



Canalside Education Project

Teacher Information Pack

Scheme/farm information

Contact details

Scheme name:

Canalside Community Food

Address:

Southam Road
Radford Semele
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
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Contact person: Ali Jeffery
(General Administrator for Canalside &
Education Project Coordinator)

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www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk

Booking a visit:

Please contact us using the email address/postal address above, or use the contact form on our website.

Cost of the visit: free for school visits of two or more hours that include a tour of the fields and completion of an evaluation/feedback form. We ask for a £30 refundable deposit, that will be refunded on completion of the visit and receipt of the evaluation form. Please note, we can only accommodate one class-sized group at a time (approx. 30-35 children max).

You will need to arrange and pay for transport to the farm. We can offer a bursary to cover some of your transport costs if the visit would not otherwise be possible.

Cancellation of visits

Please contact us as soon as possible if your visit will no longer be possible. If the notice period is less than 3 days, please use the contact phone number to let us know. If your visit is cancelled or postponed after your pre-visit meeting / less than 10 days before your visit (whichever is greater), it will not be possible to refund your deposit.

How to get here

Travelling from Leamington, leave the town heading east on the A425 (Radford Road, which becomes Southam Road at the edge of the village). Go through the village and continue up the hill out of the village towards Southam. The entrance is after the first right-hand bend and is marked with a large, wooden sign board on the left.

Travelling into Leamington, join the A425 into Leamington. After crossing/leaving the Fosse Way, follow the road up the hill and along the straight section of road. The project entrance is after the sharp left-hand bend and is marked with a large wooden sign, of which you will see the back.

Follow the track through the young woodland and park in the parking area.

For safe dropping off we recommend all coaches come to the car park, or at the very least to the bottom of the woodland.

What you can do on the farm

A typical visit includes:

Visits to our scheme begin with the group being welcomed in the pole barn, having left the coach in the car park. Bags are left in crates in the pole barn and everyone sits on the mats for an introductory talk about the Canalside Community Food, along with a health and safety briefing, and a visit to see the compost toilets, with a brief explanation of their use.

Everyone is taken on a tour of the fields at some point during the day, as best fits in with the activities planned and the weather conditions. A range of other activities are offered, which vary according to the age and needs of the children and the seasonal activities in the growing calendar.

The activities will stop for a snack break at around 10.30am, and for lunch at 12 or 12.30pm. Before the snack break and lunch, children are taken to wash their hands at the hand-washing station by the compost toilets. Anti-bacterial gel is also available for use. Snacks and lunch are eaten in the pole barn if shelter is needed, or on the grassy area in front of it.

The visit finishes back in the pole barn with an opportunity to review the visit. It may be possible to arrange an "Ask the grower" session, when the children get a chance to ask questions about anything they have seen or done during the day. The education project coordinator (workshop leader) can also lead a question and answer session.

Activities we can provide during visits:

A tour of the fields and polytunnels

Hands-on/play-based activities to learn about:

- what vegetable plants need to grow
- the processes involved in growing vegetable plants
- how compost is made and how it improves soil fertility
- the importance of bees/other insects for vegetable growing
- where vegetables come from – which part of the plant (Foundation/KS1/ KS2); which vegetables can be grown locally (KS2)
- how the seasons affect vegetable growing in the UK
- what different vegetables are called and what they taste like

Some of these activities depend on the season.

Other topics which can be covered through discussion include:

- what organic agriculture is
- other ways of improving soil fertility in organic agriculture
- how and why biodiversity is promoted on the farm
- seasonal changes on the farm

Ask the grower – questions from the group – this can also be led by the education project coordinator

Paired visits (early summer and late autumn) can be offered if required to allow classes to compare the two seasons. If this opportunity is taken, the summer visit would think about the theme 'How does our garden grow?' and the autumn visit would consider 'Where does

it come from?

Facilities:

A covered area suitable as a meeting point, for packed lunches or for wet weather activities: the pole barn

Picnic area: the grassy area in front of the pole barn

Toilets: compost toilets next to the pole barn

Hand-washing facilities: at the hand-wash station next to the compost toilets

Meeting point if children get lost: the pole barn

Emergency evacuation meeting point: the top of the drive

Farm/project profile

History:

Jane and John Ingall own Leasowe Farm, and Canalside Community Food was established on Leasowe Farm by Tom Ingall, Jane and John's son, and his wife, Caz, in 2006.

The whole farm covers an area of 145 acres, with approximately 120 acres in arable production and grazing pastures. The remainder of the land is used for a variety of enterprises, including woodland, a site for shiitake mushroom production and an extensive nut orchard. Canalside Community Food rents 7 acres of land for growing vegetables in three fields and six large polytunnels and an additional 1 acre field which is a fruit orchard with a range of soft fruit and tree fruits.

Educational visits to Canalside Community Food are offered to local school groups. Visits to the wider farm are not currently available.

The six polytunnels have been put up since the inception of the project, with the latest, largest one being installed in the summer of 2011. Other temporary and semi-permanent structures on the site provide shelter for workers and volunteers, the produce collection area, and a shelter for social activities with members/educational visits. The tree-bog composting toilet was constructed in 2011 and allows for toilet waste to be dealt with in a wholly environmentally sustainable manner. A high spec 'field kitchen' in a converted railway carriage offers a hygienic space for preparation of vegetable snacks (if available – dependent on the season).

A wide range of vegetables are grown throughout the year by two growers and a team of volunteer workers, ensuring that members of Canalside can receive a share of the vegetable harvest for every week of the year, with fruit when in season. The polytunnels provide protected cropping space for tender summer vegetables as well as helping to extend the cropping season of summer vegetables by allowing early crops to be brought on at the start of the season. The tunnels also allow salad leaves to be grown during the winter.

Members of the scheme are encouraged to be involved in the production of their food, by supporting the growers in the field. Opportunities are provided twice a week for members to help with tasks in the field, polytunnels and orchard.

Soil:

Most of the land has clay marl – this means a sandy clay. This is good land for growing cereals and vegetables.

Landscape:

This is a lowland farm, with the Grand Union Canal running alongside it. There is a 10-acre, new, native woodland (planted in 2006) which visitors pass through to reach Canalside's site. The mature, semi-ancient, natural woodland (which is on the part of the farm on the other side of the canal) can be seen from some of the vegetable fields.

Climate:

The growing season for vegetables at Canalside is throughout the year. There is always something growing in the fields and polytunnels, even in the depths of winter. The climate is cold in winter and warm in summers with variable rainfall throughout the year. Spring and autumn are generally periods of mild weather.

Who lives and works here:

The Ingall family live on the farm, although they are not currently workers for Canalside. There are two growers who grow the produce at Canalside – Dom and Lena.

The administrative work for Canalside is done by Ali (general admin), who is also a qualified teacher who leads educational visits to Canalside, and Gareth (finance).

Encouraging wildlife:

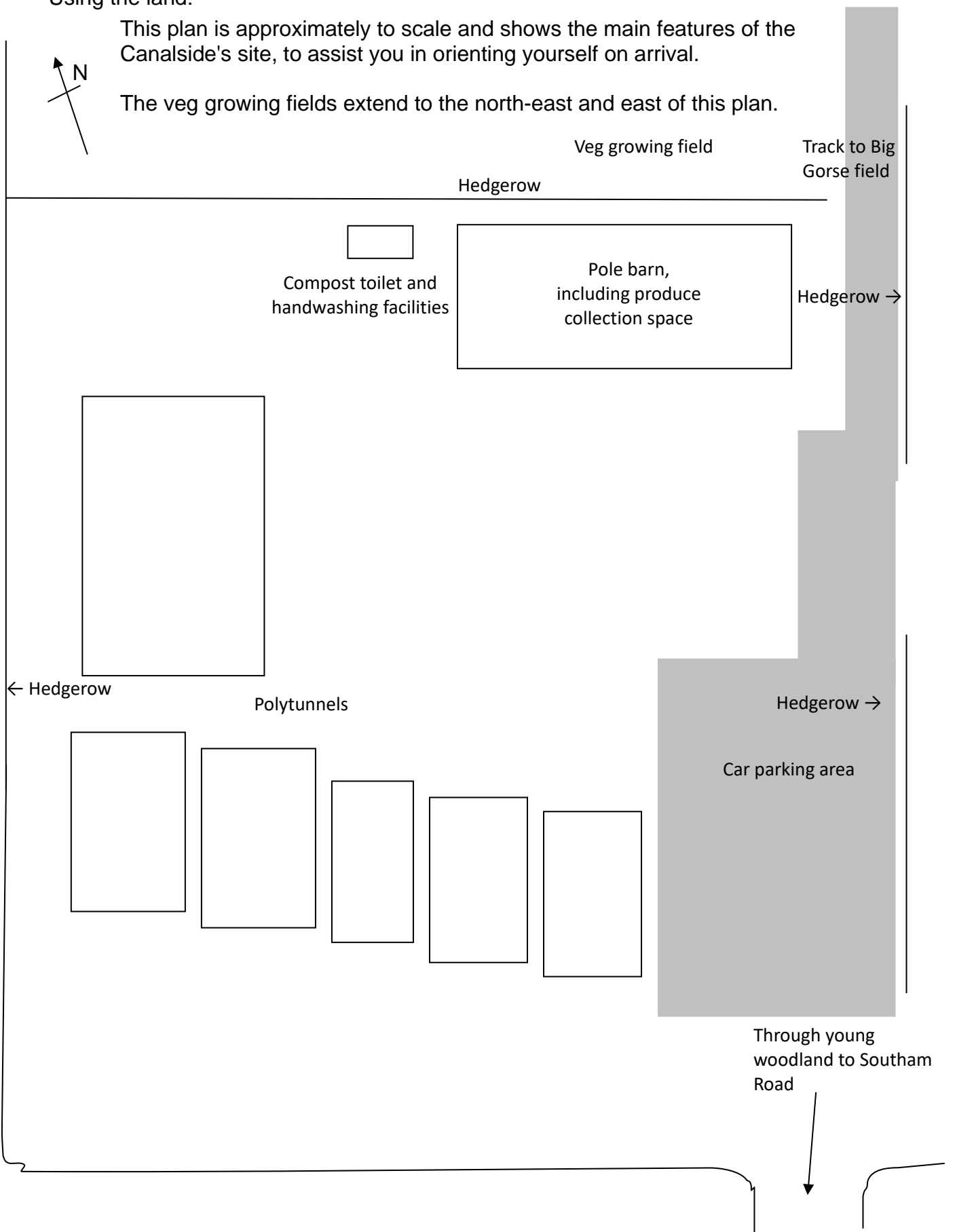
Canalside Community Food is certified organic, with the Soil Association. This means that pesticides are severely restricted and artificial chemical fertilisers are prohibited. Both these have positive impacts on wildlife. In addition to this we actively encourage wildlife by having field margins. In other parts of the farm there are ponds and both new and mature native woodland.

Using the land:

This plan is approximately to scale and shows the main features of the Canalside's site, to assist you in orienting yourself on arrival.



The veg growing fields extend to the north-east and east of this plan.



This plan shows the wider area used by Canalside Community Food, and the adjoining fields used by Leasowe Farm.

