

Design and access statement

The proposed development will enable the retreat centre at Greenhaugh Hall to be almost entirely self-sufficient in organic vegetables and fruit. We intend to make our garden available to local schools in order to teach children the benefits of growing their own food.

There will be no impact on the surrounding area as the polytunnels will not be visible from outside the existing walled garden as it is enclosed by a 9ft wall.

Polytunnels are cheaper than greenhouses and therefore tend to be larger. They therefore cover a bigger footprint of ground. As this stays warmer than the surrounding land they also protect against several degrees of frost. This extends the growing season by several weeks at either end, and creates a much warmer climate in which less hardy plants can be grown more successfully.

Tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, cucumbers, courgettes etc can all be ready to pick weeks before they would be ready in an outside garden bed, and salad (and other) crops can be maintained in them all the year round.

As they contain no glass they are also potentially much less dangerous to work around.

As an addition to a 'regular' garden polytunnels represent a huge benefit both in terms of the range of crops which can be grown and the timespan during which they are available for harvest.

I have co-written two books on the domestic use of polytunnels, both of which are available through Green Books, Totnes, Devon, and I've been growing vegetables in them for 7 years.