

# Community food growing during Covid - 19

12 May, 3-4.30pm

- **Welcome – Sofia Parente, Sustain/SFP**
- **Overview and Sustain’s response – Sarah Williams, Sustain (10 min)**
- **Guidelines, resources and website – Janelle Conn, Sustain (5 min)**
- **Findings of survey and Social Farms and Gardens response – Heidi Seary, Social Farms and Gardens (5 min)**
- **Q&A (5 min)**
- **How local networks have responded – Janie Bickersteth, Edible Lambeth (8 min)**
- **How local networks have responded – Pearl Costello, Food Cardiff (8 min)**
- **Q&A (5 min)**
- **How gardens have responded – Kate Sebag, Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses (5min)**
- **How gardens have responded – Carol Fenton, Glenarm Garden (5 min)**
- **How gardens have responded – Wendy Alcock, Incredible Edible Barnet (5min)**
- **Q&A (10 min)**
- **Wrap up and what next**

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the alliance for better food and farming



**Type your questions and share information  
about your response in the chat box**

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# Keeping communities growing food during Covid-19

Sarah Williams





## Why are community gardens important?

- Multiple benefits, but also build local resilience
- Community assets that will be critical post lockdown
- Can't just 'shut the gates'

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# Survey findings

- 113+ responses
- 70% continue growing food
- Adapting to Covid-19
- Volunteers and garden members
- Useful support
  - Online advice (78%)
  - Representing (51%)
  - Forums and training



# Challenges

- Uncertainty
- Perception
- Volunteers/People Power
- Materials
- Health and Safety
- Larger gardens





# Our response

- Clear message
  - Blogs
  - Steering group
- Guidelines and information
- Collaborate and represent

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# Seeds of hope

Growing food for those in need

- Food bank
- Community group
- Local network

How can we support this?

- Survey
- Support package





# Council support

Get Councils behind their gardens

- Publishing guidelines
- Making statement
- Providing resources
- Land?





## Over to you..

- Get involved in new project (survey)
- Council contacts
- Share our blogs
- Rise up group:  
[communityfoodgrowing-subscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:communityfoodgrowing-subscribe@lists.riseup.net)

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## Good to Grow and Capital Growth webpage and resources

- Guidance for community gardens during Covid-19
- Grow your own advice
- Online training
- School/at home resources for children
- Responses from other gardens to Covid-19
- Official information and guidance
- Updates including news items, blogs, webinars....
- Garden equipment and materials
  - Seeds
  - Seed saving resources
  - Compost/soil
  - Other – including, fruit trees, plant boxes, seedlings



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# Guidelines for Community Gardens

We created and adapted various online guidance for gardens and local projects to use covering -

- *Access and travel*
- *Social distancing and sanitation*

Other online guidance from

- National Allotment Society
- Social Farms and Gardens
- Landworker's Alliance

[capitalgrowth.org/coronavirus](https://capitalgrowth.org/coronavirus)

[goodtogrowuk.org/coronavirus](https://goodtogrowuk.org/coronavirus)



## Example notices for the garden – for the user

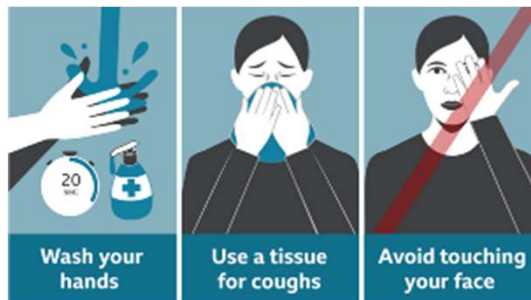
### PROSPECT WALK ALLOTMENTS AND COVID-19

**THIS SITE IS TO BE USED FOR FOOD GROWING AND EXERCISE ONLY.**

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) allows working on an allotment as a way of exercising and providing food **ONLY** if we comply with government advice:

- **KEEP AT LEAST 2 METRES BETWEEN YOU AND ANYONE ELSE.**
- **ONLY ALLOTMENT MEMBERS AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS ALLOWED ON THE PLOT.**
- **DON'T SHARE TOOLS.**
- **DON'T TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO THE SITE. WALK OR CYCLE.**
- **NO COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES or SOCIALISING.**
- **KEEP SOAP ON YOUR PLOT AND WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE DURING AND AFTER VISITING THE SITE – ESPECIALLY AFTER TOUCHING THE PADLOCK AND TAPS. DON'T WASH YOUR HANDS IN THE WATER TANKS. DRY WITH PAPER TOWEL TO REMOVE DEAD SKIN. COMPOST IT.**
- **AVOID FIRES AS THIS AFFECTS PEOPLE'S RESPIRATORY SYSTEMS.**
- **PLEASE DONATE ANY SURPLUS PLANTS OR PRODUCE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.**

For more information go to <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news/covid19-information/>



# Example notices for the garden – for the wider community

PROSPECT WALK ALLOTMENTS AND COVID-19

**THIS SITE IS TO BE USED FOR FOOD GROWING AND EXERCISE ONLY.**

Dear neighbours,

The government allows working on an allotment as a way of exercising and providing food.

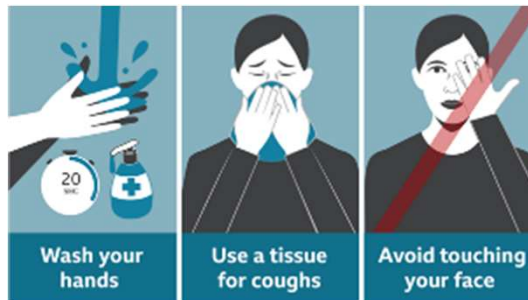
Please be assured that the safety of the gardeners and our neighbours is our priority. This is not a place for socialising so we comply with government advice to keep our distance from each other, wash our hands regularly, not share tools etc. We don't use public transport to get here and do not have any communal activities. Sometimes talking to each other is unavoidable but we always keep at least 2 metres apart.

What we do want to do, apart from keeping healthy, is provide enough food to donate to the local community so please help yourselves to anything left outside the gates. Later in the growing season we hope to have more.

We are very grateful for this space and realise that it is now and has always been a privilege which we respect. If you want to find out more about allotments and what they are doing during this crisis, go to: <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news/covid19-information/>

Keep safe.

Prospect Walk Allotment Committee





# Social Farms & Gardens Members Survey and support we offer May 2020



The survey is helping us understand how the current situation is affecting our 1600+ members, how they are responding to the crisis, and what their support needs are. It builds a picture of how the pandemic is affecting our sector nationally.



What we know so far.....



- 240 responses so far, around 60% of which are from England (including London), 17% from Scotland and the rest from NI and Wales.
- 34% of respondents were community gardens
- 13% of members say they're completely closed now, but the rest are operating in some form.
- 51% say they are facing financial issues or reduced funding as a result of the crisis
- Almost 70% of members are already working with others in their communities to help support vulnerable people or are planning on doing so.



In London members told us they are.....

- growing more easy to grow and less unusual plants
- Looking at how to run using social distancing
- Running schemes to help people grow at home
- Growing food for the community
- Calling vulnerable members
- Working with local food banks

But

- Loss of income for groups as much as £70,000
- Fast changing situation is hard to plan for and manage
- Worried about volunteer and staff mental health
- Worried about the lack of social interaction in their community
- Worried about the future for their project



Support we are offering based on these results.....

- Free member Webinars on specific subjects such as funding, strategic planning, and volunteer support
- Re-launched of our SF&G Facebook Group as a place for members and other people from the social farming and gardening sector to chat, share ideas and help and support each other.
- Newsletters to share most recent information
- Helping link with other projects to share best practice and to create partners with each other which are mutually beneficial
- Information on our website about COVID19 including where to find funding, help with insurance, #GrowingTogether Campaign, sharing what other members are doing.
- Online toolkits/resources
- Inviting members who are still active on their sites and who can do so safely to film short tours describing the sights, sounds and smells of everyday goings on for people who can't leave their homes to enjoy to share on our website.
- Working with the University of Salford and University of Kent on an in depth study of the urban farming and growing sector, its response to the Covid-19 virus



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# Cardiff Growing Together



*People and projects  
connecting to get  
growing during  
Covid-19 crisis*

**Pearl Costello**  
**Sustainable Food City Co-  
ordinator**

**Food Cardiff**

# What is Food Cardiff?

- Hub for connecting people and projects working to promote healthy, sustainable and ethical food
- Catalyst for changing the local food system in Cardiff
- Voice for wider change



# Covid-19 Food Response

- Covid-19 Food Response Task Group
  - Food Cardiff, Cardiff Council, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board Dietetics, Cardiff Foodbank, Fareshare Cymru, Cardiff Third Sector Council
- Co-ordinating action and channelling resources to those who are need
- Network of Food Response Partners



# #GoodFoodCardiff





#GoodFoodCardiff

**GROWING  
YOUR OWN  
FOOD?**

Share your discoveries using #GoodFoodCardiff

## #GoodFoodCardiff

- Shopping local?
- Trying new recipes?
- Growing your own food?
- Supporting your community?
- Reducing food waste?

Share your good food discoveries using #GoodFoodCardiff





# Edible Cardiff

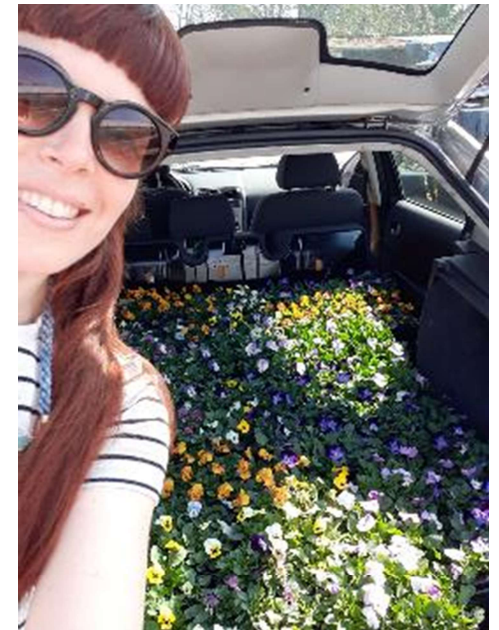
- Network to connect community growers, small scale agriculture, allotment site and more...
- Aims to increase the amount of food grown in the city and get more people involved



# Covid-19 and growing so far



- Mini seed growing kits
- Plant rescues



**Cardiff Salad Garden:** Grow and Learn at Home



**Social Farms and Gardens Cymru:** Growing



**Global Gardens:**  
Stay home, eat veg

**Green Squirrel:**  
Stay at home, Grow your own!

**Grow Cardiff: Sow Some**



# Reflections

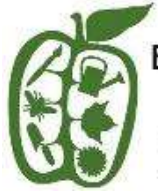
1. Use existing resources/networks and build on them
2. Connect with other projects to pool resources, avoid duplication and be part of a bigger movement
3. What should be taken forward (and how) for the long term?

**Thank you!**

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**Brockwell Park  
Community  
Greenhouses**

Registered Charity no. 1140590

## **Corona Response**

### **AIM: Keep volunteering going**

**HOW:** From Lockdown, 4 days a week, we have had max of 4 volunteers on site supervised by 1 staff/lead volunteer on site in 3 hour blocks - no lunch. Discrete distanced working, gloves, hard surfaces incl handles Dettol sprayed etc. Where 2 needed to work together, have asked couples. Operate a sign in rota. Completely different to normal drop in volunteering model. Barriers used if volunteers watering/gardening outside of our gates to maintain 2 metre distancing.

### **AIM: Keep Greenhouse plants and new stock healthy – and maintain/upgrade buildings and outdoor beds**

**HOW:** Much helped by our greenhouse automated irrigation system and leaky hoses outside in most beds. Electrification of lower greenhouse achieved by lone electrician, trench dug by volunteers.



**Brockwell Park  
Community  
Greenhouses**

Registered Charity no. 1140590

### **AIM: Keep Community in touch**

HOW: Kept our weekly email to 870+ signed up recipients going with links to films and photos of what's going on in the gardens. Linked up volunteers needing food deliveries / other help. Referred requests for help from other community organisations.

Run or Host on Zoom: weekly Gardeners Question time, Singing Group, Yoga, fortnightly Fermentation class....

### **AIM: Keep Playing and Learning**

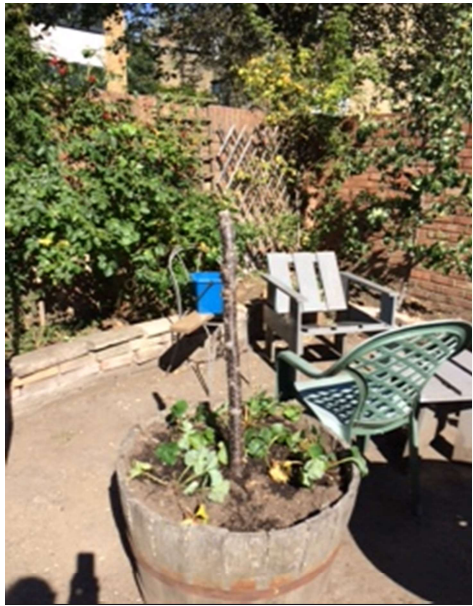
HOW: This week, 5 children from our regular SEND school are visiting for a 1.5 hour session for the first time this week since lock down. Same procedures followed as above for volunteers.

We are developing online material for nature-based play, learning, craft and story-telling for under 7s.

### **AIM: Keep Income coming in**

HOW: We have got a E shop up and running using Woocommerce so that local people have been able to buy plants and produce online, then come and pick up at pre-booked times from outside our gates at a safe distance. Have asked for voluntary £1 extra donation to go to our JustGiving campaign 'KeepBPCGRunning'





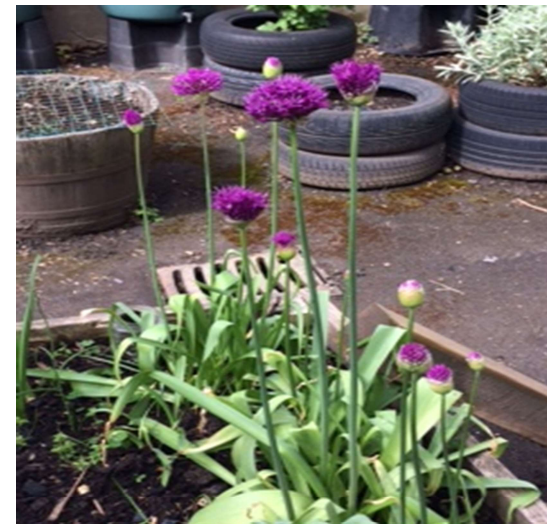
# Glenarm Garden Hackney

Member of  
The Union of Hackney Gardens  
Green Spaces Trail No 2  
Hackney Wick and Homerton





- Who and where we are
- Now/COVID 19 Lockdown
- Challenges /Opportunities
- Future
- What Next





Incredible Edible  
Barnet



Find us on  
facebook or  
[ie.barnet@  
yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ie.barnet@yahoo.co.uk)

**Type your questions and share information  
about your response in the chat box**

Stay in touch: [sarah@sustainweb.org](mailto:sarah@sustainweb.org) and [sofia@sustainweb.org](mailto:sofia@sustainweb.org)

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