

## Hello!

Welcome to the third 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](mailto:gpfoodcoop@gmail.com), and don't forget to keep up-to-date with our activities through Twitter [@gpfoodcoop](https://twitter.com/gpfoodcoop).



## NEWSLETTER – JULY 2015

### Our progress continues!

Over the past months we have made many new friends as well as deepening our relationships with NHS organisations in London and beyond. I have highlighted a few of the developments that have happened since our last newsletter.

- At the start of the year we welcomed the urban orchard to Mawbey Health Centre in Vauxhall where an 'orchard' of fruit trees were planted by patients and Lambeth GP Food Co-op members
- In March we celebrated NHS Sustainability Day by launching the Lambeth GP Food Co-op at Kings College Hospitals NHS Trust and Corner surgery. We are currently growing food in the Jennie Lee garden which is the first stage of developing up to 4 sites in trust grounds over the next year. This launch follows the launch of the project at Clapham Park group practice earlier in the month.
- In April we welcomed our first Kings College 4th year undergraduate nutrition student on placement with us. Nicola contributed to linking us with nurse nutritionists across Lambeth and Southwark. We welcomed a group of local government colleagues from Copenhagen's House of Food during the month. The visit was organised by the Soil Association.
- We have continued working with the NHS Sustainability Unit, with a contribution to the London Region roadshow at St Thomas' Hospital to an audience drawn from across the region. The Lambeth GP Food Co-op contributed a workshop at the Wales national health Conference in April which was followed by a key note contribution to Public Health England's London event on Social Care and Public Health Sustainability at Coin Street in May. A further keynote presentation was made to the 'Stomach This' national conference on Poverty and Hunger held at the House of Commons on June 18th. This event was supported by the Feeding Britain initiative with whom the Lambeth GP Food Co-op is in close contact.

We have been delighted to have been approached by students from the University of Westminster's School of Media who offered to produce a film recording our activity across the Borough. Kit Dafoe, the film maker has visited several Lambeth GP Food Co-op sites and spoken to patients, staff and supporters. We hope to have news of the film's first showing soon.

At the time of writing we are preparing for a short summer break. We hope you have a good summer and look forward to seeing you at one of our future events. Thank you for your support and interest in the Lambeth GP Food Co-op as we enter our third year.

Ed Rosen, Director of the Lambeth GP Food Co-op

Our first fruit of the year at Clapham Family Practice!



### Why I joined the co-op

When I joined Mawbey GP gardening group some months ago I can honestly say, I have eaten more fresh vegetables in that time than in the previous two years combined!

As a person with depression and anxiety problems, I find the project a relaxing way to spend time, an interesting hobby and a good way to meet people and combat the sense of isolation I often feel. It has also motivated me to utilise my balcony space to grow food for myself and, in so doing, has also reignited my love of cooking. I have now moved away from settling for ready meals and am back to creating delicious meals from fresh ingredients, which can only be good for my general health and wellbeing.

While discussing with my fellow volunteers what we like about the project, the comments made included, "I enjoy meeting nice people and the company". "Being in the garden makes me feel happy". "There is a lot to learn about gardening and it's good having another string to my bow". One of our more senior volunteers said she, "Enjoyed meeting people of various ages and not (in her own words) all old codgers like me". And one chap, when asked, said he, "Liked the potatoes," which made us all laugh, though he did add as an afterthought, "and the people". Not often you come second to a humble spud, but they were rather tasty, I admit...

We all agreed that growing foodstuffs is extremely satisfying and I'm certain our little team will work hard to make our garden as successful as possible. I personally hope, like our vegetables, this project grows and grows.

Tony Groves, Lambeth GP Food Co-op member at Mawbey Group Practice

### Join us for a party!

We're having a garden party at Lambeth Walk Group Practice from 3pm on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July. Do come along and join us!

### Kings of food growing

The Lambeth GP Food Co-op has been enjoying a fantastic new site at Kings College Hospital: the garden of Jennie Lee House. With the help of the hospital trust and our other partners, 8 large raised planters have been installed on site. They now host a huge range of summer crops including: lettuce, broad beans, French beans, peas, tomatoes, chilies, courgettes, potatoes, beetroot, sweetcorn, cucumbers, carrots, chard and dahlias (which apart from their ornamental value, were originally grown for their nutritious tuberous roots!).

It's my first project with LGFC, and makes a welcome change from my busy schedule running horticulture training courses and maintaining sites for Urban Growth Learning Gardens ([www.urbangrowth.london](http://www.urbangrowth.london)). We host a regular group of volunteer gardeners from the local Corner GP Surgery, along with a handful of retired NHS midwives, who ensure every session is not only educational but also a warm convivial atmosphere. Of course, before we could settle down to seed sowing, watering and weeding, we had to fill the beds with something like 6 tons of compost!

But, once the heavy lifting was over, and we had been there three months through the vagaries of the London spring, we were delighted to welcome everyone at a small summer celebration and exploration of our activities on Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup>. The photo below shows us harvesting our first crops!

Bruno Lacey, Lambeth GP Food Co-op member at Kings College Hospital



## Welcoming the Corner Surgery

A big thank you to all the team at Lambeth GP Food Co-op for getting our beds up and running. We have always wanted to do something like this but not had the oomph to get round to it. Our small garden at 99 Coldharbour Lane now has rhubarb and gooseberries growing in it where previously there were only rubbish bins and dreams. We are also lucky to be able to share 12 beds with Kings College Hospital in Jennie Lee Gardens nearby. I'm sure Jennie, a formidable supporter of the NHS at its birth, would be pleased.

As a surgery we believe in the benefits of getting close to nature, getting outdoors, getting involved with gardening and producing your own healthy food. Some years ago we gave out 100 pepper and tomato plants to patients. We were surprised at how popular it was and amazed by the results some of them showed us a few weeks later. One patient had used them in his own work with patients with dementia.

In busy London it is good to try and make the most of the quiet and green spaces around us. That's why our website - [www.thecornersurgery.nhs.uk](http://www.thecornersurgery.nhs.uk) - features photos of those available in our practice area. We now need to make the most of our new space and encourage our patients to use it. With so many new initiatives around it can be hard to remember what's available. Now patients are coming back and telling me how much they enjoy the garden, it is the best reminder for me to encourage others to use it more.

Dr David Wickstead, GP at The Corner Surgery

Planting at Mawbey Practice, February 2015



Our launch at Kings College Hospital, March 2015



## Getting to know the team – Jenny Jean-Paul

I joined the Lambeth GP Food Co-op in November 2014 as the administrator for the project. Previously I'd worked in the voluntary sector as a campaign worker and a development worker, advisor on benefits and as the marketing officer for a legal information charity. For more than twenty years, I've been involved with organisations that support marginalised groups as a trustee and volunteer.

I work two days a week for the Lambeth GP Food Co-op (on Tuesday and Fridays) and I also work part-time as the young person's advocate at Pace; a charity that promotes the mental health and wellbeing of LGBT people.

At Pace, I provide practical support to young people who have mental health issues or who are in emotional distress. One aspect of my job is liaising with the NHS and governments departments and supporting clients in their interactions with service providers.

Food growing activity for patients who are managing long term health conditions ties in with my approach in empowering clients who are actively involved in the advocacy process. I support the Lambeth GP Food Co-op because of my belief in patient empowerment and the benefits to the community of people working together to influence the NHS to buy locally produced food.

I am setting up new systems to ensure that the project runs efficiently and makes the most of its resources. We've had to start from scratch, begging and borrowing to get even basic equipment for the office but it's been fun.

At the moment, I am co-ordinating the production of a film about the Lambeth GP Food Co-op being made by Kit Dafoe, a student at the School of Media, Art and Design at the University of Westminster. I took the Media Studies degree course at the same university and I'm so pleased that Kit is working on producing what will turn out to be an important promotion piece for the Lambeth GP Food Co-op.

Jenny Jean-Paul, project administrator for the Lambeth GP Food Co-op