**Seaview Green Space**

 **Swansea March 2020**

**Background information**

The garden is in a very uplifting position, set high up with amazing views across Swansea to the sea. The site has a lovely old wall along the roadside with privet hedges around the other boundaries and also across some areas of the site. The site is a long narrow stretch of land which was previously used for individual allotments, a few of which still remain. Part of the area was overgrown and had been used as a dumping site. The surrounding privet hedge was very tall and needed cutting back.

The initial clearing work was carried out a few years ago by an Asylum Seekers group supported by Groundworks who had funding for running a project, providing safety wear and tools. A group from the African Community Centre was also involved at this stage. Initial support also came from Neil Barry through Swansea Green Spaces. Once the clearing was done, growing beds were set up and some maintenance done on an existing small polytunnel.

Once the first area was set up, the group were offered a second area which doubled the size of the site, adding mature apple trees and wild hedge. The garden attracts a lot of wildlife, particularly birds and some very friendly pigeons. There are even owls and a family of foxes! Birdfeeders and nesting boxes have been put up and there is talk of installing bat boxes. There is no vandalism despite the central city location.

On the other side of the site, one of the gardeners could no longer manage their allotment and this is now also a shared part of the garden. Swansea council at that time were asking groups to take on responsibility for the cities green spaces, so although there are several individual allotments as well as the community area they are now all under the umbrella of the Seaview Group.

About a year ago Jeff Bowls (also involved with the Mayhill Project) joined the Committee and supported the group to get their constitution, lease and insurance sorted and also to set up a bank account.

**Group aims**

Once the Groundwork project had finished local volunteers took over, with several residents from Seaview Terrace involved including a local councillor. Other volunteers come from around the local area to the volunteer sessions which are on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. People come and go, but a core of 5 or 6 generally remain. Gemma Collins, the main contact, lives opposite.

The Aims of Seaview Green Spaces Group are:

* To encourage community engagement by providing opportunities for residents to get involved with local growing projects
* To provide safe and welcoming environments for all the community to grow healthy food for little cost
* To build a sense of community pride and ownership
* To promote sustainability and biodiversity
* In conjunction with City and Council of Swansea specifically but not exclusively to care for identified green spaces in and around Seaview Terrace, Swansea

**Volunteers and audience**

Volunteers tend to be a range of people with different abilities who bring their ideas and enthusiasm to the garden. A limited number of people have the gate combination. Passers-by often comment on the garden and sometimes come in and get involved.

Committee Meetings are held quarterly at the Farmer’s Arms.

**Achievements**

The garden provides an inspiring and welcoming environment with no pressures. The open views and beautifully wild edges create a space that has proved really good for people’s mental health. It is a place of sharing, where people can put their ideas forward or bring resources.

Community events happen over the year, such as a poetry event, mulled wine and marshmallow round the fire and a family Halloween party in the autumn and winter. In the summer there are get-togethers and picnic lunches.

Excess produce from the garden goes to supply Matt’s Place and Hub on the Hill locally.

There was a filmmaking project about the community spirit of Swansea who brought a drone along to the garden. A group then helped to edit the footage.

Table top sales are run at the garden to raise funds, also selling scones with homemade jam the volunteers have made from the produce. Gemma sold paintings at the GreenFayre to raise money for the group. People make donations such as the greenhouse and another volunteer donated a load of seeds for this year.

**Quotes from Volunteers**

Seaview Green Space is a jewel, in ALL our crowns.

This is about keeping the community connected.
This is about helping. If, and when you can. (With zero pressure whatsoever!)
This is about growing veg, fruit, and sharing ideas, plans etc.
This is about forming friendships... having a laugh, and being outdoors. Eating cakes, with flasks of tea. 
This is about doing something different. (Like wearing jazzy wellies and feeling all smug lol) 

What they hope to achieve in the future/ aspirations for a Green Flag Community Award

The group aim to plan for the year ahead when they have a meeting in the spring as soon as the weather improves. This will include developing the new pond/wild wetland area; bringing on the fruit growing; putting in the new seeds and hopefully recovering the polytunnel.

There may also be a possible partnership with Graft (the Waterfront Museum growing project).