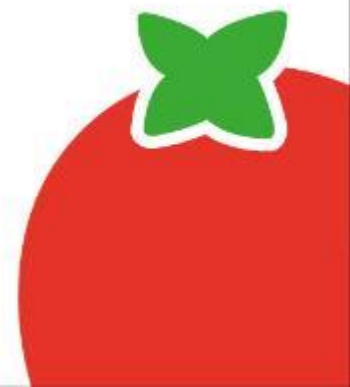




## Reflections on running a network during the Covid 19 Pandemic





# Sow the City



## Green Minds North Manchester



### Growing Health Case Study Health area: Mental health

This series of Growing Health case studies provide examples of projects which use food growing in the community to provide health benefit.



Supporting community food-growing projects in Manchester to grow and live sustainably

[manchester.gov.uk/growingmanchester](http://manchester.gov.uk/growingmanchester)

 GrowingManchester

## Supporting community food-growing projects.

Growing Manchester aims to:

- Help projects to realise their long-term aims and ambitions, to achieve long-term financial sustainability, and to be resilient
- Increase access to sustainable, locally grown food
- Improve the health and wellbeing of people involved in the projects and their wider communities
- Increase awareness of the effects of food production on climate change.

For more information about Growing Manchester or growing your own food, visit [manchester.gov.uk/growingmanchester](http://manchester.gov.uk/growingmanchester)

 Manchester Health & Care Commissioning  
A partnership between  
Manchester City Council  
and NHS Manchester CCG

**growing  
mcr**





## The Growing Manchester Network

- The programme has grown rapidly in the **last decade to include 117 groups**
- **Over 1200 direct growers now** in Growing Manchester and much more involved if include wider community (e.g. families, food banks).
- The programme supports **diverse range of hard to reach and vulnerable groups** experiencing food poverty, mental health, social isolation, drug addiction, homelessness, as well as general community groups and clubs at schools / hospitals etc















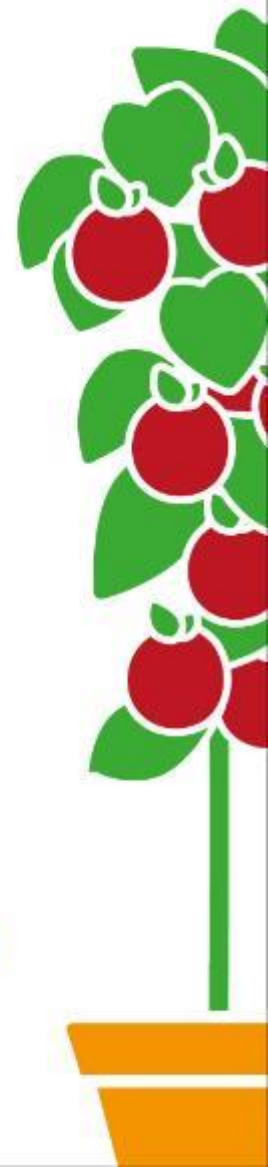







## The Coronavirus Pandemic

- The Sow the City team **provided online content via weekly webinars during lockdowns**. Click [here](#) to watch them.
- Growing Manchester groups **donated food to food banks** and projects **provided food security** for most disadvantaged groups in city.
- Outdoor based activities continued to **boost mental health and wellbeing** (nationally, gardening surged in popularity).
- Community Development Support
- Growing Manchester is all about **self-sufficiency and community spirit** and Mcr needed this more than ever this year.





# Webinar Programme



**Sow the City**


Manchester, UK

they/them


Growing food in cities makes a lot of sense – gardens, allotments, patios, rooftops and window-...[Read more](#)

[+ Follow](#) [Message](#)


15 VIDEOS



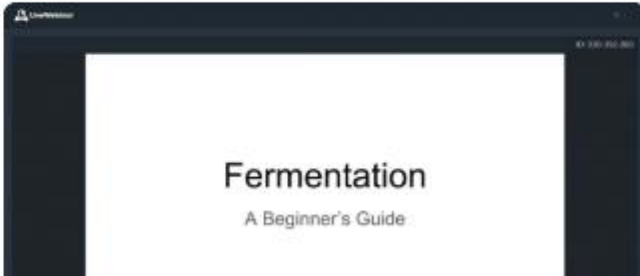
Growing Manchester Webinar: Green Roofs



Growing Manchester Webinar: Pests and Diseases of F...



SOIL SCIENCE FOR GARDENERS



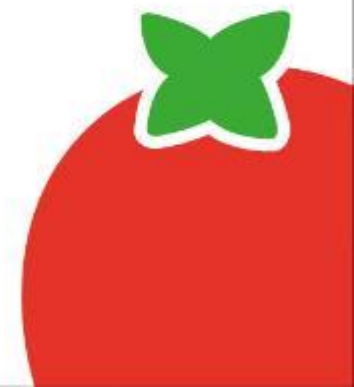
Fermentation  
A Beginner's Guide

Topics like Food Poverty, Green Wellbeing, as well as Growing at Home etc - all related to the pandemic: food security, mental health etc.





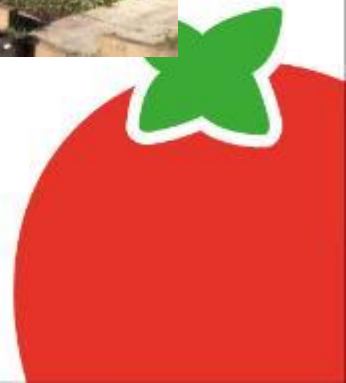
# Emergency Food: Community Harvest



## Case Study: The Lalley Centre, Collyhurst



- Growing Manchester helped the centre grow fresh and nutritious veg for the **201 people that attend the food bank project every week.**
- **The on-site allotment provides nutritious and fresh produce to supplement their emergency food parcels.**
- Growing Manchester had already supported the centre early in 2020, by harnessing the support of volunteers to bring the huge site back into use.
- “The work done prior to the lockdown was a game changer”. Manager, Lalley.

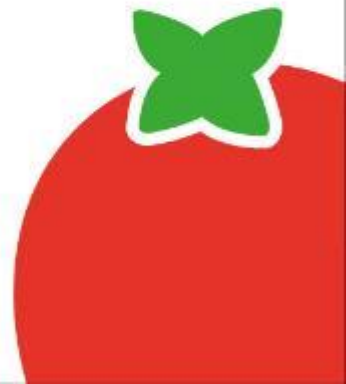




## Case Study: The Lalley Centre, Collyhurst



***“During COVID Growing Manchester has been a vital support and ally to the Lalley Centre, from helping out on the allotment when our allotment coordinator was furloughed, to providing us with grant information that was not previously known to us... to just generally being a part of our support network, during this difficult time. Sow the city are amazing and we’re thankful to have such amazing friends”.***





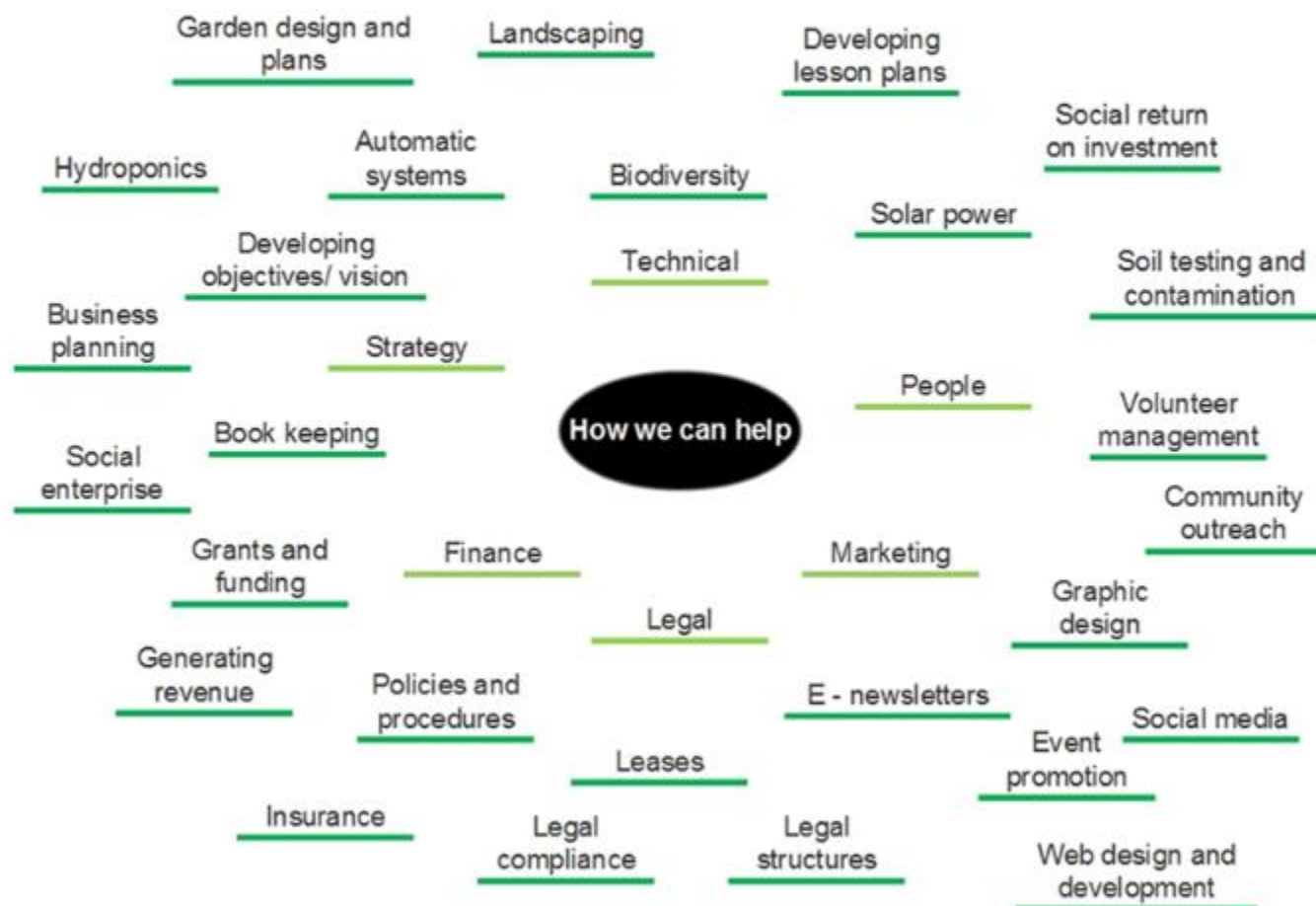
MARKET GARDEN

WA





# Community development: broad support available

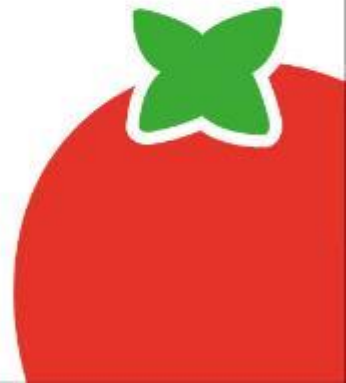


# Case Study - Ryder Brow Community Allotment, Gorton



Sow the City has:

- **Helped the group secure grant funding.**
- **Developed site designs**, for project generally and to brief social value teams at contractors.
- **Facilitated site infrastructure donations by corporates.**
- **Delivered socially distanced volunteer days** to prepare site for polytunnel erection.
- **Connected with Greater Manchester Youth Network** who now use the site weekly for sessions.
- **Supported their social media campaigns.**





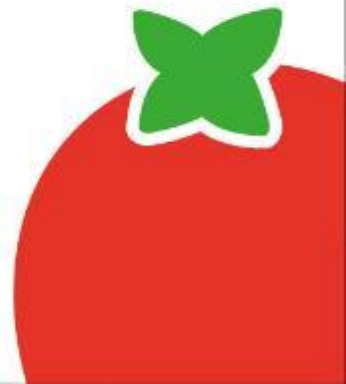
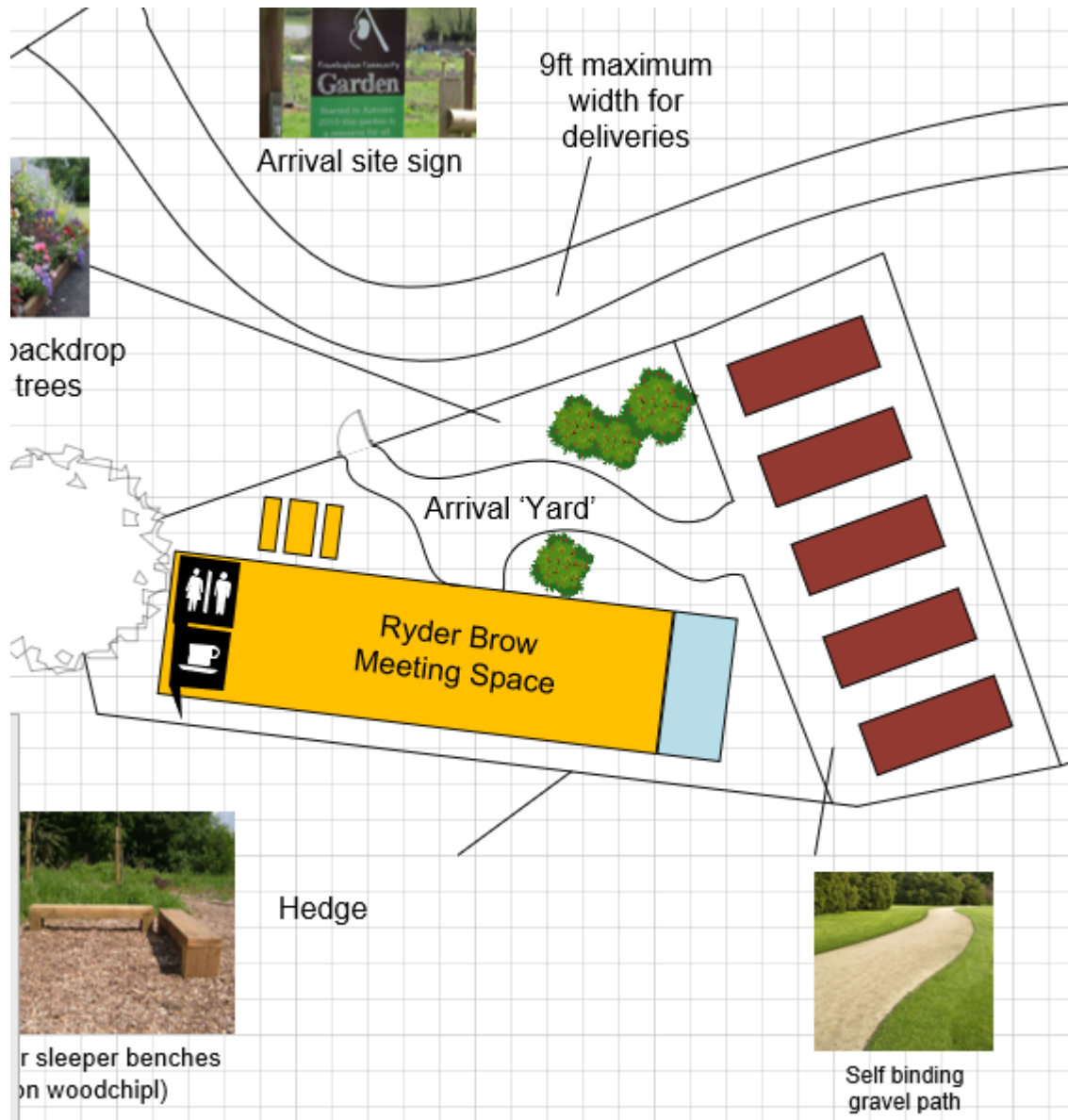
## Case Study: Ryder Brow Allotment Society



Groups greening up derelict and unused parts of the city...

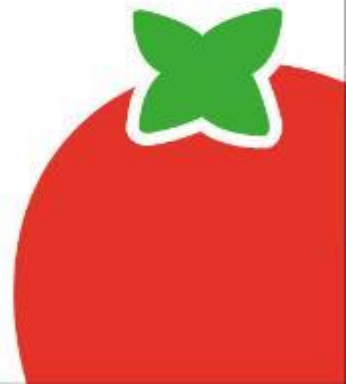


# Case Study: Ryder Brow Allotment Society





## Case study: Ryder Brow (2020)









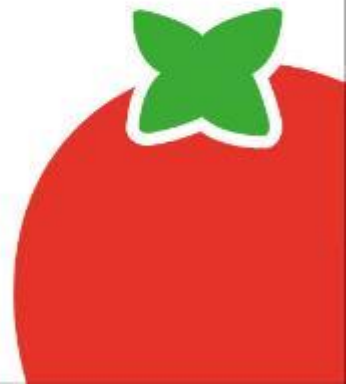


## Ryder Brow



*“It's great to see that the young people are happily engaged and volunteering in an environment that keeps them in touch with nature. **Hoping that we will continue this positive reciprocal relationship and on behalf of Ryder Brow CAS, thank you and well done Sow the City!**”*

*Project Co-ordinator, Ryder Brow Community Allotment*







PLOT 31







## Case Study: Harpurhey Wellbeing Centre

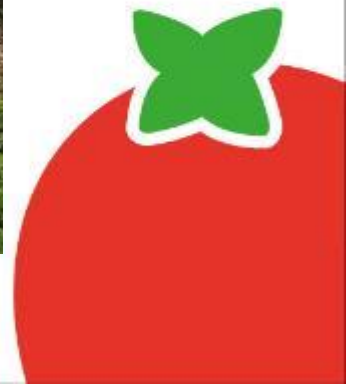
- The gardening group, managed by GMMH NHS Trust, was one of the first to start up again post Lockdown in September 2020.
- Replacing the damaged and neglected raised beds, planting winter veg and building a composter for the centre comprised GM support.
- Application to N.I.F also developed to **further growing infrastructure and activity in 2021.**



Greater Manchester  
Mental Health  
NHS Foundation Trust



## Case Study: Old Moat Greenies, Old Moat

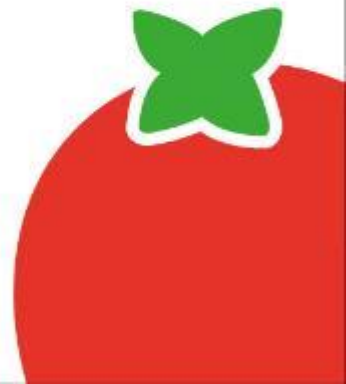




## Case Study: Old Moat Greenies, Old Moat



***“Volunteering at the OMG allotment has helped significantly with my mental health, particularly in the context of lockdown. I don't have a garden or outdoor space where I live and it makes such a difference knowing that there is a nice outdoor space nearby, where I can go to in order to spend some time close to nature. The allotment is a quiet, calming antidote to busy life in Manchester and the perfect space to think and unwind from stressful days at work. During lockdown it has been particularly important to get out of my flat, where both myself and my partner were working from home out of our living room”.***





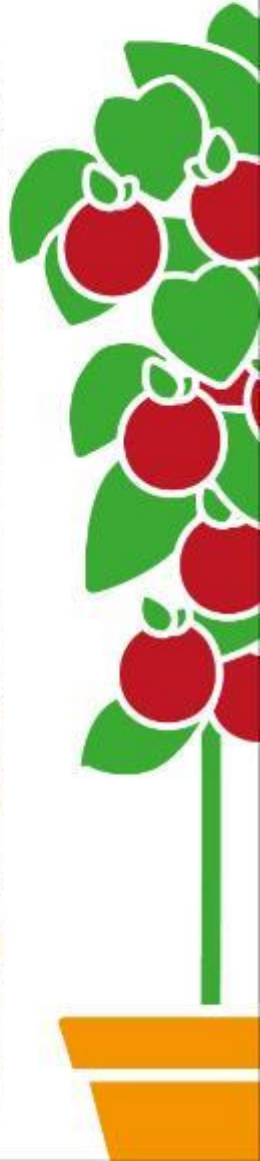
## Growing Champions: A huge surge in interest!



**Open  
Saturdays**

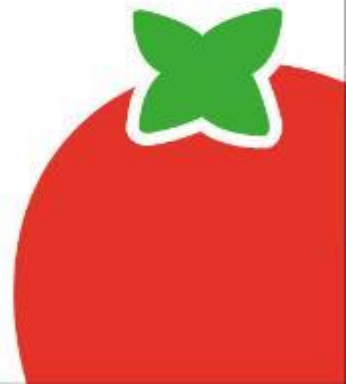
**Come in and explore the  
Hartfield Close  
Allotments at 14:00hrs**

**See the range of plants  
grown by local plot  
holders**





# Ecotherapy Sessions with Asylum Seekers



# Good to Grow and links with Council Allotments



**good to grow**

MAP JOIN US ABOUT US NEWS DASHBOARD SIGN OUT

AREA ALL GARDENS VOLUNTEER SEARCH

The place to find and volunteer for community gardens in Manchester.

Click on a pin on the map to show gardens in that area, or use the option above to find Good to Grow gardens near you.

**Key**

- Gardens
- Inactive Gardens
- Gardens looking for volunteers

The Good to Grow Manchester partner is Sow The City

**Sow the City**



Allotment waiting lists doubled – community garden network holds the key!

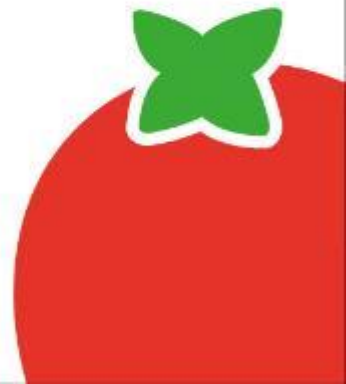




## What next?

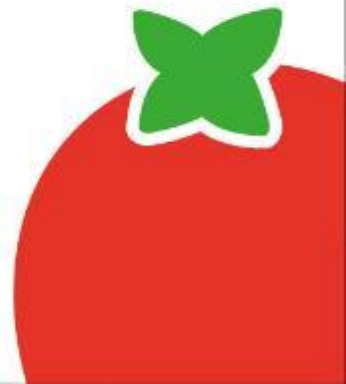
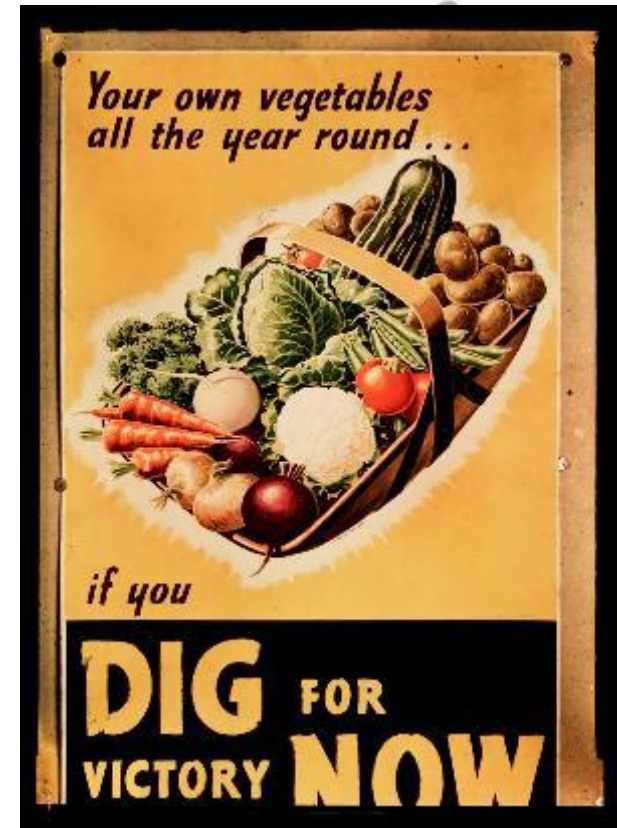


- Likely to be a tsunami of mental health problems given extra anxiety, lack of access to services, grief, particularly amongst BAME populations.
- Unemployment and aspiration. We are also a go to project for people who want to **volunteer / get involved in positive community based work** come to. We have seen a huge surge in enquiries and can naturally mobilise this human resource when safe to do so.
- **Community Gardening / food growing projects** are an excellent way to **tackle obesity** via a two pronged approach; it encourages both access to a healthy diet as well as varying levels of exercise.



## What next?

- **Growing Manchester should be an important part of the city's recovery from Covid.** We are going to be needed more than ever. A huge amount of people are now in food poverty that weren't previously.
- **Green skills** more important than ever and **green recovery, climate change.** Growing Manchester arguably more essential now for recovery than during middle of pandemic.
- **Adapt Growing Manchester** accordingly – Grow at Home Kits, dedicated learning sessions for groups online, volunteering etc







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Email [kieron@sowthecity.org](mailto:kieron@sowthecity.org)

