



Hayley's Green Vision in Belle Isle

The Beginning:

Hayley is passionate about nature and early conversations with Community Builder Ben at BITMO centred around ideas she had to share this with others. With her existing commitments to local groups such as the Friends of Middleton Park and Park Ranger action days, Hayley had lots of experience and connections to draw on to support her ideas for Belle Isle. She has a genuine passion for cultivating growth, whether through planting seeds or building stronger community connections.

Recognising Hayley's passion for nature, growing, and sharing knowledge as true gifts, Ben set about working alongside Hayley to bring her ideas to life, helping her connect with the resources already present in the community.



The Journey:

Hayley knew about the wealth of fruit picking opportunities in Belle Isle and wanted to share this with others. She set up the Belle Isle fruit picking group, and even helped create and distribute a digital map of publicly accessible fruit trees in the area. Hayley developed an interest in learning about herbal remedies and went on to share this knowledge with her neighbours, showcasing how to use what nature has to offer right outside their door. Community Builder Ben and BITMO supported her ideas, helping connect Hayley to others with shared passions, growing community connections locally of passionate people supporting nature and the environment. They saw how Hayley's desire for a greener Belle Isle, where residents engage more with nature and are confident in growing and cooking their own food, was a shared dream within the community.

Hayley's journey since then has truly blossomed. She took the initiative to free up her Fridays, dedicating more time to community activities. A significant step was her decision to lead a pre-existing community garden and orchard that had previously relied on other organisations to run it and needed some spark injected back into it by the local community.

The community garden is thriving and regularly attracting lots of participants. Hayley is supremely organised, passionate and ambitious about her plan for her community work.

Ben, Community Builder,
BITMO

Hayley mapped out the available assets, identified any challenges, and then worked with other enthusiastic residents to bring the garden into the "Incredible Edible" network. Under Hayley's guidance, the garden was re-designed and cultivated, attracting more members of the community to get involved- an impressive jump from 2 to 8 participants in just six months. She's also created a vibrant social media presence for the garden, managed with another volunteer, and has reached out to local groups like the Scouts, who are sharing their time and skills to support the garden to thrive.

Hayley's work goes beyond just the main garden. Her other projects are also doing a great job of bringing people together and making the community feel more connected. She created a seed library in a local community centre, allowing residents to grow their own food, and it's been well-utilised. She continues to lead the Fruit Picking group, and this September, she's joining forces with "Fruit works," a local tree-growing organisation, to deliver a fruit picking day and workshop. Hayley is also collaborating with Ben, a local woodworker, and the Chair of a local allotment association to create a box at the allotment entrance for plot holders to share extra seeds with the wider community.

The Impact:

Hayley's work is having a lasting positive effect to the community, encouraging people to get involved in community-led, environmental projects by building on individual talents and community strengths, always looking at the gifts people bring. The community garden is a thriving hub, bringing people together around a shared purpose. Residents are becoming more aware of the green spaces around them and are gaining confidence in growing, picking, cooking, and eating it as a community. Looking ahead, Hayley's vision is for an even more plentiful Belle Isle, where residents feel deeply connected to the earth and to one another. Future plans involve more collaborative events, further expansion of the community garden projects, and continued efforts to make Belle Isle a truly green and connected place where people feel proud to live. Hayley's story is a wonderful example of leveraging diverse gifts and resources for collective benefit. Hayley's commitment to ongoing learning is evident too; she's engaging in more training to further develop her skills and knowledge around community work and gardening.

