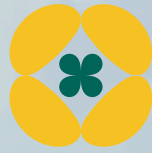




STREAM
WALK
COMMUNITY
GARDEN



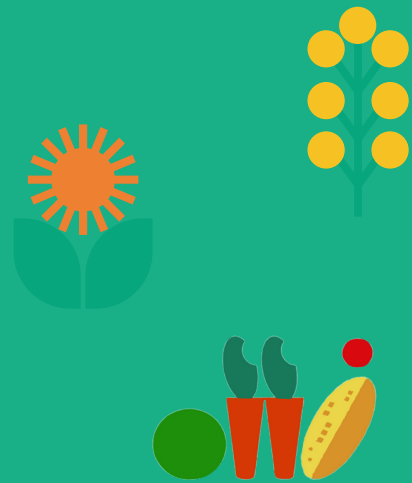
ANNUAL REPORT



2023

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2023 CHAIR'S SUMMARY

This year we were able to build upon the experienced gained in 2022 to offer a greater span of community activities with high impact outcomes.

Through the lively and engaged management team, we set ourselves ambitious improvement goals to the garden space itself, which in turn supported the level of activities we undertook. We welcomed many new faces to Stream Walk, especially at the younger end of the community, and the engagement with them was particularly heartwarming.

We significantly increased the number of volunteers throughout the year, this seems to have been achieved predominantly via word of mouth. Their energy and commitment have meant that we were confident in being able to deliver against the requirements of our funding bids. The community garden is known as a place where allcomers are welcome, no matter what their level of horticultural and garden knowledge. The culture has been described by volunteers and visitors alike as warm, welcoming and friendly and this is testament to the learning culture fostered by our Garden Lead, Jules Ellis. Along with the support and encouragement from local organisations and funders we have the opportunity to continue to grow further and reach into those areas of the community who would benefit from what we offer.

Vee Wheatley, Chair, Stream Walk Trust



WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Stream Walk Community Garden is a thriving gardening project in the heart of Whitstable offering a safe, urban oasis for the whole community. When you visit you'll find a mosaic of organic growing beds and wildlife habitats; we have a plant nursery, a polytunnel for year-round growing, an outdoor classroom, activity areas, a fire pit and a compost loo as well as a Bodger's Hut from which we run woodworking sessions.

We are run predominantly by local volunteers, and supported by our Garden Co-ordinator and a growing team of Sessional workers. Together, we are dedicated to creating a welcoming, creative and inclusive environment for all ages to access gardening and a range of nature-related activities as a route to wellbeing and greater social connection.

Our Mission

- Provide a local inclusive community garden for the benefit of individuals and groups based in Whitstable or the surrounding Canterbury District.
- Promote mental and physical well-being for our community through our outdoor activities
- Advance education in general horticulture, sustainable food growing, plant and produce sales, biodiversity and the natural environment.
- Provide opportunities for learning about and practising rural crafts like green woodworking, spoon carving, hurdle making and plant supports



Our Programmes

Twice-weekly drop-in sessions are at the beating heart of the garden. These sessions on Mondays (1.30-3.30pm Spring and Summer) and Thursdays (10-2pm) support our volunteers, maintain and develop the garden and foster friendship around the common purpose of growing and enjoying the outdoors.



We also run a number of weekly groups for adults and children including Little Green Fingers for pre-schoolers and their carers (Fridays 9.30-11.30) and Green Woodworking and Carpentry in the Bodger's Hut (Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays).



Throughout the year we host a number of fundraising events like plant sales and family fun days and we're developing relationships with local community groups offering sessions to learn about general horticulture, sustainable food growing, biodiversity and the natural environment.



We are a registered charity number 1171504

WHAT WE ACHIEVED



The number of our regular volunteers grew substantially allowing us to continue to grow the number of events and activities at the garden. Across 2023, Stream Walk hosted 1,382 individual volunteering sessions at the garden and has more than 60 active volunteers.

Breaking that down, on our main Thursday morning sessions, we had 1007 individual visits of volunteers to the garden (across 48 weeks) that averaged 3 hours. That's a total of 3,021 volunteer hours.

We ran a number of impactful courses and activities throughout the year including family well-being sessions, neuro diverse nature and gardening activities and work with local schools and nurseries. Much of these were made possible with funding support from our partners at Kent Community Foundation, Social Farms and Gardens, Canterbury City Council, The Martello Fund and the NGS. We also received food donations from the community team at Tesco, Whitstable. And in January 2024 The National Lottery Community Fund awarded Stream Walk Community Garden nearly £20,000 to help develop a programme of inclusive organic gardening sessions for disadvantaged community members.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED (CONT.)

We also ran a number of fund-raising events of our own throughout the year, kicking off the year with an Easter fun day when we had more than 400 visitors, through to a Halloween Pumpkin party in October; and our coffers were boosted by sales of plants and produce at the garden gate and through our work with the NGS Open Garden scheme.

Learning activities throughout the year centred around seed sowing, food growing, harvesting, recycling, cooking fresh produce and the exploration and conservation of wildlife.

We also ran 67 individual volunteering sessions for adults with learning disabilities.

Little Green Fingers became self-financing thanks to its growing popularity and regular attendance of local families and pre-schoolers. We now have 2 session workers each week supported by regular volunteers.

The Bodgers group continues to meet weekly and has enjoyed steady attendance levels of an average of 15 regulars, most of whom are retired. The participants benefit from the social contact and the opportunity to learn natural woodworking skills. The Bodgers is part of the Kent Sheds, a network of collaboration and support for Sheds projects across Kent. A spoon carving group has also been meeting weekly, attended by an average of 5 people.



We rounded off the year by winning the Canterbury Climate Action Partnership (CCAP) Annual Climate Action Awards 2023 for community action.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

4,987
TOTAL
VOLUNTEER
HOURS GIVEN
IN THE
GARDEN

In 2023, Stream Walk
hosted:

- 1,382 individual volunteering sessions
- 972 Thursday morning sessions
- 289 Tuesday (now Monday) sessions
- 121 monthly weekend sessions



On our main Thursday morning session, we had 1007 individual visits of volunteers to the garden (across 48 weeks) that averaged 3 hours. That's a total of 3,021 volunteer hours.

3,021
VOLUNTEER
HOURS

We had 5 major fundraising events between April 2023 and March 2024 including the NGS Open Garden Day, a family fun day and a Pumpkin party

£1680
RAISED AT
EASTER
FAMILY
EVENT



OUR COMMUNITY

In 2023 we ran the following community events

- Easter Fun Day - 400 visitors
- NGS Open Day - 460 visitors across Whitstable Town Gardens and £3,000 raised itotal with £1,000 raised from plants and tea hut sales for Stream Walk Garden
- Brightshadow Zest sessions for adults with dementia and their carers



- Family wellbeing days with refugee families in the Canterbury District
- Wild About Whitstable Week
- Summer family fun day
- Neuro-diverse weekly sessions (for 6 weeks)
- Pumpkin party
- Fruit growing and composting courses

GROWING, EATING, SELLING

Since 2019 we've been selling fresh, chemical free produce from the garden gate every Thursday.



Our low carbon fruit and vegetables come with zero-food miles for locals and the sales are now supported by our eco-plant nursery where we propagate and sell plants grown in a peat, chemical and plastic-free context.

SWCG is becoming a shopping destination and every sale we make is one less trip to the supermarket and provides a legitimate alternative to the high-intensity, unsustainable growing practices of garden centres.

The produce varies according to the season but includes salad, rhubarb, kale, leeks, tomatoes and beans.

WHAT YOU SAY

In a recent questionnaire, 100% of volunteers surveyed said that Stream Walk had inspired them to make changes in their garden/home or community as well as giving them fresh ideas or learnt new skills. Here's some of the written feedback (all quotes are anonymous):

"The garden gives me positive outlook on how to learn, so at home I can make the steps to save, to recycle, to make it more wild so to help wildlife. It has also raised my hopes in community and team work"

"I have no garden at home..., so coming to Stream Walk garden feels so wonderful"

"I'm currently in a career break and the garden has been a fantastic focus to help me adjust from a full time, very demanding professional management role to taking a step back and evaluating my next steps."

**JENNY AND YANN,
VOLUNTEERS**



DAVE, VOLUNTEER



**OYWAH,
VOLUNTEER**



OUR FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS



Funded by
UK Government

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**LEVELLING
— UP —**



THANK YOU S

A huge thank you to all of our volunteers, session workers, bodgers, tea makers, hedge-cutters, composters, drivers, fixers, cake makers and sign-writers.

Where would we be without the hard work of our fundraisers, amongst them, Jo Tonkin stands out for her time, energy and expertise in writing our funding bids and knowing her way around a spreadsheet.

And thanks to to our partners in the local community like Tesco who've donated us food and raised funds through a book swap, Whitstable Whistler who hosted their summer launch event at the garden last summer and have been invaluable in raising our profile in the town.

To the families who've got to know and love the garden, and friends past and present who support us week in and week out.





PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We've submitted plans for an all-weather eco cabin that we will build on the site to host year-round events for the community, and we're looking to increase the number of sessions we offer for local schools, groups and individuals.



CONTACT US

Find out about what's going on, how to volunteer, or donate!

For further information, please reach out: admin@streamwalkgarden.com

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Website: www.streamwalkgarden.com

