

Hello!

Welcome to the seventeenth 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 – JANUARY 2020

Update from Ed

On July 4th we launched a new vegetable garden at the Pulross Intermediate Care centre in Brixton. Working in partnership with Essentia at Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital and staff at the Pulross has created an opportunity for patients staying in the short term wards to become actively involved in learning how to grow vegetables. The weekly gardening sessions have been led by Molly Lamphear who was herself a patient at Pulross. Molly organised a fabulous Pumpkin party on October 31st which was attended by staff, patients and visitors who enjoyed produce from the garden. Aidan Cleasby from Essentia offers another view of our work at Pulross later in the newsletter.

We have been delighted to support Brixton Hill surgery who share a garden space with our friends at Katakata restaurant on Brixton Hill. Patients from the surgery are helped by Anke Zeller who leads the twice weekly gardening group. Rosemary Smart, Practice Manager at the surgery writes about this collaboration between a local vegetarian/vegan restaurant and the practice and its benefits for patients.

Dr Liz Williams and I presented our work at the inaugural meeting of Growing Health in Horley which is a local initiative of the Horley Primary Care network and Alliance for Better Care who are focussing on food, how and where to grow in the community. We were delighted to share our learning with colleagues from the health community in Horley and wish them well in the future.

Over the past months we have shared our learning with GP colleagues from as far afield as Cornwall (Compass House Medical Centre), Tonbridge Wells and, nearer to home, Albion Street surgery in Surrey Quays. It is from these conversations with people interested in gardening for health that has led us to think about developing a short manual on how to set up a successful gardening project in the NHS. If you would like to contribute to shaping the content of this online resource then we would like to hear from you.

Many of our gardens have been very busy over the past months. A vegetable stall has been started at Gracefield Gardens in Streatham where Elizabeth sold vegetables grown on site to NHS staff and patients. Hilda organised a cake sale at Lambeth Walk surgery which proved to be very popular with staff and local residents. Both activities will be repeated next year.

Last year we published our first recipe book which was well received so we thought we would produce a second recipe book, details of which appear on our website. With recipes from patients, doctors and other NHS staff the book itself is an example of our network of co-operators contributing to improving the health and wellbeing of all. We hope you will buy a copy and in doing so continue to support our work in 2020!

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

A new garden opens in Brixton

We were first approached by Ed Rosen, Director of the Lambeth Food Coop, in 2017 to discuss whether there was any scope to implement a gardening project at any of the Guy's & St Thomas' community hospitals. After some discussion with the community clinical leads, it was decided that we could do this at the Pulross Centre in Brixton. This site was selected due to it having a large, underused garden and the right mix of patients to best take advantage of this type of project.

The Pulross Centre is an NHS community site that provides inpatient and outpatient services in Brixton, south London. The centre provides clinical services such as a musculo-skeletal clinic, inpatient neuro rehabilitation care, Lambeth stroke advisory service, neuro rehabilitation, occupational therapy and stroke clinic among other services.

Once we had selected the site we set about creating a project plan and Gerard Stanley, Community Matron, approached the Pulross charity to provide a small amount of funding to kick start the project. The ultimate aim was to have 3 or 4 very large planting boxes in the garden so that patients could engage in growing fruit and vegetables.

By April 2018 the planters were in place, filled with soil and patients were engaged in the planting process. This has multiple benefits for patients as they can get outside, particularly in the spring and summer months, to do the constructive tasks of planting, watering and pruning the plants. This is much more stimulating than sitting on a hospital ward all day. These activities compliment their recovery process and enhance their wellbeing. Feedback and engagement from patients has been really positive and we even have ex-patients coming back to the site to tend to their plants. Once the planters are in place it's just a case of refreshing the area every year with top soil, plants and seeds. There is very little impact upon the environmental footprint and the benefits to our patients are huge. We are very proud of that.

There has also been brilliant engagement from the on-site Occupational Therapists who have led the project from a clinical perspective. The Lambeth GP Food Coop are highly skilled at making this type of project come to life and we have also had support from the Guy's Building and Maintenance team who allowed one of their carpenters, Wojchiech Jonas, to take time out to make the planting boxes. Wojchiech did such an amazing job of building the planters that he won an Essentia award for his efforts.

We are now busy making plans for the next financial year and securing funding for 3 new planters and looking forward to another great year.

Aidan Cleasby, Essentia Community Services, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust



Getting stuck in to the gardening at the Pulross Centre

What do you do when your GP practice doesn't have a garden?

When I joined the Brixton Hill Group Practice in 2016, I was keen to see what scope there was for patients to get involved in activities that not only supported the wider agenda of health improvement, but which encouraged social interaction and most importantly fun!

Whilst working in the East End of London for a Mental Health Trust, I had seen first-hand the benefits to emotional health of gardening groups, and how these groups

helped to bring a sense of community to those who had traditionally felt marginalised. With this in mind, and as part of my MA studies in Public Health, I have broadened my research to look at the benefits to physical health, and whether any demonstrable relationship between growing your own produce and making healthy food choices can be made.

I became aware of the Lambeth GP Food Co-operative (LGPFC) through one of our patients and having subsequently asked around amongst my fellow practice managers, was amazed to discover this wonderful cooperative community of hardworking patients who had embraced all of the benefits of gardening and who were growing and thriving (no pun intended!) and creating productive gardens right across the borough.

Having met Ed Rosen, director of LGPFC, I was even more excited about finding an opportunity for the Brixton Hill Group Practice patients to get involved in this fantastic project. The practice doesn't have a useable garden, so we were delighted when Ed told us about a wonderful opportunity that was being offered to us by Katakata, a vegetarian and wholefood restaurant opposite the practice.

As well as being a restaurant, Katakata is also a community hub for those living in and around Brixton Hill. Franklin, the manager, hosts a number of events throughout the year including mindfulness workshops and art exhibitions. The restaurant has a large garden, and Franklin through Ed, was offering our patients the opportunity to use the space to grow vegetables.

In April 2010, we spent a lovely sunny Sunday inviting patients to come and see the garden for themselves and to enjoy a glass of wine with other like-minded people (photo above).

From this came the first interested gardeners who have become the backbone of the group. The appointment of Anke, our lead gardener has helped the group increase their knowledge of growing vegetables and the wider subject of horticulture. To continue the great relationship that is developing between the gardeners and the restaurant, we are looking to become more involved with some of the community activities and support joint events and activities. Early thoughts include guest speakers on nutrition, additional mindfulness and yoga sessions, and hopefully a community lunch based on produce from the garden and locally donated food that would normally have been thrown away.

The group meet on alternate Tuesdays and Saturdays, although they are taking a short break for the Winter. New members are most welcome, so either let the practice know, or just turn up to one of the sessions at Katakata, where you will be made to feel most welcome.

Rosemary Smart, Practice Manager, Brixton Hill Group Practice



Partnership with the University of Westminster

The current relationship between the University of Westminster and the Lambeth GP Food Co-operative (LGPFC) got ignited 3 years ago. I was in my 1st year of a 2-year Masters in Public Health and looking for an opportunity to work within a project in London. A dietitian at Dulwich Hospital (where I was based at the time) told me about this LGPFC and gave me a number to get in touch - a few weeks later I started working with Ed and got stuck into the work they were doing.

Ed and the team were such an inspiration to me, that I wanted to help others experience the same environment to allow them to grow throughout their career. I have helped Ed recruit students from the University of Westminster to support the project ever since and it has had a huge impact; without them, the royal visit in Stockwell would not have been possible.

The University of Westminster is a wonderful institution with a world-leading life sciences department. The course leader of Public Health Nutrition, Regina Keith, former head of health for Save the Children, whose inspirational teaching has left a lasting impact on thousands of students, myself included.

We hope to maintain this relationship in the future and I remain in touch with my former colleagues and mentors ensuring the next wave of bright minds has an opportunity to come and work with Ed and the LGPFC. Myself and Ed still meet regularly to discuss the ongoing work of the LGPFC and I offer a helping hand in any way I can. We're currently looking to upgrade the website to match up to the aspirations of the LGPFC, we hope that soon we will have a world-class website to match up to the wonderful work that the project delivers every day, stay tuned!

Robbie Puddick

Our new Project Manager

I was honoured to join Lambeth GP Food Co-operative in late October as a Project Manager. I am a first year part-time MSc student studying Global Public Health Nutrition at the University of Westminster and a registered Associate Nutritionist. Food growing has always been a big part of my life as I was lucky enough to have home grown fruit and vegetables throughout most of the year when I was growing up. It was safe to say that not many strawberries made it to the fridge!

With an understanding of how social interaction and healthy eating can benefit our mental and emotional health, I am thrilled to now be involved with the wonderful community Lambeth GP Food Co-op has created. After visiting the many gardens that make up the Co-op, I discovered that all are as unique as the gardeners, patients and NHS staff that nurture them.

With the immense amounts of waste our food system creates, it is amazing to see seasonal, home-grown produce from the gardens going to patients and NHS staff. Along with selling our fruit and vegetables to NHS staff at our stall at King's College Hospital, our next thought is the potential to use this produce in patient menus!

Currently, I am working with the garden at Pulross Intermediate Centre to help further develop the space for patients in preparation for the growing season of 2020 as well as supporting other activities of LGPFC.

If you'd like to follow our progress, feel free to follow us on Twitter (@gpfoodcoop), Instagram (@gpfoodcoop) or visit our website lambeth.gpfoodcoop.org.uk.

Amber Davey, Project Manager, Lambeth GP Food Co-operative