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Our Community – Our Environment – Our Actions

Press Release

For immediate release: 26th September 2014

Headline: Fresh Thinking on Food Poverty

Photo opportunity: Attached

Fyne Futures Bute Produce has received £1,675.00 of funding to work in collaboration with Bute Advice Centre on an innovative pilot to tackle food poverty on Bute. Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership Health and Wellbeing Fund have committed £975 to the project, with £700 of match funding from Argyll & Bute Council Third Sector Grants. Fyne Futures is donating £450 of project management time to the project. The pilot project will explore how Growing Your Own vegetables will provide people with an alternative choice to supermarket shopping, combining with Healthy Eating on a Budget advice sessions.

The pilot will support up to 12 households undertaking training in horticulture, specifically around container growing. This will be in the form of four Grow Your Own workshops at Bute Produce market garden, Townhead, Rothesay. If participants would also benefit from improving household budgeting skills Bute Advice Centre has trained qualified staff who are there to assist in developing these essential life skills.

Reeni Kennedy-Boyle, General Manager of Fyne Futures says “It is sad that there are members of our community suffering food poverty, and nutritional issues that result from lack of fresh produce in our diets. This pilot will help us determine whether Growing Your Own fresh produce could help tackle this issue. It is also an opportunity for Fyne Futures to work with Bute Advice to combine our strengths in support of vulnerable people.”

Commenting on the award Ronnie Armstrong, Senior Horticulturist at Bute Produce is “Learning to grow vegetables is very rewarding, there are so many benefits for health and well-being as well as reducing costs on the weekly shop”



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Julie Semple, Manager at Bute Advice Centre said “The option to grow their own food may prove to be a healthier and financially beneficial way forward, alongside the mental health benefits of achieving something very rewarding”

Notes for Editors

The pilot has been developed in response to the very real presence of food poverty on Isle of Bute.

Bute Health Network is attended by volunteer representatives of 18 community groups who have an interest in health and wellbeing. Feedback from these representatives has highlighted a need to offer targeted support to low income families with issues as a result of welfare reforms; ill health and access to quality fresh produce at affordable prices.

The Bute Advice Centre in conjunction with the Area Development Group have implemented a Food-Bank provision, whereby individuals who require crisis supplies of food can access support and assistance with regard to benefits, debt, budgeting, housing advice etc. These vulnerable groups are invariably low income individuals, often suffering from mental or physical disabilities. In the period Jan 1st to March 31st 2014, 39 individuals accessed the Food-Bank. This increased in the period of April 1st to June 30th 2014 to 50 individuals. 40% of clients were noted as disabled. In order to promote better physical and mental health the Grow your Own project is seen by Bute Advice Centre as a potential key tool in combating anxiety and stress, promoting self confidence and independence, alongside their own specialist advice on managing household budgets.

It is hope that learning from the pilot will be useful in development of a larger project to develop which includes provision of larger community growing spaces in Rothesay and enables sustainable healthy eating.

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