

# SUSTAINABLE LIVING INITIATIVE



Annual Report 2014-2015



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## Introduction

The Grow-Our-Own (GO<sup>2</sup>) scheme of the Sustainable Living Initiative (SLI) started in Norwich in 2004 and has two community gardening projects; at [Bluebell South Allotments](#) and [Marlpit Community Garden](#). The SLI is a registered charity run by Trustees and [the office is at Marlpit Community Centre](#) on Hellesdon Road.

The aim of the Charity is to bring together people who are interested in growing fruit and vegetables, especially those with little or no experience, and to share skills, tools and information. There are lots of opportunities to meet other members at food-sharing lunches and to learn and share cooking skills at sessions in the community centre. Both projects rely on the cooperation of their volunteer members and are run by them.

SLI is a membership-based organisation and is also open to non-gardening people who support its objectives and wish to be involved in its activities. Young people under 18 are welcome to join but parental consent is required. SLI membership shows your commitment to promoting environmental awareness and to sharing resources in improving our quality of life. It's a forum for discussion, sharing ideas and skills and initiating collaborative action in growing food and practical gardening training.

## SLI in 2014-15 at a glance

The total number of growers in SLI managed schemes has decreased from 180 in 2009-2010 to 142 in 2014-2015 (Figure 1). With the establishment of our second scheme in Marlpit, we expect this number to grow substantially in the coming years.

Figure 1: Growth of GO<sup>2</sup> (Marlpit growers included)

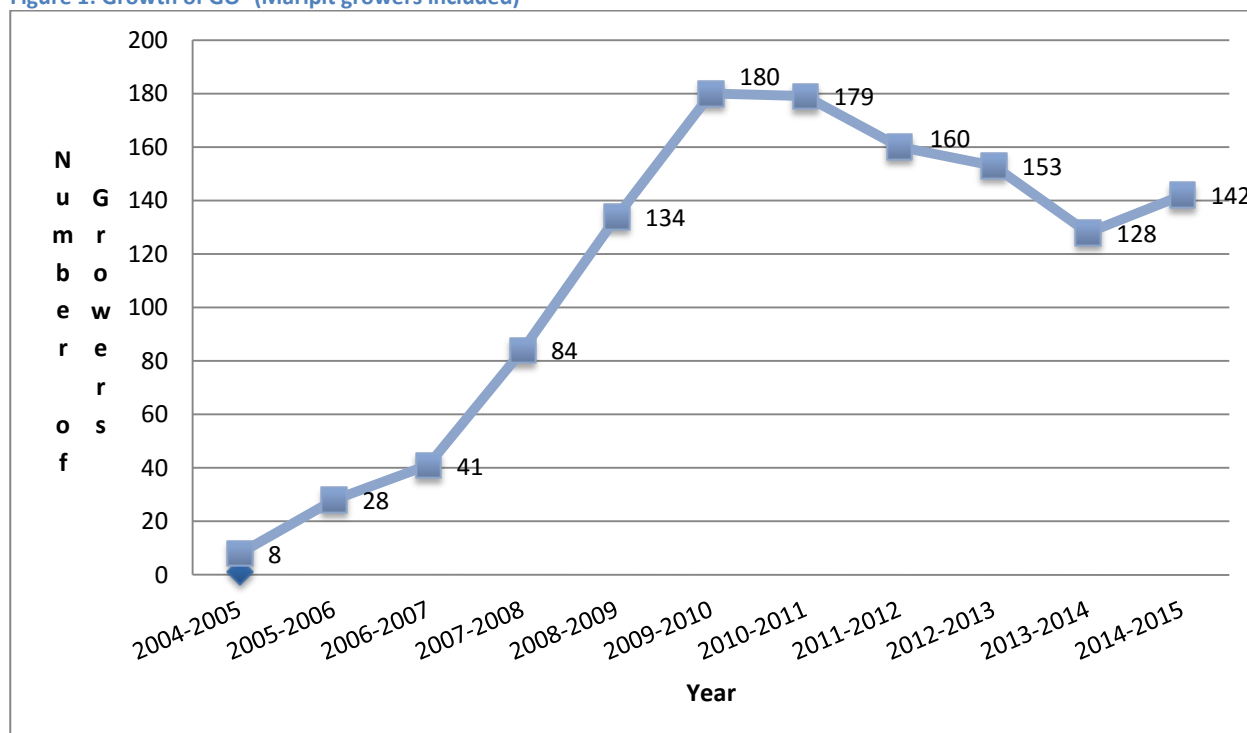
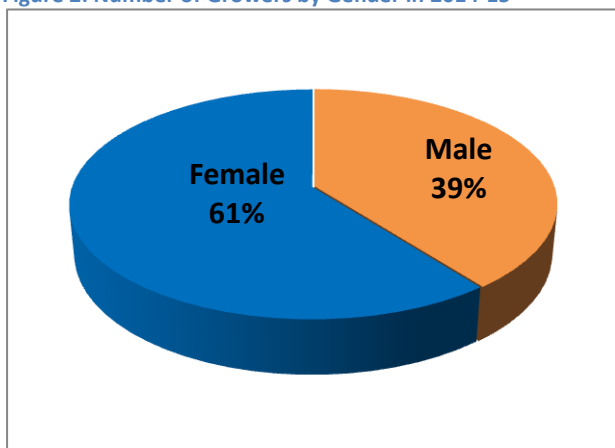


Figure 2: Number of Growers by Gender in 2014-15

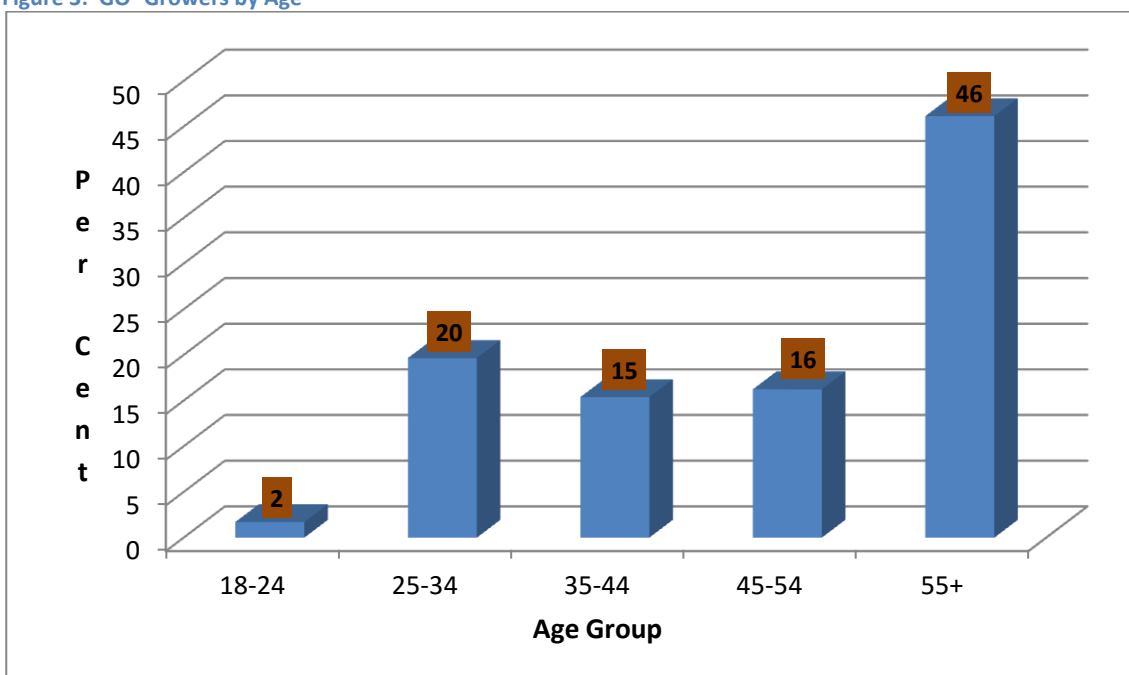


As in previous years, the majority of our growers are female (Figure 2); the very social nature of our GO<sup>2</sup> schemes which provides opportunities for members to meet regularly, share food, drinks and skills and support each other may be the main reason for this.

Analysis of the equal opportunities data collected suggests that the majority of our growers are over 55 years old (Figure 3). Given the difficulties in juggling full-time work and

looking after an allotment plot, it is not surprising that the majority of our growers are either retired or semi-retired. However, we have observed more and more young growers joining our schemes in recent years.

Figure 3: GO<sup>2</sup> Growers by Age



With regard to the ethnicity of our growers, 78% are White British and the rest are mostly Europeans – Irish, Spanish, Italian, French, Eastern Europeans - and a few Asians. Six percent of all our growers are disabled.

### Grow-Our-Own (GO<sup>2</sup>) at Bluebell South Allotments

The total number of growers in GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell during 2014-2015 is almost the same (117 compared to 118) as in the previous year; the only difference is that there are no more Growing-at-Home members supported from GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell. Apart from the lack of demand for allotments in recent years, the GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell Team is interested more on strengthening the team and improving the quality of support it provides to its members. As a result, we are downsizing the GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell scheme (we currently have 14 full-size Council plots compared to 17.5 plots three years ago).



## Reports from Team Leaders

### **Admin team**

*Christine Wilson*

The second year of the new 7-team management structure, introduced in 2013, worked very well. The first year was one of getting to know each other and agreeing a number of issues and decisions. During the year, two team leaders left but were quickly replaced. The admin team breaks down into clearly-defined activities. Jim Froud does the all-important website and weekly newsletter (though we still haven't managed to get everyone into the habit of reading it!). Rita Gallard has been doing the rota for Wednesday and Sunday mornings and several people from other teams have come forward to do a stint in the shed on those days. During the year I allocated plots to about 40 new growers, including a local group, Together UK, and there were several additional enquiries about plots. We kept an eye on overgrown plots and paths and then alerted Laura McCartney-Gray who writes to plot-holders to ask for urgent action. During the year we received two letters from the Council Allotment Officer about overgrown plots and we do have to work with both him and with people on neighbouring plots.

At the 2015 AGM it was agreed that we needed to improve communication throughout the SLI and amalgamate paperwork with Marlpit Community Garden. After a lot of redrafting of forms, introductory information to the SLI, a 'welcome' sheet – and coordinating all this with the website naturally - we have achieved a more coherent body of documentation! Bureaucratic though this may sound, there is a great deal of work in administering SLI projects; consistency and transparency is everything if we are to avoid wasting time, unnecessary work, and complaints! We now also have a revised leaflet about the SLI. We now produce the weekly newsletter jointly with Marlpit.

My thanks to a great group of team leaders and to the stalwart helpers and supporters, and, of course, Mahesh, who brought us all together in the first place!

### **Seeds and plants**

*Tessa Phillips*

The year has been a good one for us on the whole; the polytunnel had new raised beds replacing the rotten one which was more than eight years old and the existing long bed was enriched with manure and compost. Redundant green recycling boxes proved useful as growing containers especially for tomatoes and melons. Bridget, Rochelle, Jana, Shena and the two Janets have grown a good steady supply of plants including courgettes, various squashes, sweet corn, herbs, salad crops and brassicas in the greenhouse, and the polytunnel has had a good crop of early broad beans, tomatoes, a few melons, herbs, small cucumbers, chillies and hopefully sweet potatoes later on in the year. The regular watering of all the plants during the summer is about the most important part of growing them under cover, and thanks should be given to Laura, Shena and Janet and all those who have regularly ensured they are kept moist. Mandy has done a great job stocking up packets of seeds ready for sowing, and the new seed store at Marlpit should ensure we don't run out of anything next year.

As the weather is different every spring, one annual problem is where to put the courgette, marrow and sweet corn plants to harden off. Problems with theft, slugs, snails and pigeons are an annual concern, but this year the theft of more than half the sweet corn plants was particularly worrying.

Originally all growers got their plants from those grown on site but there appears to be a growing trend of people choosing to buy from shops or garden centres, grow their own at home or obtain from other sources. This makes it more difficult to know how many plants to cultivate for growers' needs, and as this is an expensive, time-consuming part of our work, we will be asking GO<sup>2</sup> members for their views.

As I have no previous experience of growing produce in a polytunnel, this year has been a steep learning curve, but I have enjoyed the challenge; the melons have been a particular success but we will try another variety next year hoping to get larger sweeter ones like Monty Don's next time!

### **Food team**

*Moira Froud*

Juyna led the team for a few years but she recently decided to stand down. She worked tirelessly and will be a hard act to follow, but I will do my best with a great group of helpers. Amy, our deputy is still with us and is always there to help and attend events. Our monthly Foodshare lunches continued to be popular and well attended. It is great to meet new members and sample the variety of recipes using our own allotment produce.

Visiting groups are always given a warm welcome and hospitality. The use of the kitchen at Marlpit Community Centre has given us an opportunity to learn cooking and preserving skills. We have been busily making jams, chutneys, local and international dishes. We have been able to produce food to share and to sell surplus produce to raise funds at events such as our Open Day and the recent preview of the Marlpit pub which is soon to be re-opened. Some of our team members attended First Aid and Food & Hygiene courses, useful training which extended our expertise. We look forward to developing links with the Marlpit Community Garden. As we come to the close of this growing season, we will continue to host Foodshare on the first Sunday of the month, when we can look forward to meeting up for warming soups and hot drinks in the big shed at Bluebell.

### **Compost team**

*Phil Young*

The horse manure does seem to go alarmingly quickly (though we had a healthy supply recently). I would encourage people to use the compost which has rotted down and is ready for use. There is a great deal of this available (a bay up in the main compost area by the main shed next to the road/large apple tree and also the covered bay by the red shed). The work days that were arranged over the year did produce a turnout sufficient to get the required work done. However, these days do tend to produce the same faces and I would encourage anyone who has not yet attended, to try and attend future work days which will be arranged from time to time.

### **Land and water team**

*Mark Newman*

It's been a full-on year for me and I've learnt a lot. Together with Peter Anderson, we've looked after the soft fruit area and I've been introduced to compost management by Phil. Amy showed me how to make yoghurt and Mahesh showed me how to make plum and greengage jam. I also attended a First Responders training session with members of GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell and Marlpit. I haven't long been an allotmentee but my role as Land and Water team leader takes me around GO<sup>2</sup>. This I find an educational experience. There are plots showing great husbandry, care of soil and cultivation. Some growers mix vegetables with flowers – strips of beauty from the Arts and Crafts movement – growing for the table whilst displaying wellbeing. Thank you on behalf of the soil, plant life, pollinators, your allotment neighbours, and myself as team leader. Other strips are

overgrown with bolted veg, rotting fruit and weeds – a wasted resource. An important achievement this year was continuing the water system down past the red sheds and maintaining the system all the way from the tap through the big tanks to the smaller ones. Each tank is labelled with an explanation of how it works. Thanks to fellow allotmenters who helped. Carpet is no longer acceptable on Council allotments and therefore not on GO<sup>2</sup> plots. On possibly the hottest, and longest, day of the year, a great team of Saudi students from UEA took up carpet from the path starting at the polytunnel to somewhere near the red shed.

### **Tools and maintenance team**

*Jane Graham*

At the beginning of the year three spades and three forks went missing from the blue shed, and were replaced with donated tools. There remains the perennial problem of disappearing hand tools which are replaced from the core stock of donated, second hand and new tools.

The big shed and tool days held in March and November continue to be popular, with many growers attending each session. The sheds are cleaned, tools inspected, counted, and put aside for mending if possible. Shears, secateurs and cutting tools are cleaned and sharpened. When the new shed is built it will be kept locked and will house the more valuable tools, along with the strimmer and other mechanical equipment. I plan to use a Sunday morning volunteer day to demonstrate the correct use of tools; this will be held probably to coincide with the spring tool and shed day. The main shed was painted early in the year along with the toilet. The toilet is cleaned by the team leader who ensures there is a supply of wood-shavings and toilet paper and also refills the hand gel containers.

### **Training and mentoring**

*Sophie Chollet*

I took up the role of team leader for training and mentoring in March 2015. I arranged five sessions of skill-sharing at GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell:

- 29 March: Crop rotation - although six people intended to come, they were all put off by the heavy rain. With the two people on shed duty we had an interesting exchange of experiences about crop rotation.
- 31 May: Protecting your crop - this was very successful with 13 attendees, including new members. Very good feedback from growers, who not only learnt useful tips but also spent a good time together – the abundance of cakes helping!
- 14 June: Weeding - the idea was to weed each other's plot as a group, as well as the communal area. Only two attendees. We weeded a communal area and one individual plot, and shared the harvest of radishes.
- 28 June: How to make the best of your plot - four members attended. We covered different topics, according to the attendees' demands: crop rotation, soil structure, watering, harvesting, how to enjoy a big harvest of garlic.
- 12 July: Pests and diseases - no attendees, so the session was cancelled.

My first aim was to provide growers with advice and help by organising skill-sharing sessions. The success was variable, in part due to bad weather. Attendees liked the friendly sessions, informal and open to all, where they learnt, gained confidence and had a good social time. Communication needs to be improved. In future I will also organise specific training for other teams, e.g. hedge-trimming or tool maintenance.

## Grow-Our-Own (GO<sup>2</sup>) at Marlpit Community Garden

Marlpit Community Garden (MCG) which started in June 2013 is developing very well. So far, we have established a herb garden, wild-flower area, bird boxes, bee-hives, forest garden, orchards (with tree-fruit, soft fruit bushes and rhubarb), demonstration plot, vegetable growing areas for individual, families as well schools and community groups.

Like our GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell scheme, MCG has a communal tool store, a composting toilet and an outdoor meeting place. All our growers get supplies of seeds, plants, tools, manure and necessary growing aids.

At present, we have 23 growers and we have the capacity to accommodate up to 100 growers plus a dozen community groups and schools.

Below is a summary of the activities undertaken and events organised in Marlpit during 2014-2015.

### Activities

#### Herb Path 2015

*Dan Wheals, Medical Herbalist.*



Marl Pit Community Garden has given me ( see the picture) the amazing chance to learn about herb growing. Planted alongside the paving slabs that welcome visitors to the central area of the gardens, the 127 slab walkway has been a herbal haven. Plant information about origin, habit, winter resilience and Latin names is recorded corresponding to the slab numbers.



The herb path has inspired and intrigued visitors with its many perennials and biennials growing massively in the fertile soil of the garden. Pizza herbs, tea herbs, culinary herbs, medicinal herbs, nectar herbs and some specialist plants have all been successful.

As well as interested individuals helping Dan and learning by his side, a workshop in October saw 10 people learn about propagation and herbal uses.. As Dan has moved away from Norfolk he will be visiting only occasionally in 2016 but he has introduced a local enthusiastic medical herbalist Alex Hobbs to

take over stewardship of the herb path.

#### Wildflowers at Marlpit Community Garden

*George Ishmael*

One of our objectives at Marlpit is to encourage the growth of wildflowers because, in turn, these support other forms of wildlife and help make the Community Garden an attractive, healthy place for both humans and nature.



One of our first actions was to carry out a botanical survey of the site so that we know what already grows here and can monitor how this changes and hopefully improves over the coming years.

The lower lying half of the site, particularly where the horses graze, is wetter and could support the traditional meadow flora which is fast disappearing from Norfolk. Grazing is one way in which we can encourage a richer natural flora. Orchids have been seen here and we hope they will increase. We have also started to dig out a pond or 'scrape' which should encourage more wetland flowers.

A mixture of wildflowers has been sown alongside the main footpath between the gate and the tool store. This contained a mixture of annuals which tend to flower quickly, such as corn cockle, and more persistent perennial flowers such as red campion and ox-eye daisy (pictured right).



Wild daffodils (pictured left) have also been planted here, which give an early source of food for bees. It is interesting to see that the three different timings of sowing have created three different communities of wildflowers even though the seed mixture was the same. The middle zone, for instance, has become dominated by the tall white

ox-eye daisy (see picture).

## MARLPIT Bees

*Tish Kerkham, Marlpit Community Garden Beekeeper*

We went into winter 2014 with one strong colony of honey bees in our secure bee sanctuary at Marlpit Community Garden. The colony had built up good stores of pollen and nectar during the long warm autumn which we supplemented with a little sugar syrup. It was with great pleasure that I opened the hive in the spring to find a thriving colony.

Throughout the spring and summer we have seen our bees foraging for nectar and pollen on our herbs, crops and wild flowers and doing their share in pollination.

In early summer we bought a new colony but this failed to thrive and a visit from the government bee inspector confirmed that the bees had a viral disease - chronic bee paralysis. The inspector said that we were doing all the right things and forecast that they would make a full recovery. Their condition has improved and we must wait to see if they survive the winter.

Meanwhile we extracted about 20lbs of superb honey from our original colony. This sold fast to members and at the Marlpit pub preview day, labelled with our new smart honey labels.



The colony grew in numbers and the workers started to build queen cells in preparation for swarming. This was forestalled by splitting the colony in two: the queen and half the bees staying in one hive. The others, after being transferred to another hive, successfully raised a new queen who duly returned from her nuptial flight, started laying eggs and established a new colony.

A number of people visited the bees during the summer. At our open day a fascinated group put on bee suits, watched a hive inspection and tested the beekeeper's knowledge with many searching questions. Plot holders and volunteers have also suited up to see the hives being opened from close up, and quite a few people have watched the bees' comings and goings from a viewing point outside the sanctuary.

Looking forward: the interest in bees, demand for honey, and increased need for pollination and availability of nectar as our fruit trees and bushes develop, all encourage us to build up the numbers of bees in our apiary. We plan to increase our number of colonies to about five in the coming year and would like to involve more people in the on-going management of our bees.



### **Marlpit Forest Garden**

*Tish Kerkham*

An exciting new project at Marlpit Community Garden during 2015 has been taking the first steps in the development of our Forest Garden.

Following on the planting of willow and hazel trees during 2014, volunteers from GO2 Marlpit and Bluebell gathered at the far end of the field on Tuesday 13th January to plant about sixty trees that will form the bulk of the canopy layer of the forest garden. These included: nut trees such as sweet chestnuts and almonds; fruit trees, including cherries, persimmons, figs, mulberries, quinces and medlars; Nepalese and Szechuan pepper trees for spices, lime trees for coppicing for their leaves and autumn olives for their fruit and nitrogen fixing properties as well as Italian



alders which also fix nitrogen. Some shrubs that will form the next layer down of the forest garden were also planted, for example June berries, honey berries and pineapple guavas.



**Forest Gardening Planting Day 12th and 13th January**

*A note from a volunteer – Late Alison Foss*

*Sixty trees, a variety of fruit trees, nut trees, trees with edible leaves to be used in salads or as spices and nitrogen-fixing trees, carefully wrapped in cardboard, were unloaded at Marlpit Community Garden.*

*A dozen volunteers gathered to plant the trees. We were faced with an empty section of the field dotted with plastic bottles on sticks. These marked the sites chosen for each individual tree based on their potential height and needs in terms of sun or shade, wet or dry soil etc. One metre diameter circles were cleared of couch grass, holes were dug and the trees planted, mulched with cardboard and protected against nibbling by deer.*

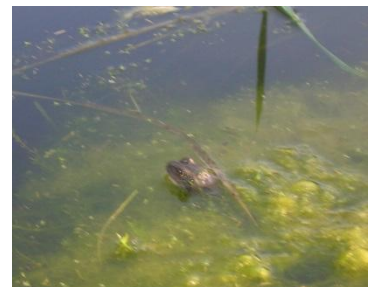
*By midday the bulk of the work was completed and the group relaxed in the gazebo. Mahesh provided a well-earned lunch prepared from vegetables grown in the garden. As a result of the day's work we hope before too long to be feasting on our own peaches, cherries, almonds and figs as well as sampling more unusual fruits such as mulberries and pineapple guavas.*

The plan is to establish a self sustaining forest garden with several layers; canopy, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, ground cover and underground fungal layer, where all the plants are either of direct use to us or help to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

During the year patches were cleared in which to extend the range of plants to include currants and gooseberries, New Zealand and Mountain flax, cardoons and wild strawberries. Cardboard was used as a mulch to suppress the weeds, and trees were protected from visiting muntjacs. As one of the products of the garden will be honey, winter honeysuckle bushes were planted to provide forage for honey bees on warm days in the winter.

The route of a circular path has been established and kept mown over the summer.

Four or five of our members dug a small pond and one of the tasks of the large group of business volunteers was to dig a trench to provide this with a water supply. The pond, which was planted with local pond weed, has attracted frogs and toads and provided drinking water for bees. Dragonflies have been seen hovering above it and newts have successfully bred in it. An area near the pond will be maintained as a clearing for relaxation as the trees get bigger.



Most of the trees established well. Replacements for the few that failed and more shrubs have been ordered for planting in January 2016. During the coming season work will include care and maintenance of established trees and shrubs and extending the areas of shrubs, herbaceous perennials and low growing plants to cover more of the forest garden.

## Volunteering Work-Days

We held regular volunteering work-days, every Tuesday from 10am to 1 pm followed by a home-made lunch cooked using seasonal produce from MCG. Volunteers help manage the site and maintain the demonstration plot, herb garden, wild-flower area, bee-hives, forest garden and orchards.

Everyone is welcome to join; no specific skills or long-term commitment is necessary. It is an opportunity to meet new people, learn gardening skills and enjoy being out in a beautiful garden.



### VOLUNTEER TUESDAYS AT MARLPIT COMMUNITY GARDEN

#### *Mark Sorrell*

A small group of us meet every Tuesday morning weather permitting (and it usually does!) at Marlpit Community Garden in a work party of volunteers undertaking a number of tasks such as hoeing, digging, planting. In this way, in the space of two years, we have helped to establish on this beautiful site a fruit bush and rhubarb garden, communal plots, a border some hundreds of yards long of herbs of all kinds, a wild flower border, a bee sanctuary and an extensive forest garden.

After an hour or two of hard work we are glad to break off and share the delicious hot food which Mahesh brings us. We have mains water on site and an ingenious Kelley kettle which enables us to make tea or coffee. The field, the food, the good company and the fresh air make these working Tuesdays a really enjoyable experience.

#### *Gordon Reid*

I started volunteering at Marlpit in July 2014. I didn't have much of an idea what to do. Since then I have learnt a lot from practical experience and courses. I am glad I went along one day a week and feel more confident growing fruit and vegetables. It is also good to bring home fresh organic produce at the end of the day from the garden.

#### *Teresa Emmett*

Our individual plots have given us good crops, and I have enjoyed working on them in such a beautiful place.

The herb garden is a delight to walk past and the Wild Flower border on the other side of the path gave us a really good show. We have sown another section for next year.



## Cookery Club

We started a Lunch Club in March 2015 for SLI members and their friends and families. The idea was to encourage people to cook using seasonal produce, share recipe ideas and have meals together. This has taken place on the last Saturday of the month. The Lunch Club offers opportunities for people to share their cooking skills, learn to cook better and enjoy the food cooked using seasonal produce from the Marlpit Community Garden.

Over the months, we have tried a range of recipes such as kale curries, herby flatbread, broad bean samosas, roast courgettes with basmati rice and Mediterranean dishes (see picture)



*Tabouleh and falafels*



In April, Lunch Club did a taste test on varieties of Kale

## Growing fruit, vegetables and herbs: A practical training course

<b>10<sup>th</sup> Jan</b> (JD)  Growing soft fruit and tree fruit	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Feb</b> (JD)  Pruning mature fruit trees	<b>14<sup>th</sup> March</b> (JD, MP)  Growing vegetables – soil preparation and plant basics
<b>11<sup>th</sup> Apr</b> (JD, MP)  Growing from seeds, what, when and how?	<b>9<sup>th</sup> May</b> (JD, MP)  Growing from seeds, plant care	<b>13<sup>th</sup> Jun</b> (JD, MP)  Looking after your plants
<b>11<sup>th</sup> Jul</b> (JD, MP)  Pest and disease, identification and control	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Aug</b> (MP and others)  Harvesting and preserving fruit and vegetables	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Sep</b> (JD)  Plant propagation / taking cuttings
<b>10<sup>th</sup> Oct</b> (DW)  All about herbs	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Nov</b> (GI)  Gardening with nature	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Dec</b> (JD, MP)  Sustainable gardening practices

We started a practical gardening training programme on a monthly basis in January 2015. As the name of the training course suggests, this was practical training. The range of topics covered included growing soft and tree fruit, pruning fruit trees, soil preparation and plant basics, growing from seeds, looking after plants, pests and diseases, harvesting and preserving fruit and vegetables and plant propagation among others.

Facilitators for the training were John Darby, Lecturer in Horticulture, and Mahesh Pant, the founder of GO<sup>2</sup> and the Programme Manager of the SLI. All sessions were fully subscribed and the feed-back from the participants was very positive.

Following on from the feedback received from the participants, we are going to continue running the training programme in 2015-2016 with additional topics.

## Events

### A Big Pumpkin Day 25<sup>th</sup> October 2014

The day started with harvesting a bumper crop of pumpkins and squashes (see picture) from the Marlpit Community Garden. The fertile soil of MCG, a favourable weather of the summer of 2014 and of course the care of regular volunteers made this possible.

After the display, visitors were offered pumpkins and squashes in return for a donation to the Charity. In the nearby Marlpit Community Centre, some volunteers were busy preparing a range of dishes from squash and pumpkin which included among others pumpkin jam, roast squash, pumpkin and chickpea curry and butternut squash soup.





### Christmas Party 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at the Marlpit Community Centre

It was the first joint Christmas celebration including members from GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell South Allotments and Marlpit Community Garden. The evening went well with live music, home-cooked food using produce from MCG, quiz & raffle prizes.



### National Volunteer Day 15th May 2015

On Friday 15th May, young people from businesses all over the country gave their time to work voluntarily on community and environmental projects. One of the projects selected was Marlpit Community Garden.



Forty-one men and women from Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), Norwich got stuck in to three tasks: protecting our fruit trees from Muntjac deer, digging a trench for a pipe to carry water to the forest garden end of the site and enlarging the pond for wildlife.

The atmosphere was great with plenty of laughter as well as work. The volunteers appreciated the fact that there were about



ten of us from Marlpit and Bluebell projects working alongside them. They said it was a wonderful day and the organisers promised that our project would be their first choice the next time round.

We also enjoyed the day and were very pleased with how much was achieved. Marlpit Community

Garden team and the Sustainable Living Initiative would like to thank all the volunteers from JLL for their hard work and to Employee Volunteering CIC for excellent coordination of the work.

### **Marlpit Community Garden Open Day 27th June 2015**

The kitchen at the Marlpit Community Centre was busy on the morning of the Open Day on Saturday 27th June. There was a chance to learn how to make samosas (fillo pastry with savoury filling of potato/onion/broad beans/coriander and sweet filling of apple/rhubarb/ginger). Once assembled they were oven cooked for 10 mins. Also a chocolate and courgette cake and rhubarb crumble were prepared.

All this fresh food was then ferried over to the Community Garden, which along with other food brought on the day gave a good spread for Open Day visitors

There were plenty of activities – the Forest Garden tours and Bee Hive viewings led by Tish were very popular.

There was also a chance to meet our new Norwich South MP Clive Lewis. Thanks to all those who contributed and made the open day a real success.

### **The Marlpit Arms – Preview Day Sat 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

We spent the morning of [Saturday 19th September](#) 2015 at Marlpit Community Centre labelling chutneys and jams and cooking vegetarian curries to take to The Marlpit Arms where they had an open afternoon to publicise their development plans.

We distributed [leaflets](#) and talked to people, explaining the aims of Marlpit Community Garden and the [SLI](#). The interest they expressed was encouraging and we hope to gain new members.

We also raised money for SLI: Curry sales made £112 and the sale of honey from the Marlpit Community Garden, and jams and chutneys made by our growers, raised £119.

A big thanks to the The Marlpit Arms and the Friends of the Marlpit for inviting us to the event.



## SLI Finance

The Living Well in the Community grant from Norfolk County Council came to an end in February 2015. The grant made a huge contribution to establishing the Marlpit Community Garden.

A grant from Norwich Consolidated Charities has enabled us to carry out important tasks including the maintenance of the Garden. As the income from the Marlpit Community Garden is not going to be sufficient for the maintenance of the garden in the foreseeable future, the continuing support from Norwich Consolidated Charities is vital. A big thank you to them.

Our thanks also go to Employ Volunteering for providing funds for purchasing materials and teams of volunteers who helped with projects at Marlpit Community Garden.

Overall, our total income including from grants and donations is up and so is the surplus compared to the previous year. Additional sources of income in 2014-2015 included income from the sale of our honey from Marlpit, monthly training sessions and the rent from horse grazing. We expect the income from these new sources of income to grow in the coming years (see table 1 below for details).

As in previous years, GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell is financially self-sustainable. Rental income from our growers in Bluebell is slightly lower compared to the previous year but as we are giving unused plots back to the Council, our rental payments will continue to decrease. We have made enough surplus to pay for a new tool-shed. We also made a big capital investment in Bluebell (£1254) in replacing old picnic benches with new recycled plastic benches.

In the case of Marlpit, income from sources other than the plot rent is increasing. As we are still in the process of developing the garden – planting more trees, improving fencing and paths, and so on, we need grants to fund our activities for few more years.

## Alison Foss

We were very shocked indeed to hear about the sudden death of Alison Foss in August 2015. Alison made a huge contribution to Marlpit Community Garden and we were delighted when she became our part-time accountant. She was a great supporter of Marlpit Community Garden and had been editing the Marlpit Newsletter from its beginning. Alison will be very much missed.



**Table 1: Sustainable Living Initiative - Annual Account Summary**  
**October 2014 to September 2015**

	2015				2014				
	Marlpit Community Garden	Marlpit Allotments	Bluebell Allotments	Total	Schools Project	Marlpit Community Garden	Marlpit Allotments	Bluebell Allotments	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Members' plot rent		770	4,099	4,869	370		815	4,224	5,409
Gardening training	730			730	260				260
Grants and donations	25,225		10	25,235		24,098			24,098
Open day			348	348			101		101
Gardening consultancy	1,000			1,000					0
Miscellaneous sales & other income		760	640	1,400			125	140	265
<b>Operating income</b>	<b>26,955</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>5,097</b>	<b>33,582</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>24,098</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>4,364</b>	<b>30,133</b>
Council plot rent			1,160	1,160				1,190	1,190
Seeds and plants		276	116	392			307	578	885
Manure and compost		283	275	558			79	179	258
Small tools, repairs and garden sundries	38		14	52		226		31	257
Conservation	6,858			6,858		8,491			8,491
Plot improvements			1,078	1,078				108	108
Keys		145	149	294				124	124
Equipment and supplies	1,509		104	1,613	248	1,061		729	2,038
Depreciation	6,307		314	6,621		6,307	50	159	6,516
Volunteer costs	281		1	282		30		7	37
Training for members	1,237		498	1,735		965			965
Members' course costs	551			551					0
<b>Direct expenditure</b>	<b>16,781</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>3,709</b>	<b>21,194</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>17,080</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>3,105</b>	<b>20,869</b>
<b>Gross surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>10,174</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>12,388</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>7,018</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>1,259</b>	<b>9,264</b>
Insurance		200	201	401				424	424
Office rent	1,630			1,630		1,020		60	1,080
Programme manager	5,700			5,700	382	4,618			5,000
Accounts	1,440	210	210	1,860		1,380	300		1,680
Telephone and internet	174	145	144	463			93	93	186
Stationery and postage		93	93	186			60	60	120
IT costs		105	105	210			65	65	130
Subscriptions		32	32	64			31	32	63
Sundries		104	104	208			21	21	42
<b>Overhead expenditure</b>	<b>8,944</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>10,722</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>7,018</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>8,725</b>
<b>Operating surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>-63</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>1,666</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>539</b>

## Plans for 2015-2016

### GO<sup>2</sup> Bluebell South Allotments



As mentioned earlier, the team approach initiated a while ago is working very well. To sustain the energy and enthusiasm of the Team, efforts will be made to increase and improve the participation of all the growers (not just the small number of core group) in managing and maintaining the scheme in the coming days. Those members who fail to look after their plots and do not offer help run the scheme will be encouraged to leave; half-empty plots (that is only about half is allocated) will be given back to the Council. We will also try to consolidate our plots in the Central area where all our facilities – water supply, tools, and picnic areas – are concentrated.

### GO<sup>2</sup> Marlpit Community Garden



Marlpit Community garden is now fully functioning; we need more growers and volunteers to make good use of the facilities developed and to enjoy the natural ambience of the Garden.

Efforts will be made in the new year to reach out to families and groups living and working in the area to join the Garden. With the opening of the Marlpit Arms in the Spring of 2016, we expect opportunities for collaborative work between MCG and the Marlpit Arms.



There will be regular training sessions each month on growing fruit, vegetables and herbs, cooking sessions using fresh, seasonal produce and preserving surplus fruit, vegetables and herbs. Details of training events will be posted on SLI's website.

Muntjac deer have caused a lot of damage to our newly planted orchard and forest garden; to deal with this problem, we already have started putting deer-proof fence around our land which will continue in 2015-2016 as well, subject to funding availability.

## Join us



If you are interested in:

- growing fruit and vegetables
- learning about herbs, bees and forest garden
- meeting new people,
- getting fresh seasonal produce in return for regular volunteering at the Marlpit Community Garden, and
- supporting our work,

please contact us at the address below.

### **Sustainable Living Initiative**

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**Registered Charity Number 1154190**