

Newsletter March 2012

Dear all,

2011 was a busy year! We completed our series of herb workshops with West Ham Park and held several more events with Central Park and other community groups in Newham. On the strength of this demand, we are now fundraising for our **Three-Year Plan** with both Parks as partners and planning more workshops.

Three-year plan in partnership with Newham's Parks

Over the next three years we will build our education programme, a key part of our community medicinal garden model. The funding we seek will pay for **two health leaders/medical herbalists and a gardener** to create herb gardens at the two Parks and with local community groups. Lasting health changes are more likely when people share knowledge with each other, so we will base our educational programme on a **teach-one, teach all** course accredited by the **National Open College Network**. Local community leaders can then become health mentors teach others about healthy food and family remedies. This course we can then market to other groups and businesses.

[Occupy](#) and the [School of Commoning](#) highlight new ways of promoting participation, enterprises that harness people's talents while keeping focus and leadership. For Living Medicine truly to teach health, we need to model it at all levels. Our challenge is **how we manage this enterprise so that it is visibly healthy from inside out!** Staff and volunteers should feel that we are all driving the project together, with at the same time clear leadership and communication. Developing project management on these governing principles is one of our next tasks.

New model of promoting self care

One way to teach healthy living so that it becomes a pleasure is to make it part of everyday life, rather than a worthy add-on, and in a place where people naturally gather. Building on the NHS Self Care project at Cullompton, Simon Mills and Joey Lee from our partner [SustainCare](#) have opened The [Hub on the Green](#) in the heart of Exeter. Simon is running the herbal medicine clinic and Joey a calendar of community classes and events that offer the perfect setting for Living Medicine's courses. Such classes form part of SustainCare's "social prescribing" model, with an online Self Care Library that GPs may offer their patients.

Urban Physic Garden in Southwark

We collaborated last summer with **The Urban Physic Garden** (www.physicgarden.org.uk), a pop-up medicinal garden conceived by Wayward Plants, with architects, artists, gardeners and writers and herbalists. We ran workshops and walks there and will be part of a second Urban Garden in 2013 supported by the [Wellcome Trust](#). Wayward Plants is now looking for a new site in Westminster.

Next steps and long-term plan

We still have the long-term vision of a great and inspirational **World Medicinal Garden**. Once we have proven and accredited our community health education course and gained expertise in running a community medicinal garden, we can set up our model **community garden**, and from this generate other medicinal gardens round the country linking professional herbalists to gardens. With a network of such gardens, finally seed a new kind of national garden and centre, created and run with local people from the very start.

Finally, thank you, all our wonderful **Living Medicine team** – Gail Farrow, Anne Betz, Rabiah Abdullah, Misty Simpson, Husna Begum, Claire Rother and Katie Stock and many others who helped at our stalls and workshops, and to Jonny Chubb at **Timeware** and Helmut Berns at **It's That Easy** for our website.

Best wishes, Alex

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