

CRYSTAL PALACE TRANSITION TOWN ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2012-13

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FOOD AND GROWING

1 Edible Garden

Aims

To increase the amount of food grown locally as this is better for the environment, cheaper, healthier and makes us more resilient.

When started

February 2012

What we did May 2012- 13

The **Edible Garden in Westow Park** has blossomed since work began in February 2012 and it has developed into a prize-winning and thriving garden.

Gardening days every Saturday have led to a high level of ownership within the local community, with attendance every Saturday ranging from 10 regular volunteers to up to 30 people on workshop days. It has an active community of around 60 local people associated with it, coming from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, ages (from primary school children to pensioners) and backgrounds. We have also attracted support from a number of residents in the sheltered accommodation overlooking the garden. 70 people visited the garden for tours at the Overground Festival in 2012.

Workshops in the garden have included:

- Ground Breaking Day
- Bramble Bash
- The Big Dig & Seed Swaps
- Lumber Lug
- Wassailing
- Bring a Plant Days
- Spring and Summer Picnics
- Companion Planting
- Composting
- Overground Festival Tours
- Winter Tree Decorating

We also carried out seed swaps outside Sainsbury's and at Antenna Cafe to encourage local food growing.

Our work in the garden was recognised by Capital Growth, who awarded us "The People's Garden" Award in December 2012. We have also been supported by Croydon Council's Community Partnership officer.

How to get involved

Come along to one of our regular gardening sessions - email food@crystalpalacetransition.org.uk for details.

2 Bugs Club

Aims

To attract wildlife and further biodiversity to the Edible Garden while offering children outdoor learning about the natural environment, and about the origin and processes involved in the food on their plates. The children also learn to help each other as participants in a community project.

What we do

Provide a wide range of educational and fun activities that engage children with gardening and nature.

When formed

September 2012

What we did May 2012-13

Regular tasks include feeding the wormery, watering plants and bug hunting. In addition, each session has a focus, which have so far included:-

- Collecting colours on the back of address stickers
- Building Bee and Bug Habitats
- Digging a Hedgehog Hideaway
- Making Bird Feeders out of old wellies
- Bird Bath out of terracotta pots
- Planting a Willow Den
- Sowing a Pizza Container plot where the children planted wheat alongside tomatoes, chives and marigolds
- Companion planting, where one plant benefits from the proximity of another, usually for the purpose of attracting beneficial bugs or repelling damaging ones.

The sessions are led by one volunteer supported by a team of helpers, with an average of 10 children attending per week.

Future plans

- Planting sunflowers to attract birds and bees...
- Planting bee-friendly edible flowers
- Bringing up butterflies
- Building a Stag Beetle Home

Challenges

The weather! The wintry temperatures in Spring made it difficult to attract people but in milder and dryer weather we get good numbers.

How to get involved

Email food@crystalpalacetransition.org.uk.

3 Permaculture Garden**Aims**

To clear a residential garden in Crystal Palace, bring it back into use for residents and use the space to experiment with sustainable growing methods.

What we do

We were offered the chance to use a residential garden at the back of a Victorian house now converted to flats. The garden was shady, full of building rubble and hadn't been used fully by the residents for a long time. We held a permaculture course on the site in the summer of 2012 and designed a permaculture garden to grow food and also create a pleasant green space for residents.

When started

March 2012

What we did May 2012-13

We used the permaculture design process to design the space and then implemented the design. One of the key features is a hugelkultur raised bed, which is formed by creating a mound of rotting wood, covering it in soil and planting into the top and sides. The shape allows more space for produce and also holds water more than a flat bed. As the wood beneath rots down plants are nourished by the rich compost. We have also created a perennial bed and introduced plants such as myrtle, hops, vines and

perennial vegetables. Fifteen of us completed the permaculture course and learned how to think about land and life from a permaculture perspective and this has influenced a lot of our projects since. We learned new methods of growing more sustainably and have used these in our other gardens.

Challenges

The space was very overgrown and full of building rubble, including asbestos. We had to be imaginative to find ways to grow food there without using the soil available. We initially wanted to create a forest garden on the site but soon realized that this would not be possible and so changed the plan.

What we'd like to do next:

Continue developing the site, building up the perennial bed in particular.

How to get involved

Contact Clare Goff at clare_goff@yahoo.co.uk

4 Topsy Garden:

Aims

To transform a derelict space outside a local pub into a community growing space.

What we did May 2012-13

The Topsy Garden began life as a derelict, concreted, rubbish-strewn corner of the Grape & Grain pub's outside space. A chance conversation with the then landlady led to Crystal Palace Transition Town creating a growing space there.

Within a year and a half (and a lot of hard work) it has become a beautiful little garden - an oasis of calm much enjoyed by pub regulars and other visitors.

Growing there we have grapes, hops, cider apples and herbs. This year the new landlady has added to this, planting a plentiful supply of tomatoes and green beans – all used in the pub's kitchen.

5 Palace Pint

Aims

To encourage people to get involved through growing their own hops - a good way to engage with people who may not yet be interested in sustainability but are interested in beer!

What we do

Distribute hop plants, support each other in growing them, harvest and deliver them to a local micro-brewery to produce our own unique local beer. This project is supported by the Brixton Beer Growers, who have carried out similar initiatives.

When started

March 2013

What we did May 2012-13

The target was to distribute 40 hop plants, but we gave out more than 100. 70 people attended the launch night in the Grape and Grain pub, and the hops were collected from the Topsy Garden growing site on St Patrick's Day. The hops were then grown, with growers sharing their growing tips and problems on the Palace Pint Facebook page.

6 Museum Garden

Aims

To create a beautiful edible garden around Crystal Palace Museum that will also be wildlife friendly.

What we did May 2012-13

We cleared the area of weeds and rubbish, then won £180 of Capital Growth funding which enabled us to buy and plant lavender, grape vines, raspberry canes, a dwarf fig tree, a dwarf cherry tree and some hops. The hops were planted as part of the Palace Pint project. We hope to use the raspberries, cherries and figs to make jams and preserves that can be sold to raise money for the museum.

What we'd like to do next

We will be planting saffron later in the year and have been donated a mini wildflower meadow that we'll be planting within the next few weeks. Volunteers will also be helping the museum with other tasks such as painting the railings, restoring the weigh-bridge and clearing the time-keepers hut.

How to get involved

We're always looking for new volunteers to help! If you're interested, email mehul.damani@hotmail.com

The Museum Garden is being developed in partnership with Crystal Palace Park Community Stakeholder Group. See <http://www.crystalpalacepark.org.uk/events/> for a complete list of volunteer projects in Crystal Palace Park.

7 Palace Preserves

Aims

To turn gluts of local produce into jams and chutneys.

What we do

We use locally grown and foraged produce to make delicious jams, marmalades and chutneys. We sell these at the Patchwork Farm stall at the Food Market and have also supplied a number of local cafes and local veg box service "Local Greens".

When started

Autumn 2012

What we did May 2012-13

This started as a jam-making and foraging workshop in the Edible Garden and developed into a weekly workshop "Jammy Mondays", with 3 core members leading and up to 12 people attending.

As well as bonding around the kitchen table and sharing new skills and recipes, a number of other positive outcomes arose:

- Several local cafes asked for the jam and chutneys produced from SE19 foraging.
- We received and fulfilled an order for 180 jars of Christmas Chutney from a local veg box service "Local Greens", raising funds to help us with the cost of equipment, sugar and other resources.
- We developed a very positive relationship with a local pub, the Grape and Grain, and they allowed us access to their kitchen on Mondays when they did not serve food.
- We ran a skill-sharing and jam making workshop with Central Hill Day Centre facility attended by 10 older members of the community.

What we'd like to do next

Palace Preserves has demonstrated its potential as a social enterprise, and will be further developed as it partners up with the market and the "Patchwork Farm".

How to get involved

Come to a jam session - email food@crystalpalacetransitiontown.co.uk

8 Patchwork Farm

Aims

To expand the amount of local produce grown. To create a market for locally grown produce. To supply reasonably priced, locally grown healthy food. To supply local food producers and restaurants with local food. To eradicate food waste created by gluts.

What we do

Patchwork Farm is a network of growing spaces in Crystal Palace and beyond. Some of them are managed by Crystal Palace Transition Town but many are gardens, allotments, or even window boxes owned by local residents. We have a stall at the weekly Crystal Palace Food Market where produce from these growing spaces is sold and swapped.

What we did May 2012-13

We set up and developed our community growing spaces and network of local growers and planned the scheme. In May 2013 we opened our Patchwork Farm stall at the new Crystal Palace Food Market and have sold and swapped many kgs of locally produced food since. We have also supplied local restaurants and food producers with produce.

Challenges

We need more people to deal with the new growing spaces we are offered and the increased demand for local produce.

What we'd like to do next

Expand the number of people involved. Grow the number of growing spaces. Train local people in horticulture.

How to get involved

Email patchworkfarm@crystalpalacetransition.org.uk

SUSTAINABLE SHOPPING

9 Food Market

What we do

Run a weekly food market every Saturday from 10-3pm on Haynes Lane.

Aims

To support small sustainable farmers/suppliers

All the farm produce is organic and mainly from tiny farms in Kent and East Sussex, and the fish is sustainably sourced.

To support local food suppliers

Most of the cooked food is very local, eg Comfort and Joy (Church Road), local cake makers (4 rotating stalls from SE19, almost all start ups), Bees 'n Beans (from Transition Town hives in Elmers End).

To promote local growing

Crystal Palace Transition Town runs 5 community growing gardens around the Triangle and sells produce alongside that of local allotments and gluts from people's gardens on our PATCHWORK FARM stall. Anything not sold is preserved in our regular "jamming" sessions or dried for making tea. All profits raised are used to pay for maintaining and expanding our growing projects.

To promote community

We have a community stall for schools/scouts/etc to use free of charge on a rotating basis and also welcome any local people who wish to try something out. We run children's activities and have a "Made in SE19" stall, to provide local artisans with a place to sell their wares. We also provide a buskers' spot to promote local musicians.

To create local employment

For stallholders, market crew, local growers etc, and we hope to bring more trade to all of the independent shops and markets in Crystal Palace.

To educate about seasonal eating

Recipes based on the seasonal produce at the market are handed out weekly and can also be found on the website.

When started

Following a discussion at our 2012 AGM on how to increase the availability of local food, work started in September 2012 and the market opened on 11 May 2013.

What we did May 2012-13

Held a year-long consultation including 4 public meetings to decide the principles, composition and name of the market. Made field visits to other 'ethical' markets such as Lewes Transition Market and Stoke Newington farmers' market. Researched sourcing, visited farmers and formed relationships with potential stall holders.

What we need

The Patchwork Farm stall is run and manned by volunteers - all welcome!

More carrots! ie volunteers to don carrot suits and hand out leaflets promoting the market.

10 Local and Fair

Aims

To encourage local traders to stock, and local people to buy, goods that are produced locally, sustainably and fairly.

What we do

We work with local *businesses*, publicising what locally produced, organic, sustainably sourced and fairly traded goods they offer, and encouraging them in more sustainable and ethical sourcing of their products.

We work with *consumers*, raising awareness particularly around Fairtrade, which enables small-scale farmers in poorer countries to produce things we can't produce locally in a more sustainable way.

When started

November 2011

What we did May 2012-13

Work with local businesses:

We did an initial survey of businesses around the Triangle to produce our map poster 'Where do you shop? A Guide to Shopping and Eating for a Sustainable Future', which we displayed on our stall at the Overground Festival in the summer.

Later we carried out more extensive research, including more businesses and listing them by category to make it more user-friendly. [This formed the basis of our 'Guide to Shopping and Eating for a Sustainable Future', now available at <http://www.crystalpalacetransition.org.uk/guide-to-sustainable-shopping-and-eating-in-crystal-palace.html>]

Awareness-raising:

We won an award from the Fairtrade Foundation for our previous year's work, which helped fund some ambitious events for Fairtrade Fortnight in February 2013, which focused on Food:

- A debate, with three keynote speakers, about the local and global aspects of sustainable food production

- A film screening showing how the abduction of children into slavery continues, despite claims to the contrary by some major chocolate brands
- A 'Meet and Greet' stall outside Sainsbury's with bicycle-powered Fairtrade smoothie –making
- A puppet show about chocolate by the eco-group of James Dixon Primary school
- An afternoon of 'Tasty Bites' made by local people using local and Fairtrade ingredients, with fact sheets describing the lives of the producers of the ingredients
- A series of 'bite-size' presentations on global and local food issues running in parallel with the 'Tasty bites'
- 'Foodstock' - an evening in Westow House pub with Crystal Palace's finest bands, which raised nearly £1,000 for the Norwood Foodbank
- The 'Hungry Gap' dinner at Domali restaurant, using only locally sourced and Fairtrade ingredients, with two visiting cocoa producer from Ghana as our special guests.

As well as attracting some new people, our events consolidated our relationship with James Dixon School, developed new relationships with the Local Greens veg bag scheme and the south London group of the World Development Movement, and continued to build on our relationship with local business, alongside the Food and Growing group, mutually reinforcing what each group does.

Future plans

- We will explore the possibility of an online interactive map to include the information in our 'Guide to Shopping and Eating for a Sustainable Future' and to reflect wider issues of sustainability around the Triangle.
- We hope to set up a Fairtrade stall in the Food Market, and will promote the use of Fairtrade ingredients in cooked food among the other stallholders. We will also explore bulk-buying Fairtrade products, to be shared among those businesses interested in stocking and selling them.
- We will make more use of events and social media to raise awareness/educate about the importance of Local and Fairtrade and plan events for Fairtrade Fortnight 2014
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What we need

More volunteers to help out with our wide range of activities – we welcome anyone to join us, however much or little time you have to spare!

How to get involved

Email lynn@crystalpalacetransition.org.uk

ENERGY

11 Energy Group

Aims

To make Crystal Palace sustainable from the point of view of energy, by reducing the amount of energy we use and generating renewable energy.

When started

December 2011

What we did May 2012-13

- * Worked with an energy survey company to provide free home energy assessments to our members, looking at the energy efficiency of their homes and ways of improving it.
- * Supplied/ran smoothie bikes at the Overground festival and Local and Fair stall.
- * Held a MEET 'N GREET STALL outside Sainsbury's, inviting passersby to pedal-power lights and music, and discuss efficiency and sustainability.
- * Delivered presentations to 3 x Year 5 groups at Rockmount School, exploring with the children 'possible futures' depending on continued fossil fuel use versus adoption of renewable energy.

* We also discussed energy monitor loan scheme, water-saving device, more draught proofing workshops and energy-style 'plant and rants', but in the end what took all our focus was the birth of PALACE POWER, a CPTT Energy Co-op which aims to site a large solar installation on a public building (see below).

How to get involved

If you're interested in making our area more energy efficient, please email us at energy@crystalpalacetransition.org.uk

12 Palace Power

Aims

To set up a solar energy social enterprise to generate renewable energy for the benefit of the community.

When started

December 2012

What we do

We are planning a large solar panel installation on a public building and setting up an energy co-operative to enable local people to invest in it.

How it works: members of the community join the co-operative and club together to buy panels for a building, for instance, a school. The school pays for the electricity it uses from the panels (at a lower rate), and this money, plus the government's Feed in Tariff paid for what's generated, pays back the co-op members for their investment plus a modest financial return on top. Any additional profit is ploughed back into social enterprise.

So people get to invest in green energy generation on their own doorstep, the school gets cheap electricity, pupils learn about renewable energy first hand - and it all helps save the planet!

What we did May 2012-13

Palace Power sprang out of the Energy Group in December 2012 and has met every fortnight since. The meetings have been attended by up to 15 people with a strong core of 6.

We have:

- taken advice on our legal structure
- made contact with potential funders
- identified a list of potential roofs and approached roof owners, and received many suggestions from the community
- visited Brixton Energy, an already successful initiative, for advice
- put on a screening and discussion in Antenna Cafe to raise awareness of community energy (attended by 30 people)
- run a drop-in roof-finding workshop at the Overground Festival.

We are negotiating with a number of community centres and schools with regard to placing solar panels on their roofs, and are drawing up a business plan that will make this attractive for community investment.

How to get involved

Email info@palacepower.org

WASTE AND RECYCLING

13 Palace Pick Up

Aims

Creative waste reduction.

What we do

Palace Pick Up is a community clean-up and upcycling group which clears up local spaces that have become unofficial dumping grounds and creates new uses for the things people throw away.

When started

February 2013

What we did May 2012-13

There were four community clean-ups, three of which were supported by Croydon Council (on Auckland Road and Central Hill) and one in the Upper Norwood Library car park. The clean-ups attracted up to 30 people and proved a very positive way of engaging local people. We received thank you notes and messages via twitter and our website from local residents. It also proved a good way to raise awareness of Crystal Palace Transition Town's other projects. Signs created from old estate agents' *for sale* boards and painted by group members were put up to discourage further litter dropping.

The other aim of the group is creative upcycling and the group delivered workshops in making baskets from woven plastic bags, and a drop-in recycled paper-making workshop at the Overground Festival attended by 20 people.

Challenges

The main challenge is the lack of permanent storage and studio space for upcycling projects, which currently limits us to small, mess-free projects.

Also, spaces that have been cleaned up are slowly starting to attract litter again – more thinking needs to go into how to discourage this and how to involve more people very local to the area being cleaned up. Flyers dropped through letter boxes attracted little attention, so a more personal door-to-door approach will be taken for future clean-ups.

What we'd like to do next

We would like awareness of Palace Pick Ups to increase, more bins to discourage litter-dropping, and access to a permanent space for upcycling.

How to get involved

Email annakostyrina@gmail.com

TRANSPORT

14 Transport Group

Aims

To promote sustainable, healthy and low-impact travel, and liveable, people-friendly streets.

When started

May 2013

What we do

Work to develop sustainable transport and street improvements.

What we did May 2012-13

The Transport Group launched at the AGM in May with a presentation and brainstorming session, which produced a wide range of ideas from the simple and practical to the long-term and visionary.

We have met regularly since, researching the feasibility of these ideas and talking with the various borough councils who run the streets around Crystal Palace to see which they are able to support.

What we'd like to do next

Next year we hope to run some Play Streets events modelled on Bristol's 'Playing Out' project (www.playingout.net), run guided bike rides from Crystal Palace to points of interest across town, and do what we can in the run-up to the 2014 council elections to put healthy, low-carbon transport on the agenda for the main parties / candidates.

How to get involved

Email angushewlett@gmail.com

OUTREACH

15 YMCA Outreach Project

Aims

To include vulnerable people in our local community.

When started

Spring 2013

What we did May 2012-13

A member of the Steering Group felt that residents of the YMCA on Sylvan Hill should be helped to integrate into our local community rather than being rejected and becoming further alienated. She met with the YMCA to discuss how CPTT could help. Feedback from the residents was that they would like support around music production. An idea came up that CPTT might fund El Crisis (a local spoken word artist) to provide a workshop there. DVDs and CDs of his work were passed to the YMCA, and received positive feedback from the residents who would like to meet him. Negotiations are underway with El Crisis and the manager of the YMCA.

16 Communications Group

Aims

To raise awareness of CPTT, what we do and why we do it, and to attract new members.

What we do

Meet monthly to plan the use of website, newsletter, facebook, twitter, posters, flyers and press to publicise CPTT.

When started

May 2011

What we did May 2012-13

Planned an overhaul of our website, including to enable blogging by individual members.

Sent out a monthly newsletter to our growing mailing list (now over 700 recipients).

Ran a skill-sharing workshop on how to make the best use of Twitter to reach people in the community.

Investigated using an interactive map for presenting green information about our area.

How to get involved

Email kalinapal01@hotmail.com

17 Green Drinks**Aims**

For existing members to spend some social time together; for new members to find out about us in a relaxed, friendly setting.

What we do

Meet for drinks in the Grape and Grain pub on the second Wednesday of every month, from 8pm.

When started

Autumn 2010

What we did May 2012-13

Green Drinks has gone from strength to strength this year, with consistent attendance of between 25-30 people, and a good mixture of new faces and more experienced members. We had over 60 people at our Christmas Get Together – hopefully an annual event that will continue to grow. An exciting development has been partnering up with other organisations, both formally and informally, which has led to different themes for the night and for developing working partnerships, eg with Master Gardeners and Sustrans, and informal catch-ups with members of the Chamber of Commerce.

What we'd like to do next

We welcome more of these joint events and themed evenings, and are open to any ideas or initiatives.

How to get involved

Just come along!

