



Triangle Community Garden

created and cultivated by people of all ages and abilities at Ransom's Recreation Ground, Hitchin

Annual Review 2013-14

More inside

- ✦ Growing Ability
- ✦ Growing Gang
- ✦ Growing Health
- ✦ Growing Health profile
- ✦ Priorities and Progress
- ✦ The Garden
- ✦ Workshops and Events
- ✦ Who's who
- ✦ Treasurer's report
- ✦ Accounts



Please join us for our

AGM

Weds 26 November
Ransom's Pavilion,
SG5 1RB, 7.30– 9.30pm

Light refreshments

All welcome!

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2013-14

It has been another busy and positive year for the Triangle Garden and all its projects. With Liz McElroy our Project Manager in her second year at the helm, and a committed band of staff and volunteers, we have made some great strides forward in all our activities.

We're delighted with the continued progress of our projects for learning disabled adults. Last November we successfully achieved accredited status from Herts County Council as a provider of learning disability social care. **Growing Ability**, our social therapeutic horticulture project, is thriving with numbers growing at a steady pace over the last year, and more physical activity built into many of the sessions to help with health and fitness. **Growing Health**, our healthy living project, has been making a big difference to the lives of its participants, benefiting from better fitness, positive weight management, and sharing practical ways of eating healthily on a budget. Read more about these projects, and our gardening work experience project, Growing Gang, inside.

This year the Triangle Garden underwent a transformation with the start of our new **Gardening Club**. The Garden has never looked so well-maintained thanks to the loving care of our Friday morning volunteers led by gardening expert Steve Granger. We've still been holding our monthly activity Sundays as usual, using the winter sessions to plant Phase 2 of our Forest Garden trees and shrubs.

More transformation is hopefully in the pipeline for the Garden through our **Treasured Spaces** project, facilitated by Groundwork Hertfordshire. We have bid for £15,000 to re-surface our central meeting space and rebuild the low walls around the sensory garden, which will become a pollinators' garden around an outdoor classroom. To do this we had to raise £5,000 between May and September 2014, which was matched and doubled by Groundwork from their landfill tax pot. Find out how we got on inside...

As always with community organisations, so much work goes on behind the scenes to make things happen, much of it unpaid. The Triangle Garden has a **great bunch of people** working away to achieve our aims and they deserve huge thanks and admiration – we couldn't function without them. Last year we were sorry to lose Mel and Dom Coath as trustees, but delighted that they are still active on the Garden committee. We were sad also to lose Kadine James as a trustee, but glad to welcome keen gardener Gareth Hills onto the board and the garden committee. We also welcome new trustee Sarah Rhodes who will advise on HR matters, and new events committee member Brigid Bassindale who is bringing her expertise in running children's activities into the mix. We are very lucky to have such a great team!

Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens is a charity No 1145243, company limited by guarantee No 07676360.

For more information please contact Liz McElroy on 07887 725962, email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Liz McElroy, Triangle Garden Project Manager, c/o Htci, 27 Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HP.



Growing Ability

Growing Ability, Growing Gang and Growing Health are our three projects for adults with learning disabilities. **Growing Ability** is a social and therapeutic horticulture project based at our allotment and the Triangle Community Garden.

Growing Gang is our work experience community-based gardening scheme which currently tends two allotments at Ransom's Rec as well as helping with the maintenance of the Triangle Garden. The gardeners also maintain the small garden outside the Church House St Mary's in Hitchin.



Growing Health is our newest project which aims to promote active, healthy living. Sessions include advice on healthy eating and weight management, physical activities such as walking and gardening, with all the associated benefits of closer contact with the natural world, plus the friendship and support of being part of a social group; leading to improved health, self-confidence and social interaction.

Since November 2013 we have had 5 new gardeners (service users) join the Ability groups; there are currently **23 gardeners**, one of whom attends three sessions a week. In September 2014 we expanded to five weekly sessions, which include Growing Health, Growing Gang and three Growing Ability groups. Each session is led by two members of staff: a support worker and a qualified horticultural therapist in the lead role. Other support workers attend to help gardeners with particular support needs, and if we are lucky we will also have help from a volunteer at each session..



Volunteers at our Ability projects are an invaluable source of support. Their commitment and enthusiasm has enabled our gardeners to do so much more. Volunteering offers the opportunity to make a real difference, to develop new skills, build on existing experience and knowledge, and to reap the social benefits of meeting new people, making friends and getting to involved in the local community. In May, Rachel Cottey, who has been a volunteer with Growing Gang and the Triangle Garden for many years, successfully applied for a paid position supporting one of our gardeners. She is also now the paid support worker at our new Wednesday sessions. In June, a new volunteer, Yolanda, joined the Thursday afternoon Growing Ability group and has been a vital support. She has particularly made a difference in supporting two of our gardeners with their vegetable and flower growing.



This October Jenni, a volunteer with us for the last year, left for a 3 month intern placement at a permaculture farm in Lincolnshire. Jenni attended 4 sessions each week for a year, bringing with her enthusiasm, support and loads of fun. Everybody was sad to see her leave although we wish her well in her future exploits.

In September **Growing Health** celebrated its first very successful year. There are now 9 members who attend each week. There has been a total weight loss of 3st12lbs with one member losing 2st 6lbs (see Claire's profile below). Members say that they have enjoyed walking and are now able to walk further and faster; playing basketball but a firm favourite has been cricket. Growing Health has been fortunate to have Andy Catherell from the Hertfordshire Disabled Cricket Association to coach the group. Members have asked to play cricket on a regular basis next year.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens is a charity No 1145243, company limited by guarantee No 07676360.

For more information please contact Liz McElroy on 07887 725962, email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Liz McElroy, Triangle Garden Project Manager, c/o Htci, 27 Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HP.

Growing Ability continued

Growing Health members were honoured at this year's Open Day by Hitchin Hackspace who created a pedal-powered smoothie maker, commissioned to promote fitness and nutrition.

This year Sean and Jeremy completed another successful year of paid employment cleaning the Pavilion. Lettings of the Pavilion have increased and they have both continued to keep the Pavilion looking clean and tidy.

Katherine one of our members from Growing Ability was involved with helping to create one of our new **mosaic** panels with Jane Visick, a local mosaic artist. Jane has offered her talent and time to the Triangle Community Garden in the remaking of the existing mosaic. Eight new panels have been designed by local groups including the 17th Cub Scouts and Hitchin Boys School. During the summer holiday and October half term, individuals were invited to create the mosaics under Jane's guidance and expertise. There is much excitement for the new mosaic which will be laid early next year.

The end of a successful growing season was celebrated by our annual Harvest BBQ in September where all the groups came together and enjoyed BBQ cooked by Andrew's dad, Roger. The day ended with everyone playing cricket. Our final celebration involved Holly's 25lb pumpkin which she grew from seed. Pumpkin soup was served to celebrate Holly's birthday on Hallowe'en.

Thank you to the wonderful team we have; Avril, Charlotte, Rachel, Jenni, Yolanda and Gardeners' support workers. Finally to Vicky, Margaret and the Trustees, committee members and volunteers for their commitment and dedication to the Triangle Community Garden.

Liz McElroy, Project Manager



Top: Katherine working on the 'Nightlife' panel of the Triangle Garden mosaic, Above: Claire receiving her Growing Health Certificate of Achievement from Chair of Trustees Vicky Wyer

Growing Health profile: Claire

Claire has been coming to Growing Health since September 2013, when the project started. Over that time Claire has had great success with weight management, and is aware of her own increased stamina and fitness thanks to regular walking at the project. She says she now feels much better about herself.

What do you like about Growing Health, Claire?

'It's quite interesting. It tells me about healthy food. I like to talk about what people like doing [such as] exercise, what we like eating and healthy snacks. I like going for a walk, I can now walk over a mile every week. I've enjoyed trying different foods such as scramble eggs on muffins for my breakfast. I've lost lots of weight.'

What don't you like about Growing Health?

'I don't like too much noise. When we started at Growing Health, Liz used to stand in front and talk to us, we just listened; I found that quite boring, We did tell someone and now we sit around in a circle with no table, and we all talk together about what we have been doing, what healthy and not-so-healthy things we do. I much prefer that. We also discuss the things we do and don't like at Growing Health so we are all involved.'

What keeps you coming to Growing Health sessions?

'I really enjoy it, I like meeting new people and I'm losing weight.'

Do you think the sessions have helped you in your life and if so how?

'I now have more confidence. I can walk faster and further and I really enjoy it (the walking). I'm very proud of myself and I would like to celebrate my achievements. My boyfriend has helped me out and he is very proud, so is my mum.'

Thank you, Claire, for telling us a bit about yourself and what you do with Growing Health.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens is a charity No 1145243, company limited by guarantee No 07676360.

For more information please contact Liz McElroy on 07887 725962, email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Liz McElroy, Triangle Garden Project Manager, c/o Htci, 27 Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HP.

Priorities and Progress:

At our 2013 AGM we reviewed, revised and prioritised the three year objectives we set the previous year, and came up with the following:

- increase the **use of Ransom's Pavilion** by individuals and community groups, seeking to generate surplus income to invest in our work (high priority)
- **extend the benefits of Growing Ability** to more people by increasing the number of sessions by one a year to 2017 (high priority)
- **extend our volunteering opportunities** to enable more people to work on the Garden (high priority)
- encourage greater use of the Garden by **children** through collaboration with community organisations and local schools (high priority)
- continue to develop our **forest garden** along the River Hiz (medium priority)
- **revitalise** and redevelop neglected and less successful areas of the Garden eg grow more pollinator friendly plants and culinary herbs (medium priority)

The following initiatives were put on hold temporarily:

- develop Ransom's Rec as a **wild food resource**
- set up a volunteer-run **café/kiosk** in the Pavilion to serve park users on afternoons and weekends.

Since then we have been working hard to make these objectives happen and these are the results:

- **Use of Ransom's Pavilion:** Pavilion lets have been fairly steady with regular hirers Hackspace and our Growing projects contributing the lion's share of our income. Children's parties have been up slightly this year and for the first time the Pavilion was host to a Summer Studio, a week of art and nature for kids, run by Letchworth-based community arts organisation Rhapsode.
- **Increase Growing Ability sessions:** numbers increased steadily over the year and a new session was started in October 2014
- **Extend volunteering opportunities at the Garden:** taking on Steve and starting the Gardening Club has hugely increased the volunteering potential at the Garden and we hope more people will join over time. There are several places still available at the time of writing
- **More children using the Garden:** this summer we had Hitchin Fun Club return to the Garden for their fourth annual day visit and we also hosted Rhapsode's Summer Studio as mentioned above. We agreed to offer the Garden as a resource to the National Citizen Service for three week-long sessions last year but unfortunately due to personnel changes at NCS, the initiative did not come to fruition. We enabled the Beaver Scouts to hold a session at the Pavilion, using the community garden and Rec for a treasure hunt. We also collaborated on the new mosaic with schools and scouting groups, facilitated by local mosaic artist Jane Visick: Cubs from the 17th Hitchin designed the 'Nightlife' mosaic panel on nocturnal wildlife, and year 9 art students from Hitchin Boys School designed the 'Pollinators' panel.
- **Forest Garden progress:** see under 'The Garden'
- **Revitalise neglected areas of the Garden:** our Gardening Club has been doing great work to weed and replant overgrown areas, and further work will be enabled in this respect if our Treasured Spaces bid is successful.

Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees



From the top: the Pavilion through the willow arch, ducks crossing the overgrown central meeting space, spring planting session under the limes.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens is a charity No 1145243, company limited by guarantee No 07676360.

For more information please contact Liz McElroy on 07887 725962, email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Liz McElroy, Triangle Garden Project Manager, c/o Htci, 27 Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HP.

The Garden:

The Garden Committee's aim is to develop, enhance and maintain the Triangle Garden as an environmental and educational resource for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

Over the past year, the garden has undergone a bit of a **transformation**. After a mild autumn, the wet warm spring brought growth so fast we could barely keep up with it. This was great news for the second phase of forest garden trees and shrubs that we planted over the winter, which included such oddities as an edible hawthorn, Goji berries, edible Fuschias, an American Elder that flowers all summer and a Strawberry tree. Also good news for the Garden, where we planted more unusual edibles including Rosa rugosa along the riverbank (for the hips), Day Lilies (which have edible flowers) and some creeping raspberries, *Rubus Nepalensis* under the limes. However the spring weather also created perfect conditions for weed proliferation throughout the garden! With a drop in volunteer numbers (as the Hub Church group went off to follow new interests), we struggled to keep the weeds under control. Even regular visits from the Growing Gang were not enough to keep nature from swamping our sensitive interventions!

However, one of our key objectives last year was to enable **more people to volunteer** at the Garden allowing it to fulfil more of its potential as a community resource. So we were already planning to set up a weekly gardening club, with the purpose of enabling people to reap the benefits of gardening together, and to keep the Garden looking good and growing well for people to enjoy. With funds we had accrued through hiring out the Pavilion, we could finally afford pay someone to lead this Club rather than relying on a rota of volunteer leaders, and in June 2014 we appointed Steve Granger, a qualified horticulturist, working gardener and experienced garden designer. The **Garden Club** has gradually expanded to 5 members (not including Liz McElroy and Vicky Wyer who attend when they can) and has made a massive difference to the Garden over the last few months. Big thanks to Steve and Garden Club members for their dedicated nurturing care.

Another big transformation is yet to come, if we're successful with the last stage of our **Treasured Spaces** bid. Treasured Spaces is a fund run by Groundwork UK to help improve much-loved green spaces, by doubling money raised by the local community. Our bid was for £15,000 to revitalise the centre of the Triangle Garden and create an outdoor classroom. Through this bid we propose to resurface the central meeting space, rebuild the walls of the sensory garden to create seating around the central area, redesign and rebuild our central mosaic with help from the local community, incorporate more pollinator-friendly planting into the central area and install a demountable shower-proof shade sail for outdoor learning sessions. There may even be enough money to install a pergola that can double up as interpretation structure for information on the garden... watch this space!

The Garden Committee



Top: a Growing Ability gardener watering the forest garden in the summer

Above: planting bulbs under the lime trees

For hire

Affordable community space, for workshops, craft activities, meetings or children's parties.

- from £15 per slot: morning, afternoon or evening (£30 for private hire eg parties)
- fully wheelchair accessible,
- main room 8 x 8m (26' square)
- kitchen 10 x 6m with electric urn,
- toilets, incl baby changing,
- free carpark nearby, off Nightingale Road

Ransom's Pavilion

overlooking Ransom's Recreation Ground, Alexandra Rd, Hitchin SG5 1RB
5 mins from the station - for more info please follow the links on the homepage of our website:

www.trianglegarden.org

call Margaret on 01462 459144 or email margaret.trianglegarden@gmail.com

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens is a charity No 1145243, company limited by guarantee No 07676360.

For more information please contact Liz McElroy on 07887 725962, email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Liz McElroy, Triangle Garden Project Manager, c/o Htci, 27 Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HP.



Top: setting up our stalls at Hitchin Apple Day 2013, Left: a maker from Hitchin Hackspace demonstrating the pedal-powered smoothie maker they made for our Growing Health stall at the Triangle Garden Open Day and Fun Dog Show 2014.

Events and Workshops:

This year has been an incredibly busy and successful year for our community events. Big thanks go to all involved!

Our Apple Day and Halloween festivities last October (2013) went well, as did our pond dipping and bat walk, although not many bats showed up that year! And Bob Flowerdew returned in July to give an excellent Triangle Garden Talk on what a lot of nonsense experts spout!

Our annual **Open Day** took on a distinctly canine flavour, as we joined forces with Berry House Vets and GRWE Greyhound Rescue to add a fun dog show to the programme. What an inspired collaboration! Everyone benefited as crowds of happy dog owners mingled with Triangle Garden supporters, Growing Ability gardeners, local stallholders, Samba percussionists and young cyclists, fresh from the CTC-led family cycle ride that started off the day's activities. All in all, the event raised over £850: more than double our usual open day takings!

Another local event to benefit us, was Benslow Open Gardens, organised by Benslow residents and held for the first time this May. We were able to put all funds raised between May and Sept 2014 into our Treasured Spaces fund, to be matched and doubled by Groundwork UK!

The Events Committee

Who's Who 2013-14: Triangle Garden Trustees

Vicky Wyer	Chair of trustees, publicity coordinator, Community Projects committee chair
Margaret Byrne	Treasurer and bookings clerk, F&G and Pavilion Committee member
John Wyer	Trustee, Finance & Governance (F&G) committee member
Frances Bogie	Trustee, F&G committee member, Child Protection Officer
Natalie Sutterby	Trustee, Community Projects committee member
Louise Wills	Trustee, Events committee member
Gareth Hills	Trustee, Garden committee member (joined November 2013)
Sarah Rhodes	Trustee, HR advisor (joined July 2014)

Non-trustee Management Volunteers

Melanie Coath	Garden committee chair
Rachel Cottey	Events and garden committee member
Kate Hendry	Events committee member
Emma Reynolds	Garden committee member
Dominic Coath	Garden committee member
Brigid Bassindale	Events committee member (joined June 2014)

Triangle Garden and Growing Ability Staff

Liz McElroy	Project Manager and session leader for GA, GG and GH, Safeguarding Officer
Avril Frost	Support worker Growing Ability and Growing Gang
Charlotte Price	Support worker Growing Health
Rachel Cottey	Support Worker Growing Ability (joined June 2014)
Steve Granger	Garden Club session leader (joined June 2014)
Sean and Jeremy	Pavilion cleaners (Sean and Jeremy are also members of Growing Gang)

We welcome new trustees and committee members – if you're interested in joining please contact us. We're particularly looking for a new **Treasurer, Events coordinator** and **Publicity Coordinator**.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens is a charity No 1145243, company limited by guarantee No 07676360.

For more information please contact Liz McElroy on 07887 725962, email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Liz McElroy, Triangle Garden Project Manager, c/o Htci, 27 Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HP.

Treasurer's Report:

Triangle Community Garden

Apple Day and the Open Day were very successful this year – as was the talk given by Bob Flowerdew which was well attended.

This year we raised over £100 from sales of our **apple juice** made from apples from the Triangle Garden orchard and donations of people's surplus apples.

Particular thanks are due to Tish Cook and the people of Benslow who donated the proceeds of their **Open Gardens Day** to the Triangle Garden - £1,230. This has been put towards our Treasured Spaces appeal which ran from May to September. If our bid is successful Groundwork will put £2 for every £1 we raised into the fund enabling us to carry out much needed improvements to the central area of the Garden, including a new mosaic.

The final total raised for **Treasured Spaces** was £4,926 – very close to our target of £5,000. Some of this was raised in September (in the next financial year) – so more of this in next year's report!

I would also like to thank those organisations and people who have supported us through donations, sponsorship and raffle prizes:

Bowles & Wyrer Town Garden Mrs Betty Goble

Waitrose Hitchin Hitchin Round Table

All those who donated their surplus apples.

Planting has continued this year on the **Forest Garden** funded by last year's donation from Waitrose Hitchin.

We would like more people to join our **Friends scheme** which we set up last year - details are on our website. Regular contributions provided by this scheme will help us plan the finances for the upkeep of the Triangle Garden and the development of the Forest Garden. We are using some of our funds to pay our new gardening club session leader. The garden club has been a great benefit to the Garden and we need to ensure that we raise sufficient funds for this to continue.

The Pavilion is proving popular for children's parties and as a meeting space for community groups and raises valuable funds to help fund Liz's community project management time.

Growing Ability – the number of gardeners has increased and another group is starting in October. The project as a whole is now on a much better financial footing, thanks to Liz and her hard work.

The Growing Gang have worked hard and have sold some of the produce from their allotment to help raise some funds towards the running of the group.

Abbreviated accounts are included with this report. The full accounts in the format required by the Charities Commission are available on our website.

Margaret Byrne, Treasurer

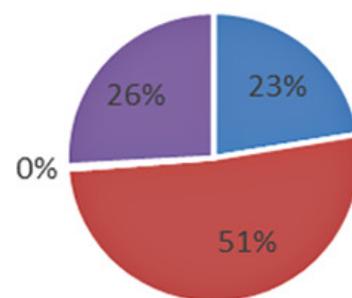
Seeking a new Treasurer!

Margaret is stepping down next year as Treasurer, after long, cheerful and unstinting service. Luckily for us she has offered to continue to do our bookkeeping. If you would like to take on the role of Treasurer or know someone who might be interested please let us know. Financial aptitude and experience are key qualities.

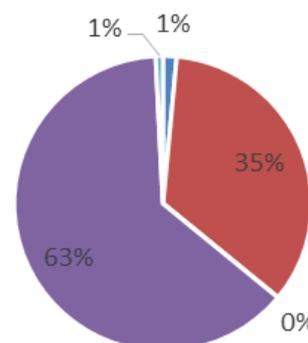


Above: members of Growing Health enjoying healthy snacks at the Pavilion after a game of cricket on Ransom's Rec

Incoming resources



Resources expended



Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens is a charity No 1145243, company limited by guarantee No 07676360.

For more information please contact Liz McElroy on 07887 725962, email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Liz McElroy, Triangle Garden Project Manager, c/o Htci, 27 Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HP.

Hitchin Community Gardens: Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August 2014

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Incoming Resources					
Voluntary Income	2452	20	0	2472	1019
Activities for Generating funds	5626	151	0	5777	5251
Investment Income	41	0	0	41	35
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities	2835	23191	0	26026	16214
Other Incoming Resources	0	0	0	0	0
Total Incoming Resources	10954	23362	0	34316	22519
Resources Expended					
Costs of Generating Voluntary Income	119	100	0	219	66
Fundraising Trading Costs	2786	629	0	3415	2585
Investment Management costs	0	0	0	0	0
Charitable Expenditure	5106	26959	0	32065	17261
Governance Costs	64	82	0	146	247
Other Resources Expended	0	0	0	0	0
Total Resources Expended	8075	27770	0	35845	20159
Net Incoming Resources before Other Recognised Gains and Losses	2879	-4408	0	-1529	2360
Other Recognised Gains and Losses	0	0	0	0	0
Net Movement in Funds	2879	-4408	0	-1529	2360
Total funds Brought Forward	9690	15375	0	25065	25065
Total Funds Carried Forward	12569	10967	0	23536	27425

Hitchin Community Gardens: Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2014

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	271	0	0	271	855
Total Fixed Assets	271	0	0	271	855
Current Assets					
Stock	0	0	0	0	0
Debtors and Prepayments	975	311	0	1306	924
Groundworks Fund	1548	0	0	1548	0
Cash at Bank and in Hand	10488	11141	0	21629	24825
Total Current Assets	13011	11472	0	24483	25749
Current Liabilities					
Creditors and Accruals	537	505	0	1042	733
Deferred Income	175	0	0	175	542
Total Current Liabilities	712	505	0	1217	1275
Net Current Assets	12299	10967	0	23266	24474
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	12570	10967	0	23537	25329
Amounts falling due after more than 1 Year					
Deferred Income	0		0	0	264
Net Assets	12570	10967	0	23537	25065
Funds of the Charity					
Triangle Community Garden Fund	9388	0		9388	6514
Pavilion Fund	3182	0		3182	3176
Growing Ability Funds		10967		10967	15375
Total Funds	12570	10967		23537	25065