

To whom it may concern,

My name is Amy Horrocks, I am currently running the community garden. The garden is extremely important in our community and to the volunteers that help run it. It is a vital resource to our community especially utilised during COVID as a space for people to meet and socialise. The garden also provides a great way for people to get outdoors and spend time in nature which is excellent for the communities mental and physical health. Additionally, the garden is a habitat for bees, robins, sparrow, blue-tits and even ducks and fish. Hundreds of creatures rely on the maintained space for their nests and food. During this climate crisis the garden is one cog in a larger machine helping to reduce our greenhouse gasses and ensure the safety of our planet.

At the beginning of the season, I had a meeting with Jennie to discuss the garden restarting, she explained how most of the volunteers we had last year had moved on to different things, so I asked around and in the last three months have managed to secure over 14 volunteers to rebuild the garden's base. This is bigger than it ever has been and yet I am still hoping to expand it. We are in the early stages of planning an open day either in the summer or during harvest. I also have plans for a Peter Rabbit nature trail which me and Jennie discussed last year but never got to complete. With these projects just around the corner, loosing the garden would be a waste of an important area in the community.

The garden is a place of peace and tranquility which supports the health and wellbeing of the community. I for one have been greatly impacted by the garden itself and the healing powers of the great outdoors. Before I started going to the garden in 2018 my mental health was in ruins. The garden helped me overcome many things and gave me a purpose and passion for something which enabled me to move forward. Without the garden, I don't know where I'd be today and losing it could be detrimental to the health of the community as a whole, both physically and mentally. I know many other people who have been saved by the garden which has repaired relationships and helped people finally find peace.

The legacy the garden holds is also extremely important. Anne and David built the garden up from an overgrown wasteland to what you see today. After their retirement I believe the garden is an important way of showcasing their impact on our community and keeping their spirit alive. They were aided by Martin, David and Linda, all of whom have since passed on. They were loving, kind and caring people who cared for their community and the garden. Martin and I dug the pond and during COVID he and his wife would watch the robins in the wildlife area. After his death a memorial was placed with his fork and a robin on top. I have plans for similar memorials for both Linda and David. This is another reason why the garden is so important. The legacy it holds binds our community and provides a way of remembering those who are no longer with us.

In the future we are not only looking to expand our volunteers with open days, and events both within the community and nationally with the RHS. We also are hoping to create a Peter Rabbit mosaic trail as I mentioned before which should be ready for the next season. But we are also hoping to branch out with different groups meeting for mental health resources, educational

purposes and physical fitness. We have already added another day to our calendar to tackle the ever-growing plants in the garden to guarantee it is ready to be used by all creatures and ages.

Thank you so much for taking the time to hear about what the garden means to me and my community. We hope you will come to the right decision, whatever that may be.

Yours sincerely,

Amy Horrocks