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Located behind Haxby Group Practice Surgery, The Village,
Haxby, York

Our First Growing Year 2023-2024

Although Whole Life Community Garden has existed for a little while now, it's been the first year we have actually been able to get growing! In partnership with NHS Property Services and with funding from them, our 30m by 50m piece of grass actually started to look like a garden. The next few pages will share the story of our first growing year, as well as our hopes for the coming years...

1. The Whole of Life...full steam ahead!
2. Community Involvement
3. Volunteers & Visitors
4. Events
5. The Background Stuff - Financials and Policies
6. Plans for next year

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The Whole of Life....



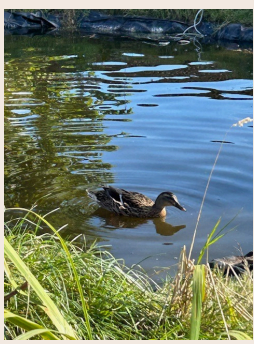
From the very first conversation of the Garden Team with the Haxby Group Practice and NHS Property Services, it was clear that our values aligned and that we shared the same hopes and dreams. We wanted somewhere the community could come along and be nurtured in many different aspects of their life; physically by having gentle exercise and growing healthy food; socially through finding friendship, but also the mental health benefits of being in nature are enormous. And also spiritually; people can come along to the garden and simply 'be' and connect to nature and find a little peace.

It was full steam ahead when some funding came up last minute to allow us to have structure to the garden with some paths and a pond. The contractor loved the idea of what we wanted to create and went above and beyond in making our raised beds and bonus pergolas! The NHS Property Staff also had a volunteer day, helping to fill the raised beds and have a bit of a tidy up.



March 2024





Community Involvement



Any community is forged together through its common characteristics and the Whole Life Community Garden is no different. In the first year of being able to invite people into the garden, we were keen to work collaboratively with others...

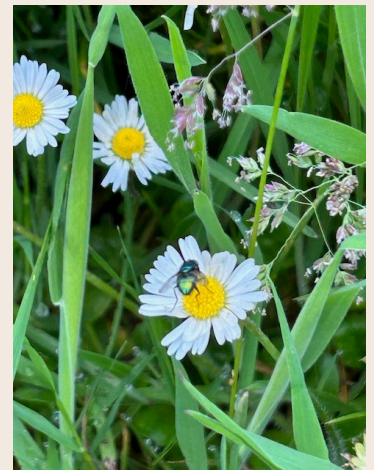
Working with all ages and abilities to grow plants and have a shared sense of belonging. Volunteers from the local retirement village enjoy the table top raised beds. Children from local schools have planted bulbs for us. We love our wide paths, many benches and non-time tabled access, so that anyone can join us.



We cultivate relationships with local residents, users of the Health Centre, local churches, the Foodshare, schools and other local organisations. The health centre staff use the garden for meetings and we let local residents know when there is something to harvest. We also create a tranquil space for personal reflection, social-prescribing and counteracting stress and low mood.



As well as our lovely human community, our non-human community belongs here too. We do our best to make sure we don't use chemicals, we also use peat free compost and try to reuse and recycle whatever we can. We leave a lot of the garden for wildlife and plant many native plants that are great for pollinators.





Volunteers & Visitors



One of the beauties of the garden is that it is open whenever the local pharmacy or Doctor's Surgery is open, which is often fairly late and on weekends too. This means our community can pretty much visit at any time. It means we don't always know how many visit the garden, but here are examples of the wonderful stories we know about...

A mother who sometimes takes her young children for a quick visit on the way home from school.



Local residents who walk over to sit and talk to friends.

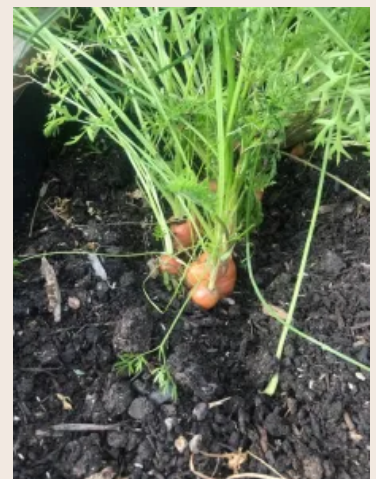


People who come and sit in the garden while waiting for a family member who has an appointment.



Organisational volunteer days. They filled our raised beds, created compost bins and got mowing!

Regular Friday afternoon volunteering sessions. Though we know many of our volunteers popped along to help with a spot of weeding and watering! We have had small numbers joining in each week, who enjoy the gardening and spending time with others.





Events



We had to work hard to let people know about our garden. One of the benefits of our garden is that it is tucked away from the main road, so it's a peaceful oasis in the middle of a busy village. But that does mean it's taken time for people to get to know about us.



Seed and Plant Swaps held at the local Church



Information Days



Nature Trails as part of York Environment Weeks and local Eco Fair.



Social Media and a website

The garden was one of the destinations on the local scarecrow trail where we had a scarecrow of Monty Don! Suddenly people knew where we were!



The Background Stuff

FINANCIALS AND POLICIES

Thanks to the generous funding of NHS Properties, the Community Garden was off to a great start and was able to get up and running as a community garden as soon as the fabulous contractors left. Our finances were therefore pretty simple for the year and reflect basic running costs. We opened our bank account this year, so the balance below is the balance of our account.

The first year of the garden team coming together was spent getting its policies and procedures agreed. See our website for the list of our policies, which reflect what is important to us; we want to make sure that absolutely anyone and everyone can enjoy the space safely and feel welcomed. Making sure these policies are in place help our community and nature to flourish.

www.wholelifecommunitygarden.org/about-us/

Receipts and Payments

in the year to 1st October 2024

Donations from fundraising events, organisations and individuals.	£1,240
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Public Liability Insurance	£100
Gardening Expenses	£249
Publicity	£50
Total Payments	£399

Net Receipts	£1,091
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Plans for Next Year



The first year of getting stuck into the garden has been brilliant for getting to know it well and finding out what the community would like in a garden. We have lots of ideas; some of which are reasonably easy to do, some that will need more planning and fundraising. We are excited about the possibilities!

I bet you didn't know that our garden was built on the site of a former tannery? This year we want to get the soil tested so we have more options than raised beds to grow food.



Improved signage so new visitors can easily find us.

More pond planting



A willow tunnel.

A labyrinth for meditation



A sensory garden.

And of course, more growing!



Patio area to have more space to enjoy the garden

Beginning longer term plans to fund a summer house so the garden can be used for private conversations and quiet reflection - as well as somewhere to make a brew!

