



Helen's Bay Community Garden has been helping local people to connect and grow for the last 6 years. We provide growing space for people from Bangor and Belfast, as well as the Helen's Bay area. Our gardeners share a love of food and the outdoors. We provide a space for people to grow, but also to make friends and overcome isolation, to meet other people and get fit. Participants have included people recovering from mental and physical health problems, bereavement, isolation (the elderly, people from other countries and new parents) and also people who are unemployed and trying to build up their CV. We have had very positive feedback from the people who have grown in the garden. Apart from benefitting individuals, activity in the garden begins to form a network of connections of people living in the same area who have similar interests. This is the point of community. Shared activities start to contribute to the fabric of society. It is not about charity, but self-help. The garden members are the beneficiaries, and there have been over 100 people volunteering with us over the years. We try to provide a range of events, all related to food and health. With a small grant from the Lottery we set ourselves up and bought essential equipment like our shed and polytunnel. Since then we have been self sustaining, running on membership fees, fundraisers and donations.

# Helen's Bay Community Garden

# The challenges

## **Ditch Digging!**

Our polytunnel is built on low lying land and if the drainage is not functioning it can get very boggy! The ditch behind the tunnel is very overgrown. We'd like to clear the area so a digger can get in to empty the ditch so water can move freely.

This will take 5 volunteer days.

## **Rabbit Proof Fence!**

In the past two years the rabbit threat to our garden has increased. We would like to build a simple fence which will protect our crops, and also add structure to the garden, making it more beautiful.

This will take 10 volunteer days

# The essentials



- \* All tools, materials and PPE will be provided.
- \* An experienced member of our team will be on site all day to support and instruct the volunteer team. This ensures they are challenged in a safe environment and can leave at the end of the day knowing they have made a great positive impact.
- \* We carry out a full risk assessment for all activities that take place on a volunteer day.
- \* Our site is covered by Public Liability Insurance (£5m).
- \* Toilets, running water, somewhere to shelter from rain, car parking and disabled access are all provided.
- \* Tea and coffee to volunteers will be available throughout the day.

# The extras

## An Alternative Lunch

Our chef will support a small team of volunteers to whip up a delicious, wholesome lunch using ingredients grown in the garden and cooked in our outdoor oven.

### Sample Menu

*Pizza and fresh salad  
with garlic bread*

*Strawberries and Cream*

Lunch costs £5 per person.



# The numbers

We always appreciate a team of enthusiastic volunteers supporting us on our site and we know that volunteers love coming to help out.

As with all organisations, our resources are limited and to make sure we can continue to deliver our great work at Helen's Bay we ask teams to help us cover the costs of supporting a volunteer team.

In return, we guarantee to provide an invaluable experience for your team. A supported day in of volunteering in the garden will develop new skills, build stronger bonds between colleagues and leave a sustainable legacy in the local community.

## **Costs:**

### **Challenge Coordinator (2 days) – £200**

This includes pre-event planning such as risk assessment, ensuring adequate insurance, planning activities as well as facilitating throughout the day.

### **Tools and Materials – £as per activities**

We gladly accept donations of tools and materials. If you prefer to source your own, please speak with us to ensure the quality and specifications will be suitable for the planned activities.

If you wish to discuss costs with us, please contact us on [helensbaycommunitygarden@googlemail.com](mailto:helensbaycommunitygarden@googlemail.com) and we are happy to talk!

# Testamonies

**We have had hundreds of volunteers working at the garden over the past 5 years, including corporate volunteer teams from Liberty IT and Lloyds.**



**What have our previous volunteers said?**

*“The greeting was lovely. Very relaxed. The coordinator was very friendly and helpful and enthusiastic.”*

*“Every one was high and happy when the poly tunnel went up. It was a great success for us all.”*

*“I didn’t know I liked rummaging around in the soil so much; how content I would be working outside. It really lifts you.”*

Keep an eye on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/helensbaycommunitygarden](https://facebook.com/helensbaycommunitygarden)) to find out what else is growing in our garden and other opportunities to be involved.