

Good Food Lewisham Network Meeting Minutes

Thursday 15th June 2023 4.30-6.30pm

St Winifred's Primary School, Lee

Present: Lewisham Local – Helen Jackson (Food Partnership Coordinator), Simone Riddle (Local Giving & Food Programme Manager), Laura Tilbury (Community Development Worker), Hannah Monteith (Bank of Things).

Good Food Lewisham Steering Group – Lakhvinder Matharu (Public Health LBL), Andrea Zick (Chef, food researcher, local resident)

St Winifred's School – Adrian Cunningham (Teacher and Sustainability Lead), Claire Gillespie (Head teacher)

Other schools – Kerri Devlin-Alce (St James Hatcham), Kelley McIntrye (Torridon Road Primary School), Lena Lindsay (Rushey Green School), Rosie White (Prendergast primary school)

Young people – Llywella Hoban (Young Mayor's Team LBL)

Projects working with young people – Lauren Goddard (Sydenham Garden), Thanh Uong (Two Mindful Bees), Anne Williams (Right to Food) and Andra McMillan (Right to Food and Legendary Community Club)

Lewisham Council – Laura Cunningham (Councillor), Mark Ingleby (Councillor), Victoria Willis Lewisham Council Climate Resilience Officer

Other food projects – Stella Headley (Rastafari Movement UK Wellbeing - food bank etc.)

Other (e.g. local resident) - Ash Pat (Newstead Gardens), Avril Augustine (arrived late so didn't introduce herself)

Apologies: Maria Devereaux (Wildcat Wilderness Community Garden), Chefs in Schools, Kids Kitchen, Horniman, Grow Lewisham, Coco Collective, Theresa Webb (Steering Group, local forager and gardener), Mel Shakespeare (Food Cycle), Helen Buttivant (Steering Group, Public Health LBL), Susan Mubiru (Steering Group, Public Health LBL), Anne McBride (St Peter's Church, food bank etc. Brockley), Coral Howard (Councillor),

Ellie Dell'Aglio (Council – compost workshops), Morgan (Young Mayor's Team), Capital Growth, Larry Evans (Clarion Housing)

Introductions

Introduction to [Lewisham Local](#) the charity – exists to make Lewisham a happier, healthier place to live, has several programmes and projects to support this such as [Wild Cat Wilderness](#), [FoodCycle Lewisham](#), support around volunteering and for community groups.

Introduction to [Good Food Lewisham](#) – we are a growing network that exists to transform the world of food in Lewisham. A passionate network of people working on sustainable and healthy food in Lewisham – food justice, food poverty/banks/social supermarkets, local good food businesses, food growing, climate, procurement, building the good food movement. It's growing. Join us! We organise quarterly network meetings like these, FJAP, business network, community food growing etc. What would you like us to focus on?

[Community directory](#)- a place to find all the groups in Lewisham – could your project be on here?

Food Growing in Schools: Context - Why did we choose this theme?

Aims of the meeting

It seemed like this would be a good next focus as we were hearing about different projects but it didn't seem very joined up:

1. Build a picture of what's happening in Lewisham with food growing in schools / projects working on food and young people
2. See if there's already networking in this area and get involved or build something new – is there an overview of this area of work? If so, who has this? If not, we can create it.
3. Bring people together to hear from different projects to learn from each other and see how we can work together
4. Inform people of national/regional resources/organisations
5. See if there are any gaps/barriers and opportunities/interest in working together

Context (politics and resources)

National – RHS school gardens project, School Food Matters (grants for school food growing), Say Yes to School Food for All (Sustain), Right to Food, Chefs in Schools

Regional – Capital Growth map and resources – good to grow – expanding their work with this and schools - not that many projects on the map – we want to make sure people are plugged into these things.

Local – situation in Lewisham? Can anyone from the council or elsewhere fill us in?, GFL list of community gardens and also community directory with some schools on but not much info re schools and food growing

Group introductions for those in the room

(People were asked to introduce their project and say what they'd like to see happen in Lewisham)

Aidan who works for St Winifred's School, the host of the meeting, is a teacher and is the sustainability lead. Works with school council and social action group. Their aim is to be carbon neutral by 2030 – one action is food growing. Previous caretaker had a vision to create a wellbeing hub, 2k received from [School Food Matters](#). Used upcycled pallets as raised beds. Kitchen garden is part of wellbeing project. Children are growing veg. Aidan gave us a tour of the garden at the end of the meeting.

Hannah - [Bank of Things](#) – project between **Young Mayors Team** and Lewisham Local to support young people 11 - 25 to access essential items. Community Fridge there as well as school items needed, particularly snacks for young people.

Right To Food Lewisham (Anne and Andra) – formed in 2022, Lewisham’s aim to achieve Universal Free School Meals (FSM), open access to food banks – community kitchens. They have had a rally, petition, met with MPs, Councillors. Will be at Downham Celebrates, shared best practice – raised the profile of Children and Young People (CYP) hunger locally which led to 400k injection by Lewisham Council at schools. Believe food is a fundamental human right. They shared data from an [End Child Food Poverty report](#) on current stats – to highlight what a dire situation it is. Invitation to join mailing list and WhatsApp group by emailing rtflewisham@gmail.com. Would like to open up community kitchens – get in touch if you’re interested. [Example of something they’ve organised locally here](#).

Report: https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Local-indicators-of-child-poverty-after-housing-costs_Final-Report-3.pdf

Lena - Rushey Green School - health and wellbeing lead – doing a lot for food growing – high levels of poverty in Catford, lots of pupils that come to school without lunches which aren’t entitled to FSM. Sabina Nessa was part of the garden regeneration, received more donations to develop this since her murder, wheat growing, beets, lettuces. They work with [Chefs in Schools](#) – they don’t have a catering company so have more control over what they’re eating. Food tech lessons for every child in the school – 600 pupils. Aim is to build a new kitchen and forest school area. Children experience a lot at the school. Official open is next month – really want a food bank in their school.

Kerri – St James Hatcham – edible playground and club once a week – tacked onto key stage 2 playground so can access. Great space but could be more. Looking for help and funding.

Cllr Laura Cunningham - looking for fair access to space - particularly interested in community gardening – want to increase access to land, want to look at children’s access, garden access with social housing – wants to be able to know how teachers

share what's happening between schools – St Mary's had 10 head teachers come to talk about community gardens – they had NCIL funding.

Kelly – Torridon Road primary school - Started in pandemic, created their own foodbank – joined with Legendary Community Club to support, now referring to Lewisham Foodbank, extended school garden (knocked down carpark) just qualified as forest school leader - growing things but needs help – new to growing.

Rosie – Prendergast primary school – teaches food education – new project, school teaching kitchen – taste ed style lessons, less of an obesity crisis, more children are underweight – doing this on her own so looking for connections – PTA funds food budget – need time and resources to set up a community garden.

Thanh - Two Mindful Bees – mindful family walks, eat together, connected to community, food for the mind and body – has worked in schools and keen to continue.

Lakhvinder - Public Health Lewisham Council – GLA has new programmes to be launched in September on healthy schools London, healthy schools early years awards, GFFAL report: <https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-for-all-londoners/>

Victoria – Lewisham Council Climate Resilience Officer - runs a climate network, runs two sessions per year for schools, one in person event for pupils, 4th of July at Beecroft primary they have a page on Lewisham services for schools – climate action webpage.

Llywella-Paige - Deputy Young Mayor – Young Advisers Team - At secondary school (I can't verify the name of the school) - you hear about free food for primary, not for secondary, can't get food, can get apples and snacks for exams but not enough – a real strain – has friends who can't get lunches for everyday, 3 meals a day but there's a gap – children going hungry. In their secondary school there's no space for a garden there - a lot harder for secondary schools – sometimes overlooked - hunger is a big problem.

Lauren - Sydenham Garden – recently started 18-25 years project, grow food, plants to make fabric, feedback is that young people are very interested in foraging, very new for

a lot of the young people. A lot of people don't feel part of the community. Herbal medicine.

Andra - Legendary Community Club – food justice group for children and their families, provide employment opportunities for CYP, cook food for YP in term time, funded by NCIL, holidays, use Torridon Road primary for meals for Holiday Activity Programme - HAF

Hannah - Bank of Things – want snacks for their youth community fridge

Lakhvinder - Lewisham Public Health team - coordinated [Lewisham's Food Justice Action Plan \(FJAP\)](#) – if you would like to be involved in mobilising actions - email Lakhvinder to be added to the list: lakhvinder.matharu@lewisham.gov.uk

Ash - Newstead Gardens – tenants residents association – some small veg boxes. There is some unused land that could be used – land belongs to Clarion.

Andrea – PHD in UK food systems – looking at how to make food more sustainable, trained chef.

Cllr Mark Ingleby - sits on scrutiny committee – worked with GFL on mass participation event for World Food Day on foraging - working on 'task and finish group' on food growing – sees that land is the biggest issue, finding old abandoned patches for food growing, mapping unused land.

Stella - Rastafari Movement UK - supports families, across Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark, based in Lee, have a garden. Interested in cultural foods, would like to grow cultural foods indoors using solar energy, knows another project that does - Prince. Important to think about the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic households. Possibly project moving to Downham.

Group updates from groups that weren't able to attend but wanted a mention

1. **Coco Collective** – They have two afro-diaspora led gardens – one is a youth-led garden in Catford. Interested in working with schools and using garden as an educational tool for young people. In touch with a black-led school, children aged 8-12 are going to visit over the summer. Hoping to role this out with other schools too. Average age of gardeners is 24-27, 18-30 range, very mobilised, growing food, climate activism. No previous gardening experience. Define new systems.
2. **Grow Lewisham** – Network of gardeners and people working on climate issues. Three community garden sites, workshops e.g. mushrooms, compost, woodwork. Looking to do more work with schools and young people.
3. **Council composting project** – recycling and waste team – they have someone dedicated to doing introduction to composting workshops all year round - the workshops are around 1 hour. They can also look at how people's compost is developing and advise. They do this with schools, as well as with adults via TRAs and other groups of residents. Email Ellie on recycle@lewisham.gov.uk for more information and to book a session
4. **The Albany** – doing work with Lewisham Homes food growing and YP
5. **St Luke's Church Downham** – garden project with young children
6. **Millwall Community Trust** - offers cooking with schools

Flipchart paper – Hopes / What would you like to see in Lewisham / Opportunities

Universal free school meals

Open access to emergency centres

Network of community kitchens

No one in Lewisham goes hungry

Food bank for forest school children

Support for edible playground – James Hatcham school

Access for funding and fair access to growing – gardening around social housing

Peer to peer support and know how

Connect mindfulness to food

Link in to Schools Climate Network – Lewisham Emergency

More work in secondary schools

Newstead gardens growing space

Growing cultural foods – could that be done?

Collaborate with community gardens / schools

Next steps

General sense that people didn't already know about each other's projects and want to stay connected and can link into the GFL network, monthly newsletter and food growing WhatsApp.

ACTION: Helen to circulate food growing and community garden list and gardening school resources mentioned (see below)

Q. What about bees? – Wild Cat Wilderness has a project with Bees

Other things to add (post meeting)

Other ideas – conference for schools to discuss, training, funding signposting, connected up to share resources etc.

Helen forgot to mention the Lewisham Growing Network – a working group of Good Food Lewisham. We have funding to build this until April 2024. Connecting up community growing spaces, putting on events etc. You'll hear about this via the WhatsApp group and GFL newsletter.

The Council's Task and Finish group on community food growing has included info from this meeting in their report recommendations. So hopefully there will be more resources and work in this area.

Resources / Information

1. List of Lewisham gardens - <https://www.goodfoodlewisham.org/post/at-least-46-community-gardens-and-orchards-in-lewisham>

This always needs updating – let us know if it needs updating. Do you want us to add your school garden?

2. School Food Matters - <https://www.schoolfoodmatters.org/> - awarded garden grants to six Lewisham schools in 2021 and work closely with 12 schools at the moment. I don't know which these are.
3. Capital Growth - <https://www.capitalgrowth.org/schools/>
4. Chefs in Schools - <https://chefsinschools.org.uk/>
5. Right to Food - <https://charliannedesigns.wixsite.com/righttofoodlondon>
6. RHS - <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/School-gardening-awards>
7. End Child Poverty - <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/>
8. Sustain e.g. <https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-for-all-londoners/> e.g. <https://www.sustainweb.org/school-food-for-all/>

Please feel free to circulate more resources or information about your project via the WhatsApp group or via email to us – thanks.

Thank to everyone who attended or showed interest.

Next network meeting will be in the autumn.