



**Welcome to our Summer newsletter!**

With summer finally arriving we can look forward to the joys and challenges that it brings. There is still great uncertainty about how the next few months will evolve and we may have to learn to live with this uncertainty. While for us as a charity it is important to plan, it is equally important to be present and pay attention to our everyday experiences and appreciate the abundance of nature.

It was a delight to welcome families to our Picnic event and to see them relaxing and enjoying themselves. In other news, we have recently recently received two grants which help support some of our summer activities. Social Farms and Gardens have awarded us funds to run children's workshops through the summer holidays.

Additionally, we are working in partnership with INVOLVE Kent to run wellbeing sessions on Wednesdays for the over 55s and those under 55 with health conditions. You can read more about that project and register your interest below.

Thank you for your continued interest and for supporting us in whatever way you can.

***Helen Turner, Secretary and Trustee***

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### **Update from the Field**

With warmer days during May and June we have been busy at the field, spending most of our time weeding, watering and planting out. Pak choi, wong bok, celery and some squash plants are planted out, and lettuce and brassica beds have been weeded. Bean poles and runner beans are in too. Potatoes growing in the pots have been earthed up and we should be harvesting the first early varieties in a few weeks' time. In the tunnels tomatoes and cucumbers are planted out and growing nicely. This month more plants are going to be planted out including sweetcorn, lettuce and celeriac.

We have been battling aphids since this is their prime season to attack young plants, however a mild soapy water solution applied regularly by our staff and volunteers is helping to bring their numbers down. Introducing more diverse wildflowers is helping too, as aphids are a favourite snack for the ladybirds.

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### **Return of the Veg Boxes!**

The weather is hotting up and our produce is now beginning to flourish. We are pleased to announce that we will now be able to offer small and large Veg Boxes. At the moment we have the following available: Carrots, Lettuce, Kale (four different varieties), Radish, Rhubarb, Spinach, Broccoli, Spring Onions, plus many types of herbs!



This month we have a one time offer, exclusive to our subscribers! We have the pleasure of offering you 15% off on one Veg Box, to thank you for your continuous support. Please quote **SUMMER15** when placing your order.

[Drop us an email](#) to place your order today!

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#### **Meet the team: Julia**

We hope that you are enjoying our interviews with staff and volunteers in our series. This time we have the pleasure of introducing Julia who started with us as a volunteer last summer and is now our Development Officer.

*"Things are more peaceful, and you feel this sense of calmness, but at the end of the day you get a huge sense of achievement"*

#### **[Read the full interview with Julia here](#)**

You can also catch up on all interviews in this series [here](#).

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#### **Volunteers' Week**

Between 1-7 June, we celebrated Volunteers' Week. This was a time to say thank you to those who have volunteered with us before and during the pandemic, and those who usually volunteer but not have been able to because of the restrictions. Our dedicated volunteers contributed a total of 3,614 hours of their time last year, without which, Communigrow would not have been able to achieve its objectives. We are looking forward to more months and years of working together!

If you would like to find out more about our volunteers, you can [read more here](#).

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#### **Family Afternoon Picnic**

On Saturday, 26th June we had a pleasure of welcoming some of you during our Family Afternoon Picnic. We had 45 attendees, adults, children and young people, who joined us for a couple of hours of fun in the glorious sunshine between 2 and 4pm. Highlights during the day included a stall with freshly picked vegetables and plug plants, a pop-up café with delicious cakes, a bug hunt, a nature trail, crafts for the youngsters and an insightful talk by Claire Munns.

It was lovely to see the local community represented at the field and during that day we raised nearly £200, which will support our horticultural and educational activities in the upcoming weeks.

Thank you for supporting us and hope to see you soon again!



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## CommuniGrow Talk Series

Over the last few months we have been delivering an online programme for the CommuniGrow Talk Series, to enable us to reach a wider community and to share our knowledge with more of you. If you weren't able to join us live, you can catch up on all our previous talks on our [YouTube channel](#).

### Previous Talks

#### Gardening, Health & Wellbeing, April

In April we hosted our first talk with a guest speaker, Professor Alistair Griffiths, Director of Science and Collections at RHS. In this fascinating 30min talk Alistair shared insights on the relationship between gardening, health and wellbeing.

[Watch it here](#)

#### Forest Gardening, May

In May we were joined by Hannah Gardiner, a Director of the [National Forest Gardening Scheme CIC](#), who gave us an introduction to Forest Gardening. She is currently studying an MSc in Sustainable Food at the [Centre for Alternative Technology](#).

[Watch it here](#)

### Next Talk

#### Sustainable Food Supply Chains and the Role of Food Projects run by Communities Date TBC

We will be joined by Rosario Michel-Villarreal, Lecturer in Food Supply Chain Management at the Royal Agricultural University. Rosario worked at the University of Lincoln and Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico). Prior to joining academia in 2014, she has a keen interest in interdisciplinary research including food supply chain management, resilience, and sustainability.

We will be sharing a date and time of this talk shortly on our social media.

CommuniGrow is committed to offering free events and opportunities to all, but as we depend on funding this is not an easy task. You could support our current campaign to organise and deliver Horticultural and Wildlife Workshops for Young People. Our goal is £500 and we have raised £130 so far – if you would like to help us to reach our target please [click here](#).

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## Veg Box Recipes

This month we'd like to share with you our Roasted Artichoke with Garlic Aioli. Artichokes are a funny looking vegetable, roasting them is a great way to get acquainted with them!

[View the recipe here](#)

We would love to see you try this recipe so please tag **#Communigrow** in your posts.



## Improving your Wellbeing with Communigrow

What is wellbeing? The term relates to good mental health, a high level of life satisfaction, a sense of purpose and the ability to manage stress. More generally it is a sense of feeling well.

We are excited to announce that in partnership with Involve Kent, we have launched an afternoon wellbeing program. Wednesday Wellness is primarily aimed at the over 55's and younger people with underlying health conditions. The sessions include 6 activities from 2-4pm suitable for all abilities and based on the benefits of garden therapy and connecting with nature.

With National Growing for Wellbeing week running between 7th and 13th June, it felt like perfect timing for us to host an open afternoon to launch our Wednesday Wellness sessions. You can read more on how it went [here](#).

If you would like to be part of the Wellness Project you can [contact us](#) or [register here](#).

## Mason Mile event- Come and see us!

We will be hosting a stall at [The Family Mile - Summer Extravaganza](#) event later this month. Come and say hi on **Sunday 25th July 2021** at Mote Park between 11am and 2pm. We will be

sharing information about Communigrow, our projects and plans, and we have prepared a small craft activity for everyone interested in participating.

Hope to see you there!



### **Birds, Bugs, Bats and a Butterfly Banquet**

Our campaign to raise funds for a series of hands-on holiday workshops 'Birds, Bugs, Bats and a Butterfly Banquet' is still live. These workshops will be designed for local young people aged 8-16yrs with each session focusing on a different type of wildlife. So far we have managed to raise £130 and we are grateful for all donations, however **this is only 26% of our overall goal!**

A small donation will help us to make it happen and we would appreciate your support, whether by donating any amount you are comfortable with, or by sharing the campaign with your friends, family and co-workers. To find out more and donate, click the button below.

**Birds, Bugs, Bats and a Butterfly Banquet**

### **Do you follow us on our social accounts?**

We share updates and opportunities regularly on our social media accounts, click on the links below to follow us and be up to date.



**Facebook**



**Instagram**



**Twitter**

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