



Canalside Education Project

Teacher Information Pack

Scheme/farm information

Contact details

Scheme name:

Canalside Community Food

Address:

Southam Road
Radford Semele
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV34 5JB

Contact person: Ali Jeffery
(General Administrator for Canalside & Education Project Coordinator)

Contact address: As above

Tel: 07758 340491

Email:

mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk

Website address:

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: £150 per class for a half day visit (2-2½ hours) or £240 per class for a full day visit (4-5 hours). A £50 non-refundable deposit will secure your booking. If the visit isn't possible with these charges, please get in touch to discuss making it possible.

Please give 4 weeks notice of visit dates, to allow us to make the necessary

arrangements including recruiting Canalside members to volunteer with the visits and enrich the experience for the children.

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, at the

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start of the 40mph zone.

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.

Adult to pupil ratios

For health and safety reasons, we ask that the organiser of any educational visit to Canalside adheres to the minimum recommended adult to child ratios to ensure safe supervision of the pupils whilst on the farm. This should be met by adults from school as we cannot guarantee additional volunteer adults and the visit leader from the farm is not in a position to be responsible for individual children during their visit.

The visit organiser will need to split the pupils into small groups, allocating each small group to an adult from school who will be responsible for supporting their group and checking that their group are present throughout the visit. The class/group does not usually separate during the visit, so the visit organiser can expect to be with or near the whole group throughout the visit.

The ratios given as a legal minimum in 2008 (from NUT Guidelines for School Trips, March 2008) are:

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3 (under 5s reception classes should have a higher ratio);
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult for every 15-20 pupils in school year 7 onwards.

These ratios apply to most types of trips, including trips to a farm **where the visit leader at the farm is CEVAS trained**. At Canalside, Ali is CEVAS trained, but if another person is leading the visit we would recommend a higher ratio that is advised for visits to risky environments, including farms. Please check who will be leading your visit to the farm to know which ratio will be required as a minimum.

Please note these are legal minimum ratios. Your school policy for trips and visits should give more guidance and it will be necessary to decide on a suitable ratio according to the needs of the group. Some children may need a ratio of 1:1 to have a safe and enjoyable visit.

Risk assessment

Our risk assessment is available when the visit organiser comes to the farm for a pre-visit briefing, so that they can conduct their own risk assessment. Part of this will involve deciding what adult to child ratio is appropriate for the group in question.

What you can do on the farm

Visits to our scheme begin with the group being welcomed in the social area, having left the coach in the car park. Bags are left in crates and everyone stands 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 'Stop that pest!' and the autumn visit would consider 'Where's that veg?'

Facilities:

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

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 social area

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.

In 2018-19, members of Canalside Community Food and people from the wider community bought investment shares to enable the land that has been rented since 2006 to be bought. This means the investment members of Canalside now collectively own 7 acres of land for growing vegetables in three fields, six large polytunnels and an area for social activities and distribution of the produce. Canalside also rents 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 school groups.

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 second, accessible toilet means toilet facilities are available for all site users. 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 a team of part-time growers supported by seasonal workers and volunteers, 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 every 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. There is a mature, semi-ancient, natural woodland nearby which 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:

No-one lives permanently on the land farmed by Canalside Community Food. Occasionally short-term volunteers live on site in tents or a caravan. There are three permanent part-time growers who grow the produce at Canalside – Lena, Stephen and Eleanor.

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).

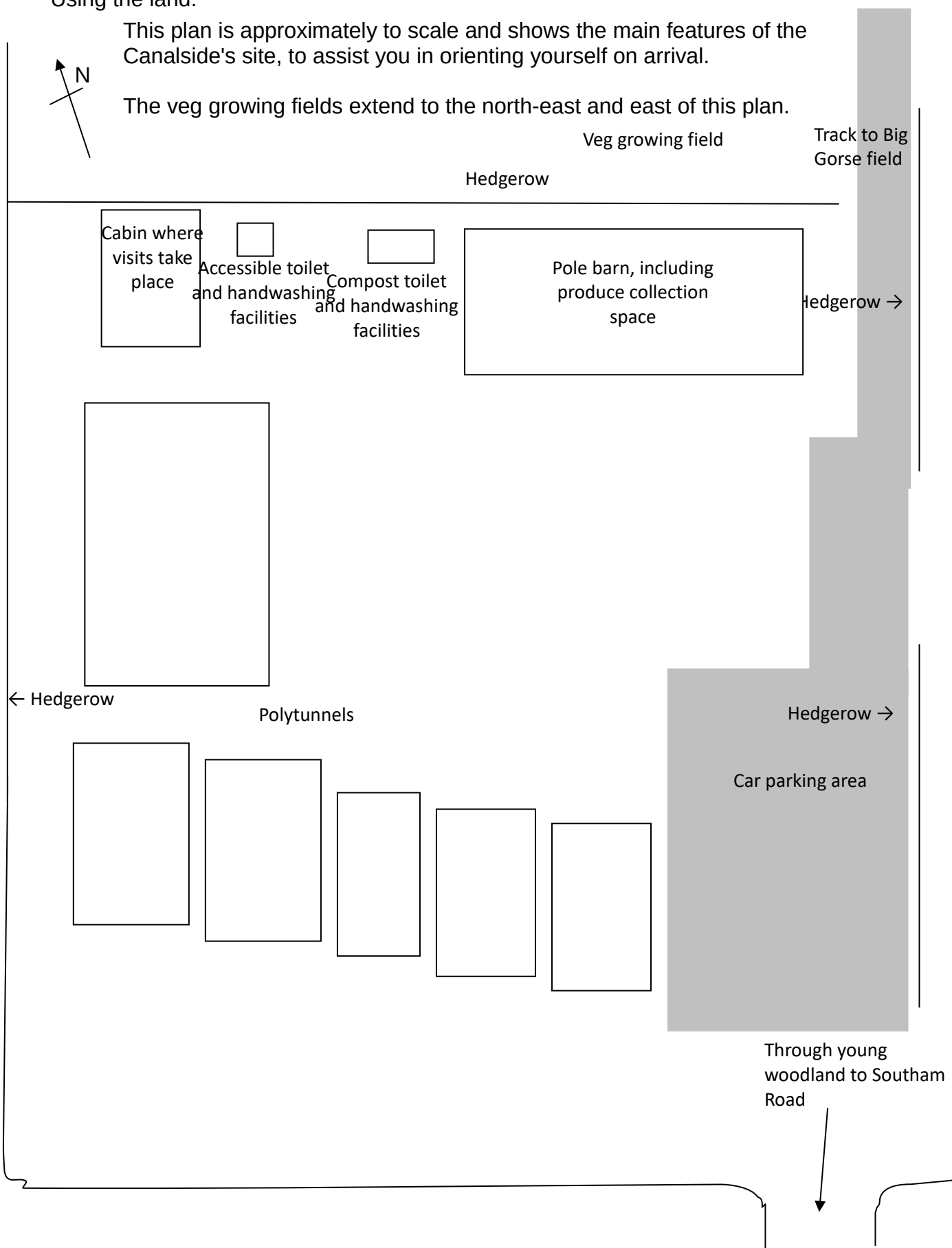
Encouraging wildlife:

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. Nearby, on Leasowe Farm there are ponds and new native woodland, with mature native woodland on neighbouring land.

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.



Updated on 23rd April 2024

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

