**UPDATE ON GRIMWOOD ROAD GARDEN SITE**

1. **Introduction**

Habitats & Heritage (H&H) has been commissioned by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT) to engage with local people and organisations about the Grimwood Road garden site. The aim is, by end of March 2022, to produce a project plan bringing the site back into use for community benefit through horticulture. H&H and LBRuT staff meet weekly to discuss progress.

1. **Activity to date.**

H&H developed a list of potentially interested community organisations and set up an online discussion group. An open day was held for community organisations on 26th Oct. Thirty were invited, ten attended and discussions are being held with four who could not attend and others who show interest. One grant-making Trust also attended. 180 households in Grimwood Road and surrounding streets were invited to an open day on 20th Nov through flyers delivered to doors. Twelve people attended from seven households and staff from adult learning. Twickenham Training Centre manager and staff have supported the process. H&H reported to LBRuT’s project board about activity.

1. **Timeline**

A timeline of activity has been agreed up to March 2022. The main elements are:

* 1. Continue engagement with community sector, local people and potential funders.
  2. Liaise between organisations and LBRuT in regard to potential projects.
  3. Support organisations in developing suitable project plans.
  4. The key output will be a detailed project plan and milestones to be developed in collaboration with LBRuT prior to project commencement.

1. **Voluntary and community organisation responses**

There is enthusiasm amongst community organisations for the aim of bringing the site back into use. The responses from community organisations suggest that there are those who could -

* 1. Use growing space at the site to deliver small scale activities for a single user group, e.g. people with mental health needs or learning disabilities.
  2. Use growing space as part of a larger social enterprise and training venture.
  3. Refer clients to suitable project based at the site, e.g. for training, employment or social prescribing.
  4. Be actively involved in restoration or rebuilding of structures (e.g. fruit cage, polytunnel, beds).
  5. Look after part of the site, if it could be parcelled out in some way, but would not be able to manage the whole site.
  6. Potentially manage the whole site either for a single user-group or for a range of groups.

It may be possible to consider the project in two phases. (1) Making safe and restoration (2) Use for communities. The first phase could be supported by community groups with suitable skills and aims.

1. **Local residents’ responses at 20th Nov open day**

Neighbours who attended welcomed the initiative and were supportive of the aim of bringing the site back into horticultural and community use. General points raised in discussion were:

* 1. How to engage community support in Grimwood Road and other neighbouring streets.
  2. Although allotments are not an option, it was asked whether there could be some growing space for neighbours who do not have gardens.
  3. There may be scope for dividing the site for different uses.
  4. There is potential for nature conservation and increasing biodiversity.
  5. Need to repair and upkeep of the garden and boundaries.
  6. Residents made suggestions about funding future projects and potential for involving neighbours as volunteers.
  7. Need to protect the site and surrounding area against anti-social behaviour.

1. **Next steps**
   1. As the profile of the project has grown organisations are seeking to continue discussion with H&H and to explore options.
   2. In December H&H will promote more online discussion and engagement through an online survey. H&H will explore possible options for funding.
   3. In January an online meeting of organisations will explore the questions of leadership, the model for partnership working and funding.

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<https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/blog/grimwood-road-garden-site/>

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**Data use statement – Grimwood Road Garden site**

Data provided by you in relation to the project being managed by Habitats & Heritage to reactivate the Grimwood Road Garden site will be used and shared between Habitats & Heritage and Richmond Council to support the development and implementation of the project, and in order to keep you informed on work being carried out in relation to this project.

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