

# SCOTSWOOD COMMUNITY GARDEN

Yewcroft Ave, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 6TU

tel: 0191 275 0000

website [scotswoodgarden.org.uk](http://scotswoodgarden.org.uk)

Contact for the Forest School is Harriet Menter, Education Manager

Notes and a summary of a visit made on behalf of the Woolsington Parish Council Biodiversity Project team by John Littleton & Joanne Couchman on 7 October 2020, shown round by Leanne Defty.

Picture references are to the photographs featured in the attached document: **“Scotswood Garden in photographs: A visit by Woolsington Parish Council”**

## **Early Explorers’ Area** pictures 1 and 2

This area is used + maintained by 2-7 year olds with their families – they also do crafts here too - demonstration area to show that you don’t need a massive space to grow things

4 smallish square beds, edged, bark chippings on floor – they have access to a friendly tree surgeon who wants rid of chippings

Some edging is wooden planks, other times is bricks on end

Compost bins

Tyres are used as planters – children have painted them yellow & red

Bench seat made out of 4 x tyres + wide piece of wood

Hand forks + trowels made by Draper

Each class/year group has its own planter or bed

The team like to get kids involved in other activities eg. RSPB Garden Bird Watch, community litter picks.

All activities are linked to the school curriculum.

There are attractive, informative noticeboards – picture 3

There is an annual inspection of health + safety of trees and action taken if recommended.

## **The Forest School**

The Forest School ethos is about risk management –

Kids are made aware of risks and there are rules, but freedom within that framework – children need to learn to assess risk themselves and learn to be safe – and are encouraged to do so as part of the project.

There is a research paper provided by a staff member on the website which details benefits of the Forest School – findings indicate that if children have a day of Forest School activity, when they go back to school they are more productive.

Forest School intervention is longer term than a one off session – minimum intervention here is 1 session for 6 weeks

They also offer Forest School facilitating training so that teachers can deliver it at their own school

## **Woodand area, used for the Forest School** picture 6

Area of birch trees, also hazel, which is a useful tree

Benches in loose circle around fire pit

Seasonal cooking, hammocks, mini beast hunting

Habitat piles (picture 7) – huge pile here, like a hedge! Made from prunings, anything that is not a perennial weed – is a natural barrier + great habitat – this provides a winter and overwintering spot for newts, they have 3 species here including the protected Great Crested Newt – it also provides a safety barrier to stop kids going into the pond area.

Forest floor – logs line path, pegged down. Wild garlic, winter aconites, bluebells, snowdrops

### **Forest Garden** pictures 4 and 5

Permaculture ecology system, working **with** nature -

This form of gardening draws inspiration from nature.

Top canopy of trees including fruit + nut trees (plums, apples, pears, damsons, crab apples), then shrubby layer of fruit bushes (gooseberry, raspberry, blackcurrant, brambles etc), then ground cover – rhubarb, comfrey (use as fertilizer) herbaceous geraniums and much more

Over 40 apple trees – use in cooking + for making apple juice – have manual press on site for this purpose.

Leave seed heads – artichokes, cardoons, teasels, honesty – spray paint silver/ gold for decorations

Honeysuckles, climbers

Bench with chamomile lawn around it so can remove shoes & socks – sensory

Herbs in bed – small blackboard signs eg. curry plant “Rub my leaves...”

### **Raised beds**

Raised beds of different heights – waist height for standing up, lower for sitting down & for wheel chair users

Containing a variety of vegetables including beetroot, squash, lettuce, radishes

A compost loo is also on site here.

### **Outdoor classroom** Pictures 13 and 14

Area with roof and benches with storage cupboards underneath for tools, gloves, home-made bunting, crafts made in garden

### **Spring meadow** picture 9

Planted with spring bulbs - daffodils, tulips – once spring bulbs have died back then kids can run around here – this area is also used to put up marquee for community events – volunteers love to mow the grass here (with petrol mower)

### **Summer flowering meadow** picture 10

Is separated from Spring Meadow by a hedgerow of blackthorn & hawthorn.

This meadow is normally cut back with scythes in autumn – leave clippings on the surface for a while for seed heads to disperse – then the grass is used as mulch on fruit trees

### **Pond** picture 8

Watersoldier is removed every January. Volunteers get in pond + rake it out – leave on side for a while so that any newts can escape back into pond

Flooring on the jetty is recycled plastic boards by Marmax – doesn't rot, cant set on fire, not slippery, can clean

Pond dipping platform – kids love to do this

Sunken bath for frogs – separate container as newts eat frog spawn

Birdhide – overlooks bird feeders – would like it to have a living roof or cedar shingles. They have binoculars on site but are in need of more.

**Vegetable plot** pictures 11 and 12

No digging out. The produce grown here is either taken home by volunteers, or staff can buy it, or can be used to make chutneys etc. They often have a lunch for volunteers on a Wednesday with food from garden

**Willow tunnels** picture 15

These prefer wet conditions underfoot, at least initially

However they can require a lot of maintenance – specialist company was used to design and to plant it - Ruth Thompson of Sylvan Skills

Wooden xylophone hanging up in trees

**Bees + hives**

they have lots of suits available, volunteers help with hives – sometimes harvest honey – educational tool – they require an information board for this area – all hives here are occupied by Honey Bees

**A Reflective Garden** picture 16

This area is accessed through a picket gate – a quiet area for reflection by visitors

**Social Area** picture 17

Has decorated walls done by children and volunteers - has a roof and a large floor area with seat and benches. It contains a Pizza oven + Barbecue for volunteers & community open days eg. Apple Day

**Summary**

Scotswood Community Garden was established in 1995. It works with nature to create a great place for people and wildlife to enjoy. The garden aims for a 'managed wildness' approach

The garden is about community, either for the local area or the wider area, and they welcome people of all ages and backgrounds to get involved in their work.

It provides wonderful opportunities for learning about conservation and biodiversity and the Parish Council team could not fail to be impressed. We should like to convey our thanks to Leanne for showing us round.

It is recommend that WPC promote and encourage links with the Scotswood Community Garden as part of its Biodiversity Project.

In the meantime, please join us on our visit by looking at the attached document:

**“Scotswood Community Garden in photographs: A visit by Woolsington Parish Council”**

***Jal/JC 09-10-20***