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By Richard Hill

The plot thickens at BBC Radio Berkshire with the launch of their brand new green-fingered project. The launch of The Plot, centring around an allotment in Chalvey, happened on Saturday 29 April and saw scores of listeners pitching in.

It's not a story, but something that will grow into September. We're not talking film plots here; we're talking garden allotments.

Victoria Hazael, the BBC Action Desk Producer has spent many sleepless nights bringing about this project. But now it all came together on Saturday 29 April as each bed slowly took shape.



She said: "We've taken over these plots here in Ragstone Road, Chalvey. These plots will be equally divided into rows and people from Chalvey will be encouraged to take on a row. This idea is the ideal solution for anyone who feels they can't take on a whole allotment on their own. The plan is to provide free seeds, free tools and free workshops."

Plenty of experienced gardeners will be on hand to provide guidance in gardening including Colin Evans, the gardening expert at BBC Radio Berkshire, who also plans to make regular broadcast from the site in Chalvey.



Jim 'n' Jules on BBC Radio Berkshire

I met Colin and asked him if popularity for allotments is in decline. "They're actually becoming more popular now. The Allotment Holders Associations up and down the country are saying that they're making a popular comeback.

He added: "If you take this (typical) sized allotment, it'll cost you just £21 a year to have an allotment. 250 sq metres. That's a lot of garden. And with more people preferring cheap organic produce, this is the ideal way; an affordable way.

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"What this project will do, hopefully, is to introduce them not only to fresh fruit and vegetables, but to freshly grown fruit and vegetables.

"What's good about allotment garden is that it brings people from all ages from all backgrounds together. They can pool together to borrow spades and forks".

One of the volunteers was local Kathryn Zöechild from Chalvey and, being partially disabled, this was her first attempt at allotment



gardening. "This is such a wonderful idea." said Kathryn, "I'd been toying on and off with the idea of having an allotment, but have always thought of it as too big to cope with. So I'm hoping that this project will inspire me to bigger and better things."

"I heard it on BBC Radio Berkshire and thought 'what a wonderful idea', so here I am!"



Regular broadcasts will be presented from The Plot over the coming months, culminating in a drama derived from the project.

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