



Hammersmith Community Gardens Association ANNUAL REPORT 2015



What a year...

Chair's Report

2015 has been my first year as Chair of HCGA. Happily, it has been another strong year for the charity. This has been largely the result of two things. The first has been the hard work of our staff, volunteers and ambassadors. The second has been the support of the ever-growing number of organisations who have funded us or worked with us during the year. I would like to thank all of them.

HCGA began in Hammersmith more than 30 years ago and this borough remains at the heart of much that we do. We have continued to play a central role in running the Phoenix School Farm. In addition to its existing range of community and educational activities, this year saw the farm host a pop up restaurant hosted by the Salt Yard Group, with the proceeds going to further projects in the farm. It also provided the site for making a cob pizza oven, a project undertaken with local volunteers from The Big Green Local and Taylor Woodrow. Our glasshouses in Ravenscourt Park have been in use six days a week, both by HCGA and by others. For the second year running, the wider public were able to admire them as well as part of Open Garden Squares weekend in June.

Our sites in Loris Road and Godolphin Road have continued to provide mini-oases for those who live nearby but have no gardens of their own. Meanwhile our May and December events on Starch Green have both become firm fixtures in the calendar for local families. As I write this our 20metre Christmas tree still glows brightly there for all to see. These and our other activities in those areas have helped provide a focus around which residents and businesses have built community spirit.

However, we recognise that chances to use our skills and expertise also lie outside the boundaries of our original borough, and we are alive to opportunities wherever they may exist.



With this in mind, I am delighted to say that during the past twelve months we have worked with schools and organisations in a total of five different London boroughs, more than ever before. Last spring, we were sought out to support local families in a community project in the Church Street Ward in Westminster which has involved not only growing crops on their estate but, again, visits to other well-known horticultural sites.

Of the work we do throughout the year, our NHS-funded Plant a Seed project moved into its second year and we were able to work with an increasing number of healthcare providers. One highlight of the year for this project was our conference entitled "Prescribing Gardening: Making green care a part of the health service". This was delivered in partnership with Sustain and supported by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and was attended by a wide range of health professionals, from occupational therapists to GPs and consultants.

However, this does not mean that we focussed any less on our longer-established Grow Well and Get Out There! projects. Each remains a valuable tool to promote social inclusion.

Grow Well continues not only to introduce the pleasures of gardening to volunteers with physical and mental health needs but also to work with carers. We thought it worth evaluating the benefit of our work in this area more formally this year, and so can now state with some authority what we already believed to be true: these sessions really do have a positive effect on the well-being of their participants.

Get Out There! meanwhile continues to provide conservation opportunities both within and outside the borough, particularly to those at risk of homelessness and to the long-term unemployed.

Finally, there is one group of people I have not yet thanked, and that is my fellow trustees. There have been changes in the last year, but I would echo Sarah Robinson's concluding comment last year that we have an excellent board of trustees who continue to bring a diverse set of skills to HCGA. I am very grateful to all of them for giving up their time for another year to help make HCGA what it is.

Simon Beale, January 2016



Get Out There!

The project, currently funded by London Community Foundation / Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund, continues to support volunteers in turning their lives around and for many this has proved life changing.

We continue to hold a weekly conservation volunteering work day on a Friday, working both locally and further afield with people at risk of homelessness and long term unemployed. We managed to sustain the project until new funding was secured by undertaking fee-based conservation work in several schools, care homes and other local green spaces.



Get Out There! volunteers continue to be referred to us from several health and homeless charities. Sites worked on this year include: Wormwoods Scrubs, a community orchard on the White City Estate, Mary Seacole House, Normand Park, and Queens Manor Schools, and further afield Cultivate London's Isleworth site, a willow plantation in Shepperton, and Cholesbury Common and College Lakes in the Chilterns.

Phoenix School Farm and Learning Zone

We continue to work in partnership with Phoenix High School assisting with the management of the food growing space. Highlights this year included making a cob pizza oven over a weekend and a pop up restaurant created by the Salt Yard Group, who support the farm financially and provide students with an insight into the catering industry.

In addition to its own students, the farm received visits from many local schools, and working with the Food Explorers Trust, schools from Kensington and Chelsea. The site was also a venue for family and growing activities as part of the Big Green Local initiative in Wormholt and White City.

With the help of volunteers from Taylor Woodrow several large tasks on the farm were completed. The twice-weekly volunteer sessions provide an opportunity for community involvement and without this help the project wouldn't be the award-winning community resource it is. For several consecutive years the project has been judged outstanding in the RHS London in Bloom awards.



Schools Educational Programme

Our education work has expanded this year and we are now delivering weekly sessions in 14 schools, nurseries or children's centres on a weekly basis, running gardening clubs and delivering curriculum-linked lessons across four London boroughs.

Many other schools have also visited our sites for one-off sessions covering wildlife, food-growing or cooking and some of these sessions have been run in partnership with Hammersmith and Fulham Urban Studies Centre. This year we have run several Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions open to any individuals working in schools or nurseries. We have run bespoke training for the entire teaching staff of several local schools at the Glasshouses in Ravenscourt Park.

The horticulture course for adults with learning difficulties is now running for the third year, inspiring a new group of learners at the Glasshouses.



Family & Community Events

Our play activities which ran throughout the school holidays and offered free outdoor educational and fun activities to local families were this year supported by BBC Children in Need.

We also took families on fruit picking trips and to the City Harvest Show in Enfield which was only made possible through the support of Westway Community Transport.

We ran seasonal community events such as Meet a Hedgehog, Bats and Bangers, Apples and Pears and Christmas Wreath Making. We held festivals at Loris and Godolphin Gardens and were a partner in delivering the large play event held to mark the opening of Bridget Joyce Square, in White City.

Edible Askew Road Part of the Chelsea Fringe

We held a May Madness event on Starch Green themed around the Hungry Caterpillar and once again many businesses on Askew Road participated in the Hungry Caterpillar trail and quiz. We were delighted to host the Askew Business Network summer event at the Glasshouses in recognition of their on-going support. At Christmas we held an event which included switching on the lights on Starch Green, with a Dreaming of a White Christmas theme, complete with Father Christmas and snow!

Grow Well

The popular Grow Well project continues to run at the glasshouses at Ravenscourt Park. The project consists of weekly sessions on Tuesdays, with morning sessions for adults who may require some additional support and afternoon sessions targeted mainly at unpaid carers. We also run taster and outreach sessions.

Funding is currently from the Mercers Trust and there is a focus on helping people at risk of isolation.

The activities encompass setting personal goals, seasonal gardening activities, with a focus on health and well-being.

Outreach sessions have enabled us to reach more people, such as those attending other settings including Elgin Close, Bishop Creighton House, Nubian Life Resource Centre and the White City Community Centre.

Quote from a Grow Well participant:
"I have enjoyed all aspects of the course, the chance to get out of my house and meet like-minded spirits in a warm and friendly setting, whilst watching the changing colours of the season".
Susan, carer

This year we have spent time formalising the evaluation of the work. The results were very encouraging:

"In all categories respondents reported an increase in feelings of psycho social well-being. This suggests the Grow Well sessions have a positive effect on mental well-being and functioning".

Plant a Seed – Grow Well

The Plant a Seed, Grow Well project trains NHS staff, providing them with the knowledge to develop social and therapeutic horticulture, as well as nature and food based activities in their place of work.

The achievements of the project to date would indicate that there is a high level of demand locally. The project has worked in 4 boroughs (Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Ealing and Westminster) and uptake for CPD training and bespoke staff team packages has been high. We have worked with 438 health professionals since the project began in April 2014, including GP's, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Health Visitors, Community Nurses, Clinical Psychologists, Specialist Dieticians and Support Workers.



In May 2015 we delivered a conference for healthcare professionals entitled Prescribing Gardening: Making green care a natural part of the health service. This was delivered in partnership with Sustain's Growing Health project, supported by The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

and was held at Phoenix High School in White City. The programme included information and advice from commissioners and practitioners and individual case studies of therapeutic gardening projects from two of our volunteers.

We continue to support individual teams on a bespoke basis, undertaking site visits and providing seasonal management plans to facilitate a range of gardening and cooking activities. In April 2015 we delivered training for the Occupational Therapy Team from Women's Services at St Bernard's Hospital, providing materials, knowledge and practical support.

The project continues to assist with small-scale site improvements to maximise the health benefits of urban green spaces and tailor spaces to specific user groups. For example, in June 2015 we developed a sensory garden at Mary Seacole House (sheltered care housing) and delivered therapeutic gardening activities with the residents.

We have delivered an ongoing CPD programme centred around the physical and mental health benefits of accessing green spaces, ranging from topics such as mindfulness, creative arts and herbs for well-being. Professionals who attend the training sessions are given information about HCGA's other health and well-being projects and how they can refer their patients/clients to our services. The number of professional referrals has more than doubled this year as the project continues to develop and awareness increases.

Through the project we are also now taking referrals from GP's to promote social prescribing. In August 2015 we held three taster days for all our GP patient referrals to introduce HCGA and our ongoing volunteer projects. One of these was held at Brook Green Medical Centre where we had 16 attendees. We are also now working with the Hammersmith and Fulham Dementia Team to deliver a clinical trial of a nature therapy programme. This is being delivered every Friday morning at the Glasshouses in Ravenscourt Park.



The project is also aimed at the health and well-being of NHS staff; we have held team away-days for the Royal College of Paediatric Child Health and for Health Education North West London, delivered a nutrition workshop for staff at local NHS psychological service Back on Track, delivered a herbal workshop for staff at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and worked with the Senior Nursing Team at the Royal Marsden Hospital, providing a venue, lunch and mindfulness workshop for their Senior Nurses Board Meeting. We also now have a weekly stand at Parkview Centre for Health and Wellbeing, working with the Soup 4 Lunch project, providing soup to staff.

Volunteers and Ambassadors

Our volunteers have once again given large amounts of their time to HCGA and helped us to achieve so much in 2015. We run weekly volunteer sessions at Ravenscourt Park, Phoenix School Farm and Learning Zone and monthly sessions at Loris Gardens. We have achieved Green Flag and London in Bloom Awards for all four of our sites and our improved scores recognise the hard work our volunteers have done to ensure the gardens are well-maintained and safe.

"This garden works on numerous levels such as health and well-being, biodiversity, volunteering opportunities and community cohesion. A great example of a community garden and well deserving of a green flag community award."

- Green Flag Judge



The Ambassadors continue to represent HCGA at local events and meetings. Their work is invaluable as it means HCGA can run more events, workshops and sessions on a small budget. Ambassadors have taken on leader or assistant roles on many of our projects and are dedicated and reliable.

A significant number of our volunteers have physical or mental health issues and are long-term unemployed. Many volunteers are referred to us by healthcare professionals and other agencies and others come to us directly. We have also arranged some social trips this year to the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace Gardens, and the Lyric Theatre Pantomime. These have proven very popular and we will continue to promote them in the future as a way of saying thank you for volunteers' hard work.



Volunteers have notched up over 8,598 hours in 2015. Special thanks go to Hugh Faichney, David Hills and Jim who take on the role of volunteer caretakers at the community gardens.

We have hosted several teams of corporate volunteers this year who have made a valuable contribution to the maintenance of our sites and several other local sites. These includes: Amey, Arriva, BBC, Google, Dunnhumby, Health Education North West London, IMG, JP Morgan, Metro Bank, Royal College of Paediatric Child Health, Taylor Woodrow, Wates and Willis. In total we have worked with over 200 corporate volunteers this year... that's over 1000 hours of volunteer time donated!

Big Green Local



The Big Green Local project was launched by HCGA in Spring 2014. The aim of the project is that residents, especially children, young people, families and the elderly will report an increased usage of open spaces and involvement in them. This year HCGA has run activities at the Wormholt Park Easter Event and W12 Festival where we created a pop up café in a neglected space. Throughout August and school holidays we ran family gardening sessions including seed sowing and jam and pickle making. We have run trips for local residents to Kew Gardens, a 'pick your own' farm in Hertfordshire and the Capel Manor Show in Enfield. In the autumn we planted hundreds of spring bulbs around White City and Wormholt over several weeks with help from a team of volunteers from the BBC. We have organised corporate days to continue work on an overgrown/unused garden at the White City Community Centre, now known as The Secret Garden. In December, we also planted a community orchard outside Mackay House, with volunteers from the Get Out There! team and local residents. The orchard is a mixture of apple and pear trees including a new variety 'Core Blimey', a new London apple that was propagated by the Urban Orchard Project.

Soup 4 Lunch

Based at Trillington House, a sheltered housing scheme on the Uxbridge Road, the project provided a fortnightly communal lunch and residents are encouraged to grow the ingredients in the gardens. This year the resources for gardening were greatly enhanced by the completion of a greenhouse in the inner courtyard. In the autumn the project also started to provide a weekly soup lunch for staff and visitors at Park View Health and Well-being Centre.

Westminster Community Garden Project

In April HCGA were commissioned to deliver a project in the Church Street Ward in Westminster to provide gardening session in two schools, King Solomon and Gateway Academies, and to support local families in a community growing project on the Fisherton Estate. The first crops included potatoes, corn and runner beans. As part of the project we were able to take families on trips including to Spitalfields Farm, The City Harvest Festival at Capel Manor College, and Kew Gardens.



Finance

April 2014 - March 2015

Our largest source of income was fee-based education work with schools and contracts to deliver health and well-being projects and training, which amounted to 63% of total income.

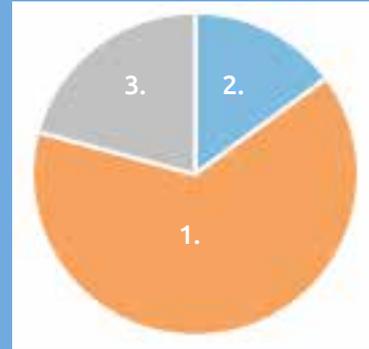
HCGA received grants from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham totalling £39,500, and other charitable grants which totalled £49,541.

The total income for the year was £242,783 and expenditure was £241,933. The net current assets of the organisation amounted to £49,231. Total funds were £102,676; the principle assets being the two Eco Sheds and the van.

The Association has leases until 2024 on both the Community Garden sites, and a 7 year lease on the Glasshouses in Ravenscourt Park.

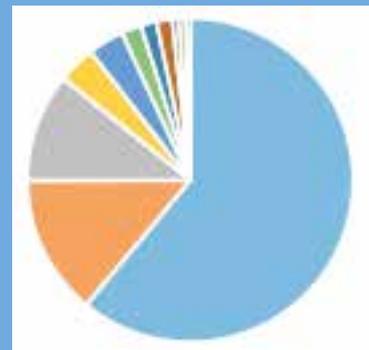
Reserves Policy: The Association has a reserves policy of 3 months running costs.

Income £242,783



1. Fee-based contracts
2. London Borough of Hammersmith
3. Other grants and donations

Expenditure £241,933



In descending order: staff costs, sessional fees, materials & maintenance, administration, project expenses, and events, depreciation, transport, volunteer expenses, conferences & training, insurance, governance.

Funders

A huge thank you to all our funders and donors.

Download our full accounts from the Charity Commission website; www.charitycommission.gov.uk or by email or post from HCGA.



Partners and Supporters of HCGA 2015

Age UK Hammersmith
Askew Business Network
Back on Track
Barons Court Project
BBC Sustainability Team
Big Local –Wormholt and White City
Bishop Creighton House
Broadway St Mungos
Brook Green Medical Centre
Chelsea Fringe
Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
Claybrook Centre
Community Alcohol Support Services
Community Champions White City
Cultivate London
Cyledelik
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Finlay Brewer Estate Agents
The Food Explorers
Friends of Marcus Garvey Park
Growing Health
Hammersmith and Fulham CCG
Hammersmith United Charities
Hammersmith and Fulham Urban Studies Centre
Haus Properties
Health Education North West London
House of Fairy Tales
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
Kensington and Chelsea Community Gardening Team
Laura Pearce Yoga Trainer
London Environmental Education Forum
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
London Borough of Westminster
London Parks and Garden Squares Trust
Mary Seacole House

Only Connect
Old Oak Community Centre
The Old Theatre Hostel
Parkview Centre for Health and Wellbeing
Philip Wooller Estate Agents
Ravenscourt Residential
Read in the Park
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Royal College of Paediatric Child Health
Royal Marsden Hospital
Sobus
St Vincent's Occupational Therapy Team
Trillington House (NHHA)
Westway Community Transport
White City Enterprise

Team & Corporate Volunteers 2015

Amey
BBC
IMG
Metro Bank
Taylor Woodrow
Wates Willis
Royal College of Paediatric Child Health Education North West London

Arriva
Dunnhumby
JP Morgan



Trustees

Simon Beale
Moya O'Hara
Sarah Robinson
Evangeline Karn
Karen Liebreich
Clare Ryland
Debbie Peters Mill

Chair
Treasurer

CO-OPTED

Karen Wyatt
Bridget Hickley

Staff

Cathy Maund
Katie Shaw
Lynne Evans
Amy Chrisp
Kevin Bittan
Ewa Masutiak
Zoe Lyall
Liz Clark
Rose Cresser
Ulla Johnson
Emila Ochocka
Annie Walker
Frances Ward
Anne MacAlpine-Leny
Katherine Locke

Director
Operations Manager
Operations Manager (Maternity Cover)
Plant A Seed Co-ordinator
Get Out There! Co-ordinator
School and Community Gardener
School and Community Gardener
Sessional Worker
Founder: Soup For Lunch Project
Admin Support

Hammersmith Community Gardens Association
1 Melina Road
London W12 9HY

www.hcga.org.uk
info@hcga.org.uk
07773 348 294



HGCA Gardens



@HCGAGardens



Registered Charity no 1111999 Company no 0549936