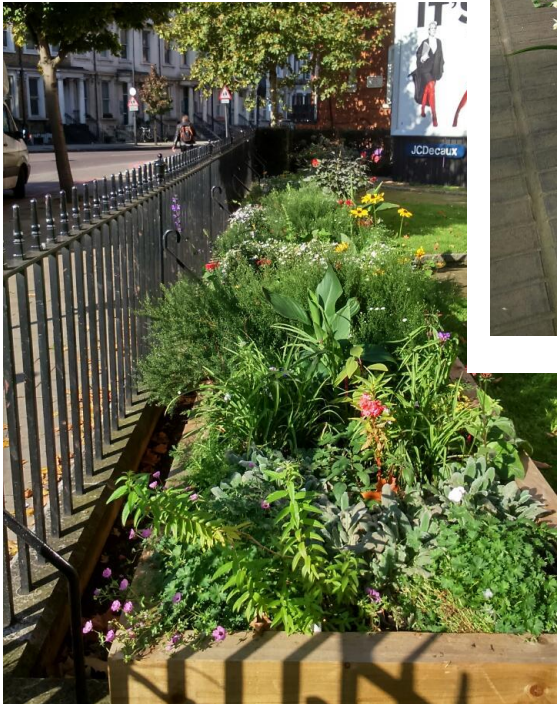


# The Royal Borough Environment Project Update Report 2015/16



## 1.0 Introduction

The Royal Borough Environment Project (RBEP) aims to work in partnership with the local community and the public, private and voluntary sectors, to improve and clean up neglected sites in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The project aims to work with a range of partners and local people to:

- Increase local residents' involvement and pride in their local environment.
- Support a diverse range of innovative and appropriate environmental initiatives.
- Improving the appearance and use of the grot spots and local area,

Agreed future priorities for the RBEP include:

- Grot Spots (Under-used, neglected and/ or derelict areas)
- Community Kitchen Gardens
- Bridge improvement schemes
- Green Roofs
- Greening of Social Housing Open Spaces
- Community engagement (Street greening initiatives, art projects).
- Parks / Open space improvements
- Identifying suitable partners to participate in the project
- Building links with other environmental and educational projects

## 2.0 Project Delivery

The RBEP delivers in partnership a wide range of environmental and community projects in the Royal Borough, below is a summary of the projects delivered in 2015/16.

### 2.1 Community Kitchen Gardens

The community kitchen gardens initiative started in 2009/10 and transforms under-used, neglected or disused areas of land into allotment style gardens where local residents can grow their own fruit and vegetables. Each year additional kitchen gardens are installed (approximately 10 per year) and proves to be extremely popular with local residents.

Over the last year an additional ten sites have been developed, creating over 70 community kitchen gardens, with over 700 raised plots and being used by over 1500 local residents, community groups and schools. Each plot is approximately 3m<sup>2</sup>, which provides a small but manageable size plot. The RBEP has worked in partnership with private landowners (Network Rail), housing associations (Family Mosaic, Notting Hill Housing Group, Catalyst, L&Q and the TMO), Groundwork London and the Council's Housing Department, to secure kitchen garden sites and funding.



Olympia Platform before (Above)

Olympia community kitchen garden with 89 plots (Left)





The Mayor and Mayoress launching the new garden at Pond House



The kitchen garden at Sir Thomas Moore Estate



The veg trugs at Earl's Ct Youth Club



One of the "Test" Market stalls for Cultivating Kensington & Chelsea on Portobello Road



The Launch of the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Garden



The new food growing garden at St Charles Primary School



The new food growing garden at St Mary's school



The moveable growing garden at Marlborough School, located at the new temporary school site



The new food growing garden at Barlby School

## **On-Going Gardening Support**

An essential part of the kitchen garden project is providing free gardening support, advice and training to plot holders and interested residents. Therefore two community gardeners (Will Gould and Lisa Wilkinson) are employed during the growing season (February to November) to run a programme of garden workshops, events and provide gardening support. This allows plot holders to plan what they want to grow, and receive free expert advice and practical gardening tips.

This support has also assisted plot holders establish garden clubs for their kitchen garden sites. The Council is keen for each kitchen garden to have their own garden club which will help manage and oversee their kitchen garden, allow them to fund raise and run their own garden events and help make the kitchen garden project more sustainable and self sufficient over the long term.

## **Brighter Kensington and Chelsea Scheme (BKSC)**

BKCS kindly invited the community kitchen garden project to be included in their annual gardening competition; a new prize category for Vegetable Plots was successfully introduced in 2012. This category has now formed part of the annual prize giving and is open to all plot holders and proves very popular. Prizes were given out to the best community plot and best plot overall.

There were over 40 entries from residents and community groups involved in the kitchen garden scheme that were judged by the BKCS. The competition is to be repeated in 2016.

## **2.2 Cultivating Kensington & Chelsea – Food Growing Social Enterprise**

The RBEP has worked with Groundwork London, Public Health and plot holders on developing a food growing social enterprise, called Cultivating K&C. Groundwork secured two years of Innovation funding in 2014 to work with the Council and the local community to set up this enterprise. Also Public Health funding was secured by the RBEP to develop the market garden site.

Cultivating K&C will be growing a range of fruit and vegetable seedlings to sell to plot holders and the wider community to generate a small profit (approx £5,000 per year). This funding will be used by Cultivating K&C via garden clubs to enhance and improve the borough's community kitchen gardens, by buying new soil, conducting minor repairs, buying tools and plants etc.

A new market garden has been developed on a disused platform at Kensington Olympia, which consists of 4 large greenhouses. This site will be used to grow and sell over 10,000 fruit and vegetable seedlings throughout 2016/17.

Network Rail kindly offered the Council the disused platform at Kensington Olympia, which in 2015 was cleared of all the overgrown vegetation, new security fencing installed and new

access paths via Russell Road community kitchen garden installed. In Early 2016, the four large greenhouses were installed and are now fully operational.



The overgrown platform at Kensington Olympia



The platform being cleared and the new security fencing installed



The cleared platform, ready for the new greenhouses



One of the new green houses being installed



The new green houses in use, growing seedlings





One of the Cultivating Kensington & Chelsea market stall "tests" being held at Portobello Market during the summer 2015



The first CKC plant sale held in April 2016 at Kensington Olympia. The seedlings proved very popular selling over £500 worth in 2 hours



Some of the new Cultivating K&C Trustees and Growing Team at the CKC celebration event

Cultivating K&C applied to the Charity Commission to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in February 2016 and was successful. Cultivating K&C is now a fully operational CIO and its charity number is 1165913. The new Chair for Cultivating K&C is Cynthia Dize and Rachel Luft is the Secretary, additional trustee's will be selected later in 2016.

Throughout 2016 Cultivating K&C will be holding a number of seedling sales and will be looking to develop partnerships with local garden centres such as Rassells to sell the seedlings.

### **2.3 Schools and Public Health Schemes**

In 2015, Public Health funding has been secured by the RBEP to develop an exciting food growing project with four primary schools in the Borough. The Food Growing School pilot is working with:

- Ashburnham School
- Bevington School
- St Mary's School
- Barlby School

At each school a food growing garden was built and an extensive gardening training and support programme delivered in partnership with a dedicated school gardener from Hammersmith Community Gardeners Association, the Food Explorers team and Community health workers. This pilot runs up to July 2016.

The aim of the training and support programme is to encourage food growing in the school, training pupils, teachers and the wider school community about food growing and healthy eating, and how the garden can be used as an education tool.

Food growing in schools has proved extremely popular therefore food growing areas and gardening support has been provided to the following schools in 2015.

- Holy Trinity
- Marlborough
- Oxford Gardens
- St Cuthbert's
- Our Ladies of Victories
- St Mary's Abbot's
- St Joseph's
- Kensington Academy
- Thomas Jones
- Colville
- St Charles Primary school
- St Thomas

## 2.4 The Internal Garden at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

The RBEP has worked with CW+ (a charity linked with Chelsea and Westminster hospital) to expand on the success of the outdoor hospital garden by transforming an underused area of the hospital into a new relaxing indoor garden. The garden was designed by Jinny Blom (winner of a number of gold medals at Chelsea Flower Show) and contains impressive indoor plants and can be used for a range of workshops, events or just to relax.

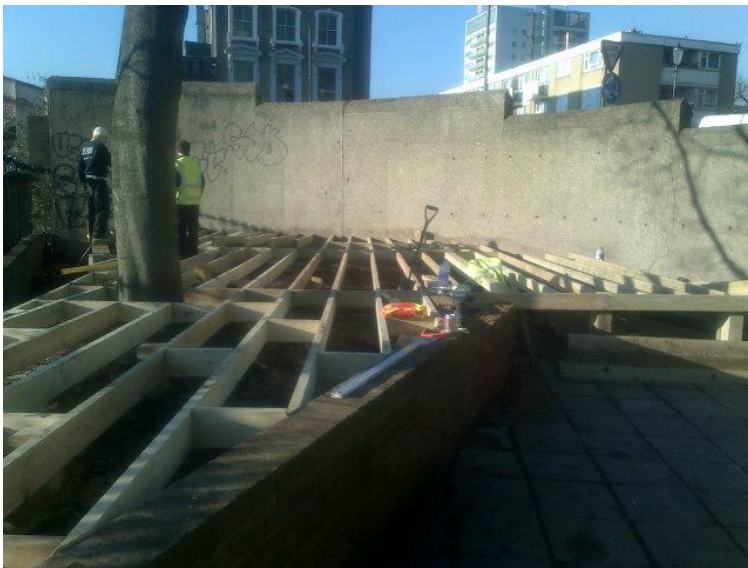


The newly installed indoor garden

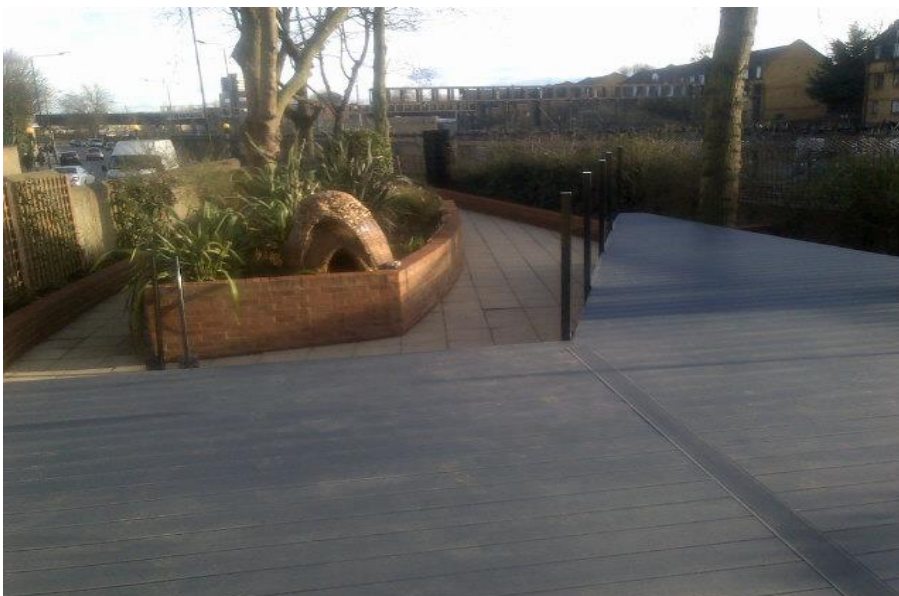


## 2.5 Elkstone Road Sensory Garden

The RBEP is working with local community group Farm the City and local Architect company De Rosee Sa to improve Elkstone Road Sensory Garden. The open space was enhanced ten years ago and transformed into a sensory garden but was never well used by the local community, therefore further improvements have been made to encourage greater use and make the garden an attractive and user friendly openspace. The new improvements include new planting areas so Farm the City can grow fruit and vegetables and a large new terrace area to allow more community events run by Farm the City such as gardening workshops to hold on site.



The new terrace area being constructed



The improved garden, which has a new large terrace, new planting and new raised beds.

## 2.6 Ladbroke Grove London Underground Bridge

The side panels of London Underground Bridge on Ladbroke Grove were damaged and peeling off, therefore an updated design was developed, the old design cleaned off and the new panels installed.



The damaged panels



The repaired panels

## 2.7 Warwick Road Triangle

The Warwick Road Triangle open space at the junction on Warwick Road and Old Brompton Road in Earl's Ct was identified as a grot spot, so the RBEP worked with the local community to develop the site as a community garden. New raised planters were installed and a range of colourful and useful (fruit & veg) plants were planted, transforming this area into an attractive new open space, which is completely maintained by local residents. This garden is being used as a demonstration site to showcase the community kitchen garden project, as some of the plots installed are the same size as kitchen garden plots and show how productive a small area can be.



The Warwick Road Triangle Open space in full bloom

## 2.8 Greener Streets - Planting days, Community Events and Public Art

A number of different community and environmental events were held throughout 2015/16, these included a number of planting workshops to promote the kitchen garden scheme, school planting sessions, and bulb planting events where over 3000 bulbs were planted by local residents and community groups, such as Scope and Age Concern.



One of the planting workshops held at Inkerman House, a sheltered housing scheme in Earl's Court



A gardening workshop at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre's new community kitchen garden

The RBEP is also working with local residents and ward Councillors in Norland to improve the planters on Holland Park Avenue Roundabout. There are two large over grown planters which looked unattractive and collected rubbish, therefore the local residents in partnership with the RBEP, got agreement from TfL (the landowner), that we could clear them and plant them up as an attractive herbaceous border.

Throughout 2015/16 a number of community planting and maintenance days have taken place, which have transformed the planters into attractive and colourful planters. The maintenance of the planters will continue to be done by the local community.



Holland Park Avenue planters -before



Holland Park Avenue  
planters - after

The RBEP also part funds the Portobello Wall Arts Project, which commissions new art work to be exhibited on the long stretch of wall at the northern section of Portobello Road. This year's artwork consists of sketches by artist Fiona Hawthorne.



A sample of the new artwork on Portobello Wall



## 2.9 City Living, Local Life (Ward Initiatives)

The RBEP works closely with a number of City Living, Local Life ward initiatives on supporting community led environmental improvements. Projects include:

- Small scale environment improvements
- Developing proposals for kitchen gardens
- Promoting Community Gardening and community events
- Developing proposals for larger greening and environmental improvements

## 3.0 London in Bloom and “It’s Your Neighbourhood” Awards

In 2015 the Royal Borough successfully entered London in Bloom and It’s your neighborhood” awards. London in Bloom is a campaign and competition where London boroughs, communities, residents and businesses work together to improve the environment of London to make a greener, cleaner place to live, work and visit.

The Royal Borough won 11 London in Bloom awards of which 7 were gold and won 10 “It’s your neighborhood” awards. This year’s “It’s your neighborhood” awards results were better with the majority of the gardens increasing their grade from Level 3 (Developing) to Level 4 (Thriving) and with St Quintins Ave kitchen garden becoming the first K&C garden to achieve Level 5 ( Outstanding).

The Council in partnership with the impressive Natural History Museum wildlife garden and Holland Park Ecology Centre retained the Biodiversity Award.

The theme for London in Bloom 2016 is “Clean and Green for the Queen”.



The successful “It’s Your Neighbourhood” community group winners collecting their awards