

# Case Study: Potting Herbs with Gale

**Business Name:** Potting Herbs with Gale

From Potential Entrepreneur to Community Interest Group.

You tube video: [Generator: A Community in Focus - Gale Whitby \(2024\)](#)

## Introduction

Potting Herbs with Gale began as a grassroots community project with a simple but powerful mission: to help people grow their own herbs and learn how natural, fresh produce can improve health, wellbeing, and daily living. Built on the principles of connection, nature, and wellbeing, the project has evolved into a multidimensional community offer that supports residents both through hands-on horticulture and increasingly through digital inclusion.

Since 2022, the project has benefited from ongoing support from the Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC), the Build a Business programme, and The Generator. This support and the dedicated assistance from staff such as Michael and Joe has helped Potting Herbs with Gale move from a small community idea to a thriving, impactful initiative.

## Early Business Activity at The Generator

When first joining The Generator as a potential Entrepreneur, Potting Herbs with Gale operated as a nature-based community wellbeing project. The core aim was to teach residents how to grow and use herbs to support a healthier lifestyle physically, mentally, and emotionally.

The project offered free, practical workshops covering:

- The health benefits of eating fresh herbs.
- Basic herbal medicine and simple home remedies.
- Using herbs for natural household purposes.
- Growing techniques for beginners.
- The wellbeing benefits of gardening and nature connection.

At its heart, Potting Herbs with Gale followed the *Five Ways to Health and Wellbeing*:

1. **Connect** – Bringing together people with shared interests.

2. **Be Active** – Potting, planting, and working outdoors to support physical and mental health.
3. **Take Notice** – Encouraging participants to enjoy the calming effects of nature.
4. **Learn** – Teaching the various benefits and uses of herbs.
5. **Give** – Creating opportunities for participants to share ideas and support each other.

## Support from The Generator / Build a business / BIPC

“I have been working with Michael Waistell since Build a Business was launched and continued receiving support from the BIPC and The Generator since 2022.”

The Generator has played a significant role in the growth of Potting Herbs with Gale by offering:

- A welcoming and reliable workspace
- Opportunities to network with other business-minded individuals
- Guidance with completing CIC applications where a became an established CIC
- Free access to workspaces suitable for a community-led, non-profit initiative
- Utilising free business workshops through Generator, Build a Business and BIPC
- Free business training workshops which have helped me to further develop my skills and knowledge in marketing my business and myself.
- I have done training on their databases COBRA and Grant finder which I find particularly useful.

Joe Drury from Trafford BIPC and Michael Waistell from the generator provided particularly valuable help when the CIC application process first opened. Their support ensured clarity, confidence, and a smooth transition into community-interest status.

As a business that does not generate income at present, having free access to The Generator has removed financial barriers, offering a safe, supportive, and productive environment.

## New Services and Innovation

### Expansion Beyond Gardening

What began as a simple gardening project in Debdale Park soon revealed a deeper need within the community. Many participants struggled with digital skills an increasingly essential area as more services and everyday tasks move online.

Recognising this unmet need, Potting Herbs with Gale expanded into digital inclusion.

## Partnership with Manchester City Council's Digital Inclusion Team

Through connections facilitated by The Generator and Manchester Work & Skills, Gale was introduced to Manchester City Council's Digital Inclusion Team. Their support included:

- A small grant to deliver digital activities.
- Practical guidance from digital inclusion experts.
- Links to wider community partners.

This enabled digital skills training to become a core new offer. Potting Herbs with Gail now became digital.

## Joining the Good Things Foundation

Gale became part of the Good Things Foundation a national charity supporting digital learning which provided access to:

- **Learn My Way**, a free online learning platform for beginners.
- Training resources and community networks.

## Weekly Digital Skills Sessions at Gorton Library

With support from Gorton Library and neighbourhood services, weekly Wednesday morning digital skills sessions were launched. These sessions offer:

- A friendly, pressure-free environment
- One-to-one support for absolute beginners
- Self-paced learning using Learn My Way
- Access to essential equipment

Community Computers supplied four laptops, and Causeway donated a portable MiFi unit, ensuring all learners have digital access.

These sessions have empowered individuals to:

- Learn to use a mouse and keyboard.
- Navigate the internet.
- Manage emails.
- Stay safe online.
- Communicate with friends and family digitally.

One participant previously relying solely on a landline now uses WhatsApp confidently and has even set up a family group.

This transformation demonstrates the far-reaching impact of the new digital inclusion services.

## **New Markets**

Potting Herbs with Gale has successfully expanded into a new service area: **digital literacy and digital inclusion**. While the original focus was community gardening, the project now delivers structured digital skills support accessible to all.

This new market includes:

- Digital confidence-building activities
- Basic computer skills training
- Online service access support
- Partnerships with libraries, charities, and Manchester City Council

Although delivery remains within Greater Manchester, this diversification marks a significant shift in both service direction and community reach.

## **Additional Activities**

Gale has also launched:

### **Herbal Tea Party at Gorton Library**

A social, wellbeing-focused event where participants enjoy a range of herbal teas while learning about their benefits.

### **Culture Nature Programme (March 2025)**

Gale delivered a series of wellbeing and nature-based sessions across multiple libraries as part of this programme.

Gale has also been connected with Tameside Libraries due to her proximity to the area and existing local community links.

## Conclusion

Potting Herbs with Gale has grown from a simple gardening initiative to a multifaceted community support project that strengthens wellbeing, grows confidence, and bridges the digital divide. With the help of The Generator, the BIPC, Manchester Libraries and Manchester City Council's Digital Inclusion Team, the project continues to expand its reach and deepen its impact.