

Knocknagael Ltd

Membership Survey 2026



Summary

A survey of the membership of Knocknagael Ltd was undertaken in the first half of 2026. The purpose was to understand our members' aspirations, skills and enthusiasms, and, in particular, to understand what interest there was amongst the membership in obtaining an allotment and in taking part in community growing activities.

There were 56 responses from 59 members, a response rate of 41%, of whom 41 stated that they would like to have an allotment available to them in due course. These respondents furnished us with further information about their preferred size of allotment and the relative importance of water supply, fencing, on-site parking, communal composting and a shared shed/ tool store.

A total of 46 respondents stated that they were interested in community growing, including a large proportion that were also interested in being allocated an allotment. A smaller, but important number did not wish an allotment but were interested in community growing.

Finally, we asked for ideas and feedback from members, and responses could be grouped into four themes; Vision & Structure, Community Growing, Offers, and Feedback. These themes are expanded below.

Members' responses to the questionnaire will inform how we move forward with the Knocknagael project from this point and we will involve members in our plans for allotments, community growing and other activities where they have stated an interest or an enthusiasm to be involved.

The Survey

A survey tool for the Knocknagael membership was created by the Directors in Spring 2026 and after six iterations a final version was agreed upon! The aim was to find out the aspirations of our membership, what desire there was for allotments and for participating in community growing, what skills and enthusiasms were potentially available amongst the membership, and what ideas and feedback we could gather. A link to the survey tool on SurveyMonkey® was distributed amongst the membership with three reminders at monthly intervals.

Analysis of the resulting dataset was undertaken manually in early August 2026 with no AI involvement and no sharing of personal data or identifiable responses.

Findings

At the time the survey closed, we had 144 members. There were 56 responses from 59 members (three responses were from couples and these responses were explicitly from both members). The response rate was therefore 59/144 or 41%.

Demographics

All members that responded were over the age of 16. When asked about any disability that would require special measures to be put in place to access allotments or community growing activities, the following issues were highlighted by four members; partial sightedness and arthritis, Parkinsons Disease and related balance issues, Chronic Fatigue and requirement for rest, and low immune system and Type II Diabetes. No requirements for special measures were stated.

The remaining respondents either did not respond or stated that they have no disability.

Allotments

Although we are not yet at a stage of our development where allotments are available to be allocated, or indeed at the stage of creating a formal waiting list for when they do become available, we asked members whether they would be keen to have an allotment in due course.

'I'd like to have a communal area with a few friends. We are a group of six women all over 60. We'd like a meeting place when we can enjoy our love of growing food'

A total of 41 respondents (73% of respondents and 28% of the membership) stated that they would like to have an allotment available to them in due course.

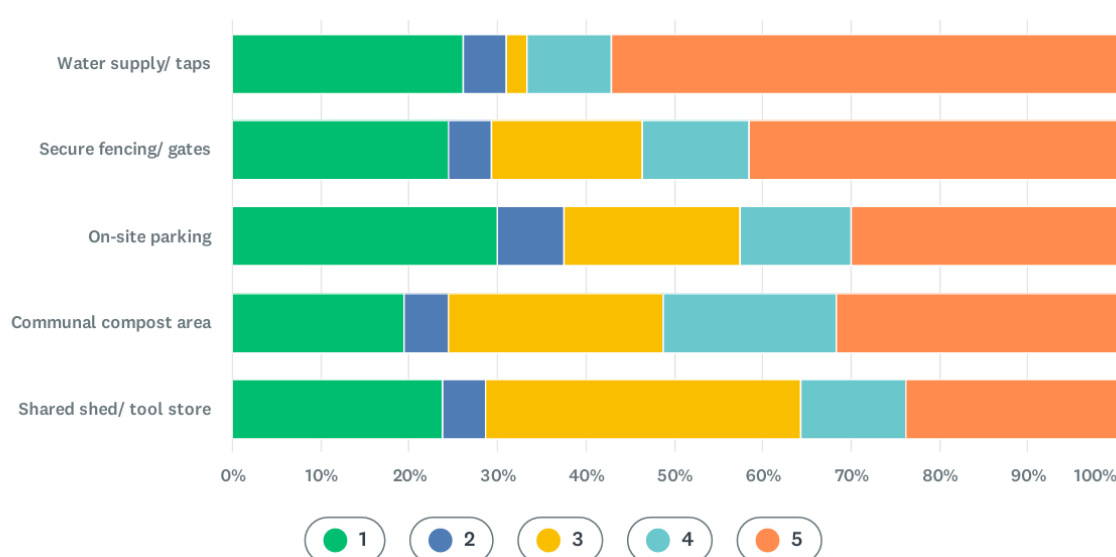
For those that are interested in having an allotment, we asked whether they would like to have a small (approximately 75m²), standard (approximately 50m²) or large (approximately

100m²) allotment. The responses amongst the 41 that stated a desire for an allotment was as follows

- Large 8
- Standard 24
- Small 9

We also asked those that aspire to have an allotment about the relative importance of water supply, fencing, on-site parking, communal composting and a shared shed/ tool store, and the responses were as follows:

If you are interested in having an allotment, on a scale of 1 - 5, how important are the following to you? For clarity, the scale is from left (1) to right (5) · Water supply/taps · Secure fencing/gates · On-site parking · Communal compost area · Shared shed/tool store



Community Growing

We asked about members' interest in community growing.

A total of 46 respondents (82% of respondents and 32% of the membership) stated that they would be interested in community growing. A large majority of those that stated they wished to have an allotment said that they would be interested in community growing initiatives with only six stating that they would not. Of the 15 that stated that would not wish an allotment, 12 were interested in community growing.

Volunteering and Untapped Skills

Knocknagael Ltd is a community-based and volunteer-run organisation. It is therefore important for us to know about members' availability and desire to contribute, as well as the enthusiasms and skills that they could bring.

A large majority of respondents were keen to contribute to communal tasks, including current preparatory work such as scrub clearance (and this has been evident in recent volunteering sessions), as well as future activities such as a communal herb garden or communal composting.

We also sought to identify specific activities that respondents may be willing to contribute to because of specific skills or experience, or simply their enthusiasm. These activities included:

- Organisation of social activities
- Horticultural activities
 - tree planting
 - fencing
 - basic construction/ landscaping work
 - machine operation
 - composting
- Fundraising
- Communication and social media
- Business/ financial/ charity/ public sector administration & management
- Allotments association administration

It is clear from the responses that we have a membership that is very enthusiastic to get involved in a wide range of activities, and that there are also skills and experiences our members possess in some of the areas listed above that could be of great value in pursuing the aims of Knocknagael Ltd.

We will be in touch to follow up with respondents where they have highlighted relevant skills and experiences, and we will continue to draw on the commitment and enthusiasm of the membership as and when the need for volunteer input is required.

Ideas and feedback

We asked members both for their feedback and their help in shaping the evolution of Knocknagael and are extremely grateful for all the interesting and helpful input that we received.

The ideas and feedback could be grouped into four themes (Vision & Structure, Community Growing, Offers, Feedback), and a warning!

Vision & Structure: We were extremely grateful for the ideas and suggestions that members offered through the survey. Some were general and others were very specific and directly related to the plans that have been approved by the Highland Council.

'Have seen the initial plans. Some thoughts are: Ensure vehicle and trailer access (turning, dumping large amounts) for communal compost areas Avoid hedges and trees near allotments due to root ingress Espalier fruit trees require maintenance, who would this be? Improve sightline between picnic tables & play mounds'

The ideas that were forthcoming revealed a pleasing engagement in the Knocknagael project, and an impressive ambition for what might be possible. Suggestions included:

- a public education/ classes hut
- a children's area
- short visits/tours, for clubs, schools, prisoners, disabled, drug abusers etc.
- sponsorship from suppliers/contractors
- a couple of communal 'bins' for wood chips and muck bought in a large scale from local suppliers so everyone doesn't have to get their own
- a code of conduct for the maintenance of individual allotments
- fencing to prevent roe deer and other animal browsing, as well as theft from and vandalism of the allotments
- water supply and fencing (to deter unwanted visitors including deer and rabbits etc)

'I'm really excited about the potential for the Smiddy Field to be a site of growing food, friends, creativity and knowledge, and bringing people together. I wonder if there's potential for building a structure that can host workshops, talks, theatre (?!), artwork etc. An annual programme of creative events that explore local food, land, growing and its folk connections both past and present would be amazing to run alongside allotments and workshops.'

Community Growing:

Many of the ideas and feedback related to a perceived benefit of community growing and community-based activity at the Smiddy Field. There were specific suggestions about a communal polytunnel, communal composting bins, a communal shed and a communal chicken coop! Sadly, the last of these is not possible as our purchase agreement for the Smiddy Field forbids us from having any livestock!

'I think having a community cook-up each month with locally grown produce would be a fantastic idea! I'd happily get on a weekly pot of heathy veg stew/soups and meals for all to enjoy'

Two respondents independently raised the possibility of using community areas to grow willow for the purpose of willow weaving/ basketry.

'Could we plant up an area for growing basketry willow in the community garden section? I have an excellent source of willow varieties, and I would be able to help tend the space and cut it annually to get it established. I think basketry weaving is having a real revival right now and could 'add interest to the hub'

Very helpful ideas also came from partner organisations in the Third Sector outlining the perceived benefits of community growing for the young people that they work with.

'We are very keen to become involved in the community allotment and would like the opportunity to secure a plot that can be used as a safe and supportive space for the young people we work with, many of whom are experiencing crisis situations or facing significant challenges in their lives.

We believe the allotment would have a lasting and positive impact on the young people we support, providing opportunities for personal growth, improved wellbeing, practical education, and stronger community connections.'

Offers:

Responses to the survey revealed a widespread desire from members to be involved in voluntary activities, bringing both expertise where it exists, but more often straightforward

'I have enjoyed meeting and working with other volunteers at recent events and would be happy to participate in more'

enthusiasm. If physical ailments limited respondents' ability to be involved in physical work, they identified other tasks that they could contribute to.

Where respondents identified skills and experience that they could bring to the organisation, or opportunities for partnership working, these will be followed up individually.

Feedback:

We were very grateful for the positive feedback that was evident from the survey, and relieved at the lack of any criticism or negative feedback, although one warning was very apposite; *'keep up momentum before people get fed up waiting'*. A sentiment that we wholeheartedly agree with!

'Thanks for all the effort so far! Look forward to hearing about next steps and getting involved'

A Word Cloud was created from the text data that came from the ideas/ feedback responses, and the result is presented below. For those that are not familiar with Word Clouds, the bigger and bolder a word appears in the diagram, the more often it appeared in the data.

