

# The Royal Borough Environment Project Update Report 2017/18



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## 1.0 Introduction

The Royal Borough Environment Project (RBEP) works in partnership with the local community and the public, private and voluntary sectors, to enhance the environment in Kensington and Chelsea.

The project aims to work with a range of partners, community organisations, schools and local people to:

- Increase local residents' involvement and pride in their local environment.
- Improving the appearance and use of the grot spots, underused and neglected areas.
- Use the environment as a tool to bring communities together.
- Support a diverse range of innovative and appropriate environmental initiatives to resolve environmental issues and improve the appearance and function of sites.

Agreed future priorities for the RBEP include:

- Grot Spots (Under-used, neglected and/ or derelict areas)
- Community Kitchen Gardens
- Bridge improvement schemes
- Green Roofs
- Greening of Social Housing Open Spaces
- Community engagement (Street greening initiatives, art projects).
- Parks / Open space improvements
- Identifying suitable partners to participate in the project
- Building links with other environmental and educational projects

## 2.0 Project Delivery

The RBEP delivers in partnership a wide range of environmental and community projects in the Royal Borough, below is a summary of the projects delivered in 2017/18.

### 2.1 Community Kitchen Gardens

The community kitchen gardens initiative started in 2009/10 and transforms under-used, neglected or disused areas of land into allotment style gardens where local residents can grow their own fruit and vegetables. Each year additional kitchen gardens are installed (approximately ten per year) and proves to be extremely popular with local residents.

Over the last year an additional ten sites have been developed, creating 80 community kitchen gardens, with over 750 raised plots and being used by over 1600 local residents, community groups and schools. Each plot is approximately 3m<sup>2</sup>, which provides a small but manageable size plot. The RBEP has worked in partnership with private landowners (Network Rail), housing associations (Family Mosaic, Notting Hill Housing Group, Catalyst, L&Q and the TMO), Groundwork London and the Council's Housing Department, to secure kitchen garden sites and funding.



The award winning community kitchen garden at Russell Road Kensington



Above, the under used area of Convent Garden Estate before being transformed into a new community kitchen garden (below). The new raised beds now allocated to local residents to grow produce.

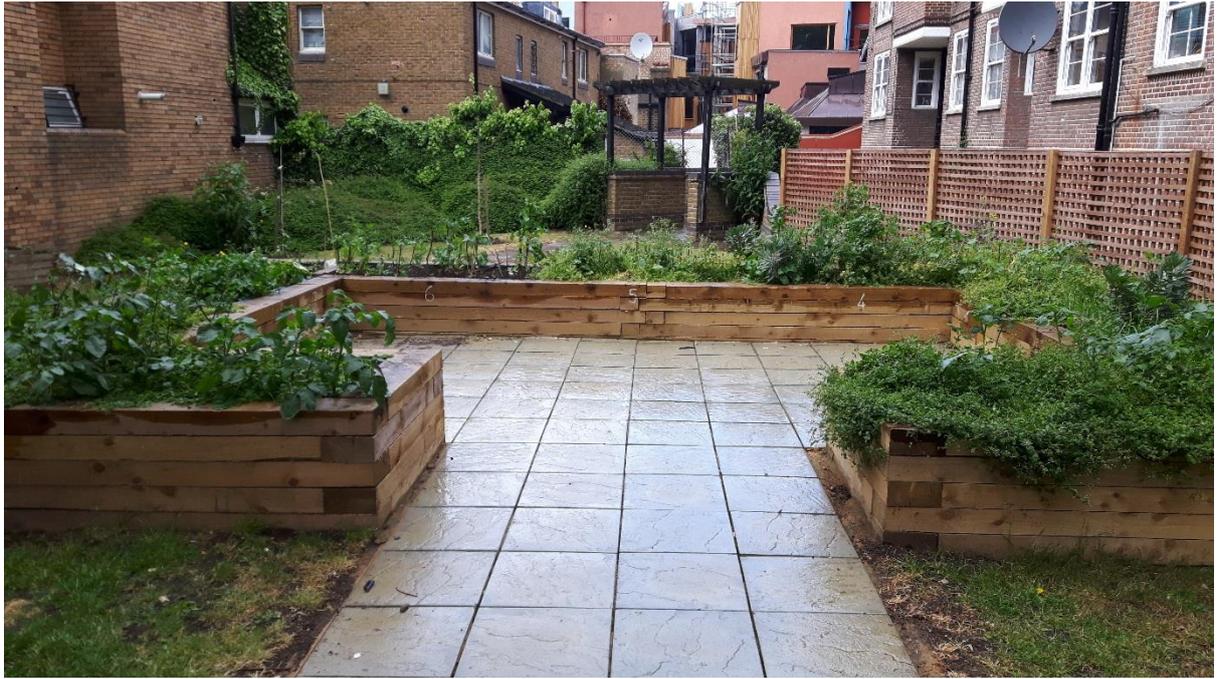




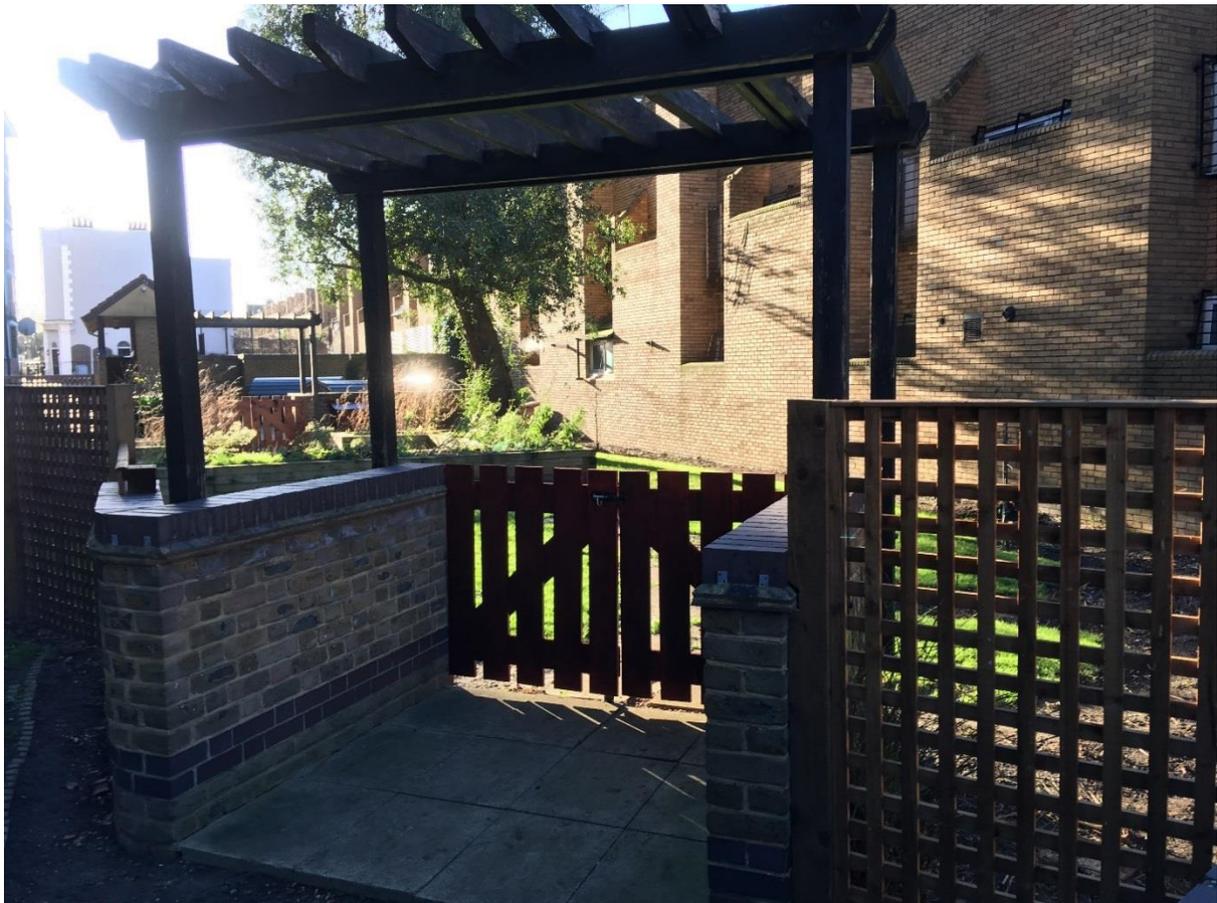
Winter planting workshop at Sybil Thorndike House, Earls Court



Newly installed community kitchen garden at Sheffield Terrace



Planters at Winterbourne House



The new gated community kitchen garden at Winterbourne House



Launch of the community garden at Elkstone Road, North Kensington. A project run by Chelsea Physic Garden in the space previously developed by MIND gardening group.



The Council Leader with community gardener and celebrity gardener Danny Clarke at the launch of St Clement James Centre community garden.

## **On-Going Gardening Support**

An essential part of the kitchen garden project is providing free gardening support, advice and training to plot holders and interested residents. Therefore, two community gardeners (William Rallison and Lisa Wilkinson) are employed to run a programme of garden workshops, events and provide gardening support. This allows plot holders to plan what they want to grow and receive free expert advice and practical gardening tips.



Composting workshop

This support has also assists plot holders establishing garden clubs for their kitchen garden sites. The Council is keen for each kitchen garden to have their own garden club which will help manage and oversee their community kitchen garden, allow them to fund raise and run their own garden events and help make the kitchen garden project more sustainable and self-sufficient over the long term.

## **Brighter Kensington and Chelsea Scheme (BKCS)**

BKCS kindly invited the community kitchen garden project to be included in their annual gardening competition; a new prize category for Vegetable Plots was successfully introduced in 2012. This category has now formed part of the annual prize giving and is open to all plot holders and proves very popular. Prizes were given out to the best community plot and best

plot overall. The RBEP also assists with the administration of the main BKCS summer garden competition, which promotes gardening and greening the borough.



Richmond Fellowship, North Kensington, community kitchen garden took part in BKCS

## **2.2 Cultivating Kensington & Chelsea – Local Food Growing Charity**

The RBEP worked with Groundwork London, Public Health and plot holders on developing a local food growing charity called Cultivating K&C. Groundwork secured two years of Innovation funding in 2014 to work with the Council and the local community to set up this enterprise. Also Public Health funding was secured by the RBEP to develop the market garden site.

The aim of Cultivating K&C is to grow and sell high quality fruit and vegetable seedlings with all profits made being used to support community gardening in the borough. In April 2016, Cultivating K&C become an operational Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and its charity number is 1165913.

A new market garden has been developed on a disused platform at Kensington Olympia, which consists of four large greenhouses. The site was used to grow and sell 1000's of fruit and vegetable seedlings throughout 2017/18, which were grown by Cultivating K&C volunteers.

The first year of operations have proved successful with a profit of nearly £2000 being used to support community gardening across the borough. The success is due to the hard work and dedication of the volunteers and trustees who have invested into this new enterprise.

In 2017, Cultivating K&C built on this success and had weekly plant sales at Olympia and Portobello Road Market during the spring and summer, as well as developing a commercial working relationships with local nurseries such as Rassells. This resulted in £3000 in profit being distributed in grants to 13 community gardening groups in the borough.



Kensington Olympia disused platform before and after clearing





A view of new greenhouses at the Market Garden at Olympia



One of the first plant sales at Kensington Olympia – which raised £500 in two hours



Cultivating K&C volunteer at Portobello Road fortnightly plant sale

### 2.3 Schools and Public Health Schemes

The RBEP in partnership with Healthy Community Gardeners Association has developed an exciting food growing project with schools in the Borough. The Food Growing School project is working with:

- Ashburnham School
- Bevington School
- St Mary's School
- Barlby School
- Ark Brunel
- St Thomas's School
- Sion Manning roman catholic girls school (due to be Co – Ed next year)

At each school a food growing garden was built and an extensive gardening training and support programme delivered in partnership with a dedicated school gardener from Healthy Community Gardeners Association.

The aim of the training and support programme is to encourage food growing in the school, training pupils, teachers and the wider school community about food growing and healthy eating and how the garden can be used as an education tool to support the school curriculum.



Willow arch at entrance to Bevington Primary food growing area

Food growing in schools has proved extremely popular therefore food growing areas and gardening support has been provided to the following schools in 2017/18.

- Holy Trinity
- Marlborough
- Oxford Gardens
- St Cuthbert's
- Our Ladies of Victories
- St Mary's Abbot's
- St Joseph's
- Kensington Academy
- Thomas Jones
- Colville
- St Charles Primary school



Above -Sion manning disused area before  
Below – Sion manning kitchen garden raised beds in use



All children in the school have engaged with the garden space since its introduction in the school summer term of 2018



Above – Bevington Primary School playground before and below the new food growing garden entrance



## Green Roof Spaces

A green roof has been installed on the roof of the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre. An unused area now supports pollinators attracted to the wildflower meadow growing there.



## 2.4 Latimer Road Station / Bramley Road Improvements

The brick bridge outside Latimer Road London Underground Station on Bramley Road suffered from a range of environmental issues. The bricks were very dirty, the paint work was flaking off and the bridge was used by a large number of pigeon covering the area in mess.

A project was developed in partnership with London Underground, RBEP and the Council's Highway Team to improve the area. This included giving the brick work a deep clean, repainting the bridge, installing pigeon proof mesh and deterrents and installing new paving and an improved road layout.





The freshly clean brick work and new paving at Latimer Road Station Bridge

## 2.5 Acklam Road Footbridge

The pedestrian bridge which connects Acklam Road to Tavistock Road provides a very well used and important crossing of the Hammersmith and City London Underground line. The bridge was improved over ten years ago but recently has looked in need of some improvements, as the existing artwork had been damaged.

In Spring 2017 the design on the bridge was repainted and the bridge cleaned, providing a cleaner and brighter crossing point.



**Above-** The damaged paintwork      **Below** – The newly repainted and repaired bridge

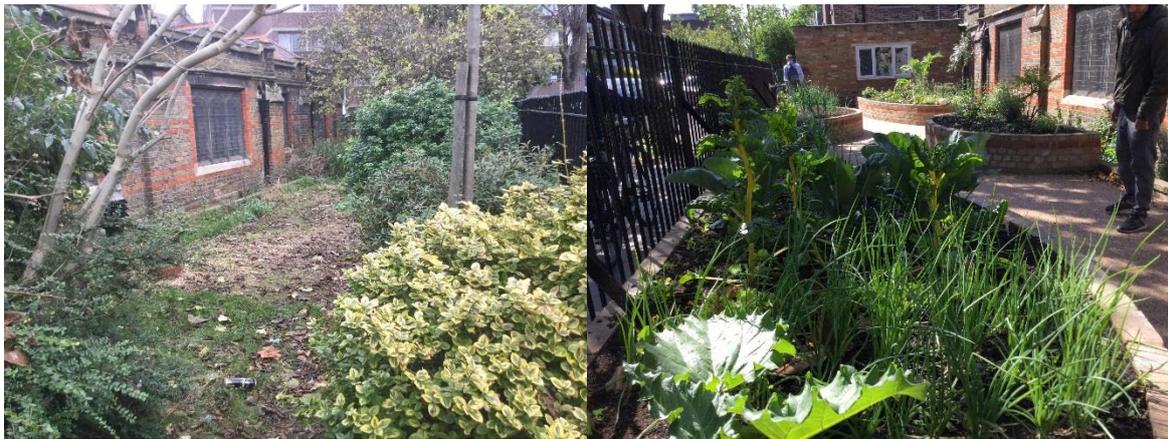


## 2.6 Clement James Centre

The side garden of St Clement Church was overgrown and underused. The RBEP worked in partnership with the Church, Clement James Centre and local Councillors to develop a plan to improve the garden and transform it into a productive and attractive garden for use by local residents and church and centre users to grow their own fresh produce and ornamental planting.

The new design includes new brick raised beds, new pathways and new planting. The theme for the planting was yellow, as this was a colour linked to Grenfell.

The garden was launched in March 2018.



Before

Newly planted

## 2.7 Earl's Court Greening

A number of small "Grot Spots" were identified in Earl's Court which would benefit from having planters installed to improve the appearance and design out t anti-social behaviour (ASB), such as fly-tipping, litter, street drinking and public urination.

The aim is to develop a green network around Earl's Court which will be maintained by local residents and businesses.

The sites include the entrance to Earl's Court Station on Warwick Road, both ends of Penywern Road, both sides of the Earl's Court Health Centre and link in with the Open space on the corner of Warwick Road and Old Brompton Road.

### Warwick Road Triangle

The small triangular open space at the junction of Warwick Road and Old Brompton Road (next to the advertising hoardings) was flagged up as a grot spot in need of improvement. Therefore, the RBEP worked with local Councillors and residents to develop a small "demonstration" garden. This included installing a new planter along the frontage of the garden to add greenery and all year round colour and two raised plots in the middle of the open space.

The raised plots were to show passers-by what can be grown in a small plot and how decorative edible plants can be.

This site is maintained by local residents in partnership with the RBEP community gardeners and forms part of the Earl's Court Green Network.



The new planters at the Triangle site

## 2.8 Improvements to the Mini Recycling Centres

In September 2016 the Council's Waste Action Team conducted a review of the 17 mini recycling centres across the borough to ascertain how well used the facilities are and how they could be improved. The review found the mini recycling centres are well used, residents found them convenient to use and help the Council to increase recycling levels. That said the review found that there was an issue with the appearance of the centres and issues with dumping.

Therefore, to resolve these issues the Waste Action Team and the RBEP worked together to improve the appearance and functionality of the mini recycling centres. New bespoke housing units were installed to encase the unattractive bins. Each housing unit contained an image relevant to that location, such as an historic image of the area sourced from the Local Studies Centre or images of Holland Park selected by the Friends of Holland Park to go on the front of the bins in Holland Park carpark.

New recycling centres were rolled out across estates and other suitable locations in 2017/18.



The new recycling centre at Holland Park



The new recycling centre at Redcliffe Square

## 2.9 Greener Streets - Planting days, Community Events and Public Art

A number of different community and environmental events were held throughout 2017/18, these included a number of planting workshops to promote the kitchen garden scheme, school planting sessions, and bulb planting events where over 3000 bulbs were planted by local residents and community groups. A planting day was held at Lancaster Green in partnership with the Parks Department and local residents to improve the large plant bed at the entrance of the site.



A gardening workshop at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre's new community kitchen garden

The RBEP is also working with local residents and ward Councillors in Norland to improve the planters on Holland Park Avenue Roundabout. There are two large over grown planters which looked unattractive and collected rubbish, therefore the local residents in partnership with the RBEP, got agreement from TfL (the landowner), that we could clear them and plant them up as an attractive herbaceous border.

Throughout 2017/18 a number of community planting and maintenance days have taken place, which have transformed the planters into attractive and colourful planters. The maintenance of the planters will continue to be done by the local community. The next stage of the project is to install a low railing around the planters to stop dogs and children running through the plants, improving watering arrangements and review the existing planting scheme, adding new plants were required.

The RBEP also part funds the Portobello Wall Arts Project in partnership with Council's Art Services Team, which commissions new art work to be exhibited on the long stretch of wall at the northern section of Portobello Road. The project aims to increase footfall to the northern stretch of the market and create a visual link between Portobello Road Market and Golborne Road Market. The project hopes through this to encourage visitors to continue their journeys further up Portobello Road to discover the vibrant Golborne area. This year's artwork is titled Hollywood W10/W11 and features North Kensington's favourite movies, their locations, history and artwork from Portobello Film Festival. The installation is curated by the Portobello Film Festival in association with author and publisher Tom Vague.



The new artwork on Portobello Wall

## 2.9 City Living, Local Life (Ward Initiatives)

The RBEP works closely with a number of City Living, Local Life ward initiatives on supporting community led environmental improvements. Projects include:

- Small scale environment improvements
- Developing proposals for kitchen gardens
- Promoting community gardening and community events
- Developing proposals for larger greening and environmental improvements

### 3.0 London in Bloom and “It’s Your Neighbourhood” Awards

In 2017 the Royal Borough successfully entered London in Bloom and It’s your neighborhood” awards. London in Bloom is a campaign and competition where London boroughs, communities, residents and businesses work together to improve the environment of London to make a greener, cleaner place to live, work and visit.

The Royal Borough won a gold for the City Category and 11 London in Bloom awards of which 6 were gold and won 12 “It’s your neighborhood” awards, the most of any London borough. This year’s “It’s your neighborhood” awards results were better with the majority of the gardens increasing their grade from Level 3 (Developing) to Level 4 (Thriving) and with 3 community kitchen gardens St Quintins Ave, Henry Dickens and St Charles kitchen gardens all achieving top marks, Level 5 (Outstanding).



Henry Dickens Kitchen Garden and the hard working garden club, which won Outstanding