



Women's
Environmental
Network



briefing

Growing Round the Houses

Food production on housing estates

1. Introduction

Now, more than ever, we need to grow more food, closer to where we live, that is tasty, wholesome and nutritious, that enhances rather than destroys the environment we depend on, and that satisfies people's need for a secure and trusted food supply. Sustain's previous reports on urban agriculture¹ and WEN's substantial experience of working with communities to establish urban food growing projects highlight multiple benefits, including:

- educational value for children and adults,
- appreciation of how food is produced as part of encouraging a healthy diet,
- improved access to healthy affordable food in areas where this is a problem,
- improvement of physical and mental health as a result of regular outdoor activity, and contact with nature,
- preservation of green space in urban areas, and
- the sense of achievement and empowerment of disadvantaged communities gaining new skills, or using existing skills (particularly within immigrant communities from rural backgrounds).

Climate change is an added and increasingly urgent pressure for us to rethink our current food and farming system. This is now widely agreed to be unsustainable and is reliant on finite supplies of oil, the use of which contributes to climate change.

In London, social housing – owned by either the local authority or a registered social landlord (RSL - a term which incorporates social landlords such as housing associations, trusts, co-operatives and companies) constitutes over 20% of homes.² Increasingly those who manage social housing have responsibility not just for meeting the housing needs of their tenants, but also helping to build healthy, sustainable and cohesive communities. Where there is interest among



JANE SEBRIE

Residents of the Clapton Park estate on the plot.

residents, urban food growing projects can be an excellent way of contributing to these goals.

Local authorities and RSLs also have an important role to play because of the large amounts of land – including much open space – that they own and manage. Nationally, waiting lists for allotments illustrate the high and rising demand for land on which people can grow their own food, and in inner city areas where social housing is most concentrated, shortages are most acute. Support from local authorities and RSLs to facilitate food growing projects on such land has the potential to meet this demand, giving access for residents to fresh and healthy food, and also reducing food bills which are likely to continue to rise over the coming years. The skills to grow your own food may also become increasingly important and, depending on how the projects are set up, food growing could provide a source of income for residents.

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2. Food growing in social housing

Below are a number of opportunities for incorporating food growing into social housing, where possible giving examples of where this has been done.

Garden plots

Parks and green-spaces are an important part of local communities, but in some cases they are not used to their full potential. If there is sufficient support from the local community, parts of the park could be used as a community garden, looked after by local residents or friends groups.

- Culpeper garden in Islington, London, for example, is open to the public during the day, with small growing plots at the rear of the public park for local community groups.³
- At the John Scurr Community Centre in Limehouse, London, large wooden growing boxes are allocated each growing season to members of the community and integrated into a park area with a community orchard (fruit tree hedge and communal borders).⁴
- Although not linked directly to social housing, the Middlesborough urban food growing project, started in 2007, centres around the main park in the city which has been turned over to food growing. This project is also worthy of note for its scale, involving thousands of residents in locations across the city, culminating in a city feast in September.⁵

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens has a wealth of information and expertise to help people establish and maintain community gardens, including in parks.⁶ The charity organisation Green Space also works with parks friends' groups and runs a support network.⁷

It has been suggested by some leading allotment experts that locating gardens or growing plots near playgrounds and other social spaces is a good form of passive security. With lots of people around there is less need for secure fencing around the growing space. This can also avoid the problem of being unable to allocate food-growing space in parks because of concerns about restricting public access.

CASE STUDY

Large housing association project/ commercial potential

Peabody Trust – Active 8 project

In 2007, charitable housing trust and registered housing association Peabody Trust, in partnership with local charitable organisations, was awarded almost £4.7m from the Big Lottery's Well-Being programme for Active 8, a portfolio of 84 projects to improve the health of 43,000 people in social housing communities across all London boroughs.

The projects, many of which focus on food, will fan out across the city from 300 local hubs in all 33 boroughs with activities including inter-cultural food days that will broaden people's understanding of nutrition, and a week of events and workshops that will address common mental health problems. Of particular interest are five projects that aim to get Peabody residents involved in food growing. These include:

- **Gardening School**, a project based at a school near to a Peabody estate in East London where residents will be involved in cultivating the land and planting vegetables and fruit helped by a community gardener. There will also be sessions on how best to prepare what is harvested and on the health benefits of consuming the produce. This will be linked into a second project,
- **Fisher Foods**,⁸ a weekly market selling fruit and vegetables harvested from the garden at affordable prices, the income being used to purchase new seeds, plants, compost etc. for Gardening School.

Other projects involve:

- teaching people to grow their own herbs and spices to use to moderate dietary levels of fats, sugar and sodium in the meals;
- building compost boxes and a greenhouse to grow exotic fruit and vegetables for BAME groups who are unable to buy local produce from their homelands;
- turning land over to residents who will create a market garden; and
- showing residents how to use bags, containers, and hanging baskets to grow a wide variety of vegetables and fruit on balconies and walkways in multi storey flats.

Fruit trees

The trees planted could use traditional English varieties of orchard fruit or nuts, many of which are not commercially available.⁹ The local community, including local schools, could be involved not only in tree planting but also in the trees' maintenance and harvesting, with the fruit either being shared among community members or being sold to generate revenue for more trees and their maintenance.

WHAT IF



One tonne grow bags at What If: Projects, see p3.

Locations could include streets, parks, paths and cycle-ways, and would need to be considered carefully, with the local community and the local council.

We suggest that such trees should be grown where the fruit and nuts will be used and valued, so the trees need to be 'recognised' by the local community. Options to engage people include signs – perhaps produced by a local school – by the trees signalling when the fruit or nuts will be ready to be picked.

Ornamental borders

Edibles as well as ornamentals can be introduced into borders, a tactic that is being considered by the Royal Parks in Regents Park, following other examples abroad such as Grant Park in Chicago.¹⁰ Produce could be harvested by local cafes, residents groups or schools.

Growing on concrete!

Initiatives like the grow bags project by What If, working with the Shoreditch Trust in London, could also be explored by housing associations. This project has 50 one tonne grow bags on a derelict piece of concrete land.¹¹ While the land in this case may not remain derelict, there are other successful examples which are more permanent. Growing Power and Growing Home in Chicago¹² grow food-plants in topsoil and compost placed directly onto concrete or tarmac.

Alternative production

Demand for land in cities is always going to be high, however creative people are with space on the ground. Another option is to use roof space and walls, which are in plentiful supply in cities. This could be on a small scale, such as beehives or food containers, or on a more ambitious scale, with fully green roofs or hydroponics. The idea of green roofs is supported by the Mayor's London Plan.¹³

- An excellent example is the edible roof garden at Reading International Solidarity Centre, which incorporates around 120 species of edible and medicinal trees, shrubs, vines and plants from around the globe. They also use paper and food waste compost from the RISC offices and stored rainwater gathered from the roof, pumped by energy generated by solar cells and wind collectors on the chimneys.¹⁴
- Window boxes are also a great place for many people to start growing, and Bankside Open Spaces Trust in London has promoted window box growing in built-up areas of Southwark, with a good track record of managing several sites. (See Case Study)
- In South London, an initiative called Food Up Front has worked with social housing residents to help them grow salad and herbs on their balconies, windowsills and front door steps. Each household that signs up to the scheme receives a growing box with compost, seeds and a growing guide, and a network of street representatives provides support with skills and advice on planting and harvesting.¹⁵

3. Setting up

All the ideas above sound wonderful, but now you need to know how to implement them, and how other groups have overcome some of the barriers they faced.

Land

The first hurdle for many projects is agreeing the area of land on the estate to use for food growing activities.

On existing estates: A suitable area (an overgrown corner, an underused expanse of grass) needs to be identified, and often a participative mapping exercise involving residents can be helpful to avoid finding out later that a "neglected corner" is actually a favourite children's play space, or attracts rare butterflies in the summer. Permission then needs to be sought from the manager of the land – whether this is the RSL or local authority. As these organisations have different structures, it can be difficult for residents to find the right person to speak to, and it may take time to make progress, but often the best place to start is with the housing officer for the estate. If there's no progress at this level, the area housing manager is a second option.

A challenge for some local authorities and larger RSLs can be communication between different departments, such as those responsible for landscaping and green space, and those who work in community engagement/development. Communications can be easier if everyone is clear to start with on what the area would be used for, who would be involved, and what the benefits would be. If there is a tenants' association on the estate, getting them onside at the outset can make things a lot more straightforward.

- Bankside Open Spaces Trust have worked on a project with the Tate Modern which transformed a boring stretch of grass into Brookwood Edible Triangle, a blossoming work of edible art (see case study).
- London & Quadrant have developed the Armoury Way Wandsworth Community Garden project, which is led by the scheme caretaker and supported by the landlord. A composting scheme for grounds maintenance and kitchen waste developed into a food growing programme for residents in raised beds on the site. The initiative was recognised as outstanding in the 2007 London In Bloom awards. Further development is planned with support from Capel Manor college.¹⁶

WEN can offer advice and support to residents on negotiating the use of land, including writing to the landlord in support of the project, and to landlords on ensuring that projects meet local needs.

CASE STUDY

Third party/local authority

Bankside Open Spaces Trust - Brookwood Edible Garden

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST



Residents tending Brookwood Edible Garden.

BOST have good and well-established working relationships with both the parks and housing departments at Southwark Council based on a good track record of running projects. Initially they worked with the parks department, establishing links with the housing department by encouraging local residents to get involved in gardening sessions and doing additional contracting work on a green space on a nearby estate.

The Brookwood Edible Garden was a joint project between BOST, US artist Fritz Haeg, and the Tate Modern. It transformed an underused area of grass outside the council-owned Brookwood House in Southwark into a completely edible garden for residents to enjoy. Permission for the Brookwood garden was initially obtained when BOST contacted the area housing manager who introduced BOST's project manager to the housing officer. Permission to door-knock on the estate was obtained and when the project team (BOST's project manager, the Tate Modern's curator and the artist) spoke to the residents, they were generally supportive of the proposal.

A good relationship was established with the compliance and tenant liaison officers for the estate and so the team was able to use a lock-up for tools and a water supply for the garden, and to install compost bins for residents. It was arranged for the contractor employed by the council to maintain the surrounding area to use a strimmer to cut grass around garden so the plants are not damaged. Additional seating, tools, hedging plants, water butt, bird-feeders and food composting caddies were funded by a £3500 grant from Southwark's Cleaner Greener Safer programme, and a tree trunk was obtained from an insurance claim tree salvaged from nearby Peckham, which was cut up into seats for the garden by a local craftsman who works closely with the council tree contractor.

BOST attended a tenants' association meeting and has inspired interest in residents of other nearby blocks, so another bid for more beds has been put in. The Brookwood garden is maintained by residents at monthly gardening sessions facilitated by BOST, and they also do weeding, etc themselves in between sessions. In the future they will need less support as their confidence and experience grows. Planting, rotation, etc of plants in the garden is planned by a core group of keen residents.

For new developments: In the case of a new housing development, community groups in neighbouring areas may be able to negotiate directly with developers or in conjunction with the local authority to get land and/or the necessary infrastructure for a community growing space (raised beds, soil, landscaping, etc.) through a Section 106 agreement. However, it is important for community groups to engage in the planning process in its early stages. Ideally, a community group or representative would get in contact with the developer before they submitted a planning application to the local authority, although this is rarely possible. If the application has already been submitted, the local authority planning officer would be the initial point of contact in order for the community group to access the planning application. However the planning officer would be likely to refer the group back to the developer. At this stage the group should contact the developer directly, making the case for allocation of space and funds for the project in their plans and asking for a meeting to start negotiations for a formal agreement. Planning Aid has a lot of expertise in this area, and offers free advice and support.¹⁷

There is also an important role for local authority planners to take into account the potential demand for growing space from an as yet unformed community at the planning stage, and to ensure that appropriate space is incorporated into the plans from the start. There are some examples where allotment and community garden provision has been incorporated into new housing developments such as the Clay Farm development extending Cambridge's southern limits¹⁸ In this instance the local development framework for the area reflects the strong demand for such growing space from the local residents.

Design

Once a space has been identified, and permission gained to use it, the design of the space is usually the next focus. There may well be expertise in the RSL or local authority, or a third party organisation (see Sources of help below) may be able to bring particular skills and knowledge, and provide a more independent assessment of local needs. However, the residents are key. These are the people who best know the space and will be using it. Ensuring that the design of the project meets their needs is vital to the success of the project: a good design can mean the difference between producing a well-used community green space, and simply rearranging a neglected area of an

estate. So, again, a participative process is important.

- Find out what residents want and encourage them to get – and stay - involved in the design process by finding ways for people to contribute their vision for the space and encouraging them to express their opinion of initial designs.
- Look at how best to incorporate what is already there. For example, a wall can be fitted with a trellis and used to grow climbing plants such as beans, pumpkins or vines, and permanent plants which can reduce extremes of temperature and save on energy bills.
- How can things be integrated so that they have multiple benefits? For example, well placed windbreaks can also function as edible edging - an innovative way of reducing wind chill and providing shade for children's play.

The design process is also an opportunity to address wider environmental issues for the area – for example, could a community composting initiative be included in the design, reducing the waste disposal burden to the local authority? Permaculture is a system that focuses on creating sustainable human spaces by following nature's patterns. It emphasises the importance of design being a participative process and of creating a design in which there are multiple benefits of the constituent parts involved, as in the examples above. The Reading International Solidarity Centre roof garden, Food Up Front initiative and Abundance project mentioned in this paper are all examples of projects that have been developed using permaculture principles.¹⁹

CASE STUDY

Resident led project

Wapping Women's Centre Community Garden



Individual growing plots are tended by residents of the estate.

In 1999, the chair of a group based at the Wapping Women's Centre (WWC) on a local authority-owned estate in East London contacted Tower Hamlets Council in response to a demand from residents using the centre who were interested in gardening but had no space to

grow anything. Through contact with the appropriate housing office, WWC negotiated use of land on the estate for the gardens. Growing space was established, but various problems arose initially including concerns about land contamination and the accumulation of rubbish from the estate in the gardens.

In 2005, the local authority proposed to refurbish the estate, which would destroy the gardens. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise: WWC agreed on condition that gardens would be restored, and the council put aside a budget of £3000 a year for gardens. The residents took charge of planning and it was agreed that the local authority would be responsible for maintaining grass areas, flower perimeter and hedges surrounding gardens. This arrangement reduces the burden of litter clean-up for residents and the WWC, while the residents tending the garden translates into less maintenance of the whole area for the local authority.

The refurbished gardens now have 30 plots, each allocated to a member of the project, with the membership rotating on a two year basis. Monthly meetings for the plot-holders are held at the WWC to share seeds, information and compost, but each plot holder is responsible for providing for their own plots as they are weaned from depending on the centre for materials.

There have been many benefits from the project:

- the garden engages previously isolated women, and helps them to interact with neighbours, the wider community and local authority, at meetings and in the garden;
- residents have learned to voice concerns and figure out what they need and want, and to organise and petition rather than remaining passive; and
- the local authority saves money on maintaining land.

There is plenty of vision from the centre for how things could be developed. Proposals include: increased garden space and greenhouses on site; a project worker who could provide training; attracting visitors and media attention; and liaising with the Map Squad to welcome disabled people (including residents) to the garden. Securing a fixed lease for the gardens from the local authority, and long-term funding would also support these developments.

Funding

In the long-term many projects function without continued funding – and some can even generate income – but usually a small start up grant is needed to pay for tools, initial landscaping (for example, installing raised beds so that everyone can get involved in the garden), or a shed to store equipment. Often this can be provided by the landlord – for example, the Spitalfields Estate Gardening Club was offered £1500 by the housing trust to get started (see case study). The money to keep the project going

comes from a small subscription paid by members of the club, and covers seeds, tool maintenance, etc. Similarly, the Wapping Women's Centre garden (see case study) on the local authority owned estate was given an overhaul by the council, creating a much-improved growing area for residents. We would encourage projects to consider how they might generate income through sale of produce and grants to run training.

CASE STUDY

Grounds maintenance contractor

John Little's Grass Roof Company²⁰

The Grass Roof company runs contracts to maintain the land at schools, housing estate land, and parks amongst other green space around London and the South East. But they are a contractor with a different ethos – limiting themselves to a handful of pesticides and herbicides, their projects stand out from manicured or lifeless 'green-space' through a naturalistic approach epitomised by their use of borders of wildflowers. What also makes them different is their work around food growing.

The company have the contract to manage the land of the Clapton Park Estate in Hackney where they have worked with the local residents introducing four food growing plots. Working on the site from 2002, the Grass Roof company put aside some of the land for one of the residents, turning over some neglected (and relatively high-maintenance) beds of roses to plots which have later been used to grow coriander amongst other things, maintained by the residents. They have established new herb beds at the base of the tower block of the estate, the species list was based on questionnaire sent to the residents of the block. Black stemmed mint has proved to be a particular favourite of the West Indian residents. They have grown green beans along stretches of their metal railings on the estate. They are now looking into planting a mini-orchard on one of the estates they work in and creating more food growing plots and raised beds.

Managing the project

It is important to establish early on who – for example, a specially formed gardening club, an existing tenants' association, or the housing association – will have main responsibility for the project. This might include allocating individual plots within the growing area, ensuring that regular maintenance of communal areas is carried out, any produce is shared fairly, and making sure any problems (broken tools or a hole in the fence) are sorted out. In the early stages it is also important to engage with tenants to ensure that their needs are met and that they get what they actually want in the design, not what someone else thinks is best. If the project is set up to grow produce for sale, it is important to establish where the proceeds will go (generally back to the project to pay for tools, seeds, maintenance, etc.).

Sources of help

In many cases, although certainly not all, a third party organisation may play a role in setting up and/or managing food growing areas on housing estates. Such organisations vary considerably in the services they can provide, for example: providing the initial inspiration for a project; negotiating with the RSL/local authority; bringing and sharing practical skills; or providing an outside facilitator to assess the interests, opportunities and needs in a particular project.

- The Bankside Open Spaces Trust has been a key party in the development of many projects on social housing estates (see case study).
- In the case of Spitalfields Estate Gardening Club (see case study), WEN provided advice based on experience on previous projects, organised a visit for residents to see another similar garden, and arranged visits from an experienced gardener to help with the initial planting.
- The Abundance Project, based on a Guinness Trust estate in Brixton, London, has been helped by members of the local group of the Transition Town movement.²¹ Local volunteers have both enthused the local residents about how an overgrown area of the estate (which had previously been partially used for food growing) could be brought back into productive use, and shared skills and tools with the residents on the estate.

CASE STUDY

Housing association led project

Spitalfields Estate Gardening Club



Residents and volunteers celebrate the new community garden.

The Spitalfields Estate Gardening Club (SEGC) has recently been set up after a resident, who is a part-time GP, noticed symptoms of depression and isolation in women living in estates. She approached the housing association, Tower Hamlets Community Housing (THCH), in response to a poster offering the opportunity to set up a garden on the estate. The housing association had been involved in a successful grow-your-own food project on one of their other estates, and wanted to start a similar

project in Spitalfields, where residents were not involved in many community activities.

THCH offered £1,500 towards the set-up (installation of raised beds, the purchase of a few tools, etc.), land and tool storage for the project, and provided a meeting space for the group to come together. However, they needed a resident to take the lead and act as a facilitator for the project, under the community development officer's supervision, getting the community involved, particularly women who had not tended to get involved in activities outside the home and had limited English (although plenty of enthusiasm!). It is hoped that this role can be passed on to other members of the gardening club as the project develops.

THCH also provided advice on setting up the group, and seeking future funding. Initially two consultation meetings were held with residents on the estate to spread awareness of and support for the project, and to plan the first stages. After the meetings raised beds were made from railway sleepers and installed by nearby Spitalfields City Farm using THCH's funding. The housing association plans to pave the area around the beds and install a water supply for irrigation.

The garden is located in a previously underused green space on the estate, which is gated, limiting access to the area to avoid antisocial behaviour and requiring the group to sign for the keys and be inducted into security protocol. The fifteen members of the club pay a small annual fee (currently £10) to cover seeds, tool maintenance, etc., and there are two people on a waiting list for when more space becomes available. In the first year, the women decided to have collective garden and share the produce rather than have individual gardens, though these may be developed in future.

The project has had wide ranging benefits including:

- combating isolation and depression in residents by getting people outside to grow their own food,
- encouraging multigenerational family involvement where, for example, parents or grandparents are able to tend the garden while children play nearby and another family member provides snacks.
- increasing community participation, which is particularly positive from THCH's perspective, and they hope to hold an opening party for the summer harvest.

However, the resident facilitating the project notes that drawing up a business plan before starting the project would have been useful to avoid pitfalls such as construction issues, and stressed the importance of good communication with the RSL. The community development manager at THCH says the project has run smoothly but stresses that the housing association intends to have minimal input: the project is about community empowerment, people talking to their neighbours, taking charge of their own space and taking pride in it – an investment in their own community.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Sustain and WEN are clear that more should be done to encourage and support food growing on social housing land, because there are so many social, health and environmental benefits from doing so. We believe the following proposals, if implemented, would lead to a significant increase in the amount of food grown and, thereby result in major social, health, environmental and personal economic improvements.

For social housing managers (local authorities and RSLs)

- Support residents who want to engage in or set up food-growing on their estate through providing access to suitable land and resources (such as compost), helping to set up or upgrade appropriate infrastructure (beds, fencing water supply, etc.), and facilitating the involvement of other residents as appropriate.
- Provide a formal agreement in conjunction with the landscape maintenance contractors for use of the land by residents to ensure the security of the project.
- Stipulate, or at the very least encourage, landscape maintenance contractors to work with residents and provide space for food growing.
- Ensure that there is good communication both within the organisation, and with residents, and make sure projects are participative ones, developed to meet the needs of the community.
- Work with other social housing managers to develop the proposed green award scheme for social housing to include food growing. (The Green Flag Award is currently used for parks, and the Green Pennant Award for community managed green spaces, but might be modified for public sector housing green space. Peabody Housing Trust is leading this.²²)
- Give credit to residents who get involved in such projects, creating a culture where community environmental projects are seen as a positive thing.
- Consider providing or subsidising training for residents on food growing.

For planners and developers

- Consider how food-growing space can be incorporated routinely into new developments. This briefing paper provides plenty of examples of projects that work on housing estates, primarily through Section 106 agreements.
- Ensure that the top soil removed during the building process is returned to the site so that soil quality is maintained and food growing is able to begin as soon as possible.

For residents

- Use your imagination! What could be done if a few people pitched in and your landlord provided support?
- Talk to your neighbours about what you'd like to see.



The more people you've got on-board, the more likely you are to get the go ahead for your project. It's often surprising, too, how many skills people have, from organising meetings to growing prize vegetables.

- Talk to the landscape maintenance team about releasing land for food growing.
- Contact organisations such as WEN who have experience in supporting people who want to grow their own food in urban areas.

Contacts

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References

- 1 These reports include Edible Cities (2008) and City Harvest (1999) see www.sustainweb.org/page.php?id=347
- 2 This figure is 17.9% at a UK level. Calculated by WEN from Department for Communities and Local Government (2008) Housing Statistics 2007, Communities and Local Government Publications, Wetherby
- 3 www.culpeper.org.uk
- 4 www.wen.org.uk/general_pages/Newsitems/pr_TH_CK7.3.07.htm
- 5 www.dott07.com/go/food/urban-farming
- 6 See their Community Garden starter pack, and also other information on www.farmgarden.org.uk
- 7 www.green-space.org.uk
- 8 This project is named after the Fisher estate where it will be based.
- 9 For more about the benefits of traditional orchards, see Sustain's publication: Dalmeny, K. & Fabrizio, I. 2008, Protecting our orchard heritage: a good practice guide to managing orchard projects. See www.sustainweb.org/page.php?id=122
- 10 www.growingpower.org/new_page_3.htm
- 11 For information on What if see www.what-if.info/ and www.lfa2008.org/event.php?id=57&name=Growth+Bags%3A+Urban+Allotments
- 12 www.growinghomeinc.org and www.growingpower.org/new_page_3.htm (although the details on growing on concrete are better detailed in *Edible Cities* a report available from www.sustainweb.org/publications)
- 13 Mayor of London, 2006. Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan. See www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=8187 or www.london.gov.uk/mayor/auu/docs/living_roof_statement.rtf
- 14 www.risc.org.uk/garden/index.html
- 15 www.foodupfront.org
- 16 Contact giggerstaff@lqgroup.org.uk for details.
- 17 www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
- 18 www.clayfarm.co.uk
- 19 For more information contact the Permaculture Association: www.permaculture.org.uk
- 20 www.grassroofcompany.co.uk
- 21 www.transitiontowns.org
- 22 Peabody Housing Trust is also, with Notting Hill Housing Group, leading Neighbourhoods Green: improving green spaces for social housing, see www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk



Residents and local volunteers working on the Abundance Project, Brixton.

About WEN

Women's Environmental Network is a registered charity educating, informing and empowering women and men who care about the environment. It researches and campaigns on environmental and health issues from a female perspective. Ordinary membership £20, unaged £12.

About Sustain

Sustain runs a number of food networks with members as diverse as farmers, caterers, food writers, housing associations and public health officials.

For more information on joining one of these networks, contact Ben Reynolds on 020 7837 1228 or ben@sustainweb.org.

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