

The community garden journey

This journey started in Sept 2015. You can feel the excitement in these early interviews with Tom Murphy, one of the visionaries behind it all.

2017 https://youtu.be/E-9mebh98EI?si=ke4Nmwlh4IL_vxK7

2018 interview with Tom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0SBXF4EIYY>

Originally, our church had a chain link fence running all the way down from top of the hill to the road separating us from the green

It still felt like the green was a reflection of the church, so we occasionally started mowing it if the grass got too long

At that point we got in conversation with the council about this (insurance!!!) and the outcome was we asked if we could look after it as a green space...

In the meantime, we were having double doors put in the other side, so we decided to go 2-4-1 and have them put in the green side as well. That double door opening onto a chainlink fence was known as the door of faith

A few years later in Sept 2015, after much prayer at our end, we reached an agreement with the council and agreed a long lease on the land, the fence came down and the door of faith was opened. IF I had realised the impact of this on our church and community, I would have thrown a party there and then

Within weeks of this, a church member had offered to build the decking and then Tom came back to the UK after working in New Zealand. He had learned a lot about permaculture (See <https://www.permaculture.org.uk/>) and was keen to put some into practice.

Using his skills and those of work colleagues, the community garden was founded...

Trees were put in funded and planted by local individuals, groups and Barton Primary 2017

A composter was built in the middle

Signs were painted

Leaflets printed

Not long afterwards, apples, pears, plums, raspberries, chard, kale, spinach, herbs and grapes were on offer at our then Foodbank cafe and little by little our local community became aware that they could come and in the words of Tom, "Pick and eat".

When asked by someone, "*What would you do if you found me just taking some fruit?*" Tom answered, "*Give you a hug!*"

As the years have gone on, we have seen volunteers come and go in the garden, leaving their stories and their mark there.

Individuals, couples, even whole families have helped out over the years

Paula set up "Gardening for health and happiness" a volunteer scheme, through which one individual went on to secure work at the hospital

I have seen families who didn't have their own garden have wonderful family gardening times down here and would love to see that again.

Today, we still run that scheme, beside our Open House Community Cafe, so people who help can also enjoy a coffee on the house and whatever John and George are cooking

Looking to the future, I would love to see new signage, making it clear to our community not just that they can "pick and eat" but that they can find out about the food, about permaculture, about how it started, it can even tie into the education (Carbon, Nitrogen cycles) for the schools. Also that they can volunteer... "Pick it, eat it, weed it"

People may not be able to manage an allotment, but another thing I would like to see is if someone has vision to grow something and takes responsibility for growing it we can loan them a specific area of garden.

Maybe a seed has been sown in your heart today about being part of this (heavenly) process. If so please get in touch, email officectriow@gmail.com

We read that God walked in the garden with Adam. He still does today

He loves gardens. and he loves you, as it says on our sign.

Knowing that is the best thing, and in a world lacking in wellbeing, it is where we find rest for our weary souls, so if a seed of God's love has been planted today, or even come to life after being dormant for a long time, please get in touch x