



# SAVING SOUTH CLIFF GARDENS

Monthly Update May 2020



Friends of South Cliff Gardens

SouthernGreen





The easing of restrictions on outdoor activity has allowed the South Cliff Gardens Community Engagement Officer, Gemma, the chance to get back to the gardens and it's very clear that spring has sprung.

The Italian Gardens are a riot of colour thanks to the hard work of the parks team and there is new life to celebrate as well as some familiar faces.





Photography / Art Contest



As part of our planned activity programme we are going to hold an annual art calendar competition. This will include photograph and art focused images of the South Cliff Gardens. Shortlisted images will be included in a calendar, which will then be made available for sale.

We are looking for creations based on the South Cliff Gardens that fit within the following themes:

- ♦ Historical habitats
- ♦ Wistful wanderings
- ♦ Connecting conservation

Please send all digital entries or photographs to:

[victoria.thompson@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:victoria.thompson@scarborough.gov.uk) or [gemma.alexander@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.alexander@scarborough.gov.uk)

# PROJECT OFFICERS BLOG

The sun is shining here and I'm sat on the back doorstep of my cute little terrace house looking out on the lettuce and spring onions, which I've been tentatively nurturing for the last few weeks. I've just had a doorstep catch up over lunch with my Grandma who lives next door (our doorsteps are handily 2m apart). I had a delicious parsnip and turmeric soup with seeds sprinkled on top and she had a poached duck egg, boiled potatoes and a beetroot salad, which we enjoyed whilst indulging in our daily discussion about 'God, man, and the universe'. Today we've been discussing loneliness because she's worried that I might be lonely. We've been reflecting on our circumstances and how similar they are, as we are both single women living alone with no pets. We both have the same contact digitally as we are on social media and we are both healthy, strong and independent women. The only real difference is that we are 60 years apart. Yet, interestingly, our family will give my Grams a ring to check on her because they are concerned about loneliness, but they do not call me in the same way. From my Gram's perspective this is all wrong and I am at a higher risk of loneliness. This is because she has been through a couple of wars and several pandemics and has come out the other side, able to cope with anything life throws at her whilst upholding great dignity. Whereas she feels this is all new for me, a massive change and a sharp U-turn into the world of isolation, which will be a shock for such a sociable person and she's angry that her age justifies the perception that she's vulnerable, but I am not.

Carl Jung said "Loneliness does not come from having no people around, but from being unable to communicate the things that seem important to oneself, or from holding certain views which others find inadmissible". I have not felt lonely during COVID-19 and I am conscious of how lucky I am to have a job that I love, to be working on a project that I am passionate about, which I am sharing with a beautiful community of people, so I agree with Jung on this one.

They say that loneliness is as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, so I'm really interested in what we can do together, to bring other people into the fold and help tackle this terrible loneliness pandemic. Gemma is busily working on activities to connect people with others and nature, because connecting with the natural world is good for our mental health as it reduces stress and anxiety, which are emotions that increase a sense of loneliness. Alongside this, there are things that we do in designing public green spaces that specifically focus on increasing community cohesion, which you probably are completely unaware of. Seating in public parks and gardens is a bit of a pet peeve of mine. We love a solitary bench in the UK and they have a powerful ability to evoke a romantic moment, clear your mind and ease your soul whilst in reflection on a stressful day, but they do not offer much to tackle loneliness. A good designer is clever and knows this, that's why it's important to also offer seating which is grouped, to allow for informal and chance interaction with friends you might not have met yet. I'm not suggesting we position two benches face to face, offering nothing but an intimidating environment staring eye to eye with a complete stranger, because no one's really going to take a seat here. What I'm suggesting is informal, non-intrusive groupings such as circles, waves or even squares, where people can be close enough to say good morning, offer an olive branch and an opportunity for someone to talk back without intruding if







the other person doesn't not want to reciprocate. You can gently nudge people a little closer together by providing a 'talking point'. I see this so often in the South Cliff Gardens because we luckily have an exceptional picture frame view around every corner that people love to share and talk about. But this could also be a curious piece of art or sculpture, perfumed planting or something strikingly off scale, an interesting lighting display, soft and subtle sounds or anything that evokes a feeling that people would like to share. So it's not as simple as throwing a bench in front of a view or offering a resting place, it's much more thoughtful and

meaningful than that. One of my absolute favourite places to see the power of good seating in action is within play areas. I heard a story once about a retired chap that used to take his chess board to the play area on a Sunday afternoon. Whilst looking after his grandchild he had sparked up a friendship with another retired man over the playground fence. Sharing a love of the strategy game, they agreed to have a weekly battle. The children would watch these two retired men playing chess and would get curious. Every Sunday the two men would arrive to an audience of kids and decided they would set up a Sunday chess club, to teach the children how to play. The council heard about this and installed a number of covered chess tables, which are still being used by the chess club now, ten years later, which has cleverly rooted this intergenerational interaction into the garden.

I have worked with hundreds of different communities as a gardener during the past 15 years and whilst reflecting on loneliness, I feel it's important to mention 'rootlessness' because the two go hand in hand. Rootlessness is where people, groups or even whole organisations do not feel they are rooted within place, floating around with no solid connection to our society. As humans we all know that when people feel they cannot share their thoughts and values with others they become lonely, it will have happened to all of us at some point, but what you might not have thought about is that whole communities of people can become desperately rootless. I've seen this in churches and places of worship as less young people coming through the generation value religion. I've seen this in children as they are not provided with good quality play spaces within public space so on a subconscious level they do not feel valued. I've seen this in our elderly because despite having the highest collective knowledge, our culture does not value it as it could. I've also seen this in refugee groups who have so much to share but there are barriers preventing it. Combatting rootless communities, bringing people together and relieving desperate loneliness is a challenge, but with a compassionate approach to place making, where everyone has a valued voice, it is achievable.

Victoria Thompson

Project Officer



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS BLOG

The need for many of us to spend much more time at home than normal seems to have led to a shift in culture towards what could be considered more traditional pastimes in many UK households. It seems that the novelty of playing video games all day or splurging on a single box set in under 24 hours has worn off as people turn to more practical hobbies such as crafting, baking and home growing.

National media has been full of stories of Britain's return to the good life during lockdown and the recent VE celebrations lead to perhaps inevitable comparisons with the Blitz spirit of the 1940s. It appears that people have taken this time to reflect on what is really important to them and to reevaluate their relationship with modern life. The frenetic pace at which many of us lived before the pandemic was all consuming and also drove us towards easy solutions for fundamentals such as food, clothing and entertainment, much of which became suddenly unavailable in the formats we were familiar with.

As people have turned to alternative ways to occupy themselves, the interest in growing food at home has soared. The RHS reported a spike in visits to their website with some advice pages, such as 'how to compost', receiving 500% more searches than usual.

The mental and physical benefits of gardening and home growing are well documented but it may not only be our search for new ways to combat stress and boredom that are driving up interest in kitchen gardening. The panic buying of food at the beginning of the crisis, which saw 42 million extra trips to the supermarket in just four days, has pushed up the cost of fresh produce and prices look likely to continue to rise for the foreseeable future.

Food poverty is a very real issue for many people and the demands on food banks and community kitchens has risen dramatically during this period. Many people have sought ways to help their communities on a practical level with provision of food supplies high in their priorities. One local example is Community Kitchen Scarborough who have, with the support and donations of produce and time from local people and businesses, been able to distribute over 2000 freshly prepared meals and more than 400 food parcels to vulnerable people and key workers.

On the Isle of White 5000 locals have joined a new scheme called the 'Green Island Veg Initiative', which encourages home growers to share surplus produce with their neighbours. It is particularly aimed at helping those on low incomes, with little or no garden space, to access fresh, locally grown food.

The Isle of White's response highlights the fact that to be able to grow your own you first need some space in which to do it. Whilst it would be lovely to have the luxury of a large garden, for many of us that just isn't the case. According to the Office for National Statistics, one in eight British households has no access to garden space. The traditional solution for those seeking self-sufficiency was to apply for an allotment, but whilst waiting lists have gone up sharply in recent years as food prices have soared and people have become more concerned about environmental issues such as food miles, access has been in a steady decline since the 1960s. Almost 50% of former allotment land has been built on and a further 25% otherwise repurposed. The hardest hit areas are also the poorest, with less affluent areas eight times more likely to have lost allotment space than their wealthier neighbours. With more than 90,000 people on allotment waiting lists nationally, even before the pandemic increased interest, these much sought after plots are unlikely to be the solution to a lack of growing space for most.

Community gardening projects are one answer to help those without gardens to get growing. A great local success story is Growing Opportunities, which for a decade have been working to match those who would like to grow their own with suitable land owners, as well as running regular classes and workshops on organic gardening. Whilst these activities are on hold whilst government restrictions remain in place, they are none the less a great example of how growing food can connect a community.

As we all seek ways to adjust to a new kind of normal, including taking up previously unexplored pastimes, it is still possible to enjoy the process of home growing without a garden. Something as seemingly simple as sewing a few pots of pick your own herbs or salad leaves on a windowsill still brings with it a feeling of achievement and an enhanced sense of connection with the food chain.

If you do have some space in which to grow, even if it's a few containers in a yard or on a balcony, it's worth considering having a go. Vegetables like runner beans and courgettes can do well in pots and are so much tastier picked fresh. They also have the added advantage of saving money on expensive supermarket produce.

Gemma Alexander

Community Engagement Officer

There is lots of information on kitchen gardening online and it is possible to convert the smallest outdoor area into a productive plot. See the links below for a few suggestions on getting started. With garden centres one of the first retailers to reopen, there is still plenty of time to get growing.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/digin/your\\_space/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/digin/your_space/)

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/grow-your-own>

<https://verticalveg.org.uk/category/best-crops-for-containers/>

---

During the past couple of months we have tried to bring you suggestions of things that you can do at home. Local groups have been at the forefront of keeping us busy and continue to find fun and creative ways to educate and entertain us. Here are a few new links to a range of activities brought to us by Scarborough based organisations, which really illustrates the diversity of culture in our town.

It's not just national theatres who have generously shared their productions with us, closer to home **Stephen Joseph Theatre** is premiering a new play by legendary local playwright, Alan Ayckbourn. You can watch it for free on their website, just follow the link below for more details:

<https://www.sjt.uk.com/annodomino?fbclid=IwAR2GVZd3oSuF2ef-IrnysYeAXKWxiQ5jQ6wfHnozSNv0KYDhVyNK92uUoE4>

Our friends at the **Beach Hut Theatre Company** are also offering the unique opportunity to watch their 2017 production of SnOwQuEeN, but hurry as it's only available until 2 June:

<http://www.beachhuttheatre.co.uk/>

The wonderful team at **Scarborough Library** continues to keep us busy with a regular 2pm Art Club on Wednesdays. They also have a very special opportunity to watch an online Q&A session all the way from New Zealand with prolific author C.S Woolley; tune in at 7pm on 10 June. From 8pm on Friday 29 May they have a family challenge to solve the puzzle and escape the junior library as they launch their new online Escape Room! Keep an eye on their Facebook page for these and lots more activities:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/ScarboroughLibrary/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/ScarboroughLibrary/posts/?ref=page_internal)

**The Children's University** has been highlighting local learning destinations daily with fun activity sheets to complete:

<https://www.facebook.com/ScarboroughCU/>

**Ranger Rich** is posting regular information/activity sheets to help us make the most of nature's sometimes overlooked gems, from sparrows to daisies:

[https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=ranger%20rich%20yorkshire&epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=ranger%20rich%20yorkshire&epa=SEARCH_BOX)

**Heritage Adventures** also have lots of top tips on exploring local heritage and archaeology, including a link to The Big Digital, an experimental collaboration by local archaeologists and historians:

[https://www.facebook.com/HeritageAdventuresLtd/?\\_tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARD6L4tKWdVMFgwQDYsfqhBLpMUIHdEUpszFJsaN7oZEDPXDJIMXlzdGkLbXbq1oCwfvMvbkWQbowDJW](https://www.facebook.com/HeritageAdventuresLtd/?_tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARD6L4tKWdVMFgwQDYsfqhBLpMUIHdEUpszFJsaN7oZEDPXDJIMXlzdGkLbXbq1oCwfvMvbkWQbowDJW)



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Scarborough and Filey Covid-19 Community Response



## What we are doing

Co-ordinating local trusted groups and volunteers to support people in their community

Pooling the existing volunteer and staff workforce to support vulnerable people with tasks such as delivering prescriptions, running urgent errands, collecting shopping

Offering information and advice on services available and local businesses offering delivery and collection of essentials

Providing weekly emotional and social support via telephone or skype

Providing regular updates via social media and local media on changes to services and accessing urgent help

If you need help, information or would like to volunteer, please get in touch with us via

Telephone: 01723 379058

Email: [scarbcomsupp2020@gmail.com](mailto:scarbcomsupp2020@gmail.com)

Facebook: <https://fb.me/sfcr2020>

Online form: <https://bit.ly/2Uswzch>

In Partnership With





# COMMUNITY NEWS

**time to change**  
**north yorkshire**  
let's end mental health discrimination



**ScarboroughSurvivors**

Mental Health Resource Centre



## **Telephone support during Covid-19 Isolation**

**Telephone support available 7 days & 7 nights  
during Mental Health Resource Centre Closure**

**07516 916290**

**(Main number for professionals/referrals 7 days)**

**Wednesday 9am – 7.30pm**

**Saturday, Sunday 9.30am – 7.30pm**

**07860 102516**

**Monday & Tuesday, 9.30am – 1am**

**Friday, 9.30am – 7.30pm**

**07395 824526**

**Wednesday – Sunday, 7.30pm – 1am**

**Thursday, 9.30am – 7.30pm**

**07562 974101**

**Wednesday – Sunday, 7.30pm – 1am**

**07759 638733**

**Whitby area - Wednesday, 9am – 4pm**

**Normal mobile charges apply – if you would prefer us to  
call you, send a text message (please include your name)**

**For other sources of telephone and online support please  
visit our website at [www.scarboroughsurvivors.org.uk](http://www.scarboroughsurvivors.org.uk)**

## Saving South Cliff Gardens Benches Appeal



Throughout Scarborough's South Cliff Gardens there are more than 300 memorial benches commemorating the many people and families who over the years have fallen in love with Scarborough's South Bay. People from across the world have taken out leases for benches to lay down their legacy within the stunning setting of the South Cliff Gardens, however over the years, some information about these leases has regrettably been lost.

The Scarborough South Cliff community is appealing for people to come forward and claim their memorial benches. We would like to unlock these hidden personal connections and reinstate their place within the South Cliff Gardens.

Scarborough Borough Council and the local community were awarded a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to renovate the South Cliff Gardens. The proposed work will include refurbishing some of the benches and tidying up around some of them to reinstate the stunning views. The modern metal benches will be replaced with heritage equivalent designed benches to be more holistic within this special Victorian landscape.

If you have a lease for a bench within the South Cliff Gardens or on the Esplanade, we'd love to hear from you. We'd like to hear your stories and hidden social connections and get your input. In return we will keep you in the loop about our plans for the site and what will happen to your benches.

Please get in touch with us via the contact page at the end of this newsletter.



# CONTACT US

Please get in touch

If you're interested in getting involved in the project, would like to know more or you have a great idea, fabulous painting of the South Cliff, or an interesting photo, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us....

***The more people involved the merrier!***

## Oral History Project

This year we will be launching an exciting new project aimed at capturing the stories of those who have enjoyed the gardens over the years. If you or anyone you know, either locally or internationally, has a story to pass on to future garden visitors, please watch this space. More details coming soon.

Website: <http://friendsofsouthcliffgardens.com/>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/southcliffgardens](http://www.facebook.com/southcliffgardens)

Twitter: [@HLFSCGardens](https://twitter.com/HLFSCGardens)

Project Officer: Vicky Thompson  
[victoria.thompson@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:victoria.thompson@scarborough.gov.uk)

Community Engagement Officer:  
Gemma Alexander  
[gemma.alexander@scarborough.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.alexander@scarborough.gov.uk)

Find out more about the Heritage Lottery Fund here:  
<https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us>

