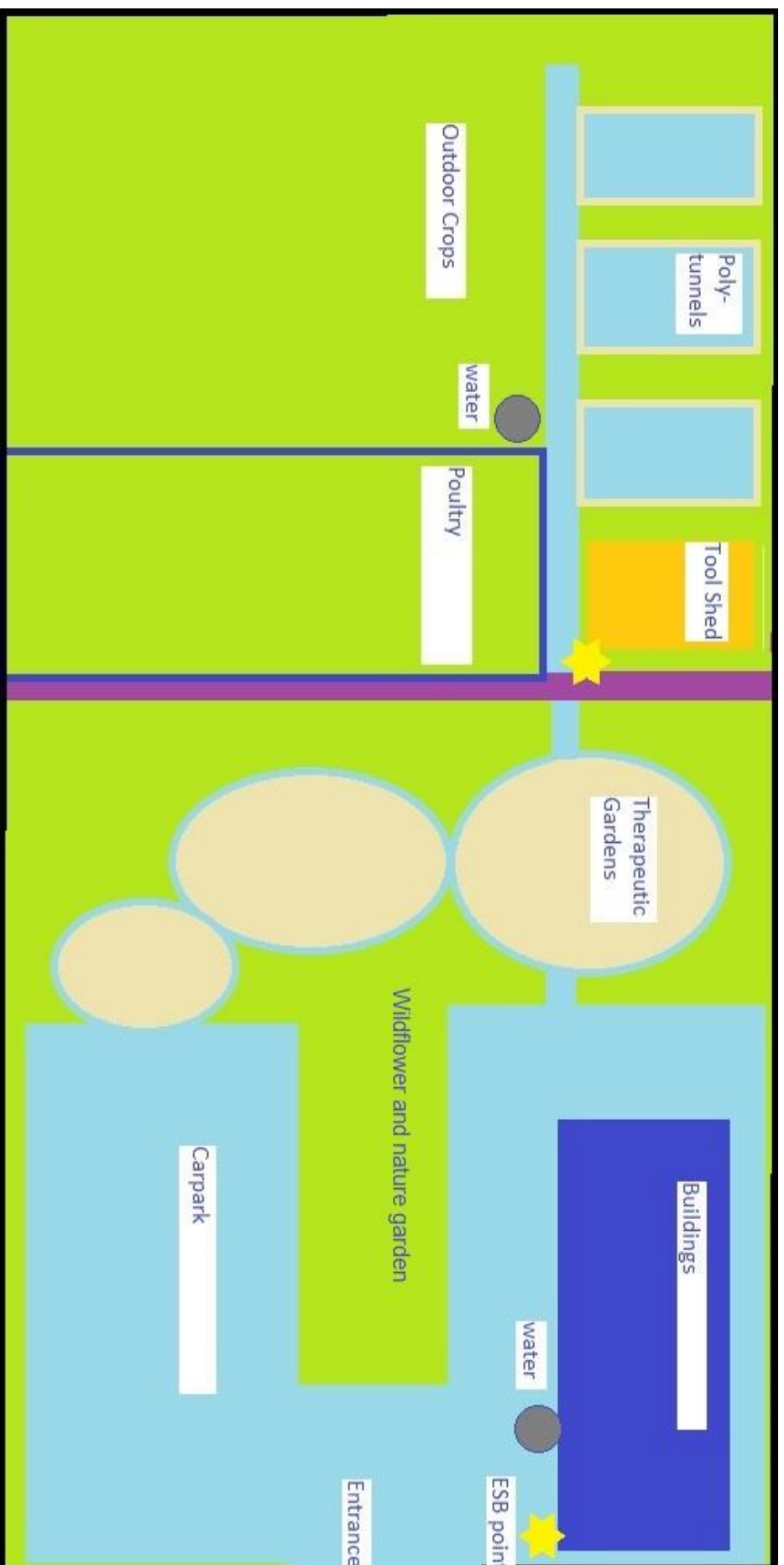
For further information on designing for a therapeutic garden see Thrive UK and AHTA websites. For Irish designers, check www.GLDA.ie, which is the Garden and Landscape Designers Association in Ireland.



Prototype Garden for Supported Housing or Nursing Home

DEMENTIA GARDEN IN A CARE HOME SETTING, DISPLAYING A FIGURE-8 PATH, NEWTOWN SAUNDERS LTD., CO. WICKLOW

Sample Generic Site Layout for .5 hectares (90m x 55m) 1cm=5m



Universal Design Principles include:

- Figure-8, or circular path format
- Wide paths, 1.2m minimum
- Predominance of plants, different heights, functions and seasonal interest

- Garden safe, free of hazards and with good lighting
- Boundaries are clearly defined
- Large gathering area for events and courses
- Users delight in being there

Buildings: 30m x10m
Polytunnels: 12 x 6m
Multi-purpose tool shed: 10m x 6m
(can be used for packing vegetables, and machinery storage)

Outdoor cropping area:
35m x 30m
Small animal/poultry pen:
35m x 15m
Front garden: 55m x 25m
Carpark: 35m x 20m

7. II TOOLS, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

7.II. A BASIC HAND TOOLS, EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS

Generally speaking, one set of the following hand tools and equipment will be needed for every 8 participants. Here is a basic list of hand tools and equipment to start a garden:

1 Wheelbarrow	1 Measuring Tape 5m	1 Dibber	Organic, peat free seed and potting compost
2 Spades	4 Hand trowels and forks	Plant labels & pencil	Nets for pest control, e.g. Bionet
2 Shovels	1 Line	Flower pots	Barrels for making liquid fertilisers
2 Garden rakes	2 Buckets	1 Garden twine	Organic fertilisers, e.g. seaweed dust
2 Oscillating hoes	2 Leaf rakes	Seed trays (various)	Watering cans o Irrigation equipment

TABLE 12: LIST OF HAND TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

7.II. B TOOL SHED:

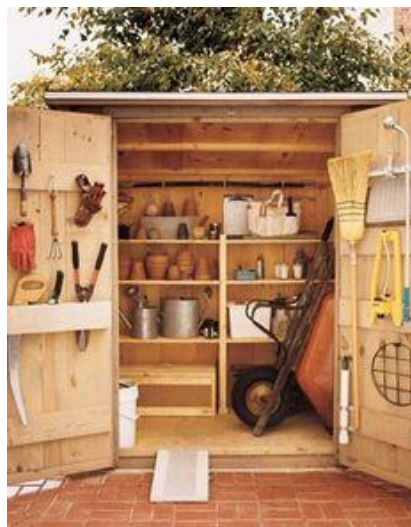
Designing the tool shed has the benefit of order in what can be a chaotic lifestyle for some service users. The benefits of order include clearing the mind for other pressing life tasks. Tool sheds can teach the benefits of simplicity and tidiness.

7.II.C MACHINERY

Machines have come to be known for making jobs easier and faster. In a therapeutic setting some thought can be given to whether machines enhance the objectives of therapy or not.

LAWN MOWER:

Consider hand pushed mowers for smaller areas because of the exercise value attached to pushing. Also consider using wildflower areas for pollinators instead of



be

lawns. Lawns can be recreational and relaxing spaces too, so it is always good to talk to a designer about the need for grass. Lawn maintenance is also a weekly job that suits some people very well.

ROTOVATOR:

This is a piece of equipment that can be hired until such a time as it becomes a necessity. Again, many gardens are reverting back to hand tools because of the benefits associated with digging. Also, some people find the machinery can cause stress through noise and the upkeep and maintenance involved. Soil life also suffers with rotovating, with earthworms particularly affected.

STRIMMERS:

For cutting weeds and overgrown brush, this motorised-scythe makes quick work of weeds. Again, consider traditional implements like a scythe or even leaving wild flowers grow as part of a design to attract pollinator

7. III HEALTH AND SAFETY

For the safety of all users, the public as well as service users, volunteers and staff, a health and safety audit must be carried out. Garden hazards are numerous and insurance companies will need to know that NUSF has done an audit and best practice will mean developing a health and safety policy. In framing policies, NUSF can check the HSA website at www.hsa.ie. The list of garden hazards is listed clearly here.

For further support also see the Social Farming Handbook (SoFAB,2014) which gives a good outline of the regulatory and legal framework, including how to carry out a risk assessment. It is most important to exclude activities from service users that require training or certification, e.g. 4-stroke petrol mowers and chainsaws.

7. IV COMMUNITY SPACE CONCEPTS

The Social Farm concept is based usually on a working farm where the communal space of gathering is often the farm kitchen. This provides the central hub critical to its success. Social farming is recognised for its value as a non-medicalised and non-clinical nature of therapy. The family/home environment and the opportunities to chat around the kitchen table are central to this. In the absence of an established kitchen/hub accepted as part of SF, thought and consideration must go into providing access to a positive space that facilitates such development. Materials for building structures that fall into the eco-build framework include cob, straw bale, timber, glass and recycled structures like containers. However, to work out costs is like working out the length of a piece of string. Costs, according to the Self-build website (www.selfbuild.ie), include too many variables to estimate. These are the considerations:

The Site It's easy to spend a third or more of your entire budget on the site, including attendant legal and registration fees.

Fees will be due to your lender, accountant, designer/architect, structural engineer, and local authority (Planning, Building Control, road opening license, etc.).

Fixed costs include structural warranties, site insurance and possibly personal cover for loss of earnings, removal and storage of furniture, buying new items, selling your existing home, renting while you build.

Infrastructure charges include connection to mains water, electricity, sewerage.

Borrowing costs in the form of interest repayments (buying the site and bridging for rent and/or the build until you can move in).

Reports If the land might be contaminated you will have to get soil samples analysed, a structural survey may be advisable before you buy, a topological or tree survey may be required if the planners ask for one... the list goes on, all the way to archaeological surveys. For things like this a contingency is vital.

Using the Home Architect calculator (<http://www.homearchitect.ie/costcalculator.html>) a building with 150m floor space, with a standard construction spec, 5 sq.m solar panels, high spec insulation and airtightness, rainwater harvesting and thermal glazing will average at €270,888 in 2019.

It becomes even harder to get hard facts with ecological builds. Costs are relevant to today's market, albeit a bit dated. For example, a Passivhaus in 2014, 2 storey costs €1700 per sq. m. So the equivalent 150m house could cost in at €255,000

7.IV.A COB AND STRAW BALE



Costs can vary as designs and materials vary but a house built of cob and straw in 2012, measuring 130 m² cost €114,000, or €877 per m²/ €81/sq ft (Irish Examiner, 2012). The couple who built the house, Feile and Colin, spent €45,000 on doors and windows, and with straw as the insulator spent €115 the previous year on heating bills. 80% of the materials

were salvaged, however, salvage costs a lot of time and travel to source.



Cob hut , Boghill, Co. Clare

7.IV.B TIMBER

Garden sheds offer a cost effective and quick solution to make provision for as part of a green site. Garden chalets with bespoke versions including kitchens can be developed. It is also worth considering if a local company can sponsor a building if fundraising efforts are consolidated well. (<https://www.steeltechsheds.ie/>)

7.IV.C LOG CABINS

Log cabins are increasingly used in Ireland for extra space for garden projects and offer a wide variety of options in cost, dimensions and quality. There are many providers in Ireland. A sizable version can be obtained for €40,000 - €60,000



Log Cabin Kits

7.IV.D ROTUNDA GARDEN HOUSE

An interesting option to explore albeit in the UK is the Rotunda garden house. (www.rotunda.co.uk)

These bespoke round garden houses provide a communal space of interest that can be erected in a short time by the company or with support from the company (this in itself is a learning opportunity). The circular shape is the unique selling point and it lends itself to being a centre piece and focal point that the farm kitchen represents in the farming community of social farms.

These are a more expensive option (costing up to €100,000) but has the potential to be a project in itself as part of the strategic SF development. In recognition of the expectation to support diverse groups in the Nenagh area this building project offers the potential to bring groups together and help sell the story of the NUSF. If managed well this has the potential to be a significant flagship for the project.



Rotunda Modular Build

For a list of options for natural and recycled building methods, see appendix 3

7. v CROPPING PLANS

This section covers suggested cropping plans, using a minimum four-year rotation, as required by IOA (reference). It is using the generic plan above as a template, which can be adjusted according to the number of polytunnels that will be used.

Returns from any crop depend on a number of factors, chiefly management and marketing.

Management: Expert horticultural experience and knowledge are indispensable factors when it comes to proper management of crops, from creating cropping plans to sowing, planting and harvesting crops in prime condition, suitable pre-market storage and transport conditions. For organic management, knowledge of the Standards for Agriculture and Horticulture, published by IOA, are required.

TYPICAL FOUR YEAR CROP ROTATION OUTDOOR CROPPING PLAN: AREA 20M X 16M (40 DRILLS X 16M OR 12 X 1.2M WIDE BEDS WITH 40CM PATHS)

TABLE 13

3 beds	3 beds Alliums &	3 beds	3 beds salads
Potatoes:	Umbels	Brassicas:	and sundries
1 bed early potatoes	Onions	Cabbage	Lettuce
2 beds main crop potatoes	Leeks	Red cabbage	Salad rocket
	Salad onions	Broccoli	Courgette
	Garlic	Cauliflower	Squash
	Carrot	Brussel Sprouts	Sweetcorn
	Parsnip		Cut flowers

Marketing: Promotion, finding suitable outlets, regular supply, contracting, pricing, crop continuity and quality control are elements that are indispensable to building a reliable brand that retailers can trust.

Marketing can be the downfall of any enterprise, as it is in horticulture. For an enterprise to be successful a farm manager will need experience, or be willing to develop both strong cropping and marketing skills.

In a social farm, the balance to be achieved is that between the commercial viability of the farm and the care of the service users. This adds a third dimension, that of social care to the requirements when hiring a farm manager.

According to the model of care farm selected for NUSF (see section 5 Models of care farms), commercial aspects of NUSF must be balanced with the care aspect.

7.VI POLYTUNNELS

POLYTUNNEL 1: ALL YEAR ROUND CROPS

Crop	Sow	Harvest	Bags or items/ week	Price per bag or item	Possible income per week
Lettuce	Every 3 weeks	Every week	50	€1	€50
Salad onions	Every 3 wk	Every week	50	€1	€50
Spinach or Kale	Every 3 weeks	Every week In summer and winter	50	€1.50	€75
Radishes	Every 3 weeks	Every week	30	€1	€30
Herbs	2 x per year	Every week	20 bunches	€1	€20
Propagation area	Quarter tunnel area	-	-	-	-

POLYTUNNEL 2: SEASONAL CROPS

Crop	Sow	Harvest	Bags or items /wk	Price estimate per bag/item	Possible income/ week
1 st Early potatoes	January Indoors	May (4 wks)	30x 1kg bags for 4 weeks	€4	€120
Cherry Tomatoes	January	July- Oct (16 weeks)	30x 250g punnets	€2.50/punnet	€75
Cucumbers	February	July-Sept (12 weeks)	30	€1 each	€30
Peppers	February	July –Sept (12 weeks)	50	€1 each	€50
Calabrese (broccoli)	December	April-May (6 weeks)	30	€2	€60
Calabrese	July	Oct-Nov (6 weeks)	30	€2	€60
Early carrots	February	May-June	30 bunches	€2	€60
Cut Flowers	December-January	May- Sept	20 bunches	€4	€80
Edible Flowers	Dec-January	May –Oct	500 grams	€6/100g	€30

TABLE 14: POLYTUNNEL CROPPING EXAMPLE

7.VII FRUIT

Fruit gives the option of fresh or processed products like cider, jam and preserves.

Soft fruit, like raspberries and strawberries require a lot of labour during harvesting particularly, similarly topfruit like apples, plums and pears have labour requirements for harvesting in the summer and pruning in the winter.

7.VII.A TOP FRUIT

Plant scab and canker resistant varieties of apples, pears and plums. Use only dwarf rootstocks for ease of harvesting and maintenance only.

Top fruit like apples, pears, plums and cherries take 5 years or more to produce fruit.

Planting top fruit is a choice that requires thought about harvesting and maintenance, especially pruning which is a specialised skill.

STORAGE:

When planting top fruit, thought as to the storage of fruit must be planned. Apples and pears require damp, cool storage. Old stone buildings are ideal. They are stored in wooden boxes, and cardboard separators are used to prevent fruit contaminating each other over the winter.

Different varieties of top fruit have variable storage times. Thus, apples can be sold from as early as August right through to April, if expert planning is used.

Plums and cherries may require some refrigeration and need to be sold promptly after harvesting.

7.VII.B SOFT FRUIT

Soft fruit, such as strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries, and all their hybrid varieties, such as josterberries and loganberries are labour intensive in spring and summer months.

The main labour requirement is weeding and harvesting.

7. VIII CUT FLOWERS AND FOLIAGE

Another niche product is cut flowers. A trend for wedding flowers is to use natural, or home-grown flowers like roses, delphiniums, anemones and many more.

Florists, both high street and privately run from home, and flower clubs are potential customers for both flowers and for foliage.

Eucalyptus, cupressus, pittosporum as well as native ivies, grasses and common shrubs like heather, pittosporum and senecio all provide much sought after foliage for flower displays.



Pittosporum as foliage

7.IX GARDEN CENTRES

This option has been followed by services like the Moorehaven centre in Tipperary Town, and Belmont Parkside Nurseries. Service users carry out duties like watering and weeding, as well as potting up.

All the above crops, as part of the horticultural sector, are eligible for the 2019 Scheme of Investment Aid for the Development of the Commercial Horticulture Sector. For terms, conditions and eligibility see:

https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/farmingsectors/horticulture/horticulture_schemes/schemeofinvestmentaidforhorticulture/2019TandCsHorticultureScheme261018.pdf;

8. CONCLUSIONS

The case for Nenagh Urban Social Farm is based on the following:

- The need of the Nenagh area as evidenced by surveys and local feedback, as well as Pobal and CSO statistics.
- The positive impact of social farming on individuals' psychological, physical, social and cognitive well-being
- The positive impact of social farming on wider society, especially the farming community
- Cost benefit analysis of establishing and maintaining this project has a threefold return to be acknowledged
- At any one time in Ireland, 2 in 11 people is suffering from a mental health issue. This implies that Nenagh will have an on-going population in need of mental health supports of 1600.
- The NUSF model for the area is unique in Ireland in that it proposes to be easily accessible on foot, in an urban area
- The healing power of being in nature as evidenced by theories such as Biophilia
- The increase of Social Farms and Social and Therapeutic Horticulture health interventions is increasing in Europe and the rest of the developed world, based on measured outcomes and client choice.
- In Ireland there is a strong support body for Social Farming called Social Farming Ireland, and a new developing network of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture practitioners, called Social, Community Therapeutic Horticulture Ireland.



NUSF will develop it's own path with following factors in mind:

- There is a choice to be made about which model of green care to use, whether to use the working farm approach, or the therapeutic/care approach
- Animals are a very therapeutic addition to any care farm, but require special attention, in most cases daily presence on the farm. Contracting in Animal -Assisted Therapy services is an option
- Social Farms have the kitchen as a hub, and meals around the table create important social connection. Any future building design can take this into account.
- Developing relationships with healthcare providers will build the idea of 'Green prescribing', where GPs and local services can start a referral service. Nenagh Hospital Occupational Therapy department is a good place to start.

- Continuing education opportunities regarding the benefit of SF and STH must be utilised in particular for service providers as they prepare budget plans.
- The daily cost for service users (average €40) must be factored in. Rather than an obstacle this can be seen as a value proposition based on SROI indicators.
- Financially the project will require significant effort to get off the ground between fundraising, linking with government partners and income generation. It is envisaged that statutory support and fundraising efforts will be an ongoing part of the project. Aiming for sustainability with one third fundraising, one third income generation and one third statutory supports is a positive goal.

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APPENDIX 1 JOB DESCRIPTION FARM MANAGER

Reports to: Board of Management

Job Location: Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

Responsibilities will include:

- Managing staff
- Managing the farm and/or therapeutic garden
- Managing funding applications
- Managing financial reporting
- Creating links to local and national organisations
- Building links with other community partners
- Training volunteers

Essential to have:

- A degree or higher in either social care, community development, horticulture or agriculture or related fields
- 5 years management experience
- Good communications and people skills
- Full, clean driving licence

Desirable to:

- Show collaborative skills with other services and organisations
- Have therapy or counselling experience
- Understanding of social inclusion
- Administration experience
- Experience in food production or food industry

Salary: Negotiable depending on experience

APPENDIX 2 VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

At NUSF we welcome volunteers and hope you have a good experience working with us. You will report to the Farm Manager who will give you clear instructions of your duties.

Volunteering with NUSF requires a time commitment of _____ hours per week, and you will be required to work with service users. Some service users may be vulnerable adults or children. For this reason, Garda Vetting is a requirement.

Training: On starting with NUSF, all volunteers will be trained in on site Health and Safety. Also, training will be provided on basic gardening/farming skills and working with Vulnerable Adults and Children.

Benefits of volunteering at NUSFs:

- Reduced cost on courses and produce
- Contact with Nature
- Improve skills such as gardening, communications and more
- Invitations to NUSFs events

Volunteers at NUSF can be asked to do some of the following jobs:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| · Weeding | · Cleaning out sheds |
| · Potting up | · Transporting manure or compost |
| · Harvesting | · Administration |
| · Digging | · Cooking |
| · Raking | · Domestic chores |
| · Planting | · Any other gardening jobs as required |

Desirable, but not essential, skills for volunteers at NUSF are:

- Good communications
- Willing worker
- People skills
- Ability to cook
- To be organised, clean and tidy

Payments: There is no payment for volunteer work, however, for agreed costs incurred as a result of working in NUSF please consult the Farm Manager/Head Gardener.

For more information please contact: _____

APPENDIX 3: METHODOLOGY

1. Contact local area service providers and organisations for possible client profiles, and gather stats on disability and unemployment in the area. Examine all potential client groups.
2. Provide rationale and background context for the need for urban social farm in Nenagh.
3. Establish through a survey those service providers who are interested, very interested or committed to funding service users to participate in the Nenagh Urban Social Farm Project. Collate this information.
4. Visit other similar projects
5. Determine what fresh produce is currently available to shoppers in Nenagh, create a questionnaire, survey shoppers, find local producers and growers, and visit local outlets. Determine the range of local produce currently available.
6. Examine structures of similar projects and recommend a workable structure for NUSF.
7. Produce job specifications accordingly, including management and volunteers.
8. Produce a site design for a 1ha with power/water connections, including a suitable cropping plan (based on an existing site) including animal therapy options
9. Produce 6-years financial projections: Cash flows, P&L Accounts and Sensitivity Analysis
10. Assess ongoing needs for Volunteer training
11. Propose concepts for a shared, multi-purpose space with a view to using sustainable building design. Include drawings.
12. Identify local, regional and national social inclusion and better health awareness plans, sustainable and resilience planning.
13. Summarise how this contributes to promoting strong community development at a local level.
14. Prepare a 2/3-page synopsis with emphasis and relevance to the HSE. The cost /benefit analysis of the engagement of people with intellectual and physical disabilities in positive engagement in social farm settings.

Consultations and Site visits:

Belmont Social Farm, Aidan Murphy

Doon Social Farm, Noreen Ryan

Festina Lente, Bray, Co. Wicklow (website)

Field of Dreams, Cork, Sharon Mulcahy

GIY, Caitriona Kelly

Laois Down Syndrome, Mick O’Gorman

Social Farming Ireland, Research Department

The Urban Co-op, Anne Maher