



Common Growth community food growing project – Update April 2011

Thank you for registering an interest in the Common Growth community food growing project on Sandbourne Road. Here's an update of where we've got to so far.

Highlights

- *We've got positive and valuable feedback from a consultation with local residents.*
- *Through local charity Bold Vision we've signed a lease on the site with the council.*
- *We secured funding from Transition New Cross to improve the fencing around the site.*
- *We've completed the other necessary paperwork like getting public liability insurance and carrying out a soil contamination test.*
- *We've held our first open day, at the Telegraph Hill Festival, which was a great success!*

What's next?

- *Lots more 'work days', the first of which will be on Saturday 7 May to build raised beds.*
- *Growing lots of tasty fresh veg!*

Here's a bit more detail on what's going on and what's to come.

Telegraph Hill Festival open day

The site was properly open for the first time on 3rd April when we held an open day as part of the Telegraph Hill Festival. We were overwhelmed by the number of people who came down to have a look and offered to help out. The day was an opportunity for us to share our plans with local residents as well as start work on getting the site up and running as a productive growing space!

There's an excellent video of the day on the Telegraph Hill festival site -

<http://www.telegraphhillfestival.org.uk/videos.htm> (scroll down towards the bottom of the page).

Thanks very much to Stephen Carrick-Davies of Bold Vision for putting this together for us.

Some of the things we achieved during the day were:

Running seed sowing workshops, with some being taken to grow at home and others to grow on site



Producing some lovely potato print paintings



Clearing weeds and rubble

Check out our wiki at

<http://commongrowth.intodit.com>

Common Growth is part of the charity Bold Vision



With funding from Capital Growth and [Transition New Cross](#)



Putting up a fence around part of the site



Planting a row of blackberry plants (sounds much nicer than brambles!)

Sowing wild flowers to encourage beneficial insects



Rescuing some wood from local skips to make raised beds



Meeting lots of great people, making new contacts, sharing our vision and enlisting volunteers!

Planting out donated seedlings, including broad beans, tomatoes, pumpkins

What else has happened?

Residents' consultation – We had a fantastic response to our consultation of local residents. Almost everyone was in favour of using the site to grow food. Residents were also keen for there to be activities for the local children, and as well as growing food, to grow some flowers to make the area look nice and encourage insects and wildlife. We have also responded to residents' concerns about security and fly-tipping by extending the fence around the site.

Gaining funding – We secured funding of £700 from Capital Growth – a partnership organisation supporting community food growing projects in London. This funding has largely been spent on soil contamination testing and obtaining public liability insurance (both of which were conditions of the lease). We also got £150 of funding from Transition New Cross to build a fence around part of the site.

Signing the lease – A two-year lease for the land has been signed with Lewisham Council. Thanks very much to Bold Vision for all their help in getting this set up. The lease is signed in their name as we needed a registered charity or other organisation to do this. We (Common Growth) form a part of Bold Vision.

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Soil contamination test – Unfortunately the soil contamination test has uncovered levels of lead in the soil which are above the legal limits. The risk to health is minimal (you would need to be eating nothing but vegetables from the site for several months to be at any risk) but to be absolutely sure we will only be growing vegetables in raised beds filled with uncontaminated soil.

Public liability insurance – We have purchased public liability insurance for the site.

What's coming next?

Work days – We intend to set up a series of work days over the coming months. Each day would have a specific aim – for example the first one we plan to hold would be for building raised beds. These will be a great opportunity for people to help out, meet their neighbours and maybe learn new skills. The first work day will be on Saturday 7 May from 11.00am to 5.00pm.

Volunteer sessions – We hope to set out regular times when people could pop down to the site to maybe spend an hour or so helping out with whatever needs doing. These sessions would be less structured than the work days – the aim would be to create times when people know that the site will be open and they could wander down if they wanted to.

Activities and events – A strong theme from the consultation was having events something that children could get involved in. We are keen to offer this, and other activities. But it may be later in the year before such activities and events can be held, as we will first be concentrating on getting the site up and running.

What can you do?

Firstly, watch this space to find out more details about the work days and activities talked about above.

We're also keen to hear your ideas for the space, and want to develop a network of contacts so we can share knowledge and experience.

We're on the look-out for materials and tools to help with the project. If you have any pre-loved items looking for a new home we'll gratefully accept:

- Wood to make raised beds
- Water butts/downpipes
- Tools (including some suitable for kids)
- A shed
- Plant pots
- Seeds and seedlings
- Compost/manure
- A greenhouse/polytunnel

We'd love to hear from you. We can be contacted by emailing: commongrowthuk@gmail.com.

Or of course you might see one of us down at the site. We hope to see you soon!

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