

Hello!

Welcome to the twenty-ninth 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 – FEBRUARY 2023

Update from Ed

One of the most delightful conversations I have had recently, was a discussion on producing NHS Honey. And why not?

In November Anna Akitoye, Deputy General Manager at Essentia/GSTT and I met with Barnaby Shaw from BeeUrban to plan the location of beehives at the Pulross Centre Brixton. We all hope that the bees will contribute to the hospitals work on biodiversity at Pulross centre. And produce local NHS honey! At least they will produce a buzz around the place.

In this newsletter Dr Anne Hayden MBE describes the Rainbow Garden/Your Planet Doctors in Dorset. This is a great example of a local food growing project aiming to engage the local community in health generating gardening activity. It is another example of gardening taking place in and around the health sector. Nearer to home, Joe Scoble describes his work in Lambeth with patients recovering from amputation. This is an important example of delivering gardening at the heart of the patients experience.

We start the year with a warm welcome to our new colleagues from Springfield Medical Practice who joined Lambeth GP Food Co-op last month. We also welcome Dr Paddy Bogue who is joining us as a group leader at one of our gardens.

We are honoured that LGPFC has been selected as one of the eight NHS national projects. Please have a look at the 'Building for Health' link and follow the video link to watch the video:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/contacts-and-resources/building-for-health/#lambeth-coop>

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

★★ 10th birthday celebration

We are delighted to announce our 10th anniversary as an organisation!

Thank you to everyone who has been involved as a supporter, friend or member of the co-operative. And if you are reading this newsletter, you must fit in to at least one of those groups!

We are holding a celebration of our 10th birthday with a gathering in Brixton on Thursday 30th March from 12.30-3.30pm.

If you'd like further information and would like to attend, please email our Project Manager Mariya at Mariyapapazova.gpfoodcoop@gmail.com



What made me a gardener

I am what some might call a serious amateur gardener.

Do you ever find that when people talk about their gardening story they reminisce back to their childhood? Well, my earliest memories as a small child were on my grandparent's farm getting a frequent soak of cow-patted shoes interspersed with heavy rain, and some strawberry, apple and rhubarb pickings between. Those weekends did not seem idyllic at the time, but they do now. My late grandmother Kathleen kept an apple orchard on a hillside which was surrounded by ancient woodland enclosed in a watery limestone landscape, recently used as a film location for the TV series Game of Thrones.

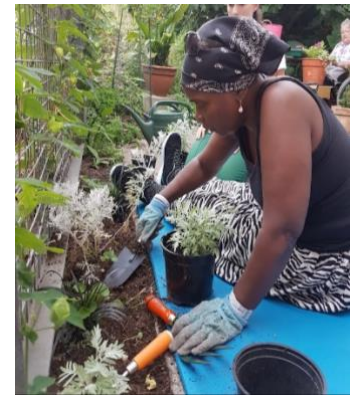
Kathleen built a rockery brimming with shrub roses which she had nurtured from cuttings. I imagine that there was some magic in her tough hands. The folklore of the area is well-known for a series of spring wells and caves. Medieval people walked for miles there seeking a cure for specific ailments; one example was 'jaundiewell' for the jaundice sufferers. Every field had a name and others would have a fairy haw tree in it left untouched. There are megalithic tombs, stone circles and dolmens built by earlier civilizations, adding mystery to a clump of thick clay soil you would wish it might give rise to a fossilized ~~ammonite~~.



I left Ireland to study medicine in Liverpool, and a BSc in Global Health with King's in Camberwell, which is how I arrived in South London. I worked at St Thomas' & later King's College Hospital, where I met my wife. My grandmother Kathleen passed away just before the pandemic hit and it was in delayed grief that I started to rediscover what joy she must have had from working with the land, the soil, the cuttings, the lifting, and the cycles of growth and dormancy you observe as the orchard keeper. As a loving grandmother she baked windfalls into never-ending tarts and pies which gave us a stomach-ache and inevitably a visit to the dentist. I never once considered the pain she might have felt with the loss of her roses, or her orchard. The rockery sadly fell to ruin as she left the farm to live with us in the city when she was needing to go in and out of hospital, but really it was us who were needing her.

I have started to become conscious of the parallels within my own life and the symbolic nature of cultivated spaces of my childhood home-away-from-home. I rediscovered a love of gardening not as a doctor but as a patient. I've learnt so much about horticulture through books and podcasts, and one of the best reads is Dr Sue Stuart-Smith's *The Well Gardened Mind*. I've also learnt a great deal from Thrive, the Battersea-based therapeutic gardening charity. Mostly, my thoughts about plants and landscape arise from pottering around the gardens of unsuspecting family and friends (those foolish enough to let me loose with a pair of secateurs!). I enjoy listening to people's stories and the narrative behind their connection with the land (or loss of that), and this helps to soothe our shared and unmet longings, us strange folk who dwell in cities. In terms of my work with you, I offer a weekly gardening course to join from Spring 2023. I hope to meet you soon.

Dr Paddy Bogue



Gardening for rehabilitation

The Amputee Rehabilitation Unit is a 12-bed unit providing amputee specific rehabilitation. It is located at Lambeth Community Care Centre in Kennington, London. The unit provides specialist rehabilitation for adults who have undergone major amputation including upper limb, lower limb, and multi-limb loss. The unit's award-winning garden, designed in 1985, is a valuable resource in the rehabilitation process of patients staying at the unit. Since 2016, gardening has been used as an alternative form of exercise for patients who seek a more functional rehabilitation approach and integration into everyday activities of daily living. Due to the gardening groups' success, a new therapy garden consisting of six raised beds designed for wheelchair use was installed in 2018.

Gardening is proving to be an excellent activity to improve a patient's balance, confidence, and strength using a prosthesis and a wheelchair in the initial stages of their rehabilitation. Activities, governed by the seasons, include soil preparation, seed sowing, potting on, planting out, watering, weeding, and harvesting. Vegetables and fruit harvested are used in cooking and baking sessions with patients enjoying the spoils.

Since the building was taken over by the Amputee Rehab Unit in 2012, the garden has helped hundreds of patients to master the use of a prosthesis and regain their independence. The gardening group, which I run weekly, is inspiring patients to take up or reigniting the desire to return to gardening. It really highlights the value of even small green spaces managed by the NHS on their sites throughout the UK.

Gardening is not for everyone, but increasingly now, we've got increased evidence that even people who aren't gardeners are able to reap the benefits of being outside, working with nature and all the benefits that come with keeping active. The physical, social, and physiological benefits from gardening were highlighted to us during the Covid 19 pandemic, with many turning to gardening for relief from lockdowns and shielding. Green therapy is on the rise, and the NHS is taking note. The NHS outdoor estate is a valuable public asset. Planning is underway to make greater use of this resource to improve the health and wellbeing of staff, patients, visitors, and the wider community. To realise these benefits more fully, a change in the management and use of greenspace on the NHS estate is now required nationwide through in part: promoting the use of NHS greenspace in clinical interventions with a range of recovery and treatment programmes delivered by healthcare professionals and third sector groups. The garden and staff at Monkton Street, along with many other hospital and GP practice gardens in the local area, are working hard to make these changes a reality with the support of the public and the Lambeth GP Food Co-op.

Joe Scobie, GSTT



Learning from Dorset

I am a Dorset GP and on my retirement I set up a social enterprise known as Your Planet Doctors CIC, (YPD) in January 2021.

My speciality had always been in mental health, and with the recent escalation of mental health issues in the community, I wanted to try and help. I could also see how vulnerable we were to the horror of food insecurity, so decided that YPD would try to address both by encouraging communities to grow their own food together. We called it the *Grow Your Own Rainbow Gardens* campaign.

Grow Your Own Rainbow Garden Campaign

Your Planet Doctors CIC (YPD) successfully piloted the first of these initiatives on the disadvantaged Beaufort Estate in Southbourne, Bournemouth earlier this year. This project saw residents receiving free raised beds complete with seedlings and gardening support. Throughout the year, the YPD team have kept in regular contact with residents offering them growing advice and support to help them grow their own fruit and veg.

The pilot demonstrated how teaching people in small groups to grow their own food is a powerful way to bring them together and that community initiatives can spring spontaneously from this. Residents improved in confidence and self-esteem, while friendships and veggies grew too.

Your Planet Doctors CIC & ForeverMore Food CIC

We, as YPD, have joined forces with another new social enterprise, ForeverMore Food, to expand and strengthen our scope for positive change. We're working together on a joint venture which will ultimately enable individuals and families to be able to purchase sustainable, affordable, locally sourced, and chemical free food. We aim to empower residents and help them build cohesive resilient neighbourhoods by becoming an integral part of this food growing process.

ForeverMore Food is a Dorset-based CIC that grew out of a food delivery service in the local area. Passionate about chemical free food and local produce their founder, Lawrence Camilleri, went above and beyond the home delivery model and began teaching neighbourhood groups to grow their own veggies to swap with one another.

The plan is for people to grow together with support and guidance from us. Anyone that grows in their gardens – say a crop of spring onions – then enters into our 'Crop Swap' credit system. It's much easier to grow one single crop, and you can do this with just a metre square of earth, but I don't know many people who'd want to eat that many spring onions! So, growers harvest their crop and pass these on to ForeverMore Food. The more they harvest, the more credits they get, and the less they pay for a generously stocked food box with recipes, the majority of which is grown on 30 acres of land acquired by FMF, also locally grown and chemical free.

In addition we are starting to work closely with a local Health Sciences University, GP surgeries and hospitals, enabling health workers to prescribe growing through surgery-based social prescribers.

We've put together a video which introduces you to residents on the Beaufort estate <https://youtu.be/DXZwC-Ofrok>. If you like what you see, we would love a like, comment, or share – we're very keen to spread the word.

Our vision is for people across Dorset to become members of Crop Swap, and through this, build mutually supportive communities, enjoying better health and assurance of affordable nutritious food, the price of which will come down as membership increases.

All profits will be returned back to the community, and when fully operational, this initiative can be used as a scalable template for anyone, with our support, to adopt.

Dr Anne Hayden MBE, GP and Founder of Your Planet Doctors CIC