

ABCD Toolkit: Cricketfield Community Garden project in Hele and Lower Barton

The project grew out of a local charity – Hele's Angels – that had to close down due to a lack of funding. There were a handful of volunteers that were still involved with the garden which was created within the grounds of the local secondary school (Torquay Academy). They initially lacked the confidence to carry on – but with the support and guidance of their local community builder they have continued and grown the garden.



Volunteers

The focus of the garden has shifted away from produce to recognising the wellbeing value of gardening. Drawing on his previous experience the Community Builder has enabled the volunteers to reorganise the site to create less but more accessible beds and polytunnels. One volunteer – Marie - has naturally emerged as a coordinator. The garden is also now working towards being cost neutral. Under the Hele's Angels model there was a paid gardener and a costly portaloo. Now the project is combining the muscle of younger volunteers with the gardening expertise of the older volunteers, and much more of a focus on social time together. A partner organisation – Play Torbay – has created a compost loo. They have some play equipment on the site and this brings young people to the garden too. Groundwork have provided some training for free on sustainable growing.

Recently the garden was showcased to local social workers as a site where they could refer isolated clients and this led to staff from the NHS and Stagecoach running an action day with the community volunteers where a new shelter was built, and beds weeded. Stagecoach also donated £60 towards seeds. Drawing on the Community Building principle of 'we have what we need when we share what we have' over the last year the garden has also received:

- Community donations.
- £8,000 play equipment from Prince of Orange pub.
- 200 garden slabs free from Facebook marketplace.
- 1 donated 8ft by 12ft greenhouse.
- 1 donated 8ft by 6 ft polytunnel.
- 200 trees from Woodland Trust.

This alongside a grant from the local Housing Association (Sanctuary Housing) has enabled a transformation of the site and its sense of ownership.



Volunteers



Sustainable beds following Groundwork training



Stagecoach cheque for seeds



Grass cutting for composting from Torquay Academy

Above all the success of the garden is based on people having fun. Last year the volunteers were asked to help 'grow' a grass man head for the local Eyeview cultural festival. They were proud to provide the following:

