



**APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020**

**Year 1 – Impact Report**  
Fulham Good Neighbours  
&  
Nubian Life Resource Centre

## 1. Has your work contributed to our key goals of early action, shared and sustainable spaces and places, and stronger relationships?

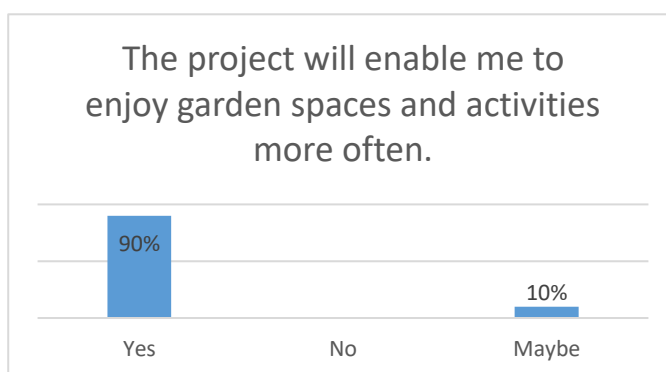
### ONE-TO-ONE VISITS

In the year piloting the project between April 2019 – March 2020, Fulham Good Neighbours has worked to support older people in the South of the borough to access and look after their gardens and address feeling of isolation and loneliness, by creating new relationships between local residents and volunteers. We were able to match local volunteers with older people living in Fulham and establishing a total of **22 matches**. The volunteers visited their matched older person monthly, to help with gardening tasks while at the same time addressing feeling of loneliness and isolation, by befriending them over a cup of tea.

From the results of our Yearly Volunteer Survey we could see that most volunteers felt that the Adopt a Garden partnership project enables them to enjoy gardening and outdoor spaces more often.

*“I love being a part of the Adopt A Garden scheme. It keeps me active and I find gardening very therapeutic. It also feels good being able to help others less able than myself.”*

*(BA, Volunteer, February 2020)*



The total number of matches this year exceeds our target as the project has proved to be very popular and therefore is oversubscribed. Fulham Good Neighbours have used their own reserves to cover the rise in the number of beneficiaries and hours invested in the project by staff and volunteers; and we are looking for additional funding to help sustain the growth of the project.

### GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Gardening Clubs started slowly with a few local people coming along. The first half of the year local people who came learnt about planting seeds and preparing the garden for the summer, growing vegetables and flowers. We also had gardening clubs with the elders at the Nubian Life centre and with families at the Shepherds Bush Families Project.

As a result of the work of planting seeds and potting on the garden produced the following: tomatoes, cucumbers, callaloo, beans, squash, sweetcorn, aubergine and herbs including: thyme, oregano, rosemary, parsley, mint, chives, sage, lemon balm and lemon verbena. There were also tubers from the forest garden including oca, chinese artichoke and mashua and lots of apples!

We gained funding for a day-long event on 20<sup>th</sup> July from the London City Park and had a fantastically successful day that brought lots of new people along to the garden, including families from the Shepherds Bush Families Project.

The Gardening Clubs have been busy since then, building up to regularly having **10-15 adults and 20-25 children along for each session**. The children and adults are learning about planting seeds, about harvesting herbs and other plants, about wildlife in the garden and about cooking the food they are harvesting. It was fantastic to see the children enthusiastically harvesting apples, eating lots of them and then cooking an apple cake using them.

The Gardening Clubs have been very successful in forming new relationships: between the garden and the elders at the Nubian Life Centre, with the Shepherds Bush Families Project, with local families and with people interested in permaculture both locally and across London.

Also, we were very pleased to be accepted as a **Training Hub through Permablitz London with Capital Growth** and we held a successful workshop in partnership with Capital Growth on Forest Gardening. We also held two workshops with Permablitz London that were very popular.

Most of the workshops organised through the garden had varying success and it was striking that repeatedly people would sign up to say they were coming along but then wouldn't turn up, and often wouldn't even let us know they weren't coming.

In trying to outreach further into the community we advertised evening workshops and worked hard to attract the wider community outside the gardening clubs, trying to attract additional people. This year we'll try doing a refundable deposit for the workshops and do a survey with people who didn't attend to find out why they didn't come along.

We had planned a workshop to take place with Fulham Good Neighbours at the end of March, which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to Coronavirus.

For the future we will reassess organising the workshops for free and consider running more in partnership with other organisations. We have been accepted as a Training Hub once again with Capital Growth for 2020.

During the lockdown we will also try offering workshops online.

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## **2. Have people been involved in developing and delivering your activities?**

### **ONE-TO-ONE VISITS**

In the south of the borough, the project coordinator has recruited 22 Adopt a Garden Volunteers and matched them with 22 older people in the local area. In the first year with the project, the volunteers performed **141 visits** during which they provided the older people the opportunity to socialize and practical support with gardening tasks such as planting, digging, weeding, pruning, tidying up. The dates and the scope of the visit were arranged between the volunteer and the older person enabling them to tailor the support to their individual needs.

## GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

We are very pleased at the number of people who have become involved in developing and delivering our activities. Over the year we have more than doubled the target for the number of volunteers (**13 volunteers**) and before the lockdown we were seeing the gardening clubs becoming more and more popular.

**Volunteers and attendees have helped with sowing seeds, cooking, encouraging children to draw and also with running the Gardening Club days, talking to new people, setting up and clearing up.**

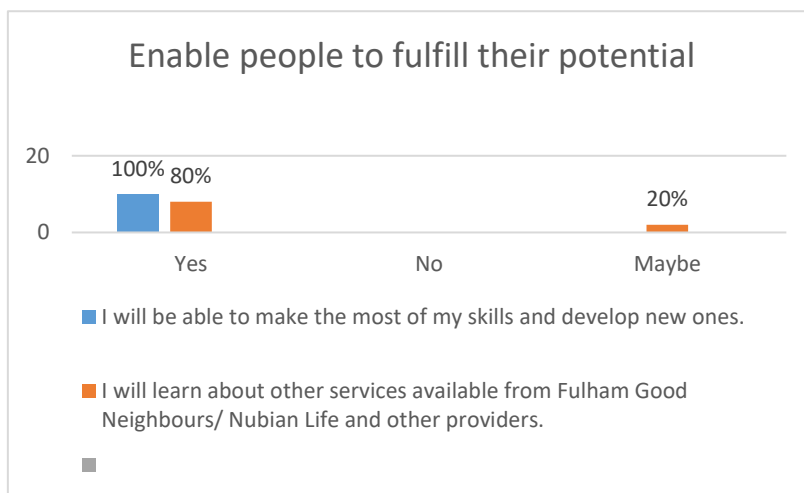
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### 3. Have you built on people’s strengths?

#### ONE-TO-ONE VISITS

The Adopt a Garden project in the South of the borough has been recruiting volunteers with different levels of experience and skills in gardening. The volunteers are offered the opportunity to attend gardening workshops with our partners Nubian Life in order to expand their gardening skills and knowledge. The older people supported by the project are offered the opportunity to do some light gardening with the volunteer during their visit, should they be physically able and interested to do so.

The more experiences Adopt a Garden volunteers are offered the opportunity to do gardening alongside our gardener and help with more complex gardening tasks, enabling them to learn more skills contributing to increasing their self-confidence. We also, offer the new volunteers the opportunity to shadow a more experienced volunteer on one of the visits. If the client is happy to have a one-off visit from two volunteers, they



can both tackle the garden together and also meet the older person and hear their feedback about the project and how it benefits them. The shadowing process aims to benefit both volunteers involved and increase their self-confidence.

In March 2020, Fulham Good Neighbours organised a Safeguarding training session open to all. The training was very well received, 16 volunteers attended, of which 5 were Adopt a Garden volunteers.

The Volunteer Yearly Survey for Year 1 revealed that the majority of the volunteers the south part of the borough feel that they are utilising and developing their skills by being part of the project.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we also organised the first Volunteer Safeguarding Awareness training, attended by a total of fifteen volunteers including five Adopt a Garden volunteers.

## **GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

As we get to know people we have played to their strengths and both adults and children attending the Gardening Clubs have shared their skills. We have volunteers who know about gardening who have shown others what to do. We have volunteers who know how to cook and have shown both adults and children how to cook simple dishes. This has led to one volunteer, Sumathi, who ran a workshop on making samosas at one of our events and regularly shows both adults and children how to cook dahl, pakoras and other dishes, being employed to cook for elders at the Nubian Life Centre.

We have focussed the sessions on creating a fun, creative, stimulating environment for the children. We have a relaxed program of activities at each Gardening Club that encourages children to do what they are most interested in. For some that is drawing and painting, others love writing, all love cooking, planting seeds and having a chance to explore in the garden, finding mini-beasts and scary spiders! The children have gained in confidence through interacting with other children of different ages and cultures. At every Gardening Club we share food together and then everyone helps to clear up with the children expected to participate.

This can be developed much further in the future so we're looking forward to the Lockdown finishing.

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## **4. Are you working with the people you had planned to?**

### **ONE-TO-ONE VISITS**

As planned, Fulham Good Neighbours are supporting older people living in the South of the borough by addressing their gardening needs as well as their feelings of isolation. The monthly volunteer visits provide older people with much needed social interactions, but also strengthen the ties on the community level by pairing local volunteers with local older people.

*"The Adopt a Garden project has allowed me to connect to my local neighbours and provide help in a really concrete way. And I love being outside while helping out too!"*

*(CD, Volunteer, February 2020)*

### **GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

Yes, we are working with the people we had planned to. We have worked with the elders at the Nubian Life centre, planting seeds with them and recording their stories.

The project has expanded beyond what we could have imagined at the beginning. It has developed through word of mouth because families have enjoyed coming so much.

We have run Gardening Clubs at the Shepherds Bush Families Project that have been very popular. We are working with local families and individuals, and some people who have travelled from all over London who are using the space to learn about gardening, harvesting and cooking.

But we are really pleased that the network is growing through word-of-mouth so more members of the community are engaging with the project.

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## **5. Have you engaged with diverse groups of people?**

### **ONE-TO-ONE VISITS**

In the South of the borough, the Adopt a Garden project engages older people experiencing isolation and loneliness as well as younger residents who wish to volunteer. The beneficiaries come from a range of social and economic backgrounds and the project brings two generations together and help form a neighbourly, supportive relationship between them.

### **GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

We have engaged with extremely diverse groups of people. The elders at the Nubian Life Centre who are from different cultural backgrounds, and we have a culturally diverse range of people who come along to the gardening clubs. The ages of people we have worked with have included elders in their nineties and children as young as two years old.

We received funding from Capital Growth for a Grow Culture day in August 2019 where we explored foods from different cultures, having a feast of Indian and Caribbean food and did natural dyeing with native UK plants. People who have attended our events come from many different cultural backgrounds including: Poland, Eritrea, India, Palestine, Tunisia, France, Italy, Spain among others.

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## **6. How are your partnerships going?**

### **ONE-TO-ONE VISITS & GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

The partnership is enjoying a good working relationship, where both parties are glad to support each other and all the beneficiaries interested in the project across the borough.

The partnership also organised opportunities for our members to come together and meet each other. Therefore, on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019 the older people from the Nubian Life Centre visited the Fulham Silver Club at the White Horse, where they joined the Fulham members for a three-course meal and a chat. Then on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the Fulham Lunch Club members visited the

Nubian Life Centre and joined the older people there for tea, life music and a chat. The visits offered people the opportunity to meet each other and interact establishing new connections between the north and south of the borough.

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## **7. Have you made connections with other organisations?**

### **ONE-TO-ONE VISITS**

We established a good working relationship with older people living at Manor Court sheltered accommodation where we set up a tool shed at the housing property, so that the Adopt a Garden Volunteers have the necessary tools to support the older people living there. Over the last year we **matched four Manor Court residents** with Adopt a Garden Volunteer who meet then offering a friendly visit and help with their gardens.



Fulham Good Neighbours also build a good relationship with **Fulham Palace** and their apprentice gardeners, who visited our centre on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and delivered a gardening workshop for our members and volunteers. Ten people attended the workshop (three gardening volunteers, three general volunteers and four clients) and the feedback has been hugely positive:



*“Great class, very informative, very friendly teachers and excellent tea!”*

*“Very informative! Loved having a little pot to take home.”*

*“Excellent! Really enjoyed learning and being shown how to do it properly.”*

*“Good to be able to ask questions. Good learning curve.”*

*“Lovely interaction. So pleased I came! Very helpful.”*

### **GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

We have made very fruitful connections with many organisations through the year. They include Shepherds Bush Families Project where we have run gardening clubs for children at their After School Clubs and as a result many of the families have come along to the Gardening Clubs on Saturdays.

We have formed a relationship with Capital Growth through Permablitz London and were accepted as a Training Hub for 2019 and for 2020. We also received funding from Capital Growth for a Grow Culture day, which we ran in August. Add more about opening up the project to a much wider audience.



Good Gym from Hammersmith and Fulham have regularly come to the garden on Tuesday evenings to clear up, fix things and plant bulbs and seeds.

In process of developing a partnership with Imperial College Invention Rings.

We have an ongoing partnership with Permablitz London with people attending workshops and Gardening Clubs who are interested in Permaculture.

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## **8. Have you been running events, talking about your project on social media, have you featured in your local press or been working with your local MP?**

### **ONE-TO-ONE VISITS**



In the South of the borough, Fulham Good Neighbours has been talking about the Adopt a Garden project in our monthly newsletter, on our website and social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram). Also, the Evening Standard runs an advert for our volunteering role on an ongoing basis.

In September 2019 a group of **BBC volunteers** offered their time and resources to produce an **Adopt a Garden video**. The video has been publicised on our website, YouTube and social media channels, [please click HERE to see the video.](#)

It was also viewed by the members, volunteers and guests present at our AGM In November 2019 who included the Deputy Lieutenant for LBHF Mr Kevin McGrath OBE and LBHF Mayor Cllr Daryl Brown. We also presented the video at our Volunteer Event in December 2020, an event we organise yearly to recognise and reward our volunteers.



### **GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

We have run a number of very successful events:

1. Health & Wellbeing Day 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019 funded by the Mayor’s Garden Park City.
2. Grow Culture day 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 funded by Capital Growth.



3. Urban Harvest day 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in partnership with Capital Growth.

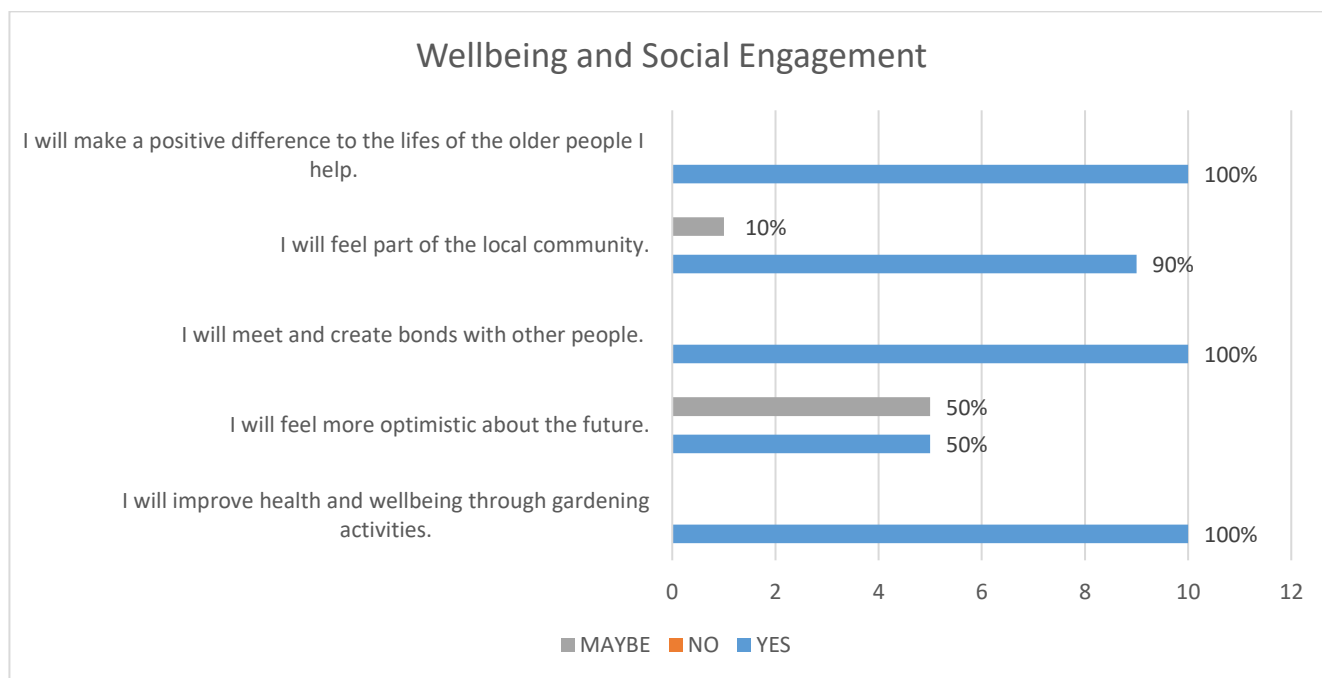
We have posted to our Facebook page and Twitter account as well as developing our mailing list and sending out regular newsletters. We have also developed a web site over the course of the year and have been using Next Door and advertising in various newsletters (London Permaculture Newsletter 2,500; Permablitz London 1,500).

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## 9. What is the difference your project is making? examples and case studies

**Please see Annexe 1 for our Case Studies.**

Additionally, the **Adopt a Garden Yearly Survey** has shown us that the majority of the volunteers providing one-to-one gardening support and companionship to older people, recognise the impact that this has had on their wellbeing and social engagements in their local community.



*“I enjoy the calm and peaceful time in the garden – something that is difficult to find living and working in London! And I find it tremendously rewarding to spend time with people who could otherwise feel a real sense of loneliness in their lives.*

*I must admit I wasn’t necessarily looking to make new friends when I first started volunteering, and saw it as me giving my time to them; and yet, I have found that I’ve developed some great friendships with fascinating people through the scheme. I have really got so much back from being a volunteer.”*

(JB, Volunteer, March 2020)

*"It's keeping me fit. I used to walk four miles to work and back, but since I retired, I haven't been walking so much. I need a reason to get out, somewhere to go to. When I'm doing the gardens, I walk from my house there. It helps. I have arthritis and if I don't do anything it gets worse. Doing the gardens is helping me. It's a two-way thing."*

(PS, Volunteer, March 2020)

*"I like [the volunteer] already, she made me laugh! And she's helping making my front [garden] nice again."*

(WG, Beneficiary, June 2019)

*"She did the grass and that helped, she usually comes once a month. It's nice to see her. She comes in, does the grass and she is off. That's great. It's really the back garden I cannot do. And I do sit out there when it's nice."*

(EY, Beneficiary, April 2019)

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## 10. Tell us about the successes and what you're most proud of

### ONE-TO-ONE VISITS

We are proud of the success that the project enjoyed in this first year, when we meet with an incredible interest both from residents interested in volunteering with the project as well as older residents who welcomed the idea of receiving one-to-one visits to help with gardening and offer companionship. The increased interest from local older resident has led to the project being oversubscribed, but it has also shown us that the local community sees the value of what the project offers and its undeniable benefits for all those involved.

*"The partnership was helpful for me in many ways. I was able to get out and do some gardening which I can't usually do because I live in a flat without a garden. I enjoy gardening but never got the opportunity to do any before starting with Fulham Good Neighbours. It also made me feel like more of a benefit to my local community because I can see that even 20 minutes spent having tea with the residents makes a difference to their day. Personally, I noticed that the people who helped my grandmother in her final years made a big difference to her quality of life and this partnership allows me to try and do the same for someone else."* (BC, Volunteer, March 2020)



### GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Gardening Clubs have become the place that the children who come along get excited about attending. Parents report that their children ask if they can go along because they enjoy it so much.

The sessions have developed a nice relaxed but active atmosphere. There are activities for the children to participate in and we always have food to share, generally some of the food the children have helped to cook. Before we share the food we always say thank you to everyone who has helped to cook and sitting down together to eat creates a good atmosphere of sharing together.



The parents are excited about their children being able to learn about where food comes from and about the natural world. They want to learn themselves but are happy that they can participate with their children in the activities. They value the sessions very highly.

Planting chilli seeds in January.

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## **11. What are the challenges you've faced, any changes you've made, any learning you would share with others?**

### **ONE-TO-ONE VISITS**

One of the main challenges faced by the project in the south of the borough was dealing with the **increased demand for the service**. Fortunately, the project also attracts an increased interest from potential volunteers who wish to be part of the project. Therefore, Fulham Good Neighbours have increased the capacity, recruited more volunteers and established 22 matched instead of 12. As the demand is higher than anticipated, from April 2020, we will increase the hours of the project coordinator from 1 day/week to 2.5 days/week, in order to manage the volunteer recruitment and matching process. At the moment, this will be covered from the Fulham Good Neighbours existing reserves, but we are exploring ways to fundraise and find sustainable support for increasing the capacity of the project.

Another challenge is posed by the **seasonal nature of the project**. In this first year, we could see a fantastic interaction between matches in the spring, summer and early autumn months (March – October). The gardening support decreased during winter months (November – February), except for December when most volunteers visited their matched older person to wish them happy holidays and when possible to a general tidy up of the outdoor space. However, though many visits stopped

for winter, most of the volunteers stayed in contact by phone and checked-in with their matched older person to ensure they were fine during the cold winter months. The project slowing down during winter meant that we are slightly under the target of total gardening visits projected for the year.

However, we learned that the decrease of 1-2-1 visits in the winter months lead to increase of personal contact via phone between that matches. Therefore, the interpersonal relationships and the befriending element of the project continued to thrive and address the issues of loneliness and increase wellbeing. This proved to be a most valuable lesson, when on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, at the advice of the UK Government, Fulham Good Neighbours took the difficult decision to stop all 1-2-1 visits in order to protect the health and wellbeing of the older people and volunteers during the **Covid-19 pandemic**. As both volunteers and older people are now either self-isolating or social distancing, the need for support in addressing isolation and loneliness became more acute than ever. Therefore, most of our matches became focused on wellbeing and support via Telephone Befriending, with 10 Adopt a Garden matches continuing their interaction and support with weekly check-in and chat phone calls. Moreover, some of the Adopt a Garden volunteers are now also supporting their matched older person with essential food shopping.

The project coordinator is also in touch with those older people who were waiting for an Adopt a Garden match, to offer the Telephone Befriending option and start new telephone matches, until the situation reverts back to normal and we can resume 1-2-1 visits and gardening support.

## **GARDENING WORKSHOPS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

At the beginning of the project it was a challenge to both prepare the garden for the summer and publicise the Gardening Clubs. To begin with since the project was brand new we had very few people coming along.

We found that reaching out to other groups and going to them to run Gardening Clubs, eg the Shepherds Bush Families Project, was a crucial way to establish new relationships that have resulted in many families joining the Gardening Clubs at the Josiah Braithwaite Community Garden. Holding the events in the summer also meant we were able to reach out to a new local audience and boosted the numbers attending the Gardening Clubs.

At the beginning of 2020, even though it was the middle of winter we had growing numbers of people coming along to the Gardening Clubs as news of them spread by word of mouth.

We now face a new challenge to maintain a connection with the families through online activities. We are planning to run some online sessions for people and give families a challenge to undertake when they go outside for their exercise.

## **ANNEXE 1 – Our Case Studies**

### **Denis and Dan’s Story (One-To-One Visits)**

Dennis is 71 years old and he lived in Fulham most of his life, he is a retired geologist and passionate about astrology. His travels and his hobbies have taken him around the world and kept him in close touch with nature.



This is reflected in his garden. From the lovely flowers brought from Greece, to the decorative rocks found while exploring the fields around Avebury, the green space tells the testimony of his travels and his passions. Every plant and every item have a story and a purpose. If at first glance the space might look haphazardly decorated, this is because everything has its own micro-ecosystem. Dennis believes ‘things should not be forced, if the flowers are meant to survive in London’s climate they will’. Like his carnivore plants, he didn’t know if they could survive but he was pleasantly surprised to see that they caught a fly and they were thriving.

However, when the garden started to overgrow Dennis realised, he can’t really do the garden anymore and asked for the help of an Adopt a Garden volunteer. This

is when he meets Dan, who started visiting regularly helping with the garden and stopping for a chat. What Dennis most enjoys about the Adopt a Garden project is the combination of practical gardening support and the friendship formed with the volunteer: ‘As Dan likes football, so do I. That does help a lot, even if he is an Arsenal supporter and I am a Fulham supporter.’

The relationship also has a lot to offer to Dan, our volunteer. He finds that the best thing about getting involved in the Adopt a Garden project is the sense of reward and satisfaction, he is able to help without any pressure or stress: ‘I don’t feel intimidated, I don’t need to be like a super expert.’

The match continues even during the self-isolation period due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Dan calls Dennis every week to have a friendly chat and he checks to ensure that Dennis is in good spirits and he has everything he needs in terms of food and medicine.

Therefore, a year after they first meet, both Dennis and Dan are happy to continue their meetings, both making the most out of the garden space and each other’s company.



## ANNEXE 1 – The Case Study (Nubian Life Centre)

### Denis and Dan’s Story (One-To-One Visits)



Marcella comes along to the gardening clubs with her two girls, Elena and Sophia who are 6 and 5 years old respectively. She lives in a flat with no outside space and can only see another building out of her window. She says that living in a big city it is hard for her children to learn about planting and she loves the fact that they can come to the Gardening Clubs and learn about planting seeds, about the small creatures and wildlife in the garden and about cooking what is harvested from the garden. She loves the multi-cultural environment, the chance to meet lots of different people and sharing food together. She says she misses the Gardening Club now we are in lockdown and her children miss it too. She can’t wait for it to start again.

Marcella and her children, Sophia and Elena drawing in their scrapbooks.



Wesum has been a volunteer with the garden since June 2019 and regularly brings her sister and 2 year-old nephew along to the Gardening Clubs. For one of the sessions in January she bought her mother, an older Palestinian woman, who Wesum said hardly ever goes out and doesn’t generally feel comfortable meeting people. She was really pleased that her mother had such a good time. We were making pizzas with the children and her mother was able to participate, helping the children make the dough for the bread pizza base.

Shipi regularly brings her four children along to the Gardening Club. She has been helping at the club for several months and says she really values the chance to take her children out on a Saturday because they living in overcrowded accommodation in a very small flat.



Here is Ethan writing about how he loves being at the Gardening Club. He told his Mum, Nieves:

*‘I’m very happy today Mum, because I was thinking the whole day about going tomorrow to the Gardening Club we went to last Saturday!’*



**ANNEXE 2**

**Adopt a Garden Partnership Project – The Figures**

<b>Adopt a Garden Project - Monitoring&amp;Evaluation 2019-2020:</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Fulham Good Neighbours</b>	<b>Nubian Life</b>
Recruit AAG Project Coordinator 7h/week	1	n/a
Recruit AAG Project Coordinator 2 days/week	n/a	1
No. of volunteers recruited (at least 12/year for FGNS and 5/year for NL)	22	13
No. of beneficiaries (12 for FGNS)	24	n/a
No. of matches (at least 12 matches/year)	22	n/a
No. of 1-2-1 visits (at least 144 visits/year)	141	n/a
No. of Saturday gardening sessions (38 sessions /year by NL)	n/a	32
No. of gardening workshops (12 gardening workshops /year by NL)	n/a	10
No. of visits to the Silver Club lunches by Nubian Life beneficiaries (twice/year)	n/a	1
No. of visits to the Nubian Life communal lunch and community gardens by FGNS beneficiaries (twice/year)	1	n/a
<b>Total of activities (volunteer visits &amp; FGNS beneficiary visits &amp; Nubian Life beneficiary visits)</b>		
No. of pre-entry survey volunteers and beneficiaries	10	0
No. of yearly follow-up survey for volunteers and beneficiaries	6	0
No. of 6 monthly Impact Case Studies	2	2
No. of volunteers attending gardening training sessions	6 (3 gardening volunteers, 3 general volunteers)	13
No. of volunteers attending Safeguarding training (twice/year)	15 (5 gardening volunteers, 10 general volunteers)	0
No of. Bi-monthly Partnership meetings	2	2
Attendances to the 2 day training NCVO Outcome and Impact Report	1	0
Considerations of external evaluation for the project	n/a	n/a
Develop external fundraising strategy for the partnership to continue	n/a	n/a