



FOREST GATE COMMUNITY GARDEN REVIEW 2023 - 2024



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SUCSESSES 2023 - 2024

- Installation of the 3 Chatty Benches into the garden as part of a council initiative to combat loneliness and promote conversation.
- Unveiling of our new mural positioned on the outside of the Dare to Dream shed, consisting of paintings by Caz Antoun, Susan Foley, Veronica Jeans, Julia Statman and Lorraine Tapper. This was commissioned by the wonderful Sophie Rigg.
- The first successful Craft Fair hosted in the garden, with another coming July 2024.
- Successful outcome to our PPP bid to Newham Co-create securing £20,000 to build an all weather shelter, make the garden more wheelchair accessible with a new path, to run a gardening with nature course, creative workshops and fund our outreach programme.
- Rebuilding of the website with a grant from the Newham Community Fund.
- Installation of a tap by Thames Water to provide a second source if we run out of rain water.
- Plant sales throughout the spring and summer continue to be a great source of income for the garden.
- Installation of the stunning new Frog Mosaic by Hazel Goldman to the garden looking outwards. MP Lyn Brown was in attendance and made a speech at the unveiling.
- We are now a Forest Gate Plastic Free Ally with Eco7. This means that single-use plastic is no longer used in the garden. Visitors and volunteers are now encouraged to bring their own cups.
- £700 raised through the Co-op Community fund.
- We were successful in our grant application to Fairy Water for £2,500 to install a small solar power set up in the garden to run some small appliances or urn.
- The montly steering group continues to have a positive impact. We have now implemented a rotating chair person.





SUCCESSES Cont... 2023 - 2024

- A successful National Lottery grant for extra admin costs.
- We have signed up to *Rooms for Rewards* - this scheme offers a mini break to volunteers.
- Myanah Saunders appointed as the new chair of trustees after Kerena Fussell stepped down. Kerena continues as a Trustee.
- Many successful activities with external organisations using the garden including Earthwatch Training, Social Farms and Gardens Gardeniser course, Macmillan Coffee Morning, The WI, Gideon Burrows Sustainable Craft Fair and Ukelele Classes.
- Repainting of the container by both garden volunteers and Corporate Volunteer Groups.
- The installation of a new child gate on the Earham Grove side. this has helped to increase visibility.
- Participating in both the Green Fair and Forest Gate Festival.
- Increasing engagement on social media particularly instagram and facebook.
- The Green Shoots team continue to do great work maintaining the planters at the Forest Gate Learning Zone.
- Considerable increase in numbers to the garden, including the expansion of work with schools, nurseries and outside organisations by our Outreach Coordinator Fiona Leckenby. Schools and councils including health care professionals are now beginning to contact Fiona.
- A very successful Gardens Trail 2024 thanks to Myanah Saunders and Laura Batatota. 19 gardens took place and we raised £2400.
- Our funding from CBF has been extended for another 2 years.



CHALLENGES

- Recruitment and retainment of new volunteers.
- All the construction tasks and obstacles that have been met in and around the construction of the shelter and wheelchair path.
- Storage within the garden for all tools and equipment as we get busier.
- Keeping on top of photographic consent for social media and website.
- Maintaining and looking after the healthiness of the pond and the natural areas of the garden when there is increased footfall.
- There has been abuse of the garden by some hirers.





REPORT FROM STEPHEN MASON
Lead Gardener

It has been a challenging but positive year for the garden. Plants and wildlife have had to adapt and respond to the constantly changing weather which has become the new normal.

The pond came out of winter slowly with a worrying greenish tone in the water as frogs and newts started to breed. Slowly this has cleared and whilst tadpoles turning into frogs is low the pond itself is healthy. This autumn we will clear some excess vegetation and hopefully sell it on to visitors. Garden ponds have become the most important freshwater habits in the UK in recent years due to sewage and fertiliser pollution.

Composting is ongoing and working well with the addition of soggy sawdust from the toilet facility. This sawdust is helping the decomposition process attain higher temperatures.

The grape vine is thriving and has many bunches forming. As long as watering takes place over summer the crop will be bountiful and delicious. Apples, Pears and Plums are also doing well overall.

The buddleia has suffered from a virus which is affecting the species London wide. I think it will recover as it is a resilient plant.

The wildflower bed is beautiful and rich in species and insect diversity. This autumn I will selectively thin some plants.

The Morello cherry tree donated by a corporate group has settled in well and fruit trees given out to local schools have all done well.

Plant sales have gone well this year and cuttings / pot division done on site have also been productive.

Each year the garden grows more diverse and as it does so it becomes ever more enjoyable. I am always happy to hear visitors express their appreciation and often surprise at the green oasis amidst the bustle of Forest Gate. The garden is many things to many people, long may it last.





Many thanks to Trustees, staff and especially our wonderful volunteers for their boundless energy and enthusiasm. You have contributed thousands of hours in the garden over the last year, as well as countless unrecorded hours behind the scenes and on external associated activities. A special thank you to Kevin Harris who has worked tirelessly over the year contributing to the garden improvements.

Without all of you there would be no Garden!

VOLUNTEERS

- Alexandra Hopkins

Ayana Bailey

Ayesha Shanzad

Barbara McKenzie

Bindhu Viswambaran

Cath Perry

Cathy Stack

Celia Mansell

Chris Amlott

Chris Rogers

Christine Unuefa

Claire Bartram

Clive Troubman

Damian Brody

David Rosenberg

Dennis Chipperfield

Derek Smith

Don Lewis

Gillian Striesow

Gill Lewis

Hannah Marshall

Helen Doyle

Jackie Holmes

Julia Statman

Kathryn Copnell

Katia Shulga
- Kerena Fussell

Kevin Harris

Laura Batatota

Lisa Eller

Lucy Ockenden

Luke Ellis

Maria Hall

Mark Gorman

Maudlyn Carter

Michaela O'Connor

Myanah Saunders

Mylene Payet

Nelson Casallas

Peter Tympkow

Rachel Burton

Rahil Mansuri

Rajinder Plaha

Sandra Jackson

Simon Vakeva-Bird

Stephen Oates

Susan Perkins

Susan Foley

Veronica Jeans

Ysr Mahmood

Zaeemma Amjal





STAFF



Fiona Leckenby
Outreach



Max Mason
Coordinator



Stephen Mason
Lead Gardener



Sally Medcalf
Administrator

TRUSTEES



Maureen Egbe



Kerena Fussell



Mark Gorman



Georgia Lindsay



Kevin Mansell



Hedy Richards



David Rosenberg



Myanah Saunders
Chair



Donna Stokes



Peter Williams

