



## Down to Earth Newsletter June 2019

Welcome to the round up of this year – it's been very busy and productive as ever!

### Vale Community Hospital Allotment Scheme, Dursley

10 more beds were built at Vale Hospital in March of this year making it 51 in total. 5 are still available — priority groups are Gardening on Prescription and residents from the local new estate. We are delighted to say that we got the first lot of our own compost this year. In the allotments the veg is always ready early due to the raised beds having high sides so the sun heats soil and helps the growth.



We have communal fruit areas and we have just built a second hand shed. The polytunnel is being used well. Bird feeding and watching has become a great pastime encouraging us to leave areas dedicated to wildlife and we have plans for a wildlife pond in the autumn.

We have run workshops in Food Preservation, Seedsaving and Propagation and we plan to run one on Compost.



The Allotment Scheme has been supported by Bisley Community Composting Scheme, Garden Supplies, Tesco Bags of Help, MacMillan and Dursley Lions.

### Vale Community Hospital Gardening Club.



12 volunteers meet on a Thursday morning to look after the hospital grounds. All plants have been donated – let me know if you have anything you don't want!

We are working towards the Green Flag Award® - this is a scheme that recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. If you join us you'll get plenty of tea and biscuits!



Hope is the companion dog of one of the volunteers and joins in most weeks.

The club was recently supported by Buildit with a donation of gravel.



**buildit**  
TRADE & DIY

### Selsley Community Growing Scheme

In Selsley we have been working on the private allotments that had been neglected over the last 20 years. We have developed this site as an example of best practice in community growing schemes. Here are a few photos from our plots recently.

Runner beans have gone in - excellent job by Derek and Robin. Pots all watered and Steve got on with the composting. Beds tidied, weeding done. All in all a good morning's work



Along with our second hand shed we now have a new second hand greenhouse so watch this space and see what grows. We regularly have 6 or 7 volunteers, so if you would like to come up and join us for a healthy, community morning of digging, chatting and tea drinking then get in touch.

01453 700011

[info@downtoearthstroud.co.uk](mailto:info@downtoearthstroud.co.uk)

### Community Seed Bank

Stroud Community Seed Bank now has around 20 active Seed Guardians who are busy growing and planning their seed saving for 2019. After our film showing of 'In Our Hands- Seeding Change' which gathered lots of interest from Stroud public around the importance of food security from local growers and producers, we are enthused and driven to continue creating a seed network and raising the importance of seed saving across Stroud. Our latest

blog, from Sally Oates, focuses on flowers for pollinating the vegetable patch, highlighting the need to create a native flourishing habitat for all our bugs and bees whilst growing to save seed.



Our Google Group is proving a good communication method for our Seed Guardians and anyone who is interested in saving seed. It is a great way to ask questions and share photos - it is open to anyone who would like to join! Fran, one of our Seed Guardians is hosting an Open Day on **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July** for anyone who would like to see a beautiful garden and see where some of our seed is grown. We also hope to organise another seed saving workshop before the Autumn comes, to refresh any current seed savers and to encourage any new interest, dates TBC!

If you would like more information on seed saving, please contact

Beth on 07545383662 or  
seedbank@downtoearthstroud.co.uk

### **The Fruit Exchange**

The Fruit Exchange connects food outlets with people who have surplus fruit or veg. It brings communities together and ensures fresh, locally grown produce is not wasted. It is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year.

We have had a good handful of businesses sign up in the last month, such as, the Community Kitchen in Brimscombe which aims to reduce surplus food waste, taking in excess from foodbanks, shops and now anyone involved with The Fruit Exchange, and a farm shop in Upton St Leonard's who are wanting to engage with their community and bring in

surplus and different fruit and vegetables for their menus. We have also now signed up P3, a charity delivering services to support socially excluded and vulnerable people. This particular local food outlet is for donating fruit and vegetables only, they are not involved in the 'exchange' but will take surplus grown food if you have it. Welcome all our new local food outlets! We are now calling out for more individual growers to take part in the project, to make use of it each year and benefit from the wonderful food that all our local food outlets offer you in return. **If you are part of an allotment or grow your own food, get in touch and I can support you to make your first exchange of many! Please contact**

Beth on 07545383662 or  
seedbank@downtoearthstroud.co.uk



### **New Projects**

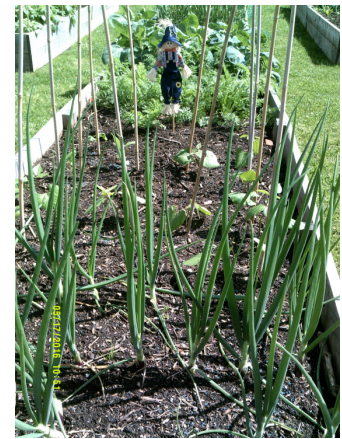
#### **Churchdown GP Surgery**

There is an increasing body of evidence that regular gardening is good for your mental and physical health. Not only can gardening lower stress levels, but can enable people to overcome anxiety and loneliness and regain their confidence and self-esteem. Down to Earth have a raised bed growing scheme, gardening on prescription starting in July.

#### **Applewood**

We are delighted to have been awarded project development of the Applewood Allotment Scheme in Cashes Green. Due to start soon, we will be looking at what current allotmenters would like to see on offer, raised beds for those less able or small!, workshops, growing schemes, putting in a pond, shed

and composting systems.



Anyone interested in getting more involved in any of our projects, please contact

01453 700011

[info@downtoearthstroud.co.uk](mailto:info@downtoearthstroud.co.uk)

**And finally**, Down to Earth is a Community Interest Company, a not-for-profit company that works for the benefit of communities.

Our mission statement is:

*"The objects of the Company are to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) for groups and individuals in the county of Gloucestershire by increasing access to and availability of local sustainable food for local communities, through encouraging cultivation of organic food in domestic gardens, allotments, developing a wide range of food projects as well as providing volunteering, training, skills development and employment opportunities."*

If you would like to get involved with any of our projects, just get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

01453 700011

[info@downtoearthstroud.co.uk](mailto:info@downtoearthstroud.co.uk)

[www.downtoearthstroud.co.uk](http://www.downtoearthstroud.co.uk)

Not-for-profit company no. 30844R

