

Hello!

Welcome to the thirtieth newsletter from the Lambeth GP Food Co-operative. There's plenty of exciting news and updates from our latest activities, as well as some personal reflections and a chance to get to know our team.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you have any ideas for future stories or want any more information please get in touch with us by email gpfoodcoop@gmail.com, and don't forget to keep up-to-date with our activities through Twitter [@gpfoodcoop](https://twitter.com/gpfoodcoop) and our website <http://lambeth.gpfoodcoop.org.uk/>



NEWSLETTER – MAY 2023

Update from Ed

We celebrated our first 10 years at the end of March with a celebration at 336 Community Centre in Brixton. This issue is devoted to our party and we hope you will follow the links to our reports on the day.

Entering our 11th year is an opportunity to take a look back on our achievements, on what worked and what was a little too ambitious for us as we set out to create a community led health co-operative in Lambeth. So back to the beginning.

We aimed to work across the borough to develop a Lambeth-wide network of food producing gardens in GP organisations as the first phase of engaging with the wider NHS health community. We have achieved this, but only by working in close partnership with friends and colleagues who have joined with us in creating green spaces in which patients and staff grow food together.

Lambeth GP Food Co-op is recognised as an innovator in the field of green social prescribing. As the recently published NHS England report "*National Green Social Prescribing: Delivery, Capacity and Assessment*" concludes there is still much to do and we are confident that we can make a significant contribution to widening access to green space and food growing in Lambeth in the future.

Food has remained at the heart of our vision. Our partnership with Medirest is important in enabling us to run our monthly stall at Kings' College Hospital where we meet and talk to NHS staff about our work as they generously buy our kale, lettuce and many more vegetables. We are grateful to Medirest for their recent donation which will be invested in our food growing activity at Kings.

Food is an ongoing theme of our work. Our wonderful 10th Birthday cake a photo of which is in the newsletter, is an illustration of food, its making and eating, that is at the heart of us being a community of growers and makers working together to improve health, wellbeing and the wider public good.

Ed Rosen, Project Director, Lambeth GP Food Co-op

Celebrating 10 years

Since April 2022, I have been working as The Project Manager at Lambeth GP Food Co-op.

Lambeth GP Food Co-op is one of the first community-led health co-operatives working in and for the NHS. It is a co-operative of doctors, nurses, Lambeth residents and patients.

I was pleasantly surprised to find such an incredible organisation where patients with long-term health conditions can learn how to grow food. It is unbelievable to see how those less exposed to big people

gatherings and more likely to cope with loneliness, can find a way to engage with others and improve their mental health. The Kings Fund have [published a report](#) outlining the evidence for the positive impact gardens and gardening, as well as access to green spaces, can have on people with recommendations for NHS organisations.

On March 30th this year, Lambeth GP Food Co-op celebrated its 10th Anniversary with more than 40 patients, supporters, friends, and members of the co-operative joining the event. It was a great pleasure for us to meet supporters from Lambeth Council, College of Medicine, NHS doctors and nurses, and some of the founders of the co-operative. It is admirable to see people interested in gardening, others who are in a mission of helping the community (Good Gym), sustainable healthcare organisations, and long-term health condition patients have been giving the chance to meet up and share ideas towards greener and more sustainable future for everyone. Such a brilliant support! Thanks to everyone contributing so Lambeth GP Food Co-op can still operate for all Lambeth residents!

Mariya Papazova
LGPFPC Project Manager

Photos by Peter Binger: Above – the amazing birthday cake from our celebration
Below – Group photo from our celebration event and Hilda cutting the birthday cake



Lambeth GP Food Co-op Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Lambeth GP Food Co-op celebrated its 10th anniversary at a Brixton community centre on 30 March 2023, with local musicians and speakers.

The co-op, which is run by patients, doctors, nurses and Lambeth residents, focused on improving health and wellbeing by creating vegetable growing gardens at GP surgeries across the borough.

Lambeth Council has provided funding to the co-op to build and lead two new gardens in the borough, one at West Norwood Health and Leisure Centre and another at a local GP surgery in Stockwell.

The anniversary party, at 336 Brixton Road, brought together 40 attendees, including patients, local GPs, NHS staff, Lambeth Council staff and supporters.

"Well done to all of us....this was a very special event, and everyone was having a good time," said Hilda Castillo-Binger, a founding member of the co-op. "Staff from one of our member GP surgeries baked our birthday cake. This is an example of co-operation in action."

"When we set off 10 years ago in March 2013, we had a dream of creating a community led health co-operative here in south London," said Dr Ed Rosen, director of Lambeth GP Food Co-op. "Over the past decade we have achieved so much, including being recognised by NHS England for our work in patient engagement in health and more recently being shortlisted by Co-operatives UK [for the 2021 Cooperative of the Year Awards]. We are proud to be part of the wider co-operative movement and look forward to contributing in the future."

The event featured a performance by the Brixton Chamber Orchestra and presentations from co-op members, Dr Narveed Akhtar, a GP and College of Medicine Council member, and Jim Dickson, Lambeth Council cabinet member for health and wellbeing.

Lambeth GP Food Co-op owns a vegetable garden at King's College Hospital NHS. The garden was set up seven years ago to support local patients with long-term health conditions to learn how to grow food and, by doing so, improve their health and wellbeing. The co-op also runs a monthly vegetable stall in the hospital's Golden Jubilee Wing, an initiative supported by Medirest.

"We're proud to have been based at King's College Hospital for seven years," said Rosen.

"Throughout our time at Jennie Lee House we have provided access to green spaces for patients and staff, as well as contributing to the Trust's Green Plan and supporting healthier communities. We look forward to more successful years at King's."

Lorcan Woods, chief financial officer at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, congratulated the co-op. "The co-op has been a supporter of our Green Plan since its launch in 2021," he said, "and has been sharing invaluable knowledge on sustainable practices with the community for many years before. Their commitment to making a positive difference to the people of Lambeth and to making a more sustainable NHS is great, and we are delighted to be able to share this important milestone with them."

Anca Voinea, Co-op News

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Many hands make light work!

6 runners, 2 walkers, 6 shovels, 3 two tonne soil bags and a couple of children's bicycles... what have you got? Lambeth's Tuesday evening Goodgym Group Run on 21st March!

It's a short run up from Brixton to Clapham High Street so we were ready and raring to go by 7:15pm and went streaming past Ed from Lambeth GP Food Co-op who was meeting us there. Once reunited Ed gave us the briefing and we had 3 huge planters to empty of soil so they could be transported by truck to another site.

We divided into two groups and began shifting soil! The two tonne bags filled up very quickly so the excess had to be stacked neatly on the ground and by 8pm we were pretty much done. We stashed the shovels, said our goodbyes and set off back to base with another great task in the bag. Thanks to Paul and Marie-Noelle our walkers who rescued bunches of tulips for the volunteers to take home!

Lots more tasks coming up in the next few months for LGPFC so our members will be keeping their eyes peeled for them. And thanks to Ed Rosen for having us over to help out.

Yianny, Lambeth Area Activator, Goodgym

