

# Report from Harmony Gardens, March 2021

*Chair Ruth Green, Treasurer Joan Curtis, Secretary Sandra Sutherland, Security Officer Clasford Sterling, Social Media Louise Orton, Edible London Max, Chris, Sunny. All our volunteers & supporters.*

Last year we **successfully grew a lot of vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs** in Harmony Gardens. We run a teaching scheme and many people have learned to grow vegetables and a number of them have gained their first certificate in "Basic Gardening Skills". We work very closely with, "**Edible London**" who are very supportive of our work in Harmony Gardens and who have contributed a lot of materials and volunteers to the project.

We have completed a number of **building projects**. These include building three big compost boxes, two sets of shelves in the poly tunnel, three new garden areas, log seats, we have constructed a greenhouse for a cut flower project, we have created a bog garden from a sunken bath. We have raised the floor in the poly tunnel where it was flooding and built a table in the area that is to be the classroom. The very tall willow trees in the west of the garden have been cut back and the willow branches used to construct ornamental plant supports.

We were fortunate to receive support from Kevin who supervised the **Community Service team** and built one of the sets of shelves and replaced some of the raised beds. They have not been able to attend since lockdown. However their bosses came to visit the garden project and liked it very much.

We have received a lot of support from Clasford Sterling when we had to **change all the locks** because of thefts. He also contributed special material for filling in cracks in the ground during the hot, dry summer.

The council built a tall fence and **locked gate** on the north side of the garden which has prevented much of the littering and damage which occurred before.

Anjli came to **advise** us on the layout of the proposed kitchen and Sheenan came several times to draw up an **architects plan** for the building project.

We are proposing to **build a classroom, simple kitchen** and small office and to have the **poly tunnel** re-covered as there are more holes in it than plastic. We are in the process of writing our Business plan.

Before The council locked the back entrance mentioned above, we had a lot of trouble from **vandalism and thieves**.

Last springtime we **planted seeds** in the poly tunnel and looked after them until they were big enough to plant outside in the raised beds. Thieves kept coming and stealing our plants. They took whole beds of onions, a bed of tomatoes, sweetcorn, garlic, pumpkins and cucumbers. This was heartbreaking for the volunteers who had done all the work to grow them. The vandals also picked apples and plums from the trees before they were ripe to throw at each other. They stood on a big branch of our fig tree and broke it off, splitting the trunk of the tree which may die as a result.

They cut holes in the plastic of the poly tunnel to get inside and take things. Later they broke the poly tunnel door. They took our original log seats so we had to have ours fixed to the ground.

We have been fortunate in our relationship with “**Edible London**“ who repaired the door and built the other set of shelves and helped us in many ways throughout the year. They transported some donated planks of wood to us to replace the rotted raised beds which hopefully will be done soon.

Despite the discouragements, we have made **progress** and look forward to another fruitful year. We hope to get support with our building program which should be a big advantage to the **local community** and the work we can do with them teaching basic growing skills and hopefully encouraging local ethnic cooking of our produce for and by our community

Ruth, for the Friends of Harmony Gardens