

## **Growing for Health speaker/facilitator biography**

### **Rick Aron, Lincolnshire Master Gardener Co-ordinator, Garden Organic**

Rick has worked for Garden Organic since the start of the Lincolnshire Master Gardener network in 2011, and has previously been a tutor for 16-19 year old pupils expelled from schools, as well as a volunteer co-ordinator for a number of local charities. A Communication Studies degree, L3 Volunteer Management qualification, and being a geek has helped Rick maintain a strong and vibrant volunteer network across one of the largest counties in England.

### **Veronica Barry, Development Manager Health and Wellbeing, Ideal for All**

- a user led charity of disabled and disadvantaged people in Sandwell

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/growingopportunities> [www.idealforall.co.uk](http://www.idealforall.co.uk)

Veronica Barry has worked for over two decades in urban agriculture and community development, from a public health perspective. She has led on the development of the Growing Opportunities community agriculture initiative in Sandwell, taking a community asset building approach to establish innovative, award winning community gardens from derelict land. Salop Drive Market Garden- a three-acre model mixed use therapeutic market garden and local food scheme; and Malthouse Garden - a third-acre intensive therapeutic horticulture unit. The high quality, fully accessible gardens are used by over 1000 children and 1-2000 adults a year. Driven by a strategic Public Health approach, the programme has been an integral part of Sandwell's wider work to establish a more sustainable food system.

### **Tim Brogden, Policy and Knowledge Project Manager, London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC)**

Tim has 16 years' experience of working in the voluntary and community sector (VCS). He began his career in the VCS by volunteering for three different organisations, Centrepoin, Connection at St Martin's and London Friend. These three positions gave him a firm foundation for his future roles and an understanding of some of the issues faced by people in London.

His first paid role in the VCS was at Stonewall the lesbian and gay rights lobbying organisation. This role was followed by one at The Food Chain as volunteer co-ordinator. The Food Chain is an organisation providing nutrition services to people housebound with HIV and AIDS.

Tim has been at London Voluntary Service Council since 2004 and is Policy Project Manager. His role involves managing LVSC's 'London for All', London Councils' funded capacity building commission, leading on LVSC's collaboration and merger in the VCS work, leading on equalities, and managing London's Voluntary Sector Forum. Tim has recently successfully completed an MA in Human Rights from UCL.

### **Paul Courtney, Professor of Social Economy, (CCRI) Countryside and Community Research Institute**

Paul is a Social Economist and specialist in the rural economy and society. Managing a portfolio of research funded by a range of sponsors, his research uses mixed-method approaches to understand the nuances of socio-economic impact and development as they interact with people, places and policy. He is currently Project Director for a three-year evaluation of the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF), and has led a programme of action research developing impact tools for the voluntary and community sector (Lottery funded). Paul has recently completed evaluations of the Big Lottery *Local Food* Programme and Axis 1 and 3 of the Rural Development Programme for England using an

SROI approach. He holds a Chair in Social Economy at the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), University of Gloucestershire.

**Susie Crome, Public Health Locality Manager, London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

Since 2012 Susie has been working as a Public Health Locality Manager in Tower Hamlets. The role is an interesting and varied one which allows for innovation and development. It aims to support community activity in many different levels with the overall aim of improving lives and reducing health inequalities. After 10 years of working within the voluntary sector and completing a masters in Health and Society, she wanted to see what life was like on 'the other side' (that of commissioner) and applied to work within the statutory sector. Her current role bridges the gap between the two as she works very closely with community organisations for them to be able to embed public health in their work, and to also act as a voice for their concerns and take issues to the strategic agenda. She also has the opportunity to work on specific areas of interest and cross departmentally from within the council. This has led to working on projects within health and housing, food access and also around the impact of welfare reform. She has currently been working on developing an asset approach to community development in her locality to enable a more co-productive way of working. Community growing enables to encompass all of these interests and Susie is looking forward to seeing what outcomes this new pilot project of Community Gardening Co-ordinators delivers to the people of Tower Hamlets and the wider growing agenda.

**Tom Gallagher, Director, Sydenham Garden**

Tom has an agricultural background, and has been involved in community gardens and farms for the last 11 years. Prior to his agricultural studies in 2002 Tom led a local community kids club from 40 children to 3000. During his studies at Writtle College and Essex University he took part-time employment on a community farm and outdoor pursuits centre in East London and was immediately enamoured with the community farm and garden movement. Since then Tom has managed a very successful period of growth and change for another community farm and garden in East London, and founded a project starting community gardens in Malawi, southern Africa. Just over a year ago he took over the running of Sydenham Garden, a mental health charity in Lewisham and has since successfully won contracts with both the CCG and local council. Sydenham Garden grew from 25 regular clients to 105 in the 2013/14 financial year.

**Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy, City University London**

Tim Lang has been Professor of Food Policy at City University's Centre for Food Policy since 2002. He was a hill farmer in Lancashire, North of England, in the 1970s and is engaged in public and academic research and debate about food policy. He's been an advisor to many bodies, from the World Health Organisation and European Commissioner for the Environment to the Mayor of London and NGOs. He was Commissioner on the UK Government's Sustainable Development Commission (2006-11). He's co-author of *Ecological Public Health* (with G Rayner, Routledge, 2012), *Food Policy* (with D Barling & M Caraher, Oxford University Press, 2009), the *Atlas of Food* (with E Millstone, Earthscan, 2008) and *Food Wars* (with M Heasman, Earthscan, 2004).

**Dr Margi Lennartsson, Growing Health, Garden Organic**

Margi is Head of Programmes at Garden Organic working to inspire, encourage and support individuals and groups to grow organically. She is involved in a wide range of research, development and knowledge exchange projects related to organic horticulture and food production systems of different types, including fruit and vegetable production on large and small scale, domestic and community growing in urban and rural areas. Margi is project leader for Growing Health, a national project run by Garden Organic and Sustain and funded by the Tudor Trust, working explore how community food growing can be routinely used by the health and social care services as a way of promoting health and wellbeing.

**Paul Nolan, Project Director, The Mersey Forest Team**

Paul has degrees in Forestry and Forest Products Technology and has worked with The Mersey Forest Team for nearly 20 years. Prior to this he worked in commercial forest management, looking after clients for 5000ha of commercial woodland in SW Scotland as well as managing estates and commercial contracts.

The role as Mersey Forest Project Director involves managing a multidisciplinary team and the wider Forest Partnership, developing and delivering the partnership business plan and budget to achieve the 30 year Government approved Forest Plan.

A Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, steering group for the NW Forestry Framework, Chair of National Community Forest network and NW Green Infrastructure Think Tank and a member of Green Infrastructure Unit.

Chair of Sefton Coast Partnership and assisting with 2 Local Nature Partnerships. Sits on the Atlantic Gateway Sustainability and Environment Group.

**Joe Sempik, Research Fellow, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham**

Joe Sempik is a Research Fellow at the School of Sociology and Social Policy at The University of Nottingham. He was trained as pharmacologist, with a degree from the Sunderland School of Pharmacy and a PhD in physiology and pharmacology from The University of Nottingham Medical School. He worked initially for the pharmaceutical industry but left and taught sailing and navigation for many years. During this time he developed an interest in environmental issues and returned to the University of Nottingham to complete a Masters in Environmental Management. He became involved with the community garden movement and started researching therapeutic horticulture (and also 'conventional' forms of social care).

Joe's research interests lie in the field of health and wellbeing; and on the provision and use of services by children and vulnerable adults. For the past twelve years, a great part of his work has focused on the characteristics and effectiveness of nature-based approaches for health and wellbeing, in particular the use of *'Therapeutic Horticulture'* for people with mental health problems and learning difficulties. He has published many articles on the subject. Joe was chair of the working group on the health benefits of 'Green Care' as part of the European Science Foundation's COST Action 866 – *Green Care in Agriculture* (2006-2010). This was a network that brought together scientists from across Europe to exchange ideas and views on green care research and practice. He continues to maintain those international links and collaboration. He also collaborates with the UK charity *Thrive*, which supports the practice and teaching of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture.

**Dr Ulrich Schmutz, Growing Health, Garden Organic**

Ulrich is an agricultural and horticultural economist. He has worked for Garden Organic for 10 years and is also a senior research fellow at Coventry University. His research interests are agroecology and the social, economic & environmental aspects of food growing, health and wellbeing. In the last two years, Ulrich has also been involved in the Growing Health project.

**Olivier Vardakoulias, Economist, nef (New Economics Foundation)**

Olivier is a development and environmental economist focusing both on “hard” quantitative analyses as well as policy analysis – a consequence of his background in politics and political economy. His main expertise lies in the application of appraisal and evaluation methods such as social cost-benefit analysis, social return on investment and cost-effectiveness analysis to environmental and development interventions – whether at a micro level or macro scale.

Additional areas of experience and interest include: the economics of international migrations and development with particular relevance to “brain drain” and “brain circulation” economics; development and international macro-economics.

Olivier has a deep knowledge of political economy, macro-economics and international economics. He has an MSc in Ecological Economics from the University of Edinburgh and an MA in Development Economics, Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po).

Olivier has lived and worked in seven different countries and is fluent (oral and written) in Greek, French, Spanish and English.

**Sarah Williams, Project Manager, Growing Health, Sustain**

Sarah Williams is the Food Growing Programme Manager for Sustain. She joined Sustain in 2009 and is part of the Capital Growth team who successfully supported 2,012 new community food growing spaces by the end of 2012 in London. Sarah has been involved in developing and fundraising for new areas of work, including the national Big Dig programme and work on health and food growing. Previous roles have involved working with various community groups in East London as well as Strategic Manager of the Newham Food Access Partnership, where for four years she coordinated the implementation a Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan. Sarah has a Masters in Leadership for Sustainable Development. She is also a Waltham Forest resident with a passion for food.