

Growing support for 'edible town'

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KNIGHTON could become the first 'edible town' in Wales after two groups joined forces to push forward a project to plant fruit and nut trees for local residents and visitors to enjoy.

Plums, apples, cherries, pears, damsons and nut trees could be springing up in public areas such as at the back of the community centre, if the group gets support.

The plan is still in the very early stages but possible sites for the trees are being considered, and the group already has some ideas about the variety of fruit and nuts they would like to grow.

Teme Valley Environmental Group and Knighton's Platform Pals are working together on the project, which has already taken off in England with Todmorden in West Yorkshire leading the way.

Fruit and nut trees

Teme Valley Environmental Group committee member Ann Mary Davies said it would be lovely to have fruit and nut trees growing in Knighton.

"The project is in the very early stages but we started off by walking around the town and earmarking areas that we felt could be used for growing fruit and nut trees or plants and shrubs that are good for bee forage.

"We put together a list of sites and Councillor Ken Harris had a look at it and differentiated

between private and publicly owned land. Some sites he felt would be unsuitable and we have agreed with some."

Mrs Davies said Councillor Harris contacted the leisure and recreation officer at Powys County Council, Chris Tully, and he had agreed that land behind the community centre could be planted. The group is now choosing varieties for that area, which will have to be agreed by the county council.

She said there were also a couple of road junctions in the town they would like to plant but they would need to talk to highway officers about it.

"Everybody agrees that food should be more local so why not use bits for land for that purpose?" said Mrs Davies.

"Someone has mentioned talking to the primary school and possibly using the churchyard. There is a lot of work to do. But eventually people would be able to help themselves to the fruits or nuts off the trees."

The matter was raised at a Knighton Town Council meeting, and Councillor Alice Cowell revealed she was already involved in the project.

"Edible towns are really taking off across England and we would be the first group in Wales to undertake it. It would be great for us to be the first town in Wales to do it," Councillor Mrs Cowell said.