

# Bug Cycle COMMUNITY GARDEN

## Creative Waves project evaluation for the refurbishment of 'BugCycle' Community Garden



Special thanks to the Pocket Parks' funding scheme which provides support to community-led bodies working in partnership with their local authority.

creative  
waves  
COMMUNITY ARTS

## Refurbishment of 'BugCycle' Community Garden, Beach House Park, Worthing

### Evaluation Report

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*Creative Waves; Nadia Chalk & Vanessa Breen, (Nessy) in action*

*"Nadia Chalk and Vanessa Breen are the exact kind of community minded people that the Park Rangers team enjoy working with. They work tirelessly to help improve and create amazing spaces for all the community to enjoy and cherish. Their ideas and execution of the pocket park they have built with the help of an army of volunteers has been a joy to watch and be part of. The creation of this pocket park has been especially difficult through the Covid 19 pandemic with lockdowns slowing the progress but as soon as restrictions eased they were there building and creating with such determination and organisation that delays were minimal. I have always enjoyed working with Nadia and Nessy as we bounce ideas off each other excellently, with them giving creative ideas and myself giving ways to implement them. They are always a joy to work with and have made a huge difference to Worthing with several projects over the years with their enthusiasm never seeming to dwindle. The creation of the pocket park in Beach House Park played a major part in the park being awarded the Green Flag again this year and their continuous involvement in the park will help us to keep this award in years to come."*

Anthony Read - Head Ranger for Adur & Worthing Councils.



*Working in partnership with Worthing Borough Council and the Park Rangers team*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Creative Waves have worked with the local community and the council's Park Rangers to design a welcoming space for all to enjoy. The garden is a creative, wildlife friendly space with sustainable, low maintenance planting, built with recycled & repurposed materials.

**HUGE THANKS** to all the volunteers and Park Rangers who helped re-landscape the garden in 2021, their generosity and skills assisted in transforming the space to create: a community vegetable patch, a rockery, stumpery, willow archway, wildlife pond and a mini library.

Improved access, seating & planters and new flower beds & lawn link to the existing willow dome and wildflower area planted in 2015. There is also a Bug Hotel and educational wildlife trails around the garden, see our website for free trail downloads & more information.

BugCycle's refurbishment was made possible with Pocket Parks' funding scheme which provides support to community-led bodies working in partnership with their local authority. Local parks and green spaces provide a wealth of opportunities for people to: get closer to nature, enhance their wellbeing, meet up with friends, play, walk the dog, take physical exercise; which are vital in addressing issues such as rising health costs, loneliness and division within local communities.

## 2. OUR PROJECT

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### Project conception

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When we first 'adopted' the unloved space, 7 years ago, from Worthing Borough Council, we were told that we couldn't do anything on the baron tarmac area, which is the central area of our community garden, so we only focussed on the grassy areas around it.

It has always been important and clear to us that our community garden maintained a strong identity that was different to the rest of Beach House Park and other green spaces locally.

A calm, urban green space for all ages to enjoy, on the edge of the town centre, adjacent to the hospital and a large residential area with a high proportion of social housing.

BugCycle Community garden is within Beach House Park which is a very traditional park, with bowling greens and formal planting. There is a small playground with play equipment to the South, by the beach, and a larger park with a big turfed area for ball games and a playground with play equipment for older children, behind the Hospital to the north. Initially we were happy to work around the tarmac, with planting, seating and a living willow dome. Working on the outer areas bought us time to watch and learn how people used the space on a daily basis.

However, the tarmac area led to confusion for the general public about the space, especially when delivery drivers and other vehicles for the cafe would park there. This caused conflict with drivers and volunteers and park users. It was very unsafe for us, our volunteers, families with small children and school groups. We had been restricted with what we could do on the site, but new management of the Council's Parks Team gave us the opportunity to be more ambitious, to renovate it and secure its identity as an urban community garden for all to enjoy.

Parks management gave us complete autonomy to renovate the neglected space knowing that we would have the communities' interests [and voices] at the forefront of all decision making.

## The aims of the project

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BugCycle community garden originally consisted of three separate sections of grass with worn out benches & seating and planters that were perishing. The main features were a living willow dome and a speedboat that needed refurbishing. The central space connecting the grass areas was baron tarmac.

With the support of Pocket Parks funding scheme and the help of Worthing Borough Council we aimed to:

- Work with WBC to remove/transform the ugly tarmac to enhance the community garden to strengthen its identity, connect grass areas together and increase the usage for the public
- Provide new footpaths, accessible for wheelchairs
- New planters at varying heights for children and disabled users. Work closely with a landscaper to design the layout. Planters will be for herbs as well as fruit/veg for free food.
- A Little Library, designed and built with recycled materials with help from local students
- A series of free workshops in schools to promote the whole project and children's artwork and handmade books displayed in the park.
- Free creative workshops for adults to engage with the community to make Art in the Park for the refurbishment.
- New seaters to replace rotten benches. New seating using natural materials- creative, unconventional and inviting for the public.
- Colourful painting schemes designed purposefully to highlight the friendly inviting space.
- Art in the Park includes educational boards featuring local flora, fauna and wildlife.
- PM liaise with other local organisations, inviting them to use the space to strengthen and widen the park's outreach.
- Recruit more volunteers to help maintain the space.



April 2021 - Consultation with passing toddlers: "please keep the boat" "when will it be open"

## Consultations and engaging with the community

Through our wellbeing workshops and community engagement projects we talked to local people about their ideas. We also built a strong relationship with the park's gardeners and the council's Park Rangers. Time enabled us to talk to everybody; local schools, teenagers, visitors and staff from the adjacent hospital, families, dog walkers, homeless people, street drinkers, local businesses and other small organisations.

There has always been a constant stream of regular dog walkers through the gardens who we have chatted to over the years. They have been our eyes and ears, reporting on changes/damage/rubbish that we may need to attend to. These relationships have become stronger because they have seen us working on site for months during the landscaping period.

During the consultation period 18 children asked if we could have a slide, swing or swimming pool! We explained that BugCycle is not allowed to have any play equipment but they were welcome to create their own games in the space. We didn't have a specific target audience before we started, as we wanted it to be welcoming and inviting for all.



The consultation day in Sept 2020 was key to developing our original plans and designs. Watching how people use the public space revealed it was important to keep wide pathways through the garden as there were many different paths and access points to the garden that people took on their way through the park. Also requests from families that use the park regularly to keep the area of tarmac where puddles form, as it is a much loved destination when it rains by toddlers!

We also promoted the project via our social media and in a local magazine - Inside East Worthing. 7000 copies are delivered free, door to door to homes in the neighbourhood close to the park.



## Project partners: who was involved

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### The main partners in our Pocket Parks project:

- [Adur and Worthing Borough Council](#)

A&W council's parks team were magnificent. The park rangers supported our [ambitious] ideas and added more ideas that improved the space even more than we had hoped.

The parks team liaised with the groundwork contractors - measuring the space, getting costings. Discussing economical options for tarmac removal, setting schedules within their own busy timetables.

Installing fencing around the site to ensure it adheres to all H&S rules for public spaces. Updating us on the council's Covid 19 restrictions, as to how we were able to work on site.

After much discussion about the unevenness of the paving and better access to the East entrance, the council were very supportive of our idea to include a new ramp to access to the garden.

The Risk Assessment for the open space was written by the L.A. to be shared with schools, other organisations and events organisers.



*"I have to say the community garden looks amazing and the work that has been carried out has really brought a new lease of life to this area. It's always nice to see when hard work pays off isn't it.*

*Good to see so many community members coming back to this area to engage after the starburst of everyone running away 12ish months ago. Lovely to hear the feedback about the Rangers and great to hear that they are really embodying the role that a ranger should play within our communities as well. Look forward to seeing you both again soon and more projects in the future to continue the fab fab work. "*

Philippa Reece - Parks & Foreshore Manager, Adur & Worthing Council

*Due to family commitments the gardener we had previously planned was unable to work on the project so we approached a local gardener Felix Driver.*

- **Felix Driver - Gardener. Horticulturist**

We first met Felix when he volunteered in the garden 6 years ago. He has since set up a landscape/gardening business locally.

Felix was commissioned to design and install the vegetable plot using sustainable planting. He has a strong interest and skills in permaculture and sustainable planting, considering local and global climate change, which he implemented as often as possible in the mini allotment. He considered the layout of vegetables, herbs and flowers to support wildlife and encourage successful growth.



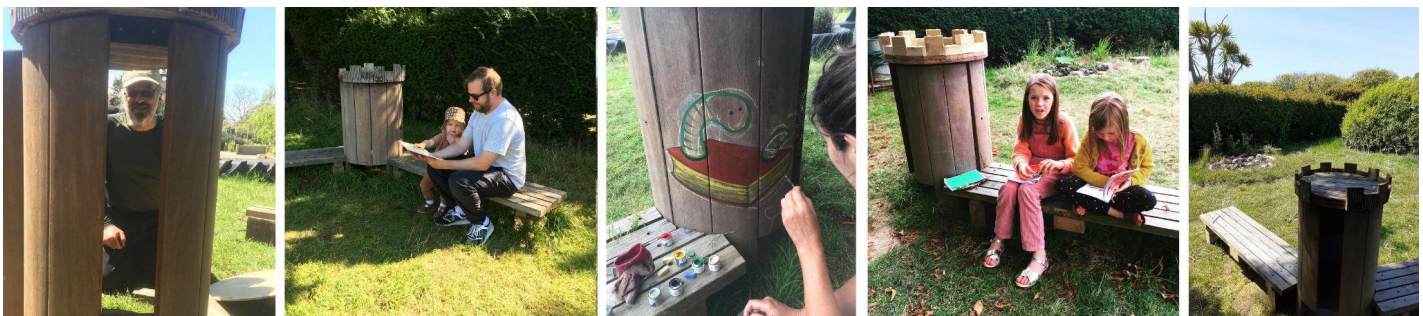
*May 2021 - Felix working on site with volunteers*

Felix was initially anxious about the freedom we gave him to design his own allotment. We didn't want to micro-manage him as his knowledge is greater than ours. We have made sure to acknowledge his work on social media to give him credit for his work which has already led to additional work for him. He is keen to extend his work at BugCycle and has numerous ideas for the future. He really enjoyed working with the volunteers and was very grateful to have useful help when he had rows and rows of seedlings to plant out!

He was also concerned that there would be vandalism, or that people would walk onto the veg plot. We rearranged the borders and entrance to the allotment several times, until we were all happy that we hadn't made a trip hazard! Trial and error over several weeks was the only way to see if it could keep toddlers and dogs off the baby carrots. Foxes and toddlers probably caused the most disruption to seedlings. There's an ongoing discussion about signs. Telling people to 'keep off' can be an invitation - and dogs and toddlers can't read!

- **Lindsey Gatenby - Free Little Library Project**

Lindsey adopted the Free Little Library project in Worthing a few years ago. Our partnership has meant that she now has a great library unit in a lovely location which is better than she [and we] ever hoped for. She was also able to widen her outreach, engaging with local families by running free book making workshops for children. Their books were printed and put into the BugCycle Library. It is regularly filled with new donated books and tidied. The Mini Library is placed by the willow dome, in the far corner which is a quiet space. People sit and read books in the park and take books away and return with different ones.



*BugCycle's new mini library created with reclaimed timber.*



- **Dan Flanagan - Dad La Soul: A Revolutionary Grassroots Movement**

Dan runs events for dads and their children. We met on site to discuss ideas that could support his outdoor events in the future, also designing the layout of seating and features that suit his clientele.

Dan ran a Sunday morning event in August that attracted dads and children from across Sussex who didn't know about the community garden. They told Dan that it's a great space for them to bring their children and they would happily help with weeding and watering.

3 dads have since become regular volunteers with their children. They all said that it felt welcoming, interesting and particularly appealing to children of different ages.



*Dad La Soul event in BugCycle Garden with Punch & Judy show*

Additional partners after the project started

- **Glynn Edwards - Seaside Heritage. Punch & Judy**

Glynn approached us asking if we would like a free Punch & Judy show at BugCycle. He had secured funding from HLF to deliver entertainment along the coast post Lockdowns. We have worked with Glynn before, so we knew that we would be able to provide a suitable space that enabled him to deliver his project in the given time frame.

Dan has since commissioned Glynn to work on other events elsewhere. BugCycle helped connect small local businesses to collaborate.

- **Dudley Sawyer - Tutor, local artist**

Dudley Sawyer wanted to set up a Sunday morning drawing class at BugCycle. Free for all.

We discussed the accessible spaces that lend themselves beautifully to an art class and he was very excited because he wanted to encourage his elderly clientele out to the world [park] post Covid. However, he enquired about 'permissions' at the council. The outdoor events officer told him he would need to pay a fee. He is a trusted, retired teacher who has been running classes in a hired hall for many years. The red tape and the fee scared him off!

We copied a paragraph from the Pocket Parks documents and sent it to the Park rangers who agree that the revamped space is a community asset. This is a valid reference that will hopefully encourage activities for local people.

'They can be used to benefit the economy by hosting events which support local retailers and providing venues for business activities. They can offer communities access to space to facilitate community integration.'

## Volunteers



*May 2021 - volunteers on site preparing for the site to be open to the public*

Due to the Winter lockdown and strict council rules we were unable to have volunteers on site from January '21 - March '21. Creative Waves, a labourer and council staff were allowed in the garden which had been fenced off completely. This worked to our advantage and as more people were using the park, were furloughed or just wanting to feel part of their community, people signed up to help.

As the space developed and the restrictions eased we were finally able to work with groups on site. We adapted the volunteering sessions to be as safe and gentle for people who were still cautious about going out.

There are still a few older people who used to help in the garden who still don't feel confident being amongst other people, we hope to be able to include them again in the future.

## 2. WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

### Planning and re-landscaping the garden



*Jan 2021 - Worthing Borough Council cutting & removing tarmac*

Our plan shows the original tarmac area and how much was removed by the council for the new garden layout.

We decided to remove the narrow entrance (bottom right) as it wasn't really used and it was better to link that entire area together with grass.

We also renovated an area to improve access for all to the garden (top right) and removed a mish mash of uneven paving. A new tarmac ramp was installed and another path to link existing areas.

We were able to use leftover rubble for the rockery, along with chalk and boulders. 40 tonnes of topsoil was delivered to the site, it was only after the 2nd lorry load that we were able to have limited numbers of volunteers on site.



*Feb 2021 - groundwork, new pathways and topsoil delivery*

## What we achieved

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*Dec 2020 - East entrance before refurbishment*



*Oct 2021 - new access ramp & entrance bordered by newly planted areas:rockery (left) & stumpery (right)*

*"This is a phenomenal achievement and you can tell how much hard work has gone into this project. What a great space for the local community. Awesome job team Creative Waves.*

*The town is lucky to have people like you."*

*Instagram, June 2021.*



*Dec 2020 - West entrance before refurbishment*



*Oct 2021 - new planters, boat jetty & flowerbeds.*

# New community garden layout showing revamped areas





## East side: improved entrance & new features

**New access ramp**, the original entrance was much wider which caused problems as vehicles could easily access the tarmac area where toddlers used to play. The new sloped entrance proved a hit for one of our volunteers who was the first to try it out on her mobility scooter.

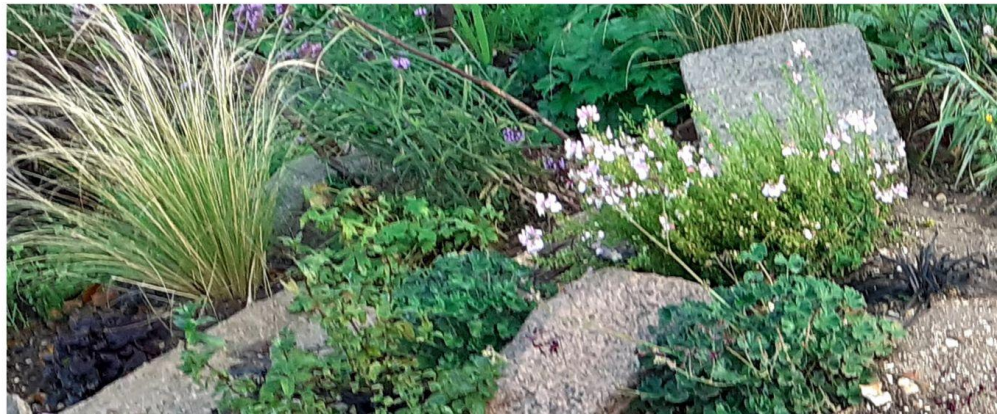


**The Rockery** was a brilliant addition to enhance the entrance way, once the tarmac

was removed we were able to extend and add height to the existing mound with rubble, chalk and boulders. Volunteers helped to landscape the space and we were delighted when local people and volunteers donated plants including dwarf fruit trees, grasses and alpinas.

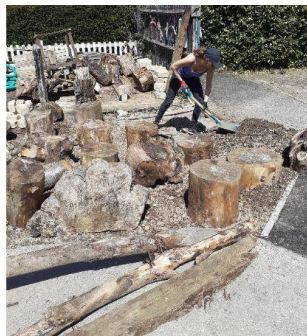


*April /May 2021 - Volunteers creating the rockery and donating plants*



*Natural pathway leading to wildflower area and pond. Three dwarf fruit trees were planted on the mound behind the rockery.*

*Oct 2021 - rockery plants more established & growing*



*April / May 2021 - Volunteers making the stumpery*

**The Stumpery** evolved organically and was designed on site by Creative Waves, a park ranger and a group of volunteers. We had access to a variety of old tree stumps and gravel from Brooklands Park and wood that we had reclaimed. Our original plans for the space had been for a smaller walled herb garden, but due to the larger re-landscaped area we were inspired to try out a stumpery. This would give us instant height and structure whilst also complimenting the rockery opposite. The stumps were embedded with gravel and topsoil, sturdy enough for natural seating, and planted with a variety of herbs, grasses and two fig trees creating a sensory area.

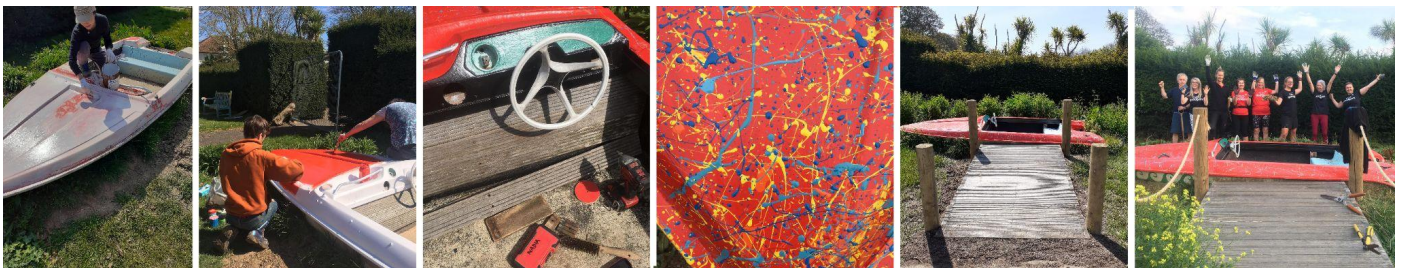


*Sept 2021 - sensory planting established in the stumpery which includes:  
two fig trees, sedum, grasses, rosemary, thyme and lavender.*

*"Well done everyone! It's been great to see this unloved space evolve  
and to see the results of everyone's hard work and dedication"*

*Instagram, September 2021*

## West side: new garden features & entrance



*The boat is a great attraction that needed refurbishing. The new jetty is made with salvaged timber,*

**The new boat jetty;** the old boat has been a feature for a number of years but needed repainting and repairing. We used specialist paint and designed a colourful splash effect which would help it wear better and hide the uneven surface. The boat is much loved by children and before when there was just grass surrounding it, it quickly turned to mud. The jetty was made with timber, we had salvaged, and installed Anthony, the park ranger. The jetty is not only a great improvement, it's also more accessible & safer for toddlers.



**The west entrance;** the garden was originally hard areas of tarmac & grass. We wanted to soften the edges by creating flower beds of wildflower, grasses and shrubs to create a natural border to our garden.

Also people used to cut across the grass from all different angles so having flowerbeds and a feature 'archway' would stop people doing this. The archway will eventually be covered in willow once it's established.

We also added a prominent sign which defines the area and tells people about the project.



*Oct 2021 - new willow entrance way, new flower beds filled wildflowers, grasses, shrubs*



*Creating a reclaimed metal 'doorway' with living willow planted to form a natural arch as it grows.*

## Central: new benches, planters and a community vegetable plot



*April 2021 - volunteers & carpenters helping create unique benches & planters*

**New benches and planters** were created with the help of skilled carpenters & volunteers. We salvaged timber, oak sleeper and reclaimed wood and decking from; Chichester harbour, Worthing Pier and Highdown Gardens.

- 2 x backless benches
- 4 x benches with planters
- 2 x triangular planters
- 1 x refurbished bench
- 1 x planter with signs



The planters have a selection of herbs, vegetables and plants growing in them and are various heights for children and disabled users. There is also a very small bench which is perfect for toddlers!



Jan 2021 - tarmac removed



March 2021 - filled with 20 tonnes of topsoil



July 2021 - growing nicely

**The community vegetable plot** is a big success thanks to Felix and volunteers who have helped transform the once tarmac area into a thriving space to grow food for all to enjoy.



Veg Plot - Spring through to late Summer 2021

## Workshops/volunteer sessions

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**We ran 20 volunteering workshop sessions** teaching a variety of techniques for up-cycling and refurbishing using found materials. Whilst on site, within the fenced enclosure, passers by stopped to admire the volunteers' work and enquire about the whole project.

The original plans had to change due to lockdowns. All sessions were outside and the number of people at each session was limited to adhere to guidelines. All workshops include personal mentoring. Our methods through practical problem solving and creative tasks enables participants and practitioners to nurture natural skills and talents which boosts confidence and self esteem.

Initially groups of 6 people. Growing to 30 when we all felt ready.

We had to limit the outreach for the sessions so that we weren't inundated with bookings. All participants had to email to book a space and we all made sure to respectfully consider all guidance and rules. We found that our older volunteers were shielding and some just didn't feel safe being amongst other people so we checked in on them digitally, knowing that they were feeling isolated and disconnected from the community. They have just started emerging, tentatively, back to the garden in October 2021.

As our activities and engagement on site were limited we used social media and our mailing list to ask people to grow plants at home to bring to the garden when they/we were ready. This helped them feel involved, being able to contribute to the garden, risk-free. It helped us enormously too as the wide range of plants, trees and bushes meant that the garden is less formal with an irregular array of plants.

### Activities completed at workshop/volunteer sessions:

- Prepping and painting decorative features on large metal planters
- Willow weaving workshops: designing and making willow fence panels for new archway, willow shapes for fencing and allotment borders.
- Planting and making wildflower bombs
- Designing, installation and planting of stumpery with sensory planting.
- Designing, installation and planting of rockery.
- Preparing and repainting large 2D birds for the side of planters.



*“ I loved learning how to weave willow. I look forward to seeing the willow archway grow and take shape. It makes me feel proud to be involved in this wonderful community project “*

April 2021 - Volunteer

**12 weekly student sessions for 3 months**, with a small group of students who were completing their Bronze award for the Duke of Edinburgh.

Activities completed at D of E sessions:

- Basic gardening skills
- Prepping, undercoating and painting wooden fencing
- Refurbishing; design & paint existing garden bench

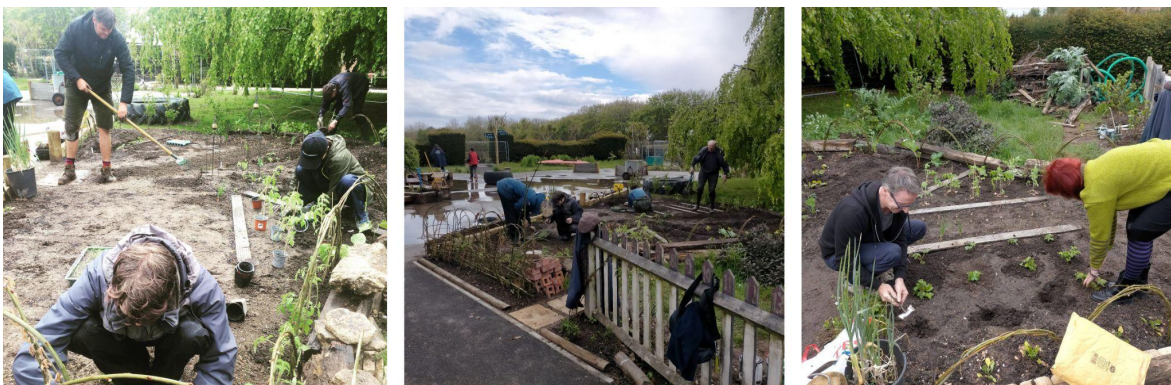


**We ran 4 mosaic workshops**; free workshops for 24 people, over 2 days in October at Colonnade House in the town centre to design and make mosaic tiles to create a 'tiled rug' on the ground at BugCycle. This new idea developed through the summer when we discussed decorative colourful features. A new sponsor is covering the installation costs. Volunteers will help grout the tiles into place and decide where it will be installed.



### **Learning how to grow vegetables**

Felix Driver ran volunteering sessions, sharing his knowledge and experience with people who wanted to learn more about growing from seed, planting on, after care and harvesting.



**Storybook making workshops:** Lindsey Gatenby ran workshops with 12 children at Worthing Pavilion, in the summer holidays to create storybooks for the BugCycle Community Garden's new Mini Library.

Due to Covid restrictions and not being able to visit schools, she wasn't able to deliver as many workshops as planned, Lindsey's evaluation after the workshops in the town centre.

*"We started each session with a quick chat about the BugCycle Community Garden, where it is and what can be found in it. Most of the children were really familiar with the Garden and were keen to share their experiences of visiting it (lots of mention of the red speedboat!), but some hadn't visited before so this was a nice way to introduce them to it.*

*We then talked about Free Little Libraries.....it was great to be able to show them the photo of the BugCycle mini library with the bookworm painted on, so they could get an idea of where their books would end up.*

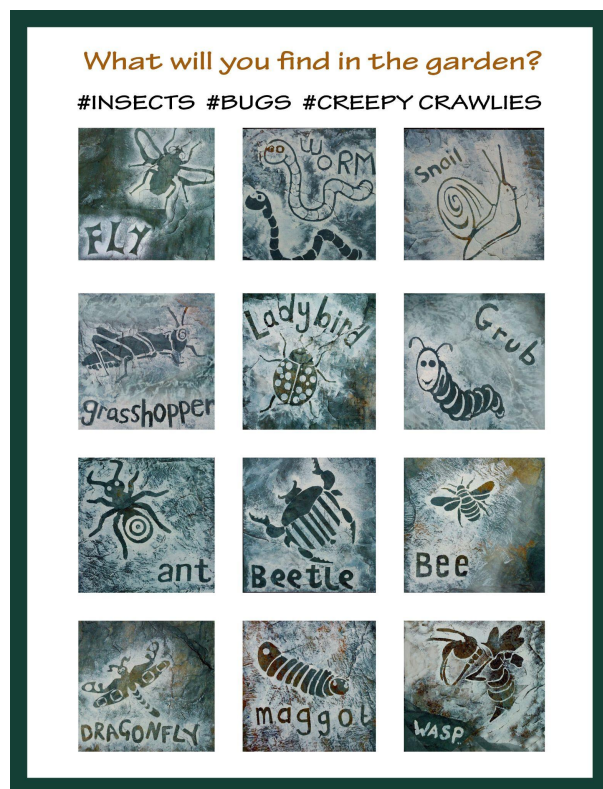
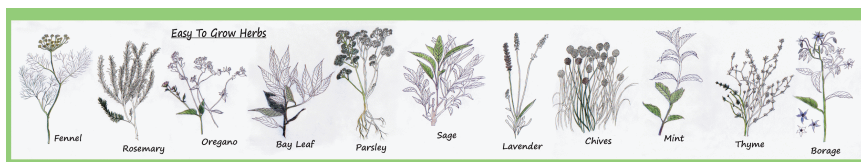
*The children were buzzing with ideas for designing their own books and we suggested that their ideas should be based around the theme of the BugCycle Garden and the creatures that lived there. We spoke about how other children might be inspired to make their own books once they see these books in the BugCycle mini library and the children liked that their bookmaking had a bit of a 'sharing and inspiring' mission about it."*



### Educational boards for the garden:

The designs for the bug life cycles and tiles were done in previous workshops with local schools. We have re-used the children's artwork to design a new educational board. The life cycles are re-printed on durable dibond (as the old wheels got damaged)..

Easy to grow herbs illustrated by a volunteer.



### 3. SUMMARY

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#### What has been learnt so far

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The project was designed to encourage discussion with our volunteers and the wider community, with problem solving and delivery through trial and error as we were dependent on using found materials wherever possible. We had flexible plans that changed with the skills and time we had with volunteers. We wanted to reach a wider audience and have learned how to listen better to people who walk through the park but don't necessarily use the community garden. Prior to Covid 19 the politics between local residents and the local authority was quite strained. To avoid our organisation getting mixed up with the controversy we chose [after discussing options with the L.A. and volunteers] to delay our project launch until the public's complaints settled down. None of the negative comments were aimed at us, or our space, and we were able to distract the complainers with positive questions through our consultation at BugCycle.

The delayed launch date also meant that we were able to talk to local people who were back from their summer holiday, rather than engaging visitors to Worthing. Local community engagement was key to the success of the project.

Spending more time on the consultation period meant that the groundworks started in the new year when the space was used the least which was less disruptive for the public.

#### **Obviously Covid was the main obstacle that had a big impact on the project.**

There were times when we could see the weeks slipping away and we hadn't met our deadlines, we were worried that we wouldn't be able to catch up.

However we were very lucky that the lockdowns ended up helping our project to be bigger and better, with a quality of engagement from volunteers that we couldn't have hoped for!

We adapted our plans, constantly changing the layout of the design to be economical and sustainable.

We attracted a few skilled volunteers who enabled us to be more ambitious compared with the initial plans.

Changing timetables so that we could progress rather than missing the window of opportunity to prepare soil for planting etc.



Knowing that many of our contacts were dealing with their own troubles caused by the pandemic, we worked long hard hours to get jobs done. The majority of our volunteers were [like most of the country] feeling low and not able to communicate easily via email.

We kept referring to our notes and sketches from group discussions to remind ourselves what the volunteers had suggested. We kept a close eye on social media engagement too.

It highlighted, to all of us, that face to face communications are much easier than telephone or email. There's an organic energy that inspires and motivates people when seeing positive facial expressions and body language.

We felt reassured that the way we run our small organisation is helpful for projects like this. There haven't been any staff changes and some of our volunteers and practitioners have been working with us since we first adopted the space in 2014.

So we all knew about all the ideas, developments and conversations that have led to BugCycle's transformation.

We were unable to run the original style of workshops for adults or children due to Covid restrictions. We always plan projects to involve as many people as possible so it was frustrating not to be able to have people working with us. To avoid putting anybody else at risk we stayed in a tiny bubble and took on tasks that we didn't expect to be doing.

As we were restricted and unable to go into schools, Lindsey did one day of workshops for the mini library in the summer holidays and we adapted the budget to pay a carpenter to make a magnificent Library with benches attached.

We quickly adapted to the new [constantly changing rules for people, places and council owned land] plan, talking at a distance to anybody who would stop to look at us in our enclosed, caged compound!

As each day and week passed we connected with dozens more people who had the time and curiosity to stop and share their ideas and hear ours.

The lockdowns were very difficult for the rangers who had to keep on working with very restrictive rules, which meant that their normal workloads doubled.

Something we would have done differently. We could have saved time and money for good quality top soil if we had known that we could have used reclaimed soil to fill some of the deeper holed areas. Due to the restricted deliveries and suppliers we had to book in advance and didn't have space to store reclaimed soil.

We have made a conscious effort to *not* be 'in charge' of the space, but it's difficult to convey the message that this is a community asset for us all to use freely. In general the public do not feel that public spaces are our/their responsibility. Or that they have the freedom to be part of the plans and upkeep.



We have been impressed that our hard work [recruiting people] was supported by so many willing volunteers. We have been embedded in the local community for over 10 years, which is probably why/how we get positive engagement from so many age groups.

However, even our most confident volunteers have not offered to host sessions...only one lady [who works full time] has run a session.

So...we continued to volunteer when our funding ran out because we need to sustain the continuity and connection with people.

- **Laughter** - we are very approachable, easy going and open to other people's ideas and skills.
- **Happy accidents** - we don't stress about things that don't go to plan, we quickly adapt to a new plan which is often better than the original
- **Collaboration** - we listen to everybody and enjoy engaging with people of all ages from all walks of life.
- **Communication** - we are open and honest about everything we do and enjoy sharing our achievements to others to inspire them
- **Trust** - we trust ourselves, our volunteers, our partners and the wider community



*"Can't wait to check the garden out. Everyone in your photos always looks so happy. look at the joy you are creating"*

*Instagram, May 2021*





*The salvaged pond is a great addition and has been a hit with local wildlife and children visiting the garden.*

## Biodiversity and environmental changes

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We have large areas of wild flowers. Specifically aimed at local bees, supporting the hives nearby on the roof of the Leisure Centre

5 planters with herbs growing.

A lovely sensory stumpery, planted with herbs, wild flowers, grasses, succulents and fig trees growing in-between the old tree trunks. This also serves as a bug haven as well as a very practical and economical way to improve uneven ground that would have been costly and not environmentally friendly to resurface. The stumpery has a soft feel to it. The chunks of tree trunks are all like living sculptures in their own right.

The mini allotment appears to have constant activity with veg and fruit growing. Planks laid out for people to access the free food. This space is key to the garden's future so we are supporting Felix to continue during the winter to prepare for the Spring.

The small 'pond' bird bath was very time consuming. We worked with the park ranger to ensure that the depth of water was safe for hedgehogs whilst being a good bathing and drinking spot for birds.

Whilst we worked it attracted many birds for drinking and washing - the resident blackbird and robin were the cheekiest.

The dragonflies were a real treat to watch, especially as we hadn't seen any on site before.

The garden always had a calm feel to it but with less tarmac, NO cars...more plants and grasses the sound has definitely softened.

There's a regular robin and a blackbird who always visit when we are working in the park. This is a gentle reminder that we have made a people and bird friendly space to share.



## Bringing people from different backgrounds together

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The space has been a real leveller. We have been humbled by the range of ages and backgrounds of people involved. The timing [post lockdowns] of our volunteering sessions and workshops late Spring/Summer 2021 were perfect for re-connecting people to each other and to the space.



*"I watered yesterday as i'm on the friday rota and 5 wee schoolgirls played "dodge the hose", we had great fun pretending to water them then, as I coiled up the hose to finish, and said goodbye to them and their mums, one wee girl said "thank you for watering the flowers" - brilliant "* Volunteer, July 2021

**Throughout the summer we had a strong team of 18 volunteers on the watering rota.**

Morning and evening every day when it was dry.

The Tuesday morning slot always made us smile...a 20 year old, [with a new interest in plants/gardening/sustainable living] with his mum and Grandmother aged 89, she had a brand new disability scooter that she practised on [before venturing onto the roads] when the new path was finished!

**There are 158 people on the general volunteering list.**

Some of these we have not met but they have delivered plants to the site, or helped weed or water in their own time. Some may never be able to physically help out but have emailed their support and want to be notified of activities, projects in the garden. They are enjoying following the progress on social media and in our newsletters.

When new people contact us we ask where they heard about the project which has helped us learn what promotion and social media reaches people and works best to engage with wider audiences.

Word of mouth, social media and the free 'Inside' magazine have all been very useful.

However the best results come from being on site and talking to people walking past, showing them that we are all friendly and welcoming. That it's a free community space that they can participate with. Explaining that there are many great reasons to get involved.

We have had lots of parents helping on site, they are then pleased to return with their children to show them their contribution and to encourage them to have family time together watering and weeding and tidying the Mini Library. They have told us that the space is good for children of all ages with varied interests. It also encourages them to recognise the value of volunteering and being good citizens in their local community.

### **53 people helped with physical work; landscaping, digging, planting, painting.**

Due to Covid we were able to connect with people who would have usually been at work - they offered to participate for as long as they were furloughed.

Now that people are back at work we will stay connected via email. We are now getting enquiries from people who have heard about the opportunities from other people, or they have seen the signs in the park explaining what it's all about.

We managed to 'recruit' retired men who; love working outdoors, have a purpose for their skills. They were the most valuable to the whole project as they brought additional skills and interests to the tasks.

Mark joined us after his wife met us when she was walking past the fenced area. She offered his services and he was priceless. He generously shared his skills and knowledge with us all...most significantly with a 14 year old boy who built a bench on his own - with extra support from Mark.

The 14 year old joined us when his mum saw the project on Facebook. We have taught her 2 elder children in the past so she knew that Nathan would be comfortable with us.

The network of Creative Waves 'news' also seems to spread by word of mouth which is very reassuring for our organisation as it proves that we are approachable and inclusive.

We recognise that the online booking system for people to attend volunteering sessions is not practical or possible for people who don't use computers, or for people suffering with mental health issues that prevent them from committing.

This is an ongoing problem that we repeatedly discuss with partners and volunteers. Who we encourage to tell other people about the space and invite them to get involved in an informal way so that they don't feel anxious.

We are connected to signposting for social prescribing which is extremely difficult to access. We have had 4 clients attend with a support worker but they haven't returned.

We have attracted numerous nationalities to the project which has helped us all learn about how communities share their home grown produce in other countries.

Polish, Lithuanian, Brazilian, Japanese, Italian, French, Iranian, Russian, Moldavian

Interestingly a lady told us that we need a sign telling people to help themselves to the free food that was growing in the allotment. We discussed the pros and cons and will continue the conversation as the allotment develops.

This interaction illustrates the difference in attitudes towards free food.

Local lady "That lady has picked the raspberries"

Nadia " Brilliant, they're ready for eating"

Local lady ..surprised face!

The raspberry picking lady has been attending the garden for a few years whilst caring for her grandchildren. She's Polish. She has been weeding and watering too, quietly getting on with jobs that need doing. We have had a few short chats over the years but she doesn't feel the need to be part of a group. It's reassuring to know that she feels comfortable doing her own thing in the shared space.

We regularly address the fact that we are in a position to grow free food which may be useful for disadvantaged families. It's also very rewarding for volunteers to see the outcome of their efforts.

The volunteering session, harvesting the veg, was a very positive activity for all. Felix saw the success of his mini allotment and realised how his knowledge has spread to lots of local people who will be using their new skills in their own gardens and helping to grow free food next year.

One hot evening a volunteer went to do her watering duties;

*"Hi Nadia*

*The allotment was very dry after that heatwave today. Luckily I managed to get helping hands!*

*There was a group of young people, in their early twenties, sitting in the central area of the garden. One man was in a wheelchair. A few had skateboards and bikes. I must confess that I was quite nervous, I think they all had tattoos and piercings. I decided to be very jolly and chatty with them which was the perfect approach because they were absolutely delightful. Very chatty, articulate and friendly.*

*One young man had fixed the broken broom, he'd swept the central area so that he could skate on it.*

*I think it's a good idea to tell the other watering volunteers that there's no need to be nervous if they see the same group of people.*

*I told them the code for the tap and watering cans and asked if they could help water plants when they saw the need.*

*I hope that's okay?*

*How lovely that they are using the garden in the evenings when we're sitting in our own gardens."*



Some of our volunteers do not have gardens. They have enjoyed the sociable aspects of the volunteering sessions as well as visiting in their own time and enjoying the space with friends/family.

Post Lockdown 7 volunteers used the garden for their own outdoor social gatherings because they don't have space at home. They told us that the elderly grandparents, young children and teenagers felt comfortable and interested in the community garden.

We have had 3 inquiries, in the last month, from people asking if they could donate a tree or plant to commemorate the life of their elderly parent who recently passed away. They told us that their family members loved sitting in the park, listening to the birds, watching young children investigate the wildlife. It was the ideal space whilst waiting for a hospital appointment or to meet other family members when we were all restricted to outdoor socialising.

We work closely with the senior leadership teams at Lyndhurst infant and Chesswood Primary schools to engage with children with additional needs and those who benefit from working outside and doing practical logical tasks and problem solving.

We recently ran workshops for 8 disengaged teenagers. The feedback was extremely positive because they all saw the purpose of learning practical skills that lead to tangible outcomes. They were engaged and interested in hearing about the variety of jobs and skills that are required for landscaping, horticulture and carpentry and we were able to explain the value of volunteering, communicating and building personable skills that may lead to employment in the future.

Parents, carers and teachers have told us that the teenagers' whole attitude was positive and they felt inspired after the workshops.

**We know that welcoming people from all backgrounds to take ownership of the garden is key to the success of the space.**



*"So lovely to see how this project has literally blossomed.*

*You've all done amazingly"*

*Facebook July 2021*

## 4. EVALUATING OUR SUCCESS

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### Social Media and PR

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**Social Media;** We used social media as a visual diary, documenting key aspects through the project. This was a useful way to capture friendly aspects of the project. We took advantage of the opportunity to praise the council, how supportive they have been and that we couldn't do the project without their permission and help.

We always take lots of photographs, and have previously not been so vigilant with sharing the photos. This project helped us get better at showing our faces, doing the work and updating people with the progress as well as inviting them to help.

It turned out to be a very friendly way to engage with the community which widened our outreach.

Facebook; [@Creative.Waves](#)

Instagram: [@creativewaves](#)

*"I watered yesterday as i'm on the Friday rota and 5 wee schoolgirls played "dodge the hose", we had great fun pretending to water them then, as I coiled up the hose to finish, and said goodbye to them and their mums, one wee girl said "thank you for watering the flowers" - brilliant"*

*Facebook July 2021*

*"We've just come back from the park and had a wander through your bit...it looks amazing. Hats off to all of you for what you have created...it has such a lovely scene feeling about it"*

*Instagram, June 2021*

*"Nathan is buzzing, he really enjoyed today, thank you for welcoming him "*

*Mother of a 14 year old volunteer carpenter.*

*Instagram, April 2021.*

**Press;** We sent press releases to local papers and our article was featured in the Worthing Herald & The West Sussex Gazette, published 14th June 2021: 'New Community Garden opens in Worthing' by Elaine Hammond

<https://www.worthingherald.co.uk/news/environment/new-community-garden-opens-in-worthing-3271757>

<https://www.westsussextoday.co.uk/news/environment/new-community-garden-opens-in-worthing-3271757>

## The difference made to our organisation

The success of this project has led to more opportunities for our not for profit company:

A 'Friends of' group from another local park have contacted us to help with their plans and consultation for another community garden.

We have also been contacted by Horsham District Council to work with 7 towns, to 're-wild' their town centres. They have secured funding for us to liaise with Parish councils, volunteers, In Bloom and Friends of groups. At each meeting, on the 7 sites, we have referenced examples of how we transformed tricky parts of our community garden effectively. With a focus on sustainable planting and ongoing maintenance that is manageable for volunteers.

Being able to help 7 towns develop new urban gardens is an absolute privilege and wouldn't have happened without Pocket Parks funding. Being able to share our new knowledge, skills, contacts and ideas is a fantastic extension to our own project. We have sent photos of the park and have invited them to visit BugCycle to see how the ideas can work in their public spaces. Two voluntary gardening groups have already visited the garden Horsham.

We work closely with the senior leadership teams at Lyndhurst infant and Chesswood Primary schools to engage with children with additional needs and those who benefit from working outside and doing practical logical tasks and problem solving. We recently ran workshops for 8 disengaged teenagers. The feedback was extremely positive because they all saw the purpose of learning practical skills that lead to tangible outcomes. They were engaged and interested in hearing about the variety of jobs and skills that are required for landscaping, horticulture and carpentry and we were able to explain the value of volunteering, communicating and building personable skills that may lead to employment in the future. Parents, carers and teachers have told us that the teenagers' whole attitude was positive and they felt inspired after the workshops.

*"Well done Creative Waves and all your volunteers you have created a wonderful space for everyone to enjoy. Another successful project."*

*Facebook May 2021*



**BugCycle** COMMUNITY GARDEN

Creative Waves have worked with the local community and the council's Park Rangers to design a welcoming space for all to enjoy. The garden is a creative, wildlife friendly space with sustainable, low maintenance planting, built with re-cycled and re-purposed materials.

HUGE THANKS to all the volunteers and Park Rangers who helped re-landscape the garden in 2021, their generosity and skills assisted in transforming the space to create: a community vegetable patch, a rocky, stumpy, willow archway, mini library, bespoke seating and planters and a wildlife pond. Improved access, new flowerbeds and lawn link to the existing willow dome and wildflower area planted in 2015. There is also a Bug Hotel and educational wildlife trails around the garden, see our website for free trail downloads and more information.

BugCycle's refurbishment was made possible with Pocket Parks' funding scheme which provides support to community-led bodies working in partnership with their local authority. Local parks and green spaces provide a wealth of opportunities for people to: get closer to nature, enhance their wellbeing, meet up with friends, play, walk the dog, take physical exercise which are vital in addressing issues such as rising health costs, loneliness and division within local communities.

creativewaves.co.uk

Follow us on: [Facebook](#) CreativeWaves [Instagram](#) @creativewaves [Twitter](#) Creative\_Waves

WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL creative WAVES

Creative Waves is a local, not-for-profit organisation, creating inspiring community projects to bring people together. Please contact [info@creativewaves.co.uk](mailto:info@creativewaves.co.uk) if you would like to help with gardening and future projects.

## Project outcomes

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### We are very proud of our outcomes and achievements:

- Beach House Park was awarded Green Flag 2021
- Beach House Park has been added to Council's Assets of Community Value register in 2021
- Strengthened the 'BugCycle's' identity and improved the space to increase the usage for the public.
- Other local organisations have used the space which has widened the garden's outreach.
- New seating, made from reclaimed timber, various sizes and heights, accessible to all users
- New footpaths, accessible for wheelchairs
- New planters at varying heights for children and disabled users.
- Improved biodiversity planting new fruit trees, wildlife pond, large areas of wild flowers
- Created a sensory stumpery, planted with herbs, wild flowers, grasses, succulents and fig trees growing in-between the old tree trunks.
- Engaged with more people of all ages through a variety of free workshops
- Created a mini Library, designed and built with recycled materials.
- There are now 158 people on the general volunteering list,
- We host regular sessions for people to 'drop in' and volunteer to maintain the garden
- Throughout the summer we had a strong team of 18 volunteers on the watering rota.
- There are more educational boards featuring local flora, fauna and wildlife.

A 90 year old moved to Worthing from London in 2021 to be near her daughter Claire. All services for the elderly, e.g Guild care, were closed. Claire took her mum to BugCycle, with her new mobility scooter. Her confidence built each day as she watched the garden develop.

Claire's son Alfie, age 21, also volunteered, he told us:

"I learnt that one of the most interesting and fulfilling things about helping with the community garden is that slowly, through time, if you put work into something you are able to see the fruits of your efforts as time goes on. This was an alien concept for me because my generation has everything..instancy is all around us at the click of a button.

I moved back to Worthing after trying to study photography at Uni. I was disillusioned with the lack of effort needed to do my work.

The community garden has taught me that I can tend to something and watch the benefits grow with the plants and the whole garden... it gives me faith in my environment. "

As a family the garden and their watering responsibilities, that they did together, became very important for them all for.

**They are all very grateful for the welcoming intergenerational project which has helped their mental health and family relationships enormously.**





The creation of the pocket park in Beach House Park played a major part in the park being awarded the Green Flag again this year. We were invited, along with some key volunteers to a 'Green Flag' celebration evening hosted by the council's Parks and Gardens team.

One of our volunteers summed up the presentation evening and her involvement in the project:

*I was invited to celebrate the amazing achievements of @creativewaves along with many other fantastic volunteers and park rangers tonight.*

*Lots of the local green spaces have kept or been awarded their green flag in recognition for the quality and value they bring to the communities they serve. My involvement has been small but significant enough to help make a collaborative difference and done wonders for my own mental and physical well-being. I highly recommend.*

*I feel deeply passionate about collaboration. We can't solve the worlds problems alone. A problem shared and all that. We all have varying degrees of skills, experience, creativity. When we bring them together we can do SO much! A shared value is a great starting point.*

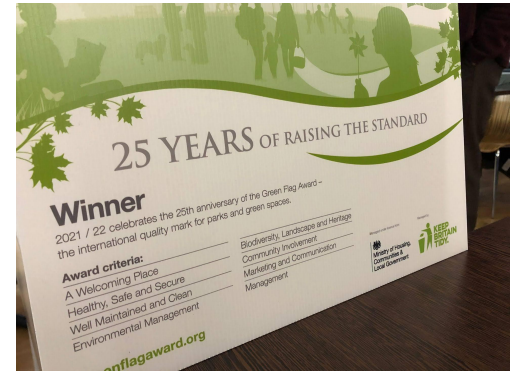
*Collaboration over competition.*

*Cooperation over egos.*

*Action over conflict.*

*Life takes teamwork*

*Instagram, Nov 2021*



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#### Contact details:

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