



# Abbey Physic Community Garden

*Growing a healthy community*

Autumn  
2019

## ABBEY PHYSIC COMMUNITY GARDEN—25TH ANNIVERSARY



On Saturday, 15 June the Abbey Physic Community Garden celebrated 25 years serving and working with the people of Faversham with a sun-soaked party attended by over 500 visitors, including many old and new faces and the newly-named Mayor of Faversham, **Alison Reynolds**.

- Physic Garden founder **Chris Ives** spoke to the assembled members at the Annual General Meeting, giving an enlightening history of the twists and turns that have made The Garden what it is today.
- The re-launch of the Men's Shed, sponsored by **Axminster Tools** who were represented by David Johns, manager of Axminster, Sittingbourne. Assembling our new sheds and kitting them out with tools and equipment was the first major woodworking project undertaken by the volunteers and staff of this scheme which seeks to tackle loneliness and isolation.
- **Jane Beedle** of Great British Bake Off fame baked an incredible watering can cake which was almost mistaken for the real thing, joining the latest superb cake provided by Physic Garden stalwart baker **Liz**, which depicted one of our volunteers working in our vegetable garden.
- The women of the **Faversham Gunpowder Women's Institute** served brilliantly in helping to set up and run the stalls and refreshments on offer, which included food and drink grown and prepared by our volunteers, and most importantly took care of all the cleaning up afterwards!
- The excellent '**Swing the Bridge**' band provided the musical backdrop, and occasionally took centre stage as visitors danced and enjoyed the sunshine

The Abbey Physic Garden would like to thank the following companies and those who donated raffle prizes for our celebration as follows:

**Artisan, Teynham, Axminster Tools, Bafflegab Productions  
Boots, BTF Hair, Cyclechic, Dello Data Analytics, Edible Culture  
Faversham Hire, Faversham Hypnotherapy, Julie Davies Flower Workshops, Mor-  
risons, Saxon Shore  
South East Water, Vegan Perks, vino's**

In this edition:

- **APCG 25th Anniversary**
- **Happiness Café**
- **Faversham Men's Shed**
- **Peer to Peer Support**
- **Ground Force Action Team**
- **Horticulture**
- **Buzzing in the Garden**
- **Grub Club**
- **Meet the Cabin Crew**
- **Art, Pottery & Singing**

### Dates for your diary

**Art in the Garden**—every 2nd Friday 11am-1pm

**Singing in the Garden** —every Friday 2pm

**Happiness Café** – Wednesday 9th October 2019 (every 2nd Weds in the month)

**Peer to Peer Support - MIND** every Friday 1.30pm-3pm

**Horticulture training** – 10am-2pm every Tuesday with Paul Muddle

**Groundforce, Grub Club and Men's Shed** – every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10am-2pm.



HM Government

# CHAIRMAN OF THE TRUSTEE'S UPDATE—SARAH HARVEY



## Looking Forward

Our AGM in June and our last newsletter already feel like a long way back. All of our Trustees were reappointed at the AGM and we are firmly focused on doing whatever we can to support members and our fabulous staff team.

Our Big Lottery Reaching Communities grant comes to an end in September so we have been furiously putting together new grant applications to win replacement funds. Suzanne and I had the opportunity to bring Kim Debling, the funding officer who oversees our Big Lottery grants, down to the garden to see what we are doing and the progress we are making. We are hopeful that the Big Lottery will decide to extend at least part of our grant.

There is so much happening in the garden and things to look forward to. The Taste of Faversham Food Festival on the weekend of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September promises to be a very busy event and an opportunity to showcase the wonderful produce we grow and cook in the garden and hopefully to connect with a whole new set of visitors. The bees are happy and producing honey in the Churchyard. The Men's Shed is really taking off and their new Chicken Coop is a thing of beauty. As a former chicken owner who can testify to the calming fascination of these wonderful creatures I can't wait for the garden to get its first group of bantam hens. I suspect we will all be queuing up to give them a little cuddle.

The Coffee Cabin is looking really smart and welcoming, not least with that seemingly endless supply of cakes from Liz and Diane. It will soon be time to harvest the fruit and make a new batch of jam and before we know it the leaves will fall and we will be preparing for our Xmas fair.

The Abbey Physic Community Garden is never static- always evolving and hopefully improving. Its been a particular joy to hear so many suggestions coming forward from members. Please keep those ideas coming and work with us to help make them happen. A particular priority for us over the next year is to sustain members' interest in gardening and try to increase the amount of food we grow, exploring new ways to produce fruit and vegetables in small or tiny spaces. This will mean that more of the food in our Community Kitchen will have been grown locally: we also hope that local people will see us as a source of inspiration to grow their own food.

APCG Happy Cafe

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

## Happy Café

Hello everyone. I hope you have all enjoyed the summer, and putting into practice all the things that we have covered during the last 7 months of "Action for Happiness". The August meeting did not take place, so we will meet again on **9 October at 11am**. We will be looking at "Acceptance" and how to learn to accept being the person we are! Look forward to seeing you all then. Very best wishes, Steve.

**We meet every second Wednesday of the month @ 11am**

Everyone is very welcome to attend.

Please contact **Steve Bartholomew** on 07543719925 or [stevepb13@hotmail.com](mailto:stevepb13@hotmail.com) to find out more.

**ALL WELCOME**



**GREAT DREAM**  
Ten keys to happier living



## BUZZY IN THE GARDEN—SHARON GEPHEART



When I moved to Faversham last year the first thing I did before I even moved in was volunteer at the Abbey Physic Community Garden. On the form there was a section asking if I had any skills to bring to the garden. I'm a beekeeper of 40+ years so was delighted when Suzanne said they wanted to have beehives in the Churchyard next to the Garden.

With Tom Jewell as my 'wing man' we started to prepare the site. Tom and his volunteers built a dead hedge around the site to protect the hives and make the bees fly above head height.

We ordered two nucs of bees (five frames of worker bees and a laying queen bee) we were ready long before the bees were ready to pick up!

Once they were installed in our hives we got a call to say there was a swarm of bees nearby. It was collected and we then had 3 hives.

Every Thursday Tom, myself and assorted volunteers donned our suits and worked the three hives.

We have watched the hives build up and get very busy, the swarm didn't seem to be building up and on investigation we could not find a queen so we ordered a new queen who was delivered by my postman. She was installed and seems to be happily laying now.

The other two hives built up and produced some honey that we could take. This was done and we now have our own Abbey Physic honey. It has been filtered but otherwise untreated hopefully another income stream to build up.

We hope to build up a larger apiary and do workshops and classes to help the apiary pay for itself. As well as help people to appreciate and enjoy bees and beekeeping.

Tom continues to gain knowledge and confidence and other volunteers especially Martin help monitor and care for these busy girls.



## PEER TO PEER SUPPORT—MARTYN DYER

Our peer to peer support sessions are an informal, flexible form of support. You don't need to call and let us know you are coming—these drop in sessions are for anyone who feels they could benefit from time with a trained Wellbeing Worker.

Whether you want a chat with peers or just get advice, this service is designed to provide you with a space where you can come, sit and get how you are feeling off your chest.

Set in our beautiful garden, you will get the benefits of talking to someone and enjoy a peaceful outdoor space.

***Join us for a chat and a cuppa Every Friday 1.30pm to 3pm***

***at The Abbey Physic Community Garden***



## MEET THE CABIN CREW—MITZI, MARTYN & HELEN



The Cabin, often referred to as the cafe, is an integral part of “Abbey Physic Community Garden” and is the meeting place where anyone can come to partake in hot or cold drinks and freshly baked cakes and scones. These are available to the general public who often visit the gardens over the week. **We are open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 9am to 2pm and Saturday and Sunday we open 11am to 3pm.** As the cafe benefits from being the central meeting place, it is often the first point of contact for new members and visiting public and we aim to be a friendly and approachable place to visit.

There are three main volunteer members who run “The Cabin” and these are Helen, Mitzi and Martyn although other members often assist when required to facilitate the smooth running of the cafe. Anyone who works in “The Cabin” is referred to as “The Cabin Crew” and we are proud to be known by this term as we work so well together as a phenomenal team. Over time the members have greatly improved the facilities and made a very professional finish to what we now offer and they are always on hand to help out when needed. The Cabin is an ongoing project of improvement and thanks to members of “APCGs” we now have a professional looking cafe.

Thanks to the hard work of “The Cabin Crew” and its helpers we are now able to assist by helping put more finances into projects around the garden.

Our aim is to improve the cafe facilities which we have done by installing, thanks to the generosity of one of our cabin crew, a large chest freezer which allows us now to have a variety of cakes and scones that we can freeze and use as required. We have also, thanks to Stewart one of our “Men’s Shed” members installed a tiered shelving system to display our range of soft drinks and this shelving has allowed us also to open up the front counter to safely serve our members and the public.

In “The Cabin” we have a display of items made by our members which are for sale. The items range from jigsaw puzzles to embroidered cards to intricate bowls that have been made by members of the “Men’s Shed” based in the garden. The imagination of our members who make these items to sell is boundless. We also have a small selection of books on gardening and butterflies which can be used by anyone who will find them useful for looking up information. The “Cabin Crew” are also on hand to answer any questions that you may have and if we don’t know the answer we will always find out for you.

The Cabin is also used for functions such as mindfulness, mindful drawing, Coping with Life lecture and not forgetting our “Happy Cafe” that is run by Steve every second Wednesday of the month. So come and meet “The Cabin Crew” and have a refreshing cup of tea or coffee and conversation as we are a very friendly group that work for each other and each other’s well-being. If you want to join please speak to any of “The Cabin Crew” and we will be happy to help you fill in a member’s application form which allows you from the moment you become a member to free, yes free, hot drinks throughout your membership. We look forward to seeing you.





Let me start by introducing myself, my name is **Ian Hardie** and I have been asked to be the volunteer lead for the Faversham Men's Shed Project. It's a great concept and such a massive opportunity that I could not possibly turn down. Thank you, **Abbey Physic Community Garden**, Suzanne and Jacqui, for asking me.

Our aim here at Faversham Men's Shed is to increase the men's shed membership with the priority that we all help each other, have fun and build friendships along the way. We would like to design our own brand type items that are unique to the Faversham Men's Shed. To enhance our presence and identity we have designed our own logo for correspondence and hopefully our own t-shirts that all members will receive. With regards to joining Faversham Men's Shed we have introduced membership application form and a signing in system to assist with the welfare and

happiness of what we hope will be a fantastic and friendly atmosphere.

The Faversham Men's Shed hope to help local projects by making bird and bat boxes, also making minor repairs such as picture frames or garden furniture.

By working in partnership with The Abbey Physic Community Garden (APCG) we will also be assisting this great charity by aiding with garden projects, disability access and equipment within APCG.

We will be seeking the assistance of various charities and partner organisations such as Axminster Tools and Optivo. Axminster tools will give us and all new members a 5% discount.

Our Axminster sponsor will also be hosting tool demonstrations here at APCG, the first one will be held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 09.30-11.30 am. More dates to follow.

**We aim to raise funds for new equipment by selling items made in the Faversham Men's Shed in the APCG cabin shop and collecting small donations for any local repairs made.**

**We will be hosting our first monthly meeting on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September at 10am-12pm at APCG. And also a membership welcome BBQ – Date TBA.**

We are pleased to announce that **Kent Men's Shed** in partnership with **Faversham Men's Shed** will be hosting an event to publicise Men's Shed's valuable work and community spirit. The event will take place **3 October 2019 10am-2pm** with some 30 participants.

For further information, please do come and see me on Weds or Friday morning 9am -1pm or email me at [ian.abbeyphysic@gmail.com](mailto:ian.abbeyphysic@gmail.com)

Thank you for taking time to read this article, I and my team look forward to meeting new members



***Any time that suits you, is good for us. Come and join a fine group of people doing a fine thing or two. We'd love to meet you.***



**Alex and Roz** have been busy in the Grub Club preparing delicious food for us all. We've been loving all the delicious veg from the garden at Grub Club this summer. Philip's amazing onions have brought tears to our eyes and his garlic garlands were a work of art. The trombone squashes weird and wonderful shapes have made chopping an interesting job in the kitchen! They have ended up in all kinds of dishes from frittatas to curries.

Paul's (Horticulture) Monday and Tuesday groups have provided the kitchen with a near constant supply of lovely potatoes, which we've also used in numerous different ways.

The very hot spells of weather sometimes made working in the kitchen a challenge but the brave cooks soldiered on to provide lunch for hard working volunteers, staff and garden visitors. Although unfortunately it all proved too much for the fridge, which had to be replaced after an exceptionally hot day.

We are looking forward to the arrival of the gardens' bantam hens (well the hens will be cute...but we're after their eggs!), the new clay pizza oven and some warming autumn stews and crumbles.

**Come and join our Grub Club cooking sessions Weds, Thurs and Friday 10am –2pm. Space is limited so please do get in touch with Alex and Roz and book your place.**



## Accredited Horticulture Qualifications at the Abbey Physic Community Garden.

We are celebrating 2 of our learners attaining their City and Guilds Level 1 Award in Horticulture, another 2 have attained a Level 1 Certificate whilst 3 now have L1 Diplomas. We already have 7 new recruits for the new years course, so places still available.

This is a fantastic place to learn or improve your horticultural skills and knowledge. Learning in this award winning working garden, is fun, interesting and inspiring. No previous experience is required. Just come along and speak to Paul Muddle for more information.

**Abbey Physic Community Garden runs horticulture training every  
Tuesday 10am – 2pm at the garden.**

**Paul Muddle, course tutor, has supported our candidates through  
their level 1 City & Guilds.**

**Phone 01795 539915 or Email – [abbeyphysic@btinternet.com](mailto:abbeyphysic@btinternet.com)**



## ART IN THE GARDEN – VIVIEN WHITEHOUSE



When Suzanne offered space for our art in the Garden two years ago I jumped at the offer.

I know through my own experience art improves well-being. Be it gardening, pottery, sewing, flower arranging, drawing or painting, creativity, using one's hands, gives a pleasurable sense of freedom from anxiety.

One of our 'art ladies' said the Garden was a wonderful place to sit and do art. Another said arts and crafts absorb the mind and distract from feelings of anxiety and depression.

Anyone can draw. If you can see reasonably well and can write your name, you can draw! Drawing is a skill that CAN be learned. It can reveal much about you to yourself and show you how you see and feel about things.

We incorporate crafts to connect with the garden more, using off-cuts from the 'Men's Shed'. We paint nature; recycling wooden off-cuts into key-rings, coasters, fridge magnets. Our artwork appears on miniature bird-boxes - 'homes' for insects as well as greeting cards and drawing and painting.

The highlight for us was the 25th Anniversary/Open Day in the Garden in June. Our Art/Craft stall attracted many. We sold most of our crafts and greeting cards. We are a small friendly group and have a couple of vacant places - and even if we're full no-one goes away empty-handed. Time and a 'beginners pack' is given out. Do come along and improve your well being. Art is great therapy. We meet fortnightly - Fridays in the café - 11 am to 1 pm (materials free). We meet fortnightly - Fridays in the café - 11 am to 1 pm (materials free).



## POTTERY IN THE GARDEN—RACHEL HOWARD



Over the summer we have run a number of pottery sessions where people have had the opportunity to come and make something using clay. We have been using hand building methods such as coiling and slab to make a variety of pots, and in the future we hope to get a wheel so people can have a go at 'throwing' a pot. Our sessions are open to people of all abilities.

Some great things have been made during our pottery workshops. Rachel has been a fantastic tutor and we hope to have more dates over Autumn and Winter.

Look out for announcements at the Garden or on Facebook.





£25



Celebrating

25 YEARS

For 25 more.....

friends training sessions **peer support** health plants  
 meals weeks watering cans BIRD BOXES  
 well being SUPPORT SESSIONS *cups of tea* learning  
 bags of compost members dementia support **gardening**  
 Qualifications yoga friends plant pots people confidence  
**chickens** bees **wildlife** children new mums community  
**volunteers** seeds laughter hope staff insurance electricity

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[www.abbeyphysic.org](http://www.abbeyphysic.org)



Besides all the buzz created by the swarming success of our three super beehives, described in detail elsewhere in this newsletter by beekeeper-in-residence Sharon, the Ground Force Team have been busy with a number of other activities this summer.

Digging parties (which actually are every bit as fun as the name suggests!) have been preparing new areas for seed sowing in the coming autumn weeks. We are pushing back towards the wall in the churchyard where we hope to extend the grass area and introduce self-seeding annual and biennial flowers. A similar sowing scheme is hoped to be brought to life in the area of the alley outside the Physic Garden, where clearing and preparation have also taken place.

An honorable mention should go to the efforts to raise butterflies from caterpillars in pots of cultivated nettles protected by special netting. Sadly our young larvae were lost to predators, but all of those who took part in butterfly spotting, and scoured the Physic Garden for clusters of butterfly eggs hidden under leaves, agreed that they had become more aware of these magical creatures, and we fully intend to try again next year – watch this space!

An unqualified success this summer has been the much clamored for return of the elderflower cordial we made in 2018 by harvesting flowers from the many elder trees which grow in St. Mary of Charity's churchyard. Scores of heads of flowers were collected by a team of volunteers and prepared according to our secret recipe (actually it's not a secret at all, it's a BBC recipe you can find at [tinyurl.com/APCGelder](https://www.tinyurl.com/APCGelder)). The nearly two gallons we produced were sold at our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary party, and it went down so well we did it all again the following week to make a batch for the Faversham Gunpowder Women's Institute to sell at their market stall.

As ever, a huge thank you to the many volunteers who have given their time and energy to help with the activities of the Ground Force Team this Summer.

**- Tom and the Ground Force Team.**



## MIDDLESIZED GARDEN—ALEXANDRA CAMPBELL



'Journalist and blogger Alexandra Campbell has been filming and writing about The Abbey Physic Garden for her blog and YouTube channel, both called The Middlesized Garden.

She's highlighting some of our eco-friendly and wildlife-friendly gardening methods in order to encourage people to use them in their own gardens. The first video and blog post features five of our homemade fertilisers and she also wrote about them in the gardening section of People's Friend magazine, out the week of the 14th August.

Check out Alexandra's two links below: .

<https://www.themiddlesizedgarden.co.uk/5-homemade-fertilisers-garden-grow/>

[https://youtu.be/LaMREENk\\_-4](https://youtu.be/LaMREENk_-4)

## SINGING GROUP - HELEN PERCIVAL

'Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home....'

'What shall we do with the drunken sailor, early in the morning....'

Just a taster of the vast range of songs that we have been singing in the Abbey Physic Community Garden's new singing group.

The group is purely for the joy of singing, so there is no pressure to rehearse and prepare for a public performance, and no one gets cross if you get it wrong. We are singing to feel peace, not stress.

Over the summer we have been lucky with the weather, so we have been singing outside in the idyllic setting of the garden, surrounded by flowers and leafy trees. Sometimes we do a meditative walk around the garden while singing. Beautiful music and nature - after the group I go home knowing I have just been in paradise.

Liz has been a wonderful leader, maintaining a relaxed and friendly group. After a few meetings members started to bring songs to the group for it to sing. We'll have a go at any genre - pop, folk, sea shanties, spirituals, blessings, choral. If we don't know all the words Liz finds them out for us. You don't need to be able to read music.

We sometimes sing in parts, and there's plenty of smiles as we concentrate on trying to get it right! We also do mindful walks around the garden while singing. One day we invited a visitor to the garden to join in. It turned out she was German and she taught us a song with German lyrics. **Come join us every Friday from 2pm.**



## MEMBERS' MEETINGS

It's quite a challenge to arrange member meetings that suits all you wonderful, busy people. **Steve Bartholomew** (07543 719925 or [stevepb13@hotmail.com](mailto:stevepb13@hotmail.com)) has kindly offered to organise these and be the first point of contact. Please see come and see Steve or Jacqui Hunt at the Garden. Our next meeting will be in **Wednesday 23rd October 11.00am.**

## GROWING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES –JACQUI HUNT, LONELINESS HEAD

We are continuing to forge many partnerships in connection with our 'Tackling Loneliness' in Faversham Campaign (AGE UK, WI, Optivo, Bangers & Balls which is the charity for the lost gardens of Lord and Lady Faversham, Inner Wheel & Rotary) who have all had fundraising events at the garden. We are talking to many more including:

Optivo, Porchlight, Seteda, Plastic Free Faversham, Food Bank, Rising Sun , Strode Park Foundation, Swale Borough Council, Lady Mayoress of Faversham - Alison Reynolds, Edible Culture, APCG Bereavement Care, Social Prescribing , RedZebra, KCC & Faversham Health Practice, local schools, Faversham Gunpowder WI, Faversham Markets, Live well Kent and Shaw Trusts - all like the idea of joint collaboration projects. Together with Faversham Men's Shed, this will enhance and support those who will benefit from our garden to build longstanding friendships.

If you would like to find out more about our Growing Healthy Communities work or know of someone who would benefit from coming to the garden, please do get in contact with Jacqui [jacqui.abbeyphysic@gmail.com](mailto:jacqui.abbeyphysic@gmail.com) or at The Garden. We very much welcome your thoughts, ideas/comments and making you part of everything we do.



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**Website** - [www.abbeyphysic.org](http://www.abbeyphysic.org)

***Thank you to all our supporters including: Big Lottery, Kent Community Foundation, Brook Trust, KCC Members Grant, Swire Foundation, Live Well Kent, Axminster Tools and Optivo. Many thanks to the Old Grammar School Charity for your continued support in leasing us the garden.***



**A BIG thank you to all our members,  
volunteers, trustees, friends and visitors!**