

# Project Brief: Community Growing Space – Thornwell, Chepstow

## 1. Project Overview

We are seeking to commission a suitably qualified and experienced landscape designer to develop a design proposal for the transformation of an overgrown site adjacent to Thornwell School, Chepstow (formerly the caretaker's house and garden).

The aim of the project is to create a vibrant, nature-friendly community garden focused on individual growing plots, along with a shared garden accessible to the wider community.

## 2. Background

Chepstow Town Council wanted to understand residents' views on potential options for a piece of unused land next to Thornwell Primary School was previously the caretakers house & Graden.

Local consultation in 2025 identified that residents would like to have a local growing/community garden space.

Chepstow Town Council plan on leasing the land from Monmouthshire County Council and forming a management committee to include members of the town council and growing plot holders to help manage the site going forward.

## 3. Site Description

The site is approximately 1,210m<sup>2</sup> (55x22m) in total. It has an obvious slope, at its highest at the northern boundary. The site parallels Thornwell Road and follows a roughly north – south axis.

The caretaker building is on a separate, lower terrace down some steps, at the southern, lower end of the site.

The site has a large bramble bush running for 25m along the eastern / 'upper' side of the site, along the boundary with the primary school, its size covers approximately 12% of the site's footprint.

The site includes numerous trees including a purple maple which has recently been issued with a tree protection order.

## 4. Scope of Works

The appointed consultant will be responsible for producing a design scheme, including layout drawings and supporting information. The scope should include:

### 4.1 Site Clearance and Preparation (Design Considerations)

Full clearance of the site, including:

- Overgrown vegetation
- The majority of existing trees

A mature maple tree on site must be retained and incorporated as a key feature within the design.

Ground regrading and levelling where necessary to create a usable site.

### 4.2 Growing Plots

Design of 10–12 individual growing plots.

Plots should be:

- Clearly defined
- Appropriately sized for residential/community use
- Arranged to maximise usability and accessibility

Layout should respond to the retained maple tree, ensuring:

- Adequate root protection area
- Consideration of shading impacts on plots

### 4.3 Access and Accessibility

Provision for secure access to the site (e.g. gated entry).

Layout to include accessible pathways:

- Connecting all plots
- Suitable for users with reduced mobility
- Designed with appropriate gradients and surfaces

## 4.4 Communal Facilities

Design of a gazebo-style communal shelter, incorporating:

- Covered space for shared use
- Integrated, secure storage for gardening tools and equipment

Inclusion of a water supply point.

Consideration should be given to a potential toilet facility in the future.

## 4.5 SuDS Compliance

The design must ensure that:

- All new structures and hardstanding (including pathways and shelter) do not exceed 100m<sup>2</sup> in total
- Use of permeable materials should be prioritised to support sustainable drainage principles

## 5. Design Principles

The scheme should:

- Be practical, durable, and low-maintenance
- Provide a safe and welcoming environment
- Support inclusive use by local residents
- Maximise usability of the site despite constraints
- Integrate the retained purple maple tree as a natural asset within the space. Other trees may be retained where appropriate and feasible
- Consider the relationship with adjacent school and surroundings
- Protect and enhance biodiversity on the site

## 6. Deliverables

The appointed designer will provide:

- Work closely with the project steering group and the community user group to design a space which includes:
  - 10–12 individual growing plots
  - A communal shelter and secure storage for tools for individual growing plot holders

- A community garden which may include some shared/communal growing (e.g. fruit trees)
- Prepare and on the Town Council's behalf submit a planning application (if required) to obtain all necessary statutory consents for the proposed use of the site, the proposed structures, and the demolition of the existing bungalow, liaising with the local planning authority as required.
- Advise and support the Town Council on the appointment of appropriately experienced and qualified ecologists to carry out necessary ecology surveys and provide a Green Infrastructure Statement and other reports as required to support the planning application and demonstrate the project's net benefit for biodiversity.
- Advise and support the Town Council on the appointment of contractors to implement the project and provide ongoing design advice during construction.
- Site appraisal and concept design.
- Scaled layout drawings.
- Outline specifications for key elements (paths, structures, plots).
- Area calculations confirming compliance with the 100m<sup>2</sup> limit.
- Tree protection considerations and integration strategy for the retained purple maple tree.
- Recommendations to support future construction.

## 7. Key Constraints

- Significant vegetation and tree removal required (with the exception of the retained maple tree)
- Site levelling likely needed
- Strict maximum of 100m<sup>2</sup> for all built elements and hard surfaces
- Must accommodate 10–12 plots plus shared facilities within available space
- Existing maple tree must be retained and protected throughout design and future construction phases

## 8. Budget

The total budget for design and implementation of the project is £60,000, including all fees (including this commission).

This budget will need to include the costs of demolishing the bungalow to existing slab, estimated at £10,960.

## **9. Skills and Experience Required**

Applicants should demonstrate:

- Experience in landscape design, particularly community or growing spaces
- Understanding of accessible design principles
- Knowledge of SuDS and low-impact development

## **10. Location**

Address: Thornwell Road, Bulwark NP16 5NT

Adjacent to Thornwell School, Chepstow (former caretaker's house and garden site) – see attached aerial and OS site plans.