

Northallerton Secret Garden

Summer 2017

Well it's been a very exciting few months since the last newsletter. All the things we were working on then have come to fruition with a poly tunnel now full of tomato, cucumber and other tender vegetables and a brand new (and much safer) entrance to the garden. Most exciting of all, we now have a lease on the next door plot (the garden behind Costa Coffee). We've already made a lot of progress on this. The Probation Service Community Payback team did a fantastic job of clearing a lot of the brambles, nettles and small trees from the site. We are also very fortunate to have some apprentices from Babcock International working with us as part of the community service aspect of their apprenticeship. They have done a huge amount of digging to make the area suitable for planting and will be helping with construction of arches and fences throughout the garden. Although we are still working on detailed plans we have planted some "overflow" vegetables and started some permanent planting of shrubs. We have also applied for and received a very generous National Garden Scheme Elspeth Thompson bursary for the development of this plot.



Another highlight is that we were open for the Northallerton Home Grown Food Festival on 25th June. A couple of hundred people visited the garden, relaxing with tea and cake on the patio, buying plants and generally being amazed by the tranquil oasis in the center of Northallerton. We shared a stall with Northdale in the main area, and Mental Health Support joined us in the garden during the day.

The garden is looking amazingly mature in only its second season. The permanent planting, much of which only went in last autumn, is looking remarkably established. We have had a bumper crop

of strawberries and the remainder of the soft fruit should be cropping really well by next year. We continue to share the produce with Hambleton Food share and with volunteers and we are exploring other potential recipients too.

We've had a number of new regular volunteers, including somebody doing their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh volunteering section with us (and making summer fruits jam to sell at the food Festival!)



It's unusual now to not have somebody visit us when we are open. People have also contributed in lots of different ways – giving plants, seeds, stones, baking, tools, tables and chairs, art work, bench, photographic and IT skills and helping with the watering. We always appreciate their advice and enthusiasm. Lots of groups have also contributed including the guides (to make scarecrows, bug hotels, help with planting and helping with plant sales for the food festival) and the local WEA Gardening for Pleasure course. The garden has also been used for a mosaic making course and other outdoor arts activities.

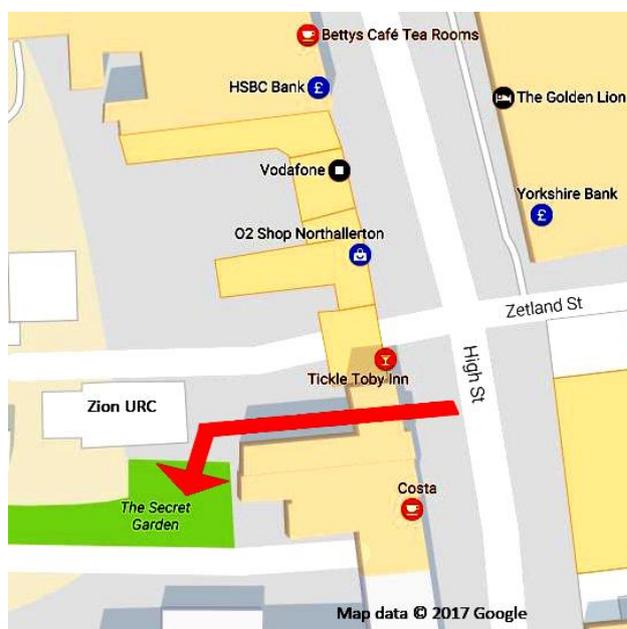
We now have a Facebook page (see details below) so please do like us and keep up to date with what is going on. If you would like to get involved or know of an individual or organisation who might like to work with us, we would be delighted to hear from you. The garden is open from 2pm on Monday and Thursday afternoons. You can either drop by or contact us using the details below. Even if you aren't able to work with us we would be delighted to see you and show you around, so please do just drop in.

Our aims

- To provide a therapeutic space for individuals or groups from our community who may find the garden a helpful place to be
- To increase wildlife and biodiversity within the heart of the town
- To provide sustainably grown fresh fruit and vegetables for any of the Volunteers, their families or users of the Food Bank.

Contacts

Please contact Liz Styan on
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The garden is accessed via the archway between the Jewellers and Kitsons Butchers.



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