



CLAY FARM COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP AGM 2021 Report on activities 2019-2021

At the 2019 AGM it was expected that the Steering Group, set up by the Council and Countryside with representatives from the Garden and neighbouring residents would drive forward work to complete the Garden infrastructure. However, the Steering Group did not meet every 2 months as planned after June 2019.

In 2021, although a couple of Steering Group did take place to discuss specific issues, others were cancelled at the last minute and no minutes were forthcoming for those that did take place. The Garden Group then organised Steering Group meetings with Council and Countryside on their own initiative and took minutes.

A small informal group of volunteers most involved in the Garden came together in the absence of the Steering Group, and was expanded to include local residents with an active interest in the Garden.

Members of the Garden Group continued to work with the Council Open Spaces team and persevered in holding Countryside to account to fulfil their obligations to complete the work on the Garden and associated building as promised.

The Environment Officer (Guy Belcher), and the Access officer (Mark Taylor) have given Garden Group volunteers advice for improving the Garden and have supported the Garden Group's input to Countryside on design and facilities for the Garden. Some plants for the pond were donated by Guy Belcher, others were purchased with the income from the summer garden parties.

Several items on the original plans submitted by Countryside were not possible because the restrictions imposed by the major gas pipeline that runs through the Garden had not been thoroughly explored by the developers at the design and planning stage. Notably the 4 gateways planned at the entrance from the Busway, across Hobson Avenue and into Hobson Park. The Public Arts Steering Group will make the final decision on new plans submitted by Nils Norman, the designer, for the alternative use of Public Arts funds for seating and signing in the Garden. Nils visited the garden to discuss what sort of structures would be suitable within the guidelines of his remit.

The website has been updated and improved and both social media and email messaging are used to regularly update both those already involved in the Garden and the wider Trumpington community of regular events and calls for assistance in the Garden .

COVID19 restrictions made gardening in groups impossible for many months, but when it became possible again, Covid-secure socially distanced events to prepare for the removal of the “Shed”, and to reinstate the popular summer garden parties.

A watering team was set up to keep the water butts filled and the garden hydrated during the dry weather.

Summer Garden Parties continue to bring in an invaluable income and have become a weekly event.

At the Big Dig organised by residents living close to the Garden, the previously undeveloped West side of the Garden was planted. Plants were provided by Coton Garden Centre and paid for with a generous donation from Clay Farm Food.

The popular Clay Farm Food regular food trucks in Hobson Square contributed greatly to the purchase of plants for the Garden as well as to the Trumpington Food Hub and other community initiatives. It is a great pity that this initiative, bringing in much needed income for community groups, is currently suspended due to ongoing issues with the Council and Countryside.

In July 2021 young National Citizen Service volunteers spent a day helping to maintain the Garden and learned a little about food production. Future assistance is promised by the Council Community Engagement Team who organise Community Pay-Back sessions and similar volunteer work groups.

The Big Picnic in August 2021, despite the uncertain weather, brought together both regular volunteers and new visitors to the Garden. More events of this nature are in the pipe-line. Money raised through donations for Garden produce and cakes (baked by Nonna’s Lab and local residents) generated a healthy sum, and all surplus vegetables were donated to the Trumpington Food Hub. Further contributions of vegetables grown in the Garden have been made to the Food Hub.

We are awaiting the result of two funding requests, one to buy a durable strimmer, and another to develop the area around the pond and mound.

The future licence between the Council and the Garden Group is being finalised and will come into effect once the Council becomes responsible for the Garden. This will happen when Countryside has fulfilled all its planning obligations satisfactorily. There will be a section of the licence with the Council that will apply to shared access and use of the building by the Garden Group and Hobson Park Allotments Group.