

GOOD FOOD STORY

Name: Bev Askew
Project: Acre Fare
Location: Waterbeck



Describe your project

My 1-acre market garden, small orchard, meadow, and hen pasture is located just outside Waterbeck. I grow, make and sell about 50 different products – fruit and vegetables, fresh and dried herbs, vegetable plants, preserves, pickles, pasture-raised eggs and handmade greetings cards. I'm a one-woman enterprise, but would love to welcome volunteers or offer work experience in the future.



How did you get started?

I started the veg plot in 2022 to become semi self-sufficient, reviving nine overgrown raised beds, building a polytunnel, and creating safe spaces for hens and two rare breed pigs. By 2024, we were producing more than enough food, so I began selling from a small gateside stall. With support from SOSE and Business Gateway, I added a second polytunnel, bought jam-making equipment, and launched my business, Acre Fare, in January 2025. My aim is to offer seasonal, interesting produce to the local community and show what can be grown here. I love experimenting with new varieties – this year's hits include gigantes beans, spaghetti squash, padrón peppers, elephant garlic, and sweet blackberry vinegar. People keep coming back for more, which is fantastic!

What have you learned?

Many people don't realise how food is grown or what "seasonal" truly means. At farmers' markets, I try to show that tomatoes aren't available in February and that "home-grown preserves" don't include orange marmalade! Each month I showcase whatever is fresh and ready, even if it's just a few items. Sometimes that disappoints people – for example, my hens moult naturally, and I don't use artificial light to keep them laying through winter. By November, there are no eggs until at least March. It's all part of showing how natural cycles work and why real seasonality matters.



What does sustainability mean to you?

I sell produce from the gate, at local farmers' markets, and through veg boxes delivered within five miles. I make all my own compost, using pony and cow manure from neighbours, and brew comfrey fertiliser. No chemicals or pesticides are used. In 2023 I began a small wildflower meadow, sowing yellow rattle to encourage pollinators – it's gradually becoming established. I use a local abattoir and butcher for our pigs, which we keep every other year for our own use, and a local printer for my canvas bags. Supporting nearby businesses helps strengthen the local economy while keeping my carbon footprint low.



What are your plans for the future?

I'd like to add more raised beds to the plot, in order to grow more produce. I'm also experimenting with an addition of 5 truffle-inoculated hazel trees, which will be added to the small orchard this autumn 2025. Hopefully I may have summer truffles in a few years' time! Watch this space...



What good food changes need to happen in D&G?

I do feel there is less 'going on' in the east of the county and while I would love to be a part of the food hub, it's just too far to justify the travel and environmental costs of transporting my produce so far at the moment.