

Northallerton Secret Garden

Autumn 2018

Welcome to another of our regular, if somewhat infrequent, newsletters. I would encourage you to “like” our page on Facebook (details at the bottom of the page) as this gets updated two or three times a week. When I looked back over all the Facebook posts since the last newsletter in May I was amazed by all the things we have achieved. I can’t possibly include all of them here but I hope I can give a flavour of some of the things that have been going on.



Plot 2 has seen the most change this year. It was planted up in the early summer and has been growing well despite the drought conditions. The annuals, mainly sunflowers and cosmos, which we planted in the gaps, have provided a fantastic show. We’ve also been working on the wildlife area planting lots of insect friendly shrubs and wild plants. There have been structural changes too with the addition of benches, arbours and arches.

We once more opened the garden for the home grown food festival in June. The theme this year was “Healthy body, happy mind” so the Secret garden helped provide a quiet, reflective space to retreat from the hubbub, a “mindfulness trail” and offered two guided relaxation sessions. Don’t forget that the garden is open on Wednesday and Saturday mornings if you would like to enjoy the tranquillity and beauty of the garden without the frenetic activity of Monday and Thursday afternoons. In this vein we also had a Quiet Gardens Trust quiet retreat day which helped people take some time out to “notice” and “be” rather than always “doing”.



In July we won a “Community Project Award” from the United Reformed Church and Congregational Insurance. This also resulted in us being featured on the front page of the Darlington and Stockton times and led to many people visiting to find out what we are doing.



<https://www.facebook.com/ntonsecretgarden/>

The garden continues to be used by a number of different organisations including cubs, guides, Nature and Nurture Forest School and NYCC's Adult Learning and Skills Service introduction to gardening course. There have also been some one-off events like a Help for Heroes pot making day and a Mosaic Making event.



For the first time this year we've had two off site events. The first was a visit to Ripon Walled Garden to find out about the work of this inspirational venture. Secondly a small team of us went to Northallerton School and Sixth Form College to help them clear their allotment. We're hoping to work with them, both at the School and in the Secret Garden, more in the future.

Plans for the winter

Over the winter we will continue to work in the garden from 2pm on Monday and Thursday afternoons. We have various structural projects in our sights including the creation of a small wildlife pond and laying paving to the corner arbour. This year we will also have wet weather activities available. On a Monday this will be a garden related craft activity and on a Thursday the opportunity to learn more about some aspect of gardening.

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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