

NEW BRIGHTON COMMUNITY GARDENS

CHAIRPERSON ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015

It is a pleasure and gratitude that I can report another successful year for the NBCG.

Credit for this is mainly due to the untiring and dedicated leadership and skills of both our Gardens Manager Catherine O'Neill and Administrator Joyce Bailey. This, along with the regular input of Volunteers and Trustees.

None of this could happen without the generous, financial input from our sponsors, namely:

CCC Strengthening Communities, COGS, Canterbury Community Trust

Lotteries, Red Cross

There have been Trustee changes during the year, Rene resigned and Fay after many long years of service resigned due to ill health. We thank them both for their contribution. Two new Trustees were appointed: Linda Rose and Sue Anne Keen whom we welcome. The Trust would welcome more members.

A significant milestone this year was celebration of 10 years of the Garden's existence. This was marked by a luncheon on 9th April. It was a cold day, but a gathering of approx 50 past and present volunteers, friends and local supporters and some of our funders warmed themselves with delicious soup made from ingredients from the garden.

A monthly lunch brings volunteers, staff and trustees together all enjoying a good social time get together.

Some volunteers fly under the radar. I would just like to mention Carl and his carpentry skills – Notice Board, Signs and fixing the toilet floor very much appreciated. Denis (paid staff), our great compost maker and Hilary for the bi-monthly "Green Tips" newsletter which is a wonderful work of art itself.

The Gardens resumed their contribution to the New Brighton Christmas Parade with well decorated float on David's Morrie. It is a good way to show our 'face' to the local community.

A special highlight of this year has been the 'Propagating Young Gardeners' programme for approx 25 children from 5 local schools in the East who choose to come and learn about gardening. This started on May 22nd and ran for 10 weeks. Joyce and Catherine put a wonderful programme together which included:

Planting and making their own garden including making their own signs

Learning about all different seeds sizes and how plant them

They learnt about root crops, planting in pots and planting cuttings

The children made worm towers for their gardens, bird feeders, rain gauges

The children participated in cooking from the garden which included:

Making Kale chips

Tomato soup and pumpkin and spinach penne

We are grateful to the Red Cross for sponsoring this exciting programme. It has much potential and local schools and pupils are enthusiastic.

Our pavilion has been used by the Greens, Widow and Widowers, Patchwork and Craft groups this year.

Our visitors numbers continue to increase, we have many and varied groups through the gates including: Gardening groups, Other Community Gardens , Walking groups, Pre-schools and kindies etc. Individuals continue to call in and are always amazed at what they see.

We have had clients from Corrections, CCS, Ferndale though out the year.

Open Day held annually in November has gone from strength to strength and is a good earner (last year the most successful to date). It takes considerable planning and works to have abundant seedlings ready for sale, and getting the gardens up to scratch fro Open Day. Whilst weather dependent, it draws the community in and is great for PR for the Gardens. Thanks to all who pitch in and help.

In conclusion, thanks again to our special workers and volunteers. The New Brighton Community Gardens are really about people, with the gardens as a great non threatening medium to get people working together for a common good. The combining of skills, ideas, enthusiasm and a noticeable absence of ego all combine to make the gardens the peaceful and happy place that it is known to be.

David Pierce

Chairperson