GOOD FOOD STORY



Name: Naomi Wight
Project: NANA Community Garden
Location: LIFT – Lochside – Dumfries

Describe your project

NANA (Nature And Nurture Areas) is a community-led garden focused on access to free good food everyone in the local community but the project is also about getting people out of the house to improve their mental health by spending time in the garden either getting involved practically or just being in the space. The garden provides opportunities for volunteering, work experience and is designed to increase wildlife and biodiversity.

Since the project started we have planted 24 fruit and nut trees with the help of the local schools and community volunteers and created 12 raised beds for vegetables and fruit that is shared out amongst volunteers and local community. At the end of the growing season there was a harvest festival and the food from the garden went into soup for sharing.

Activities through the year have encouraged adults and children of all ages to be a part of learning to grow food and passing the knowledge on. All three of the local schools have been involved in planting and harvesting, trying lots of different fresh foods along the way and the project is seeing a change in eating habits. There are regular events around the space like Lochside Gala and other festivals - there can often be over 150 people there! NANA provides regular after school garden and craft activities and the occasional snail racing.

LIFT and Nana Park garden are passionate about combing art and food to bring people into the space. In December 2025 we won the SURF Award for Creative Regeneration!



How did you get started?

It all started in February 2025 when we designed the garden from the inspiration of a willow tree with its roots growing out from the LIFT cabin and curving round to include fruit trees, raised beds for vegetables, a medicinal garden, willow and other native trees. Willow symbolizes rebirth, new life and growth and renewal as well as healing & resilience.

We received funding and when we got our license to occupy the land we began planting in April 2005.

What are your plans for the future?

There are plans in hand for an indoor growing space, a Willow Maze and weaving workshops.

Extra funding has meant that Naomi can extend her hours and a regular volunteer is going to be doing more which will really help. Volunteers at the garden are right across the ages and volunteering is such an important part of the project, one person said...

"I come every week - it gives me a purpose!"



What are the challenges?

The ground is wet and the weather can make things a challenge, but that is same for many gardens in this area. We also are limited with staff and volunteer time, however, that is about to improve!

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

More access to affordable fresh food and education around growing and cooking. There also needs to be more access to the unused land in D&G for growing food.





What does sustainability mean to you?

Longevity for the project and encouraging kids to grow and cook for the future. Natural health is also important, local herbalist Alex Ross helped to create a medicinal herb garden and runs workshops for the community to learn the benefits of plants in healing.

The woodland trust provided 400 native trees that local schools and community helped to plant and there are over 1000 bulbs to attract wildlife into the garden. Our bug hotels improve biodiversity. The site was marshland so we work with the wet land to grow willow instead of fighting against nature.

Community baking organisation, Doughlicious, are growing wheat in the garden to teach people about how it grows and how to make bread which is a great example of full cycle education for sustainability.

Nana Park is a lovely place for people to socialise and integrate into the community. People out walking stop by, children and parents call in on the way home from school to sew a few seeds or take some strawberries and other folk come with donations. The feeling you get in the garden is peaceful and welcoming so pay a visit as soon as you can!

You can find out more on the LIFT website:
LIFT – NANA Project

And find them on Facebook:
FB – NANA Park Project