

Newtown Linford Primary School

Kick-starting edible growing in a Leicestershire community.



In the Leicestershire village of Newtown Linford, signs of growth are beginning to appear at the village primary schools' new garden area. The area has been developed by pupils, staff, parents and the wider community, with a bit of help to kick-start from Food for Life.

In Autumn Term 2021, Newtown Linford Primary School decided they were ready to achieve their Food for Life Gold Award. Sadly, due to Covid restrictions and their original gardening space being disturbed by a school building extension, some investment was needed to get the school garden up and running once again.

Food for Life Funding

In March 2022, Food for Life posed a question to its commissioned schools around the country:

Which edible growing project would you get started with £50?

School staff were invited to attend a growing webinar and enter their ideas to be in with a chance to win £50 to launch their edible growing in their school.

The Food for Life Lead at Newtown Linford, Lucy Pearce, hoped to get the school and the wider community growing once again. After attending the online growing training webinar, with Food for Life gardening experts from our training team, she decided to put forward her edible growing project idea.

Lucy's ambitious edible growing project was to reclaim a central part of the school playground for growing using raised planters donated and installed by members of the village community. Along with Anya Patel, an enthusiastic parent helper, and using some of the ideas from the webinar training, they discussed with the children the seeds they planned to grow and the recipes they could create using the fruits and vegetables from the garden.

And they were successful! Newtown Linford was chosen to receive the £50 and soon spent it on much needed compost, seeds and equipment.

“We are so proud of how we look after our plants. We work hard to remember to give them the water they need.”

Newtown Linford Primary
School Gardening Club



Woodchips and a Welly Day

The children have got involved in filling the community raised beds and, to make it more cost effective, they have used a 'lasagna' method. They have used woodchips, shredded paper, cardboard and compost to fill each of the beds and in March began to sow their nasturtium, pea, radish and potato seeds.

The school also hosted a community event called 'Welly Day', where children, parents and community members were invited to take part in gardening activities at the school and were asked to donate compost. The community were incredibly generous, and the school now have enough compost to completely fill all their raised beds, as well as planters dotted around the school grounds.

Families who attended Welly Day were taught how to sow pea seeds which they could take away and grow in their own garden. The school shared a Food for Life recipe for Pea and Mint Soup for the families to make with their pea harvest!

Now the community have heard more about the growing at the school the school has been overwhelmed with the kind offers of volunteer support and plants, such as rhubarb crowns and strawberry runners have been donated.

Gardening Club

Although the garden is perfectly situated for all children to be involved in gardening activities, the gardening club, meet weekly to take responsibility of maintaining the garden and review and plan what needs to happen next.

The children in gardening club are most excited about growing the strawberries but can also identify a range of seedlings from the seeds they have bought and grown using their £50 voucher. They talk excited about continuing to grow at home and how their parents come into school and support the gardening taking place.



Rotbots

One of the projects the gardening club children have worked on is making rotbots, which involves making compost in a bottle. This activity was inspired by a Food for Life Leicestershire food producer film shared with the school and has been one of their favourite activities - it's helped them to understand the importance of making compost for the garden. The children also paid a visit to George Mount from Roots farm - the food producer in the film!



Growing passion and shoots for the future

Staff share their passion for growing with the children. One member of staff works with her husband to produce timelapse videos each year to show what they are growing in their allotment in the village. The children can see the progress virtually and visit throughout the year.

Now that Newtown Linford are thoroughly enjoying edible growing in school, they have begun to look to the future.

The children are very excited about harvesting their crops to use in school, take home and share with the local community. They have plans to use the fruits and vegetables in cooking lessons and they have a new cooker fitted in their new school hall! The gardening club have been discussing the potential uses of an apple tree in the school grounds as a source for apples used for eating, cooking and pressing. In September, they plan to share their harvest with the local community as part of the village scarecrow festival.

£50 has gone a long way to support a community growing boost!

