



Welcome to our Autumn newsletter!

Much has been happening since our last newsletter and it has been a busy time for CommuniGrow.

We organised a series of workshops for young people, developed our Wednesday Wellbeing sessions, hosted our Food Fest, and officially opened our log cabin. All this is in addition to our harvesting, welcoming schools back to the field and responding to more requests for sessions.

We could not do this without your support! We thank you and look forward to the coming months as we expand the diversity of our beneficiaries.

Helen Turner, Secretary and Trustee



Summer Workshops

Despite the last-minute allocation of funding we succeeded in planning and delivering five workshops over the summer holidays, welcoming 48 young people to the field. These workshops were designed for; young carers from Crossroads and IMAGO, Y2 Crew (Tonbridge and Malling), Kent Refugee Action Network and two with INVOLVE for young people with communication difficulties and autism.

A highlight for attendees was the shared lunch which allowed everyone to relax and get to know each other.

[Read more here](#)





Food Fest

On Saturday, 18th September we had the pleasure of welcoming some of you during our annual Food Fest. We had 126 attendees including adults, children and young people, who joined us for a few hours of fun in the glorious late-summer sunshine. Highlights during the day included a stall with freshly picked vegetables and a pop-up café with delicious cakes, a bug hunt, a nature trail, crafts for the youngsters and a cooking demo by our volunteer Richenda.

It was lovely to see the local community represented at the field and during that day we raised over £700, which will support our horticultural and educational activities in the upcoming weeks.

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

Food Fest Video

Thanks to Lauren, one of our dedicated volunteers, we have this short video we wanted to share with you. Hope you like it as much as we do!



Official opening of our Log Cabin

A few days ago, on 29th September, we



officially opened our log cabin! If you have visited the field recently, you must have seen our newest addition.

Thank you to Kent Mark Master Masons and the Mark Benevolent Fund for their generous donation. Our log cabin will be a place for beneficiaries, volunteers and staff to meet for many years to come. It has also provided a safe and dry space to keep seeds and educational resources.



Veg Boxes

Our field is still very productive and we are picking fresh, chemical-free vegetables weekly to put into your Veg Boxes. We have only recently started harvesting our leeks, and our brassicas (kale, cabbage etc.) are still producing beautifully.

The produce we have currently available: Kale, Chard, Lettuce, Leeks, Squash, Cabbage, Carrots, Potatoes, Cucumber, Celery, Turnips, Swede, Onions and Chillies. You can order either:

- Small Veg Box at £6 (for 2 people)
- Large Veg Box at £10 (for 4 people)
- Loose vegetables, portions as you need

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

National Lottery Community Fund: Giving a green space for growing our communities

We're delighted to announce that CommuniGrow has been awarded £135,000 over 3 years by The National Lottery Community Fund to support disadvantaged young people and adults by providing a safe, welcoming environment for education, skills and personal development.

Beneficiaries will have the opportunity develop their own tailored pathway to meet their individual needs and abilities through the use of horticulture as a medium, gaining an understanding of the growing cycle, biodiversity and the importance of the natural environment, by engaging in the practical aspects of sowing, planting, managing and harvesting crops, and vegetables.



Meet the team: Clair

We hope that you are enjoying our interviews with staff and volunteers in our series. This time we have the pleasure of introducing Clair, one of our knowledgeable Growers

“There is definitely no typical day! From raking stones to building bird boxes, who knows what a day at Communigrow will hold?”

[Read the full interview with Clair here](#)

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

We'd like your opinion

As we are receiving more interest in sessions and produce at Communigrow, we would like to test market interest in our ideas for a social enterprise model moving forward. This will help us make the field an attractive destination for our supporters, broadening and extending skills development and work experience opportunities for our service users.

Could you please spend 2 minutes answering few questions we have prepared?

[Click here to open the survey.](#)

Upcoming events

We have two exciting workshops planned for half term. We will be working with Involve Kent again to offer a field-to-fork session for 11-18 years olds with autism and communication difficulties. The summer workshops we delivered were a great success with parents and young people making connections over the course of the day. We are pleased to be welcoming back some familiar faces but do have some spaces available if you know someone new who might be interested.



This year the education team are focusing on ways to bring more local families to the field. Billed as 'Awesome Autumn' the second workshop on 26th October between 10am and 1.30pm aims to do just that. There will be a chance to find out about wildlife on the field and how we can support wildlife

during the winter months, and an opportunity to make a bug house to take home. Participants will also be invited to harvest vegetables to make a delicious lunch to share.

[Book your 'Awesome Autumn' tickets here](#)

Communigrow Talk Series

Over the last few months we have been delivering a free online programme for Communigrow Talk Series,, enabling us to reach a wider community and to share our knowledge with more of you. Our last talk in this series took place earlier this week. Thank you to those of you who joined us online, we will be back with more talks in the upcoming months!

If you weren't able to join us live, you can catch up on all our previous talks on our [YouTube channel](#). Some of the talks included:

- **Gardening, Health and Wellbeing** with [Professor Alistair Griffiths](#), Director of Science and Collections at RHS
- **Forest Gardening** with Hannah Gardiner, a Director of the [National Forest Gardening Scheme](#)
- **Sustainable Food Supply Chains and the Role of Food Projects run by Communities** with Rosario Michel-Villarreal, Lecturer in Food Supply Chain Management at the Royal Agricultural University

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](#).

Veg Box Recipes

This month we'd like to share with you our Spiced Squash Soup. This soup is a real winter warmer, and can be kept in the freezer if you don't get around to eating all of it at once. You can use any sort of squash or even a pumpkin in this recipe. If you attended our recent Food Fest you might have tried this soup, cooked and served by our amazing volunteers.

[View the recipe here](#)

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



Did you know that 7/10 carved pumpkins are sent to landfill in the UK every year? That's over 10 million pumpkins! At Communigrow we hate food waste and we hope this recipe will help you to use up your leftover pumpkins and squashes this year.



Improving your Wellbeing with Communigrow

Our Wednesday Wellness sessions are still popular, and we are continually welcoming new participants. This project is primarily aimed at the over 55's and younger people with underlying health conditions. The sessions include activities from 2-4pm suitable for all abilities and are based on the benefits of garden therapy and connecting with nature.

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

We are hiring!

Great news, we are currently looking to expand our team and we have two great roles:

- **Operations Manager:** Intended to consolidate the development of the charity, strengthen operational day to day management, thereby allowing further growth and business development to be sustained in accordance with our strategic aims (37.5 hours a week). [Click here to view the Operations Manager job description.](#)
- **Fundraising Consultant:** The new role of Fundraiser is intended to broaden our income streams by increasing individual and corporate donations, allowing further business development to be sustained in accordance with our strategic aims (approx. 25-35 h/ month). [Click here to view the Fundraising Consultant job description.](#)

If you are interested please get in touch with us.

Come and meet Communigrow at the following events

During the next few months we will be meeting the community at several events. We will provide information about our wellbeing sessions, the Veg Box scheme, educational offer and volunteering opportunities. We would love to chat with some of you if you are local.

- Friday 29th Oct 10am and 1pm. Over 55's Advice and Information Fair, Snodland
- Saturday 4th Dec 1.30pm – 4pm. Christmas Fair 2021 at The East Malling Community Centre
- Sunday 5th Dec 2.30pm – 6pm: King and Queen Christmas lights switch on



Zero Waste on Wheels at Communigrow

If you are local you might have heard of Alicia who runs [Zero Waste on Wheels](#). It is a local service for Maidstone and surrounding areas offering dried and bulk foods, laundry detergents, household cleaners, shampoo, conditioner, body wash & more items to refill! Alicia also offers recycling services, you can find out more about that directly via [Zero Waste on Wheels](#) page.

We have Alicia with us at the field on every second Friday of the month and her next visit will be on Friday, 12th November. In the upcoming weeks we will be sharing more details about Alicia's offer on our social media.

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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