



Dear Becky,

Community Green Spaces and Growing Schemes.

Edible Earth Project – Continuation Funding January 23 to December 25.

We are now into the 5th month of our Edible Earth project. It has been a crazy five months for the project, with Emily quickly pushing forward to successfully embed three very diverse test and learn growing spaces across Torbay.

The project has been very well received by each of the three communities and continues to grow from strength to strength. We would like to take this opportunity to open up a conversation about future funding for the project.

I thought I would start by giving you a quick synopsis of our work and some thoughts about the future of each site.

Melville Street Community, Torquay.

Our priority site, with very limited green space at The Point, Planters at the Car Park and The Large Tree at the top of Melville Street, junction with Warren Road.

Emily has spent lots of time, with Davina's support, getting to know many of the residents in the Melville area, she has connected to local organizations such as Burlington House, Melville Residents Association, St Luke's Residents Association, MMM Project Steering Group, Ceri- Community Builder, Oliver- Housing Standards Team, Exeter Energy, Sustrans, Local Councilors, SWISCo, TDA, Croft Hall, Healthwatch, Blue House B&B, who were all very supportive and responsive to the project.

Davina has taken the lead with the Melville Residents association attending meeting with Emily and getting to know the key stakeholders in the area. Very often these meetings can be challenging to navigate and require a delicate balance of collaboration and proactiveness, but we feel we are starting to be accepted as an active part of the community with authentic intentions.

We've held 4 community engagement events and knocked on a lot of doors. Initially we were met with a mixed response from residents mostly all skeptical, feelings were generally divided between 2 opinions. One being, 'it just wasn't worth it as nothing would change'. The other 'that doing something was much better than doing nothing'. Our seed planting, bedding plants, Spring Fair and Tomato Jean Planting events has all been well attended and numbers have been steadily increasing.

Our last event at Warren Point, tomato jean planting, saw 12 residents attend from a diverse background and we are starting to build a core group. We have a few Mums attending with their children, one Mum is Polish, 7 years ago she made the move from Poland and has been living in the area ever since, she has 2 small children and loves attending all the events. One lady has lived in the area all her life, she has been quite emotionally happy about the project, and is starting to use the garden in the car park and pick mint for her tea. One family have volunteered to water the tomatoes at Warren Point for us, but don't yet feel confident to get involved in group activities, two residents from Burlington House have taken part, one had recently moved to the House and our events are helping him to settle him into the area. A single parent and her secondary school age son have enjoyed taking part and have committed to attend every event we put on. We also have some older men who are supporting us who live locally and are passionate to see change. It's a real mixed bag of people, who enjoy spending time with others, enjoy gardening and would like to see change in the area they live, with lots of community events to bring people together.

The changes we have made to Warren Point haven't yet seen any major vandalism, we have seen a lot less dog fouling and more residents seem to be enjoying the benches at the Point. All changes so far seem to have been well received. Faith is building in the opportunities for the area and residents are beginning to talk to their extended families about the project and the future of the area in a positive light.



What's next for Melville:

- We have the Melville Jubilee Mural coming up in partnership with Studio Meraki. 4x Community Workshops each creating opportunity for local residents to upskill in various art techniques and to be part of forming the design of the Mural, which we hope to have complete by mid-summer.

- We have entered Melville into the Britain in Bloom Neighborhood Award in July.
- We are working in partnership with Oliver from housing standards to introduce the concept of 'bringing growing into your homes'. Developing community events to look at foods that can be re-grown from supermarket foods. Looking at growing houseplants that improve air quality and have calming effects. Windowsill growing with herbs and plants.
- Every time we turn up to Melville we feel we are reinforcing the positive rather than the negative, the time is now right to give the residents of Melville more structure to develop their skills and we are working on how we will best achieve this through interactive, friendly and skilled events.
- We feel this is only the start of the project in Melville and there is further opportunity to galvanize sustainable change.



QED & Lutyens Community - Westerland Valley, Paignton

Lots of options with a large site of underused space at our disposal, adjacent to Great Parks Community Centre. Easily accessible to two large housing estates, Queen Elizabeth Drive and Lutyens.

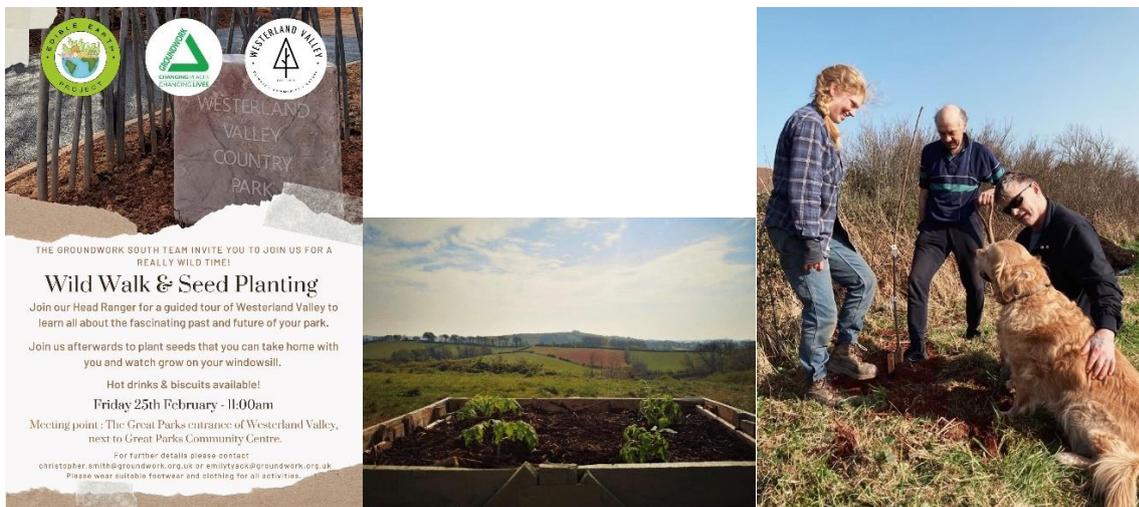
We started engagement with informal door knocking and flyers. We didn't initially get much resident engagement, people really weren't connected to the Park, saw it as a place for anti-social behavior in the past, had only just been made aware of the site in recent years and didn't know much about it, or felt their mobility issues limited their access to the site. Active engagement was mainly with dog walkers who use the site and users of the Community Centre, with opinion quite positive towards the project but with limited commitment to take part, rather waiting to see what happened. Decisions were made in consultation with the Community Centre on location of the site, choosing the more visible location, with frequent dog walks passing by the location. Plans were drawn up and shared with SWISCo for their agreement.

The grow site has seen masses of activity over the past few months, enabling us to make the most of the growing season. Our kickstart trainees have been digging and preparing the site, building planters, a compost area and water system, between them all doing most of the heavy work. The trainees have also prepared a Spiral Pollinator Patch close to the Growing Space to enable residents to see change happening and raise awareness of the importance of pollinators on the natural environment. Seeing work happen on the site has stimulated a lot of community interest with residents stopping to talk with our trainees and finding out how they can get involved, (we had one

resident suggest we should get a Nobel prize). We've also had Combe Pafford School on the site, helping us to prepare and paint the entrance ways to the park, achieving great improvements.

At the same time we've held two engagement events. A lead Nature Walk – followed by seed planting. 12 residents attended, 11 adults & one child. Adult ages ranged from 20 to 70. Two participants were partially sighted, one lady was elderly and said she wouldn't have accessed the park on her own but enjoyed being guided by others. Our second event was Fruit Tree Planting, where we had over 20 people attend, 1 family with 3 generations, returning adults and we were also joined by a group of children who hang around the Community Centre at Weekends. One of our residents who had lived on the estate since he was a boy planted a tree in honor of his brother who had recently passed away.

The growing space is now recognizable as a growing space and has huge potential.



What's next for the space.

- Now that we have prepared the site we need to move quickly to hit the growing season and we are now starting our monthly Grow Club sessions, twice a month, one at weekend one in the week. We have a core band of volunteers who we feel need the structure of monthly events, and lots more residents who show interest but haven't yet participated, we feel the structure will enable them to feel more empowered enabling them to fully understand the aim of the events, and the activity/learning they will be participating in.
- We've been donated Tyers to use as planters and these will be installed soon as part of the Grow Club.
- A Harvest Celebration Event is being planned in conjunction with the Community Centre.
- We plan to engage with more partner organization to enable their participants to get involved with the space including The Women's Circle, Sanctuary Housing, Social Prescribers, Physio Group, I Can Do That, Motiv-8 and Gaia.
- Britain in Bloom neighborhood award in July.
- More guided walks.
- Healthy Eating Cooking Sessions.

- We are creating signage to help residents to understand and identify with the project
- The site and the community is so large the future opportunities are endless. As we head into Autumn we hope to make plans with the community for next year's growing season.
- We'd like to support the Community Centre to set up a market garden in their outside storage container.

It's worth mentioning, we have had some anti-social behavior on the site, where some planters were tipped over and some beds destroyed. We have been made aware of the perpetrators from the Lutyens Estate and have been working with the Community Centre and local residents to tackle the issue. Local residents have been hugely supportive of irradiating the behavior and so have the parents of the young people concerned. So far this appears to have been an isolated incident.

Garlic Rea Community Brixham.

A small site, located in a residential area above the hustle and bustle of the harbor.

Engagement started with flyers & door to door knocking. We found that many homes were empty as they were either holiday homes or holiday lets. Residents told us that over the last few years they have lost their sense of community as so many homes are for holiday makers in the summertime and empty for the rest of the year. A lot of people have gardens around the site, whereas in other areas of Brixham they don't.

We've held three engagement events in Brixham, seed planning, where 15 people attended. Residents were very interested in a growing space. Our second event, fruit tree planting was attended by 12 residents, all who really enjoyed it. We were gifted £100 by a local resident for the fruit trees.

Our third event was the creation of a pollinator patch and pollinator houses. One family attended all 3 events, they had recently moved to the area with 3 small children, Dave a local resident for 40 years attended the pollinator day and brought lavender with him to plant. One older man in his 70's was keen to plant some sunflowers that he had at home and will bring them to the next event.

Residents have reflected on the use of the site, feeling it's a great area for contemplation and a community space for people to meet up. They would like some benches for the site, and for the grow space to be limited to certain areas, and not take over the whole space.



What's next:

- More engagement events to plant and grow crops.
- Residents would like to connect with other grow spaces in Brixham and explore the idea of a community food swaps.
- YES Brixham are donating a bench for the site and we will support it's installation.
- We feel that after 12 months this project would become light touch for us, with the community able to sustain the space. We would like to focus on a new grow space in the town center area where residents don't have access to a private garden.

In conclusion we feel the Edible Earth Project has got off to a great start. We would have liked to engage more partners in the project inception but due to us having to move quickly to hit the growing season, we've had to plough on and get the sites up and running as a priority. On reflection this has been a great way to engage the community, with them able to see action in progress right from the start.

We feel that we are only at the very start of an exciting journey, all the team and our active residents can't stop talking about the project and all the ideas we have for the future.

A further two years of funding will not only able us to connect more with partners and enable them to refer/involve more participants in the projects, but it would also mean we could create more growing spaces, offering more Torbay' residents; increased levels of well-being, opportunity to comfortably come out of isolation and get to know their neighborhood, education around health food, how to grow it, how to prepare it and how to eat it in style with friends and families. We earnestly believe that this project can bring vibrance to areas that are in desperate need. Nature food and outdoor space are key to community development and this project offers all three in a way that is both charming and effective.

Given enough time the Edible Earth project will normalize community led growing spaces across the Bay, create ingredient trails, allow residents to follow the full circle from sowing and growing to cooking and eating and through community engagement and the art of nature we can chronical the past and champion the future.

We would be happy to weave into the project other aspects of our work and focus in on some of Torbay Councils wider aims, for example targeting adults who are inactive in the labour market and would like to explore the opportunities in the Green Sector.

It would be great to have a conversation about how the Council would like to progress the work we have been doing and how we can grow this fantastic project for Torbay Residents.

All the very best,

Liz & Davina.