

Bandstand Beds Association (BBA) AGM – 20 February 2018

Chair's Report

Growing on Clapham Common

Having been given the opportunity by Lambeth Council to take on more land on the green waste site to extend our community food growing garden, we began 2017 with this challenge as our main focus. With financial help from the [Clapham BID](#) we were able to buy a new shipping container which was delivered in February. With grant money from [Tesco Bags of Help](#) we have kitted the container out as an on-site kitchen and bought raised beds and other equipment for the garden.

Aware that the extended garden was not accessible to everyone, at the beginning of the summer we launched a [Spacehive crowdfunding campaign](#) to raise over £5000 for pathways. Through events, the sale of our fresh produce, pickles and donations we achieved our target and the new paths were installed in the autumn, making our garden a welcoming place for everyone.

Throughout the year we also continued to maintain the original Bandstand Beds next to La Baita and our growing space opposite The Spinney which produced a good crop of soft fruit last year. We have now added autumn raspberries and plan to plant more berries – making these our Fruit Beds.

BBA activity and community engagement

Workshops

- Throughout the year we held a Saturday morning gardening session each week and a midweek meet and harvest throughout the summer.
- We set up a series of themed pay-what-you-can gardening workshops facilitated by [Social Landscapes](#) and a bee and pollinator workshop with entomologist Hannah Norman.
- In late summer we ran some trial Monday afternoon gardening sessions aimed at encouraging older people to get out and get growing.

Events

As well as pop-up picnics after the gardening sessions, our fundraising and foodie events throughout the summer included...

- [London Food Month](#) cook-up to launch our new container kitchen. We were joined by [Cactus Kitchens](#) who ran a knife skills workshop. *One Fine Day* video of the event [can be seen here](#).
- [Pause for Effect](#) 'land girls' visited us for an afternoon gardening workshop followed by a cream tea.
- In August, Will and Conor ([Howell&Harte](#)) organised a successful supper club to raise cash for the pathways.

- [A Taste of India on the Common](#), a fundraising picnic working in partnership with [Green Shoots Foundation](#).
- In September we held our annual feast which was part of [Capital Growth Urban Harvest](#). We were joined by Dr Bike, the local police and The Spinney. As well as our own delicious food, Dean Parker, head chef from [The Manor Restaurant](#) also provided food on the day which helped raise a significant amount of money on the day.
- Halloween Happening Pathway Launch. Another fantastic cook-up to celebrate the installation of our access pathways. Lots of fun activities including pumpkin carving, leaf printing and archery provided by [GLL](#).

Outreach working with local community organisations

- [Clapham Society](#) talk about community food growing.
- Helping to organise and taking part in CCMAC's Common People at the Bandstand.
- Stall at Clapham BID's summer fete in the Old Town which raised money and brought new members on board.
- We were a winner in the Food Growing category of the Blooming Lambeth Awards 2017.
- Working with [Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee](#) (CCMAC) and The Spinney we have secured £10,000 from the [Mayor of London's Greener City Fund](#) for a wildflower project on the Common, and we will be involved in this throughout spring and summer 2018.
- In recognition of our contribution to Clapham Common, at CCMAC's Annual Open Meeting on 1 February 2018 an amendment was made to the organisation's constitution allowing us to have a community representative on the committee.

Looking forward

We now have a committed group of volunteers and BBA membership continues to rise, as does our income. For this reason, and to secure BBA's future, we need to change our constitution to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

We will run our weekly gardening sessions as before, but on the first Saturday of each month we will have a pop-up lunch and stay open later. We've booked 10 gardening workshops (one a month until October), will be working with Groundwork on four [Small Change, Big Difference](#) workshops, and in the spring we plan to start a weekly Monday gardening session for older people – and that's just the start!

The most important thing is that our food growing project continues to fulfil our aims and objectives of sharing horticultural skills and knowledge with the public. That our community garden provides a space where people can get outdoors, meet people and have fun – and where everyone is welcome!