



COMHAIRLE CONTAE  
CHEATHARLACH  
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

# COMMUNITY GARDEN & ALLOTMENTS — HANDBOOK



Contents

Introduction ..... 2

What is a Community Garden and Allotments? ..... 2

Forming a Community Garden and Allotments ..... 3

Considerations for a Community Garden Group ..... 4

Local Support ..... 4

Opening a Bank Account ..... 4

Constitution..... 4

Gardeners Personal Contract Agreements ..... 4

Insurance..... 4

Supports ..... 4

Public Participation Network (PPN)..... 5

Planning Exemption Certificate..... 5

Potential Funding Sources ..... 5

Appendix Documents..... 7

Appendix 1 Agenda (Sample) ..... 8

Appendix 2 Agenda (Template) ..... 9

Appendix 3 Attendance Record (Sample) ..... 10

Appendix 4 Meeting Minutes (Sample) ..... 7

Appendix 5 Officer Roles ..... 13

Appendix 6 Constitution (Sample) ..... 14

Appendix 7 Growers Contract (Sample) ..... 16

Appendix 8 Accident/Incident Report Form (Sample) ..... 17

Appendix 9 Application Form for Section 5 Declaration on Development & Exempted  
Development ..... 19

Notes: ..... 23

## Introduction

These guidelines are directed towards members of a community who wish to come together in a group, to form a Community Garden and Allotment Committee. Community Garden and Allotment committees come together to enable people to grow their own food and promote other growing initiatives, albeit on local authority lands, or other. Carlow County Council will work with interested groups to assist the development of community gardens and allotments and commit to helping groups resource information and locate suitable sites in the County (SDG1<sup>2</sup> & 2<sup>7</sup>).

Carlow County Council seeks to support the development of community gardens and allotments that are developed to encourage sustainable practices. It is acknowledged that allotments and community gardens will play a part by providing rural and urban green corridors, enhancing habitat connectivity and safeguarding biodiversity.

These guidelines are designed to support new and existing committees, outlining procedures for best practice when forming a Community Garden and Allotment committee. Carlow County Council assists Community Garden and Allotments through the work of the Community Section.

It is the Vision of Carlow County Council to support opportunities for positive social interaction and recreation in beautiful, non-threatening atmospheres; to promote social inclusion and cohesiveness, where people of all ages and backgrounds can meet; to enjoy a common activity, exchange ideas; to interact in a healthy pursuit and common interest of gardening and horticulture in a pleasant and welcoming setting (SDG11<sup>8</sup>).

## What is a Community Garden and Allotments?

Community Garden and Allotments are groups formed of local people who come together with an interest in growing food for their own consumption.

A Community Garden and Allotments can:

- Develop a vision and goals for their Community Garden and Allotment Group.
- Communicate information to members.
- Apply for grants from funding providers and from Carlow County Council.
- Organise events, planting days and clean-up days.
- Address local issues and improve sustainability and climate action.
- Work with Carlow County Council to promote and participate in Local Authority Initiatives.

Community Garden and Allotments are for members who are interested to grow food for their own consumption. Carlow County Council encourage and support community garden and allotment groups to work together with local community groups and residents associations to be inclusive and make their community a better place.

## Forming a Community Garden and Allotments

Those interested in setting up the committee will need to have an **initial meeting**. The purpose of this meeting is to make a plan that will maximise the attendance at an **open meeting**. A Community Garden and Allotments is open and representative of everyone living in the area interested to be involved in the group going forward.

### Initial Meeting:

- Ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to become involved in the Community Garden and Allotments.
- Arrange an open meeting in a suitable local venue that is easily accessible for everyone.
- Appoint a chairperson and secretary for the open meeting until the new committee is elected.
- Agree an agenda for the meeting (see Appendix 1)
- Notify members of the date/time/venue and agenda of the open meeting.
- Ensure as many people as possible living in the local area engage in the Community Garden and Allotments.

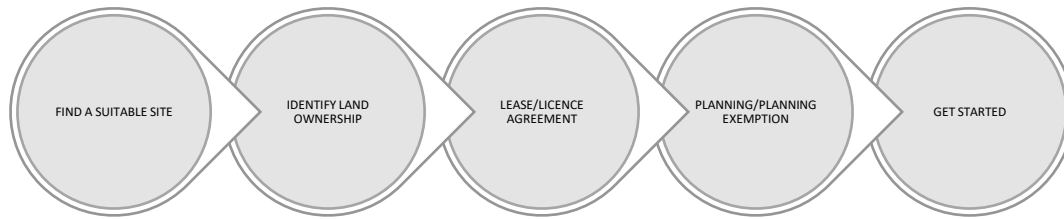
### Hosting an Open Meeting

- Ensure venue is open on time and people are welcomed on arrival.
- Distribute agendas throughout the room (see Appendix 2).
- Circulate an attendance list (see Appendix 3) ask everyone to sign in on arrival.
- Assign a minute taker and record minutes of meeting (see Appendix 4)
- Introduce the main speakers, explain what a Community Garden and Allotments is and how it would benefit the area.
- Request agreement to formally proceed and elect a committee.
- Outline officers' roles (see Appendix 5) and request nominations for:
  - Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer
- Election of Committee
- Discuss and agree on initial aim and objectives of Community Garden and Allotments
- Give an opportunity to the group to discuss Any Other Business (AOB) which was not covered on the agenda.

### Committee Meetings

Once the committee is formed regular meetings should take place a minimum of six meetings per year. An agenda should be circulated in good time, at least a week before the meeting generally. Any additional items which come up at the time of meeting can be included in Any Other Business (AOB). Chairperson should follow the agenda and discuss all items. Secretary should update correspondence and take minutes of each meeting and circulate to the group after the meeting. Minutes of the previous meeting should be proposed and seconded by committee members who were present.

### Considerations for a Community Garden Group



#### Local Support

A commitment of support for the Community Garden and Allotment Committee by resident’s association or other residents’ groups: It is advised that when establishing a community garden committee any residents’ association in the immediate vicinity would be involved and support the group. The local authority supports resident’s associations and collaboration with these groups will support and sustain community gardens long-term.

#### Opening a Bank Account

It is strongly recommended that your committee opens and maintains a bank account with a bank of your choice. The bank will advise you of what documentation you need. This will assist with managing your finances and is a transparent way to track income and expenditure. At least two members of the committee will need to be signatories on the account and must sign for all transactions.

#### Constitution

The constitution is one of the most important documents that your group will develop. A constitution is a set of rules/procedures to assist the committee in the day to day running of committee matters. It will help resolve issues and clarify rules. It outlines the aims and objectives of the group. A sample constitution is included in Appendix 6.

#### Gardeners Personal Contract Agreements

Community Garden and Allotment Committees manage the membership and agreements for those using the facilities. Each year members sign an agreement to upkeep the area and abide by the constitution. A sample Personal Contract Agreement is included in Appendix 7.

#### Insurance

Carlow Local Authority advises Community Garden and Allotments to have adequate Public Liability Insurance to indemnify and protect against claims. All groups will require up to date insurance cover to avail of grants/funding. Any accidents or incidents should be recorded and kept on file by the committee. A sample report form is included in Appendix 8.

#### Supports

Carlow County Council, Community Section provide support to Community Groups and Residents Associations. Community Garden and Allotment Groups may be entitled to apply for community grants. Please register your Community Garden Group with Carlow County Council by emailing: [community@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:community@carlowcoco.ie) . Grants are

advertised on Carlow County Council website and information will be available to groups once grants become available.

### **Public Participation Network (PPN)**

Carlow County Council strongly advises all groups to become members of the Carlow Public Participation Network. For further information and how to register go to: [Carlow Public Participation Network - Carlow PPN](#)

### **Planning Exemption Certificate**

Local authorities may issue certificates of exemption for developments that do not need planning permission. Exempt development is development for which planning permission is not required and is generally of a minor nature. To be certain that a minor development is exempt from the requirement for planning permission you are advised to make an application to Carlow County Council to establish if there is a requirement to obtain planning permission for your proposal under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Acts. To make an application you must complete the form (See Appendix 9). In addition, you are advised to provide a Location Plan, Site Plan, Floor and Elevation Plans (sufficiently detailed and scaled) to illustrate the proposed development. When you have completed the form and plans, the application together with a fee of €80 should be returned to: The Planning Section, Carlow County Council, Athy Road, Carlow. Unless further information is sought by the Planning Authority a decision will be issued within 4 weeks of receipt of the application.

### **Potential Funding Sources**

#### **Carlow County Council Environmental/Amenity Grant Scheme**

Each year applications are invited from interested groups, committees and organisations who are engaged in or intending to engage in community, environmental works or anti-litter initiatives in their localities.

#### **Carlow County Council Pride of Place Competition**

Carlow County Council's Pride of Place initiative offers the opportunity to all communities in County Carlow to demonstrate the pride they take in their areas and the activities of the people who make a real difference. Independent judging is carried out in a set timeframe and prizes are awarded in various categories. Community Gardens and Allotments are eligible to enter in the Community Project Category for Carlow's Pride of Place.

#### **Discretionary Funding**

Elected Members of Carlow County Council can support local projects across Carlow. To avail of this funding please contact local councillor/s directly. Elected members contact details are provided on Carlow County Council Website.

#### **Other Grants**

Funding is available annually from various sources; Local Authority Departments regularly have funding available for Community Enhancement, Arts, Environmental/Climate Action, Heritage and Sports Projects.

Other organisations also provide funding such as County Carlow Development Partnership, LEADER and SICAP Funding for community projects and Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, Community Education Funding for training programmes.

## Appendix Documents



COMHAIRLE CONTAE  
CHEATHARLACH

---

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Appendix 1 Agenda (Sample)

Open Meeting of \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Insert name of Community Garden and Allotment Committee)

Date:

Time:

Location:

### Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Guest Speaker
- Priorities/Concerns
- Motion that a Community Garden and Allotments be formed, and a committee be elected.
- Election of Committee
- Setting Aims/Objectives of the Community Garden and Allotments Committee
- AOB
- Date/Time/Location of the next meeting

Appendix 2 Agenda (Template)

Meeting of _____		
Date:	Time:	Location:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li></ul>		





## Appendix 5 Officer Roles

Chairperson	Secretary
<p>The primary role of the chairperson is to lead the committee and facilitate its meetings.</p> <p><i>A Chairperson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Facilitate</b> the group to work towards achieving the committees aims. Give help and support where needed.</li> <li>Ensure the agenda is prepared for meetings in consultation with the secretary. Arrange meetings and sign minutes once agreed.</li> <li>-<b>Chair</b> committee meetings, move through the agenda in the time set out. Encourage full participation of members and ensure the workload is shared amongst the group.</li> <li>-<b>Report</b> at AGM on the work carried out in the previous year. Ensure all necessary information is made available to committee members. Ensure adequate records are kept and be a signatory on the committee bank account.</li> <li>-<b>Represent</b> the committee to outside organisations, networks etc.</li> </ul>	<p>The primary role of the secretary is to communicate and record decisions made by the committee.</p> <p><i>A Secretary should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Prepare</b> the relevant documents for committee meetings. Each meeting should have a record of attendance, an agenda, and minutes of the last meeting.</li> <li>-<b>Read/Report</b> the minutes of the last meeting. Allow for discussion of any matters arising which are not on the agenda. Give an update of any correspondence received.</li> <li>-<b>Record</b> attendance and minutes of meetings and circulate the information to committee members.</li> <li>-<b>Communicate</b> any relevant information to committee members between meetings.</li> </ul>
Treasurer	Committee Member
<p>The primary role of the treasurer is to account for the finances of the committee.</p> <p><i>A Treasurer should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Maintain</b> the financial records for the committee</li> <li>-<b>Account</b> for payments/lodgements made on behalf of the committee. Monitor budgets and seek additional funding through grants.</li> <li>-<b>Present</b> financial reports at each committee meeting and a final financial report at the AGM.</li> </ul>	<p>The first task of a committee member is to attend meetings of the committee.</p> <p><i>A Committee Member should be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Aware</b> of and committed to the aims of the committee</li> <li>-<b>Engaged</b> in meetings and supportive of events</li> <li>-<b>Responsible</b> for sharing in the work agreed at meetings</li> </ul>

Appendix 6 Constitution (Sample)

## Constitution

### Title:

The name of the Association shall be \_\_\_\_\_ Community Garden/Allotments Committee.

### Objectives:

The objectives of the committee is to develop and promote community participation in \_\_\_\_\_ Community Garden and Allotments, through the medium of gardening/growing.

- To promote healthy communities in \_\_\_\_\_ and surrounding areas, through regular exercise in the development and maintenance of gardens and the production of healthy vegetables.
- Organise community events to promote community gardens as amenities to be valued.
- The principles informing the Community Garden and Allotments include social inclusion, equality, respect and environmental responsibility.

### Membership:

Membership is open to all householders in the area of \_\_\_\_\_. Any such householder, having paid their annual subscription, shall be deemed to be a member. Membership is per household. Each household will have two votes which can be at the Annual General Meeting to elect a new committee to represent members, or vote on constitutional changes etc.

### Finance:

The Treasurer will open a bank account in the name of the committee. Account signatories will be that of the chairperson and the treasurer of the committee and one other nominated committee member. All transactions and instructions to the bank shall require two of these three signatures at committee meetings. A statement of account will be produced by the treasurer at the committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting.

### Committee:

The committee will be elected to carry out the business of the Community Garden and Allotment Committee. The committee will comprise of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and other committee members. Community members are welcome to form sub-groups to encourage participation and ownership. The committee shall be elected at the AGM and if additional members are required, they can be co-opted by the committee to fill any vacant positions. The committee will meet at least six times per year or more frequently if the committee deems it necessary.

The Committee will: -

- Raise funds, receive grants and determine and agree how funds are spent.
- Implement and review the terms and conditions for membership of the Community Garden and Allotments.
- Co-operate with and support other groups with similar purposes.
- Abide by the Constitution and Terms and Conditions of Lease Agreement/Licence.

**Annual General Meeting (AGM):**

An AGM shall be held annually in \_\_\_\_\_ or within three months of the same. The committee will report on its yearly work, present a statement of accounts and facilitate elections.

**Quorum:**

A meeting must have a quorum in order to make any decisions. A quorum is generally 50% of the group plus one person e.g., if there are 10 people on the committee at least 6 of those must be in attendance to carry out the meeting.

**Changes to the constitution:**

The constitution can be altered at the AGM subject to notification. Any proposed changes must be given to the secretary at least a week before the meeting is scheduled to take place. Changes to the constitution must be agreed at a meeting ensuring there is adequate committee members present to meet the quorum.

**Dissolution of the committee:**

The association may only be dissolved at a special general meeting or AGM called for that purpose and must be advertised.

**Standing Orders:**

Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings or in premises used by the committee.

Any community member may propose a motion, in order for it to be passed it must be proposed and seconded by members of the meeting.

Only members present at a meeting may vote.

Signatures of committee members:

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 7 Growers Contract (Sample)

**Gardeners Personal Contract Agreement 2025**

You and your fellow gardeners are the caretakers of this Community Garden/Allotments Project, and it is through your efforts that it can realise its full potential and become a beautiful and productive place.

**Gardener hereby agrees that they will:**

- Undertake compost training provided by the Garden/Allotments
- Attend tidy up events put forward by the committee
- Keep their assigned plot weed-free and restrict growing space to their own plot
- Keep adjoining path clean and free of weeds
- Treat fellow gardeners with consideration at all times
- Remove their refuse from the Garden/Allotments
- Compost organic materials in accordance with the agreed rules
- Supervise and accompany any children brought to the Garden/Allotments
- Clear debris at the end of the season and make the plot ready for the winter
- Have regard for the security of the allotment site

**Gardener hereby agrees that they will NOT:**

- Give their key or a copy of their key to anyone. Anyone who has lost a key please contact the Garden Committee.
- Build any projects or objects in the Garden/Allotments without prior permission of the Garden Committee
- Grow or purposefully allow invasive or hard-to-remove plants to enter the garden area
- Bring pets to the Garden/Allotments
- Bring/use a boom-box without headphones or make any disturbances in the Garden/Allotments
- Grow or use illegal substances in the Garden/Allotments.
- Consume alcohol in the Garden/Allotments without prior permission of the Garden Committee.
- Bring motor vehicles onto the garden/allotments without permission from the Garden Committee
- Use any chemicals without permission from the Garden Committee

**I hereby agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the Plots Community Garden/Allotments and to take up/continue with an allotment for the 2025 year. Please complete all sections below.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Enclosed (please circle)    €25    or    €30

FOR OFFICE USE:

Plot No: \_\_\_\_\_ Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 8 Accident/Incident Report Form (Sample)**

Name of \_\_\_\_\_ Community Garden & Allotments Committee

**Part A: Incident Details**

Date of incident:	Location of incident (be specific):
Incident reported by:	Time of incident:
Incident reported to (Print Name): Signature:	Date incident was reported

**Part B: Injured Party**

If you are reporting a near miss or dangerous occurrence, go to Part D. If more than one person was injured by the same incident, please attach all details asked for in Part B for each injured person.

Details of injured person		
Name	Age	Gender
Address	Phone Number	
Details of the injury		
What was the Injury?		
What part of the body was injured?		
Did the injured person ( <i>Tick all the boxes that apply</i> )		
Become unconscious <input type="checkbox"/>	Need resuscitation <input type="checkbox"/>	
Was medical attention given by (tick the boxes that apply)		
First Aider <input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor <input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>
Details (incl name of first aider)		

**Part C: Accident Type (Please tick the box that best describes what happened)**

Contact with moving machinery or material being machined	
Hit by a moving, flying or falling object	
Hit by a moving vehicle	
Hit by something fixed or stationary	
Injured while handling, lifting or carrying	
Slipped, tripped or fell on the same level	
Pushing or pulling	
Twisting or turning	
Other movement (e.g. walking)	
Fell from a height	

How high was the fall? (meters)	
Fall, collapse/breakage of material	
Drowned or asphyxiated	
Exposed to, or in contact with, a harmful substance	
Exposure to fire	
Exposure to an explosion	
Contact with electricity or an electrical discharge	
Injured by an animal	
Physically assaulted by a person	
Another kind of accident (describe in part D)	

Part D: Description of incident:

Photographs available, If yes, please attach.

Part E: Witness Statement

Please Describe the incident in your own words:	
Signed by witness:	Date:
Address:	Contact Number:

Part F: Injured person statement

Please Describe the incident in your own words:	
Signed by witness:	Date:
Address:	Contact Number:

Appendix 9 Application Form for Section 5 Declaration on Development & Exempted Development

 <p><b>COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHEATHARLACH</b></p> <p>CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL</p>	<p>Oifigí an Chontae Bóthar Átha Í Ceatharlach, R93E7R7</p> <p>County Buildings Athy Road Carlow R93E7R7</p> <p>T: 059-9170346 E: See <a href="http://Carlow.ie/contact-us">Carlow.ie/contact-us</a> W: <a href="http://carlow.ie">carlow.ie</a></p>
--	--

**APPLICATION FORM FOR SECTION 5 DECLARATION  
ON DEVELOPMENT & EXEMPTED DEVELOPMENT**

<b>1. Name of applicant:</b>		
	<i>Contact details to be provided in section 10 at the end of this application form</i>	
<b>2. Name of person/agent acting on behalf of applicant (if any):</b>		
	<i>Contact details to be provided in section 11 at the end of this application form</i>	

<b>3. Location of site in question (postal address or townland):</b>		
	<b>Tailte Éireann Map Ref. No. (and the Grid Reference where available):</b>	
<b>4. Please state the applicant's interest in the site:</b>		

**5.** Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides that: - *If any question arises as to what, in any particular case, is or is not development and is or is not exempted development, within the meaning of this Act, any person may, on payment of the prescribed fee, request in writing from the Planning Authority a declaration on that question.* In accordance with this provision, please set out below a clear description of the question for which you seek the Section 5 Declaration. *(Additional details may be provided in supporting documentation)*

<b>6.</b>	To enable the Planning Authority to issue a declaration on the question asked in section 5 of this application form and within the prescribed period, please include the information referred to in parts (a) to (c) below:	
<b>(a)</b>	A comprehensive description of the existing or proposed works, development, or site/building use (as applicable) upon which your application and question is based <i>(Additional details may be provided in supporting documentation)</i>	
<b>(b)</b>	Details of the relevant exempt development provision under which your declaration is being sought (e.g. relevant section in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) or relevant article/exempt development class in the Planning and Development	

	<b>Regulations 2001 (as amended).</b>	
<b>(c)</b>	<b>Parts (a) and (b) should be supported by plans and particulars including:</b>	
	<p><b>i</b> A site location map (Scale 1:2500 for rural area and 1:1000 for an urban area), with the site/land in question clearly outlined in red.</p> <p><b>ii</b> A site layout plan (Scale 1:500) prepared in accordance with Article 23 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), with dimensions in metric scale and clearly detailing the existing or proposed works, development, or site/building use (as applicable) upon which your application and question is based.</p> <p><b>iii</b> Floor plan and elevation drawings as applicable (Scale 1:200), prepared in accordance with Article 23 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), with dimensions in metric scale and clearly detailing the existing or proposed works, development, or site/building use (as applicable) upon which your application and question is based.</p>	

<b>7.</b>	<b>Do the proposed works, development, structure, or site/building use (as applicable) relate to a Protected Structure and/or its curtilage?</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>List any previous planning application(s) relating to the site:</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Are you aware of aware of any enforcement proceedings relating to the site:</b>

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Signature of Applicant or Agent as appropriate)*

**ADVICE NOTES TO APPLICANT**

Under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended any person may request in writing from the Planning Authority a declaration as to what, in any particular case, is or is not development or is or is not exempted development within the meaning of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Planning Authority is required to make a decision within 4 weeks of receipt of an application under Section 5 of the Act. However, where insufficient information has been provided, the Planning Authority may require the submission of further information in order to enable the Authority to issue the declaration on the question asked. In this regard and in order to avoid any delay in the processing of your application please ensure a fully completed application form is submitted, along with all information, plans and particulars in response to Section 5 and parts (a) to (c) in section 6 of the application form.

If the existing or proposed works, development, or site/building use relate to a protected structure you are advised to liaise with the Planning Authority to establish whether the works will require submission of an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, to assess the impact of any proposed works on the character, setting and fabric of the protected structure. Where required, this report must be prepared by a suitably qualified Conservation Architect/Specialist.

- This application must be accompanied by the statutory fee of €80
- The application should be submitted to:

**By Post:** Planning Department  
 Carlow County Council  
 Athy Road  
 Carlow  
 R93 E7R7

**By Email:** [planningdevman@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:planningdevman@carlowcoco.ie)

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

<b>Date Received:</b>	<b>Decision Due Date:</b>
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	<b>Recommendation:</b>





COMHAIRLE CONTAE  
CHEATHARLACH  
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CONTACT  
COMMUNITY@CARLOWCOCO.IE**

---

**COMMUNITY GARDEN &  
ALLOTMENTS HANDBOOK**