

CASE STUDY: KIRKSTALL VALLEY FARM

A HORTICULTURAL CSA IN URBAN LEEDS



Established: 2020

Type: Community-led

Legal Structure: Part of Kirkstall Valley Development Trust

Paid staff: 1.1 FTE (Five people)

Volunteers: 0.4 FTE (25 people)

Produce: Vegetables and fruit

Members/shares: 100 veg share members year-round and 60 additional social members

Member radius: 5 miles

CSA turnover: £53k

Photo credits: KVF

Buy in to supplement produce: Yes

Land: Growing on 1.2 hectares on a 6.5 hectare site rented from the council on a peppercorn rent

Infrastructure: Three polytunnels, compost toilet, garden shed, veg shed

And... Kirkstall Valley Farm (KVF) were given a boost by a successful crowdfunder which not only raised £45,000 but also attracted a large initial membership

The seed...

Kirkstall Valley Development Trust, set up in 2016, aims to enhance community life through sustainable community projects. They jumped at the opportunity to rent the an existing farm in urban Leeds when it became available in 2019. The site is bordered by housing and includes a wildlife area, a river (which regularly floods) and a large growing area. Their aim is to develop social and educational projects around a successful CSA. In 2020, they crowdfunded £45,000 start-up from over 300 supporters and, despite delays due to the pandemic, grew a membership of 135 who formed working groups.



Grew...

In 2020 volunteers grew a limited amount of produce which helped raise awareness and in 2021 they employed a grower. They initially accessed CSA Network mentoring and training and then were successful in applying for support through the CSA Network Incubator scheme which offers a longer period of mentor support lasting up to two years. In 2022 they employed a second grower. They are working to make sure accessibility is at the heart of the CSA and donate surplus to a local pay-as-you-feel cafe and foodbanks as well as offering sliding scale payments. In 2023, a team of three part time growers are working with a trainee and a community of regular volunteers.



And...

KVF are creating a vibrant farm with dedicated volunteers and inspiring other CSAs to set up in the area as well as supporting a local mushroom and flower growers and a chutney maker through providing access to market. They've also been experimenting with a no dig area, have plans for an orchard and are working with local students to set up a community compost scheme. They work with the Probation Service and host Scouts, GoodGym, youth groups and corporate volunteers. They run a monthly tours and tea morning and encourage families to visit for "Explorer tots"

