

Case Study: Tamar Grow Local

ABOUT TAMAR GROW LOCAL

Tamar Grow Local was started in 2007 with three main aims; providing opportunities for local people to grow their own food, raising awareness of the benefits of local produce, and working with commercial growers and supply chains. In addition to the Farmstart, they run a Food Hub, a scheme to improve healthy eating and cooking skills with low income households, they run producer cooperatives, community food projects and more. The Tamar Valley is very rural with low population density and limited public transport.

THE MODEL

Several fields totalling 12.5 acres have been leased from a local landowner (more land is available if needed) on a ten year Farm Business Tenancy and split into 1-acre plots, and people do not have to move off the plots as there is so much land available. Each plot comes with a 30 x 14 ft polytunnel, a 1 tonne IBC water tank and shared access to barn space, electricity and off-road parking. On the site they have had a variety of operations including native cut flowers, a small orchard, a vineyard, hatching eggs and several market gardens. Some tenants bought equipment (mower, topper, spreader) and do work for other tenants - self organised. They have found a monthly tenant meeting works well to help with communication. Participants provide a business plan, crop plan and soil building plan. They also have business review meeting after 6 months with a break

clause in the contract if they are not adhering to the farmer policy.

MARKETS

Tamar encourage and support tenants to grow through supplying their retail and wholesale Food Hub or Grow Share Cook project, and most sell through the Hub as well as having their own direct sales including a pop-up shop and small veg box rounds. Some informal partnerships and shared crops have worked between tenants. Tamar Grow Local also provide access to their equipment bank which includes market stall equipment which tenants can borrow.

TRAINING

There is no formal training with the programme. Initially there was some time funded to provide training, and this ended up being spent on bespoke training for each individual, but this funding has now ended. People are provided with Level 2 Food Hygiene training so they can use the Community Kitchen.

COST

Tenants pay £500 a year for a 1 acre plot. After 3 years this decreases to £300 per acre, and tenants are responsible for maintaining the tunnel. Tenants can also expand onto another acre when they have proven they are able to manage it. Tenants pay a £150 deposit in case they leave their plot in a poor state.

