



CropDrop Project Summary

CropDrop is increasing the local supply of fruit and vegetables from bountiful allotments and food growers to community projects and organisations. Volunteer drivers transport this 'untapped resource' from growing sites to alleviate food insecurity across Bath & NE Somerset (B&NES). Allotments and food projects are connected within the same area to help strengthen communities and minimise the 'food miles' of the produce.

How did the project start?

The "CropDrop" project originated from a discussion between Milly Carmichael, B&NES Food Poverty Officer, and Dr Lyn Barham, Food Convenor of Transition Bath on July 20th 2020.

The initial team was Fiona, Joe, Lyn and Milly, soon after they were joined by Sam, the co-ordinator. Sam started to link up allotment groups with the food projects that Fiona & Joe had been working with during the early part of lockdown restrictions. The team now consists of five volunteers, supported by Milly Carmichael:

-  Sam Rudd - Project Co-ordinator
-  Lyn Barham - Allotment connector and Food Convenor, Transition Bath
-  Deborah Griffin - Somer Valley co-ordinator
-  Fiona Bell - food network connector and challenge-solver
-  Joe Lavington - design, branding, website & social media expert

A typical CropDrop operation is as follows:

- 1** Allotment holders deposit their donations into an arranged collection box on-site, protected from the weather and potential hungry animals (usually in a box, behind a shed in the shade). This is often over the weekend.
- 2** On a pre-arranged day, a volunteer driver picks up the fruit and vegetables and transports them to a charity project. This is commonly on a Monday or a Thursday.



3

Food charity projects distribute to their clients the afternoon after a drop off or the next day.

How did the project grow?

On 9th August three allotments in Bath began donating to four Bath food projects. By October six more allotment site growers had been linked with fourteen further food charity projects across B&NES - in Keynsham, Peasedown St John, Radstock, Paulton, Temple Cloud and Midsomer Norton.

There was a positive response to the 'shout out' for volunteer drivers over social media, the B&NES 3rd Sector Group *Compassionate Communities* Hub, radio and email callouts to community networks. Over 25 volunteer drivers came forward; 9 of them were deployed in the first 3 months. In some cases, the volunteer drivers have come forward from the allotment growers or the charity projects themselves.

A visual image of the connections can be found on this map:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1ohxRdS8vsSD9qs_01aSx1i8DMAVNr-eg&usp=sharing

A favourite journey started between the Bath Mind Greenlinks project at Ammerdown and the Radstock Children's Centre Food Club. The equivalent of 2 bags of apples, pears, grapes, tomatoes, squashes...and the first trumpet courgettes seen by CropDrop were shared on the first of these journeys.

In addition to regular allotment drops the team have also been able to respond to individual large one-off distributions, including 200 yards of kale shared with 9 projects on one day and harvesting from 2 laden apple trees shared with 10 projects.

By the end of October, over one hundred CropDrop journeys had been achieved. Photo records of the deliveries have been kept so that the quantity of produce shared on these journeys can be estimated.

A presentation was shared with the Feeding Britain Community on 21st Oct, highlighting the challenges and the aspects that contributed to the start-up



success of the project. A 'How to' guide was made available with the presentation slides.

What was the role of social media?

Initially, social media posts were used to raise awareness of the project and attract volunteers. The first post was on Facebook and was followed by a series of Tweets, tagging all the organisations, local news publications, radio stations and presenters known to the team. This attracted the attention of BBC Radio Bristol, BBC Radio Somerset, Somer Valley FM and Bath Radio who have supported the project broadcasting interviews with members of the team.

Allotment co-ordinators and drivers involved with each delivery event were asked to take a photo of the donated bounty and recipients - in front of their project sign if possible. The photos have been used to illustrate the project activity on social media.

Where does the project grow from here?

Plans to be developed over the winter season include considerations of how to:

-  Connect more allotments and growers with food providing projects
-  Enable produce recipients to have easy access to recipes for produce preparation and cooking
-  Strengthen links between projects and growers, eg by arranging allotment visits by project recipients, possible seasonal events and sharing seedlings and plants
-  Explore food-providing projects taking on their own allotments
-  Connect with schools and introduce opportunities including Rosie Havers' "Vidigrow" primary curriculum, RHS Growing programme & awards
-  Explore social prescribing opportunities involving growing
-  Encourage and facilitate home growing for food project recipients



How to find out more?

If you are a member of an allotment site that would be interested in donating fruit and vegetables or you have a market garden, a small holding or a garden with abundant produce and you would like to donate, please contact the CropDrop team by email: transition.surpluscrops@gmail.com
Likewise, if you are interested in contributing to the project as a driver, contact us at: transition.surpluscrops@gmail.com

If you are a charity or project providing food and would like to get involved please fill in this survey so we can help you become part of this exciting project:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SJZ3NQV>

As well as our website (cropdrop.org.uk), CropDrop can be followed on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (@CropDropBanes)

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