

Dear participant,

Thank you for attending the Good Food Lewisham network meeting on local food growing and foraging on 31st January. Please find the minutes and more information from some of the speakers attached. Sorry for the delay.

We would be very grateful if you could fill in this survey (especially if you're involved in a growing project) so that we can shape Lewisham Growing Network according to what people want and need. It will take about 10 minutes to fill in. Get in touch with Helen if you have any questions – helen@lewishamlocal.com. Survey here: <https://forms.office.com/e/dLhMrr4YvL>

Our next network meeting will be on Tuesday 21st March 8.30 - 10am at the Lewisham Local Offices: PLACE/Ladywell, 261 Lewisham High Street, SE13 6AY. It will focus on local good food businesses - cost of living effect on businesses in Lewisham, London Living Wage, apprenticeships and volunteering and coops. Arrive from 8.15 to get a drink/snack. Shortly after 10am we'll visit Ed the Baker Artisan Bakery – a short walk away: <https://iamedbaker.com/>

Please sign up on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/good-food-lewisham-business-network-meeting-tickets-560680770277?aff=ebdsoporgprofile> and let others know about it.

If you'd like to be added to our growers' WhatsApp group or to the monthly GFL newsletter or if you're interested in joining the Growing Steering Group or general GFL Steering Group please contact Helen – helen@lewishamlocal.com.

All the best,

Good Food Lewisham Team

Minutes Good Food Lewisham Network Meeting

Food Growing and Foraging

31st January, 2023

Stanstead Lodge

These are the minutes from the meeting, as well as information speakers sent after the meeting to circulate.

About LL/GFL/GL/Lewisham Growing Network

Lewisham Local – A local charity doing about 20 community projects, including digital access, community grants programmes, bank of things, time bank, community directory, volunteering. There are different newsletters for different projects, sign up on the website:

<https://www.lewishamlocal.com/>.

Good Food Lewisham – One of Lewisham Local's projects. It's part of Sustainable Food Places – there are food partnerships around the country looking at sustainable, affordable, healthy, local food. In the first year of LL doing this project (2022 – 2023) we've focused on food justice and food growing. GFL has a monthly newsletter, food growing whatsapp group, food giving groups whatsapp/informal mailing list. <https://www.goodfoodlewisham.org/>. We have an overall Steering Group, as well as working groups/steering groups for the different streams of work. We're developing one for local businesses at the moment.

Grow Lewisham - Grow Lewisham is volunteer led organisation which aims to initiate, support and expand community food projects within the borough of Lewisham. They are a collective of Lewisham residents concerned about the climate crisis and its impact on food security. They are committed to improving access to local land, supporting learning, sharing of resources and building unity between people and planet through the practice of growing food together.

Grow Lewisham's main plot - community garden - is in the southern part of the borough near Downham (1 Southview Rd, Bromley BR1 5RD.) Associated projects include **Bridgehouse Gardens** in the north of the borough (61 Rollins Street, SE15 1EP) and **Lewisham Park Herbal Plot**, near Ladywell. (Lewisham Park SE13 6QP.)

Grow Lewisham invite you to get involved in their growing community in 2023. No matter your experience of food growing, gardening and horticulture – there's many ways to get involved. Join a friendly community of food growers, gardeners & climate justice advocates, gain access to growing and gardening space, free workshops and resources, connect with nature and the local environment and have regular opportunities to share your skills and learn new ones!

Grow Lewisham also run a programme of free workshops, including on their community garden Open Days on the first Sunday of every month, 12-4pm. All welcome.

For more information and to get involved:

Contact Sarah, Volunteer & Workshop Coordinator: growlewishamnetwork@gmail.com

Join Grow Lewisham e-mail newsletter: www.tinyletter.com/growlewisham

Follow on Instagram here: <https://www.instagram.com/growlewisham>

Visit: www.growlewisham.com

Lewisham Growing Network – This came out of the food growing working group of GFL, we've been meeting informally since 2021. We've secured funding to build this over the next year. Lewisham Local and Grow Lewisham will be collaborating on this.

Speakers

Dean - Grow to Give: Knap Mill Way Bellingham:

Joined forces during lockdown with fellow allotment users, started a network, linked up and communicated what was being grown and excess was then distributed to food banks and projects in the borough. This was helping with excess fruit and veg gluts and helping provide to those experiencing food insecurity.

Carolina - Bridgehouse Gardens:

Bridgehouse Gardens is a project that seeks to activate the existing and create new public spaces with the community along Rollins Street and Winslade Estate in the North of Lewisham. These spaces will be centred around greening, cultural and community infrastructure, food growing, education and recreation to explore alternative approaches to community cohesion and just futures. Bridgehouse Gardens will involve activities, workshops, events that will seek to activate these spaces through active participation and collaboration.

For info please email bridgehousegardens@gmail.com

They have an event coming up next Sunday, 12th March. It's a planter making workshop.

Sunday 12th March, 11am - 3pm

Carpentry workshop: building garden planters and boxes, with Jack Narbed

Come and build some garden planters for Bridgehouse Gardens with us, and make your own too!

61 Rollins Street, SE15 1EP

Stanstead Lodge Garden Volunteers:

Started the garden 10 years ago.

“We need help with borders and the Polly Tunnels” We have had help in the past with Good Gym.

Managed to Link Sydenham Gardens with Young Lewisham Project for help.

Maria – Community Directory:

<https://www.lewishamcommunitydirectory.org/s/>

Presentation slideshow: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFX7dMBWFA/wxkzhtWLKzZ_GYS7kM-L_Q/view?utm_content=DAFX7dMBWFA&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

Contact: maria@lewishamlocal.com

We the had a lovely tour of Stanstead Lodge Gardens

Notes from discussion groups

Group 1: Grow to Give

- Lessons from projects doing this?
- How can we do more of this?

Notes:

- Good Food Catford. Sangley Road. Credit for vegetables from allotment.
- Signage on site to plant spare veg. Allocated areas.
- Communicate via WhatsApp. Projects and schedules.
- Volunteers to deliver to charities/food banks
- Shared knowledge of growing techniques/varieties/regional differences
- Seed sharing scheme. Excess seeds. Home grown.
- Charities include LEWCAS and Catford Irish Centre
- Key point = creating a strong network

Group 2: Equality/Diversity/Inclusion: barriers and inclusion

- Going out to groups and spaces to bring people in (creative outreach) and taking workshops out to groups who can't engage in green spaces including public spaces like shopping centres, housing providers, carer providers
- Provide volunteers who are supporting in community gardens a small plot to grow their own vegetables
- Allotments: Look at allotment list- engage those on waiting list to join community gardens. Allotment buddies, link those with knowledge to newer growers, mixed abilities
- Volunteers: always a lack, barriers of language – reframe volunteering to community growers/allotments – mutual benefits – be clear on expectations and benefits – e.g access to greenspace - how can volunteers have more agency and say in how growing spaces are used?
- Plots: multi use to attract different groups – those that want to grow, those with kids to play, older people to sit and engage for example – intergenerational work
- How to address socio-economic barriers to volunteers
- Challenge assumptions that you have to be able bodied and “well” to volunteer/engage in horticulture – how can we make plots and community garden spaces more accessible, warm – provide clearer information around access on community garden map (i.e. is it wheelchair accessible, is there a toilet, close to bus stop, space to sit down – activities for children)
- Smaller grassroots groups need support accessing funding, doing applications – doing the work but hard to put on paper
- How can community food growing / gardening projects in Lewisham better represent the cultural diversity of our communities?
- In what ways could food growing / community garden projects collaborate / partner with other local organisations / community groups/ front-line services?

- How can community gardens and growing projects more directly address food scarcity / poverty in the borough – what support is needed for this to happen?

Group 3: Climate and Growing – How can we measure and improve?

- Capital Growth tools and other resources?
- Key green/climate issues in local growing
- Solutions

This session didn't go ahead as the Capital Growth person was unable to attend the meeting until later, but we'll share the info they shared with us at the end of the meeting which speaks to this theme (see below).

Group 4: Benefits of Working Together and Practical Next Steps

Q. What can we get out of working together in Lewisham Growing Network, what next steps can we take?

- **Internal benefits:**
 - Shared voice
 - Tool library
 - Skill shares
 - Training opportunities pooled together- hosted at different spaces
 - Where to get resources – collective buying
 - Seed swaps
 - Access funding – joint funding opportunities
 - What different members can bring and facilitate
 - Sharing database/networks
- **External benefits**
 - Website and FAQs – e.g. how to set up a community garden
 - Clear pathways for residents (council should be doing)
 - Supporting food justice plan and offer groups' campaigns
 - Services to know about projects (social prescribing)

Other notes from discussion:

- Difficult to get garden resources without a car
 - Group of people to get together and buy resources in bulk
 - Not everyone can carry heavy things e.g. soil
 - Need a resource making more accessible for people gardening on their own
- Talking about times to do these meetings: there's no perfect time for everyone
- Need to be clearer how to get an allotment: the steps aren't clear and easy enough to find
- Something like a joint network website would be a good resource to feed into
 - Would make it easier to present issues to external groups such as the council
- Skill sharing
- Could be sharing resources such as seed swaps and leftover materials

- Share resources on where to buy materials (eg compost) and what small businesses/ groups to support
 - This could be via the network website
- Power together to put pressure on council
- Other London councils have designated food growing officers
- Put pressure on council for it to become a key priority area
- Housing associations for funding on community gardens - Difficult because they have to benefit their own residents so you have to organise all people together
- Joint funding applications
- Supporting the food justice action plan as a group
- As well as other wider initiatives that we align with
- Data sharing and contacts
- For example Lee Greens have a loyal customer base and periodic newsletter they can put things in
- seeing what members can bring to the table and contribute
- sharing database networks: every group has a different type of reach to different demographics, so it would be useful to take advantage of that (eg. Different newsletter with different audiences)
- Directory can be used to find what projects are in a certain area to find maybe through what and who to promote through
- Services to be seen by CCL and social prescribers to become visible and available for referrals

Group 5: Foraging/Picking Local Food/Food for Free

- Local foraging info/plans/resources
- How can we get more people learning how to forage?

Notes:

- Food justice for families
- An agreement for sustainable harvesting. What is your fair share? Storage
- Legal support – private/public land UK
- Feeling confident with fruit etc.
- App for website gluts
- To extend for inclusivity
- Adults/children/families/schools with gardens/children's centres
- Seeds directory – regeneration, learning how to collect seeds, how to germinate them, what conditions
- Multi languages – Spanish, French, Farsi,
- Window ledges
- Vertical growing spaces/maximise space with pockets e.g. nasturtium, strawberries, spinach/Insulation for a wall/In egg boxes

Discussion group key points/Main points fed back from discussion groups

Grow to give: we created a very strong network at beginning to make this positive

EDI: go out and bring groups in to use space, reciprocity for volunteers – give a plot to volunteers to grow, to get something out of this.

Foraging: make sure people on low incomes and groups have knowledge on these, confidence on identification

Benefits of working as a group: resources, access to funding, seed swaps, joint promotion. External benefits: services know about the project

Fi from Capital Growth/Introduction to Capital Growth

– London food growing network, you can join to become a member, allotment, volunteer at community garden or commercial spaces, free to join, funding information, help to recruit volunteers, offer discounts on soil testing and insurance. Provide food growing training,

Events going to be in south London in 2023

Together a network is much more powerful, knowledge in group to share resources

Harvestometer – if you use very powerful, record how much you harvest, put onto calculator, if you're donating produce, helps to track how much, how much CO2 you're creating, helps to

Growing for change – make a commitment to climate and nature, key features that are important to be nature friendly – create more bio diversity, - access this by becoming a member, pledge growing for change

More info from Fi after the meeting:

- **Join Capital Growth** for free [here](#) to:
 - put your garden on our interactive [map](#)
 - receive our monthly newsletter
 - use our harvest-ometer tool - https://www.capitalgrowth.org/the_harvestometer/ - to record how much produce you harvest and find out how this converts to CO2 and money saved
 - access discounted food growing training
 - access free resources, funding & jobs news, info about and much more via your member dashboard
- **Make the Growing for Change pledge** to show your garden's commitment to the climate and nature emergency. Simply [go to your member dashboard](#) and select 'Growing for Change Pledge'
 - More about the campaign [here](#)
- Join us for our next **Community Food Growing Convo** on 14th March on Growing Food on Housing Estates: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-food-growing-convos-3-food-growing-on-housing-estates-tickets-493769426647>
- **Save the dates** for this year's **Good to Grow** Day of action:
 - This year's national day of action (used to be called Big Dig) is 21-24 April.

- Plan to take part and organise an event, volunteering day or seed swap at your garden.

Lewisham Council re Food Justice Action Plan Update

They'll update use when they know what's happening with this – waiting to launch. FYI this is likely to be late April now – we'll keep you posted.

Any other business

Sedgehill School have asked for help with their new ecological biodiversity site. Forster Park, Grow Lewisham and Bellingham allotments all linked via email with them for help.

Actions from the meeting (and updates)

- Organise a webinar on Grow to Give (Helen) - **to follow once the funded project starts end of March**
- Send round Survey to participants to establish baseline to see where growing spaces are at and what people would like to see happening (Simone and Helen) - **done in these notes**
- Send round info on Capital Growth - **done in these notes**
- Send round info on LL's Community Directory - **done in these notes**