

Hello!

Welcome to the twenty-eighth newsletter from the Lambeth GP Food Co-operative. There's plenty of exciting news and updates from our latest activities, as well as some personal reflections and a chance to get to know our team.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you have any ideas for future stories or want any more information please get in touch with us by email gpfoodcoop@gmail.com, and don't forget to keep up-to-date with our activities through Twitter [@gpfoodcoop](https://twitter.com/gpfoodcoop) and our website <http://lambeth.gpfoodcoop.org.uk/>



NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2022

Update from Ed

As I write my report on our activities over the summer months the public inquiry into the first phase of the Covid Pandemic is meeting for the first time. As regular readers of our newsletter will remember we responded to the pandemic by launching our Seeds for Life initiative in partnership with Lambeth Council and its community food partners. In the autumn of 2020 we extended this pandemic response work with the launch of the Gardening at Home/ Garden Buddy scheme which with hindsight can best understood as our contribution to the wider mutual aid movement. Time has moved on rapidly since the first tragic months of the pandemic, a collective social experience which is still reverberating across our lives. We are privileged to be contributing to the many discussions and meetings both in the NHS and beyond. These seem to be headed in the same direction which the educationalist John Dewey described as the 'reconstruction of experience', by which he inferred thinking and making sense together. Lambeth GP Food Co-op is one very small organisation working within a wider Co-operative movement and it is to our purpose as a co-operative that I would like to turn. But first by way of an introduction to this, our last newsletter of the year.

We have included two leaflets which reflect where we are at this moment in time. I am delighted that Hannah Callingham, Sustainability Consultant at Kings College Hospital designed a new leaflet for us which reflects our partnership with the Trust in helping the Green Plan become a reality. The second leaflet is designed by Mariya Papazova, our Project Manager, and it reflects who we are and what we do, in and for the NHS. This work includes supporting and helping colleagues when we can. The piece from Issy O'Donnell, Breast Cancer support worker with East Sussex Health Care Trust is one example of this support work and we wish Issy well in creating a garden for cancer patients in their Trust.

We welcomed four members of the NHS England 'Green Team' to the Jennie Lee Garden last month where they spent a busy day helping the team with essential gardening work. Their efforts were deeply appreciated. The wider health sector has continued to approach us in the spirit of shared learning and the search for new approaches to address contemporary issues. Last month Dr Shuo Zhang presented our work to Public Health Teams in the North West; Mariya Papazova presents to the South East England Built & Natural Environment Network of Public Health Directorates; and Savannah Fichel presented our work along with Sandwell Hospital's project to the NHS Estates Conference also in September. But the highlight of the summer was Hilda Castillo-Binger's annual Lambeth GP Food Co-op's picnic which this year was held in Archbishops Park and a great time was had by all.

In her book, 'Silent Spring', Rachel Carson dedicates her book to Albert Schweitzer with his statement that: "Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth". This is a sobering and terrifying thought and yet having experienced an unprecedented day time temperature in London of a 40 degrees, we seem to be accelerating the worst case scenario to which Schweitzer's thought is directed.

Being prepared as a society for a future in which day time summer temperatures are almost way off the scale is everyone's new work. We will do our bit with whatever scarce resources we can muster. In doing so I am reminded of an old Chinese saying that "a time of crisis is a time of opportunities". We certainly are overwhelmed with crises at the moment, but what of the emerging opportunities?!

In a few days' time I will be attending the Co-operative Party's Annual Conference which will explore the theme of 'From Crisis to Co-operation'. Our Lambeth GP Food Co-op stall will make available to a wider national audience examples of our work in GP surgeries, hospitals and the community here in Lambeth. The invitation from the Co-op Party to contribute to the discussion on Food Justice alongside Pam Warhurst from Incredible Edible may well offer us the opportunity to work together to create a sustainable, just and new society. If not now, when? If not us, who?

Ed Rosen, Project Director, Lambeth GP Food Co-op



Left: NHS England Green Team at Jennie Lee Garden, Sept 2022



Right: Group visit to Sutton Community Farm September 2022

Introducing our new Project Manager

Hi everyone! To introduce myself: my name is Mariya Papazova and since May 2022, I am the ongoing Project Manager at the Lambeth GP Food Co-op. I was born and raised in Bulgaria and at the age of 28, I moved to London where I got married, delivered my beautiful baby girl in 2016, and completed bachelor's and master's degree. I am and have always been nutrition, wellness, and sports focused, and enjoy playing beach volleyball, attend Ballet barre and Calisthenics classes. Currently I speak five languages – Bulgarian, English, Russian, Macedonian, and a beginner level in Spanish.

In August 2022, I have completed another master's degree in Global Public Health Nutrition at the same University. As an actively involved Course Representative, I was able to engage with students and represent their voices.

Following the need of continually personal development, I am constantly building on Nutrition knowledge and expertise by engaging with webinars (MyNutriWeb), reading relevant articles, and attending practical seminars led by Accredited Professionals. Also, food waste and climate change are another interest of mine.

In 2020, I have started a health and wellness blog on social media channels. I was supporting individuals and communities to make positive change to their food choices and encouraging a healthier lifestyle. Alongside, I was developing mouth-watering recipes with reduced refined sugars and salt content. Also promoting advice on healthy eating, wellness, and diet. Due to my full involvement in the master's course, I had to divert my time and efforts into the educational process, and temporarily suspended activity on socials. In 2018, I have completed a bachelor's degree in marketing at University of Westminster, which due to maternity leave and growing a little child, I have never developed into career.

Meanwhile, I was working and supporting my husband in the family business we run for the past 12 years. Not to forget to mention, in 2004, I have completed another Plant Protection degree at the Agricultural University in Bulgaria. Lots of Latin words, plants, plant diseases, and practice were covered during the 4-year course!

Having the opportunity to work at the Lambeth GP Food Co-op came just like a miracle for me. I was at the end of the last study semester and was about to look for a job, when one day my Course leader, Dr. Regina Keith, posted the job position. I applied and was shortly called to meet with Ed Rosen, the Director of LGPFC. Ed is an excellent leader, a professional to learn from. Since then, I am enjoying my work, as being involved with the co-op gives me a sense of contribution to more sustainable communities and a better world. What the LGPFC provides to people is simply amazing! No matter if you are a patient, a doctor, or someone who works at the surgery, feel welcome to join in the gardening sessions. What a great community initiative! And don't forget, Lambeth GP Food Co-op's 10th Birthday is around the corner!

Mariya Papazova, Project Manager, LGPFC





Above: Welcoming the NHS England Green Team to Jennie Lee Garden, September 2022

Space for New Growth

I am a Breast Cancer Support Worker working for East Sussex NHS Trust (ESHT). I have worked in various positions for the NHS since the age of 20, gaining experience in a range of roles including the Ambulance Service and Microbiology. The loss of my son in 2013 changed me, and how I saw my life and work. I did not conform to standardised counselling following this event and looked to other outlets as a form of healing. It also altered my view on what I wanted to achieve within my career.

During the summer myself and my colleague Kelly began to discuss the possibility of introducing a community garden project to the oncology service. We are hoping it will work to provide extra experiences and reach out to a broader network of patients, to improve personalised care and allow for more opportunities to heal.

As a department the ESHT Oncology Service are responsible for thousands of patients each year, both new and historical, all requiring some degree of care to help and support them through their treatment process. We are very grateful to have been given insight into how to begin building up our project design plan by being allowed to visit and network with established community growing projects such as the Lambeth GP Food Co-op.

Each patient journey is different and can often be traumatic, resulting in the need for referrals to multiple resources for the use of complementary therapies, counselling, and physical therapies. This idea is not to stop those other referrals, but to build a new branch to support our patients in the best way possible, by giving them further options to improve their mental wellbeing and help in their journey to recovery.

Many oncology patients (like most people) are still feeling the effects of the long isolation period post pandemic. We think there are four ideal benefits of our project, although there are likely to be many others!

1. Forming a connection with others – Finding support or friends in a community who are facing similar challenges and finding support in a group without the “therapy” label which can sometimes feel intimidating.
2. Utilising time outdoors in a safe environment – Many of our patients would like to spend time outdoors but have not got the space at home or are unable to get down on the ground, so providing them with an area where they are physically capable of gardening safely.
3. Sense of belonging – The feeling of finding a meaningful occupation and contribution to bring following diagnosis, which can help when patients are struggling with difficult emotions.
4. Wellbeing & physical activity – An increase in gentle physical activity for those who may be recovering from surgery or undergoing treatment; the increase in physical activity is beneficial for the body as well as mental health.

Not all patients fit the box of standardised counselling as a means to healing from a traumatic event. As a supportive department we are listening to the way in which people need to heal or be heard and finding ways to ensure other options are available to our varied range of patients. And we hope to be up and running by next year.

Issy O'Donnell
Breast Cancer Support Worker
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Lambeth GP Food Co-op is Supporting King's Green Plan



Increase and improve greenspace on site

Choose local produce and suppliers

Support patients to manage their own health and wellbeing

Reducing food miles

Encouraging home gardens and healthy diets



For more information visit
<https://www.kch.nhs.uk/about/our-strategy/sustainability-kings-green-plan> and
<http://lambeth.gpfoodcoop.org.uk/>



Lambeth GP Food Co-op Stall
Every last Thursday of the month between 11 am and 2 pm in the Golden Jubilee wing, where locally grown vegetables are available for sale



Above: designed & written by Helen Callingham, Sustainability Consultant, King's College Hospital

LAMBETH GP FOOD CO-OP

ONE OF THE FIRST COMMUNITY-LED HEALTH CO-OPERATIVES WORKING IN AND FOR THE NHS

SINCE 2013, WE HAVE BUILT GARDENS IN GP SURGERIES AND HOSPITALS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT PATIENTS WITH LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS TO LEARN HOW TO GROW FOOD AND, BY DOING SO, IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH AND WELLBEING.



Patient with courgette



The Queen Consort cutting the Lambeth GP food Co-op 6th Birthday cake [February 2019]

OUR AIM IS TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LOCAL PEOPLE LIVING WITH MULTIPLE LONG-TERM CONDITIONS AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM.

WE'LL BE CELEBRATING OUR 10TH BIRTHDAY IN MARCH 2023



Gardeners at Lambeth Walk Surgery

WWW.LAMBETH.GPFOODCOOP.ORG.UK

EMAIL: GPFOODCOOP@GMAIL.COM

@GPFOODCOOP