

Sydenham Garden Strategic Plan

2019-2022

1. Introduction

This document sets out the future for Sydenham Garden in the coming three years. It looks at where we have come from, what we currently provide and how we plan to develop our services in the years up to 2022.

2. Vision

The vision for Sydenham Garden is to ensure that all people in Lewisham have access to gardening and other Creative and social activities to improve their mental and physical health.

3. Mission

Sydenham Garden's mission is to promote the physical and mental wellbeing of residents living in South London by providing:

- Community gardens where horticulture is used for therapy and rehabilitation
- Opportunity for training for work and education
- Opportunity for artistic and creative expression principally in our resource buildings
- The protection and preservation of the environment for the benefit of the public through nature conservation and the promotion of biological diversity

4. Values

We are a user-centred service, where co-workers and volunteers are very much involved in decision making and service delivery.

- **Empowerment:** Everyone involved with Sydenham Garden – whether contributing to our work or benefiting from it – should feel empowered to participate in service developments.
- **Inclusiveness:** We listen to and are open to everyone, regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity status, race, religion/belief, disability or sexual orientation.
- **Accountability:** Through our outcome focused approach, we hold ourselves accountable in everything we do.

5. Background

5.1 History

Sydenham Garden was founded in 2002 by Dr Jim Sikorski who, with a small group of local residents, had the vision and dedication to convert a neglected nature reserve into what we have today - a thriving community garden which preserves and cares for the nature reserve. It is a registered charity which initially provided a community based garden where horticulture was used for therapy and rehabilitation for people recovering from mental health problems.

Since 2002 the charity has grown to incorporate art groups for people recovering from mental health problems, gardening and arts groups for people with early dementia and in 2015 a market garden for people recovering from mental health problems was opened on another site locally, De Frene. Alongside the therapy groups it protects, promotes and preserves the environment and biodiversity of the garden for the benefit of the public.

5.2. Funding

The charity receives funding from a range of sources including NHS and Social Care funding and funding from charitable trusts and foundations. In the financial year 18/19 we received charitable grants in excess of £170,000 and statutory sector funding in excess of £77,000.

In 2019 the charity joined two collaboratives of mental health providers, one for the provision of services to people with dementia and the second for people of working age recovering from mental health problems. As members of the collaborative Sydenham Garden receives £70,000 from Lewisham CCG. In addition this financial year to date (July 2019) we have received charitable grants in excess of £115,000.

We also raise funds through donations, legacies, events and rentals.

6. Our services

6.1 Current projects

We have 4 key projects that co-workers can be involved in and that we use to achieve our aims:

Garden

Sydenham Garden currently provides four 2.5 hour gardening sessions for up to 40 co-workers. These are led by 0.6WTE Garden Project Lead together with 12 Volunteers.

Co-workers are offered a 12 month placement on the programme and are able to move onto the Growing Lives project after this if they wish.

Arts and Crafts

Sydenham Garden currently provides 3 2.25 hour Arts and Crafts sessions based in the Resource centre community hall. The sessions are led by a 0.6WTE project lead supported by 9 Volunteers.

Co-workers are offered a 12 month placement. The opportunity to move on from this group are limited within Sydenham Garden, but where possible co-workers are referred to suitable outside agencies or organisations.

Sow and Grow

There are currently four 2.5 hour Sow and Grow sessions for up to 10 co-workers with early stages of dementia. A 1.5 hour singing and movement group for upto 20 co-workers which is also open to their carers. A new 2 hour growing together group for 6 co-workers and their carers which runs for for 12weeks, Sow and Grow is a six month programme, with the option of moving onto Sow and Keep Growing for 1 year or to singing and movement for 16 weeks. These are led by a 0.8WTE Dementia Project lead and a 0.6WTE project deputy and 20 Volunteers

Growing Lives

Growing lives is a therapeutic market garden based at the De Frene site. It provides an opportunity to learn food growing and each session includes a group meal. Growing Lives co-workers also work towards 2 qualifications as part of the Open College Network. It is led by the full-time project leader, supported by a part time project assistant and 12 volunteers.

6.2 Supplementary Projects and services

In addition to Sydenham Garden's 4 core projects, a number of supplementary services are provided some of which are described below:

Transitions Project

All co-workers coming towards the end of their placement in a core project are offered a placement in the Transition project. Staff and volunteers run 1 to 1 sessions, group tree of life, mood board and goal setting sessions, and take co-workers on visits to potential next-step placements outside of Sydenham Garden.

Outdoor Education

We run regular sessions for local schools based on the Forest School model. For example we run three sessions for Brent Knoll (a school for Children with Autism), held at the De Frene Market Garden, every week during term time.

Tamil Asylum Seekers Project

PTSD stabilisation Therapy and Social and Therapeutic Horticulture for up to 30 Tamil Asylum seekers each year. This project is based at De Frene.

Bee Keeping

We currently have 2 hives on the De Frene site, producing honey sold to raise funds to support services. We also provide bee keeping courses. This is supported by a sessional team member.

Workshops and short courses

Sydenham Garden runs a programme of short courses and workshops. These are based on the skills of the team and are open to co-workers and members of the local community. In addition we run some courses for local schools and colleges as requested.

7. Current structure

All the projects are supported by the Board of Trustees, the Director, an outreach and development worker, a part-time finance officer and a business and premises manager. We also have 2 sessional staff, and a range of self-employed instructors to draw on.

7.1 Chair of Trustees

Our chair of Trustees is **Julia Brandreth**. Julia is a local resident and experienced trustee. She was previously Head of Communications at the National Union of Teachers, with prior roles in TUC affiliates. She is currently a market trader at Greenwich Market, specialising in vintage goods.

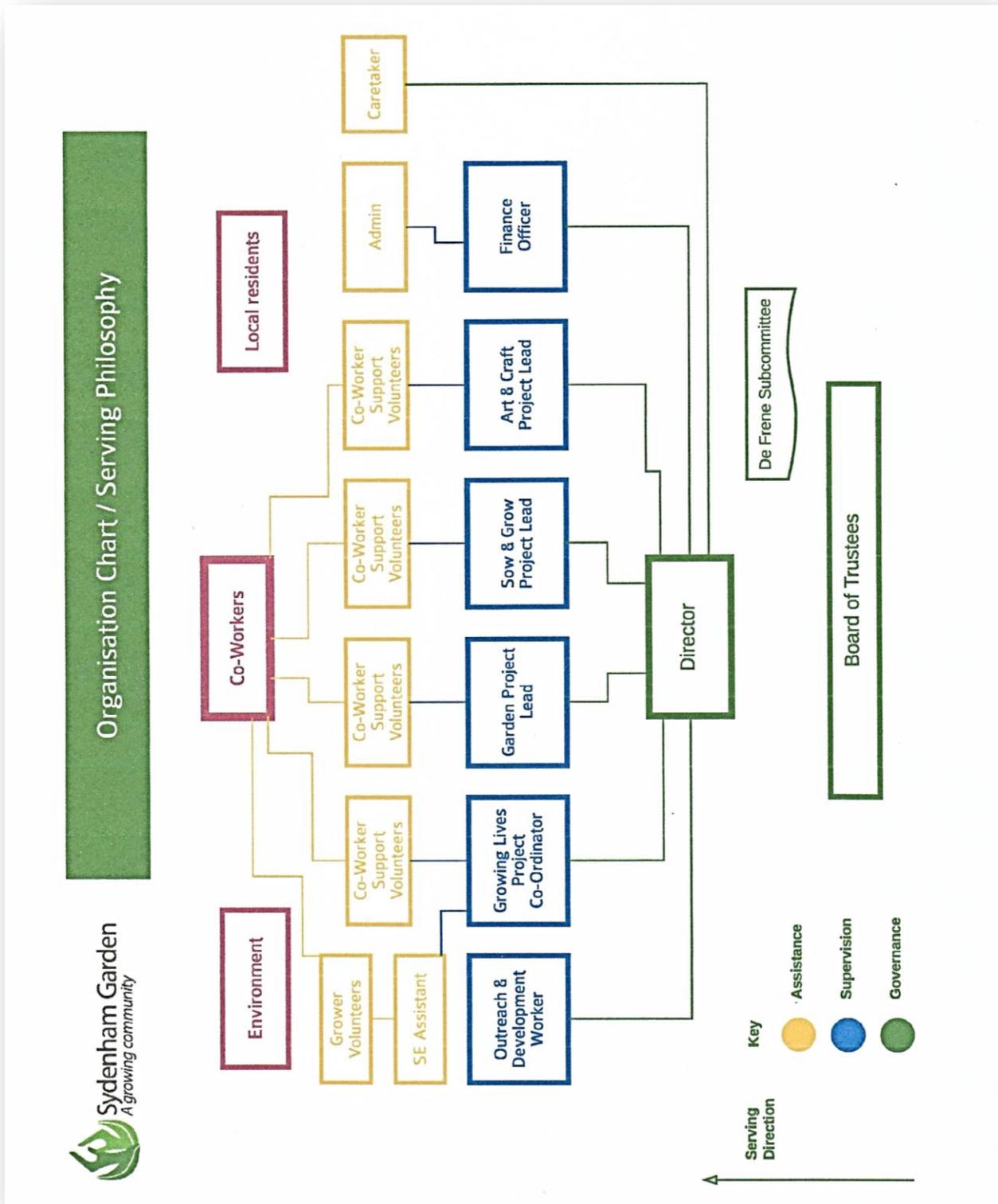
7.2 Treasurer

John Sherman is our Treasurer.

7.3 Director

Coralie Hopwood is our new Director, she will be starting with us in November 2019.

7.4 The chart below sets out the current staffing structure



8. Strategic Objectives

Our Strategic vision for the next 3 years is to:

- Improve the services and accessibility of these to people in the north of Lewisham
- Strengthen the sustainability of services at De Frene
- Improve accessibility to the sites we use
- Maintain and strengthen our unique identity

How we plan to achieve these objectives

To improve what we offer to people in the north of Lewisham who want to use our services we will review their needs. We will also work with our colleagues within the collaborative to undertake a needs analysis across the range of services provided in the north of the Borough. Following this analysis we will look to develop services to meet the needs identified either through establishing our own site in the north of the Borough or through working out of another suitable site. Either option will require significant additional fundraising for groups to provide paid staff, recruitment, training and support of volunteers and for advertisement of the groups to attract co-workers.

To strengthen the sustainability of the offer at De Frene we need to gain funding to allow continuity of the project when the Big Lottery funding finishes in late 2020. We also need to review the group sessions and look at a recruitment strategy to attract additional co-workers.

To improve access to the sites we use we need to finish the work at Wynnell Road to allow better access to the Resource Centre. We also need to improve the entrance at De Frene and consider development of more and varied height raised beds

To maintain and strengthen our unique identity we need to continue to market our services to Co-workers and Volunteers. Also to strengthen our links with our local community whilst continuing to work closely with our partners in the collaborative of Mental health and social care voluntary and statutory providers.

9. Summary

This three year plan has been developed in consultation with staff, volunteers and co-workers at Sydenham Garden. It sets out the diversity of provision developed over the last 17 years.

We would like to thank all the staff, volunteers and co-workers for their ideas and support in developing the plan. Although we have not been able to take all ideas on board for this plan they have all helped us in developing what we believe to be an ambitious but realistic plan for developing provision over the next three years. We hope it will serve as a positive framework for our work in the period 2019-2022.

Approved 9/11/2019