

Hope Gardening on a page

February 2018

Hope is a long established Northampton based charity helping address poverty and homelessness. Every day we feed hundreds of people and use food as the cornerstone of a range of services and help to enable people to escape poverty and move on in their lives. These include activities to keep people busy, build confidence and self-esteem, reduce offending and substance misuse, and to train for work and gain new skills.

For most of our 40 year history, we have fed people using donations from the wider community, including business. This has included some fresh and healthy vegetables and fruit, but often this has been end of date produce alongside sometimes variable quantities of fresh salad and vegetables.

Hope's new gardening project is an ambitious attempt to grow a sizeable quantity of fresh veg ourselves, especially salad, to stock two of Hope's key services, our day centre for the homeless and in need, and our new foodclub for people on low incomes.

The primary aims are clear:

- To improve access to healthy veg and fruit to people on low incomes
- By doing so, improve diet
- To give opportunities for people in need to participate in the benefits of practical horticulture, by offering training and skills opportunities in horticulture for those who have been long term unemployed

However there are several secondary aims:

- To reclaim neglected urban land, building community growing project which benefit the wider community
- To reduce food miles
- To improve the local financial economy by circulating funds locally
- To contribute to a wider sustainable food strategy in Northampton
- To offer therapeutic gardening to people in need

As well as growing veg, the project also maintains some urban gardens for community use, including growing flowers and ornamental plants for leisure and pleasure, and providing a service to public sector groups in terms of landscaping and garden management. We will also develop community composting.

Examples of similar projects include: <http://www.capitalgrowth.org/>
<https://www.cfgn.org.uk/how-we-work/our-members/>

The theory behind this kind of work can be found here:

https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/GrowingHealth_BenefitsReport_0.pdf
<https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/2017/10/newdealforhorticulture/>
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-press/browse-books/sustainable-food-systems-the-role-of-the-city>

For more about our project, see our own website:

<http://hopeenterprises.org.uk/Content/Page32.aspx?PageId=519&PageTitle=Other%20Hope%20Services>