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14th October 2019

Dear R G H Lewis,

Update on the work of Time Exchange's Community Gardener

We are writing to tell you about the work that we have been able to do thanks to The Ninevah Charitable Trust's very kind contribution towards staffing costs for gardening sessions for our members and local residents. We are extremely grateful to you for this funding.

We apologise greatly for our late reply. Unfortunately, we had some difficulties gaining core funding, so our administrative efforts have been concentrated on (successfully) solving this issue, which meant that some of our project-related administration work was temporally delayed.

We have been working with members and residents to help improve their gardening knowledge and attitude to the environment. Between 1/9/2018 and 30/9/2019 our Community Gardener spent 62 hours helping 18 of our members with advice and practical support to improve their gardens and yards. This work included help cutting an overgrown hedge, advice on tackling plant pests, help and advice on rose and fruit pruning, advice (and seeds given out) for planting wildflowers, digging vegetable beds, and advice on growing Bangladeshi pumpkins and beans.

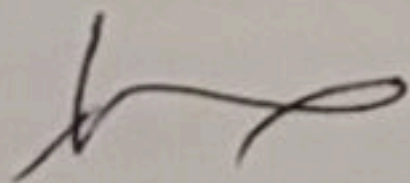
We have run year-round sessions at The Bike Garden, the local community garden which we are involved in. Between 1/9/2018 and 30/9/2019, 5 regular volunteers worked together putting in a total of 187 hours to grow vegetables and pollinator-friendly flowers, construct a living willow structure, maintain herb, fruit, and ornamental borders, and of course maintain our tools. We were able to offer members a share of the harvest to take home, totalling 68 vegetable bags over the year. For most of our volunteers, attending these sessions is an important part of their weekly routine. We also ran sessions at Time Exchange over the winter, involving 21 local residents, covering basic gardening techniques: potting on, seed planting, taking cuttings, container planting as well as some winter garden crafts.

Between January 2019 and September 2019 we held 51 street planter maintenance sessions for Time Exchange members and volunteers. We also gave staff support to the monthly community Saturday litter pick. We carried out late winter/early spring pruning in February and March for those shrubs (such as dogwood, buddleia, hydrangea, willow) that needed it. We have then made two full rounds of all of the planters for litter picking, weeding, and other maintenance. We have also sown and planted pollinator-friendly seeds and plants, including Scabiosa, birds-foot trefoil, red clover, marjoram, mint, lemon balm, poached-egg plants, cornflowers, calendula. We have given support to 5 residents and community members to improve, maintain, and litter pick street planters or other parts of their local environment.

Your contribution has helped us create ways for members to meet each other, work together, learn new skills, and improve the local environment. We hope that you are still able to support our project for a second year.

Please find enclosed some photographs showing some of the activities throughout the year, and case-studies of some of the people who have been involved in the activities you have funded.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Theresa Ball', with a stylized, flowing script.

Theresa Ball
Time Exchange Project Manager

Time Exchange Gardening Case Studies

Fatema

Fatema has started to be interested in gardening since moving to house a couple of years ago. She is especially interested in growing Bangladeshi vegetables. Our community gardener gave her advice about growing plants in pots and about starting crops such as Chinese pumpkins, Naga chillies and Bangladeshi long beans from seed, as well as helping to identify plants that had self-seeded (such as spinach) and giving advice on edible weeds. Practical help was given in the form of helping her weed and dig over a vegetable bed and helping her to stake climbing plants.

Fatema finds it hard to come to Time Exchange gardening sessions as she is a busy mother to two children who have additional needs. Therefore, having our community gardener come out to her has really helped her. She uses gardening to help her relax and have an interest for herself.

James

James is one of our regular volunteers at the Bike Garden. He is currently unemployed and looking for work, so coming to our sessions helps him keep to a routine and feel productive. He is very enthusiastic about gardening, but needs support and supervision to be successfully involved in sessions. He has helped grow fruit, vegetables, herbs, and flowers and was a great help with planting willow for our structure. He is good friends with one of our other volunteers, Charlie, and enjoys the social aspect of our sessions.

John

John has been very concerned about the state of the shared planted areas at the block of flats that he lives, and the litter in the street outside. Our community gardener gave him some advice about planting in shaded areas, and we provided him with compost, bulbs and a litter-pick. He then planted crocus bulbs under the trees at the back of his block and planted a display of roses and dahlias at the front. He regularly litter picks the pavement and street-planters near his flat. Our staff and volunteers have helped litter-pick the areas which he has planted. We have also listened to his concerns about the local environment and given him a significant amount of moral support.

Dilston Road pedestrian area planter

We had a discussion with the owner of a local shop who was concerned about both litter and the height of some of the shrubs in the planter. Our community gardener and volunteers selectively pruned the shrubs, including partially coppicing a corkscrew willow to increase wildlife value whilst reducing height. With a local resident we litter-picked weeded the planter and planted up gaps with herbs such as lemon balm and marjoram, bedding plants including Calendula and Bellis, and bulbs such as crocuses. The shop owner agreed to water and litter pick on a regular basis.

INTERCHANGE GARDENING PROJECT

Gardening Sessions at the Bike Garden



Garden Produce from the Garden



Time Exchange Members Gardens



Seasonal Gardening Activities



Sprouting Seeds Event



Design and Build of a Willow Shelter





Street Planters

