



The CHERUB HIV Garden - A Life Without Walls
RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2018
A safe haven of acceptance and calm



The CHERUB HIV garden has been inspired by the lives of young people growing up with HIV.

It is a unique collaboration between people living with HIV, garden designers, clinicians and researchers.

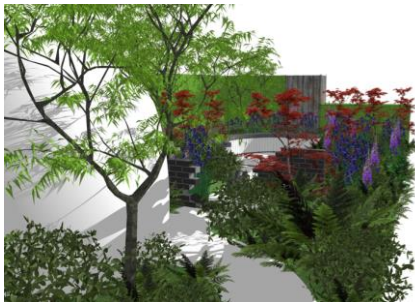
The garden embodies the main challenge for these young people: stigma. A partnership between Londoners from all backgrounds, it explores how stigma has affected their lives.

Our aims:

- **To empower young people born with HIV.**
- **To facilitate conversations among all audiences tackling the stigma of being HIV positive, and openness around testing, screening, and treatments.**
- **To introduce wide audiences to research into HIV on new therapies and the future of care.**



Stigma remains the major impediment to accessing health care, disclosing one's status and is a significant burden to mental health. The garden represents how young people can overcome stigma to reach a safe, positive place to live.



Most people with HIV in the UK live in London, and disproportionately in the poorer boroughs. The London strategy for public health aims to address equality and equity of care by enabling Londoners to feel comfortable talking about HIV and mental health. The garden fulfils the stated goal of enabling London's children to have a safe space to live, play and develop. We hope that one London Borough might support relocation of the garden after the show to form a sustainable and unique space available for all.

The garden will enhance visibility and public awareness of the challenges of HIV and related stigma through press and media impact. The legacy of this work can serve Londoners for years, providing a safe haven of calm and beauty in an urban community.



THE GARDEN IN BRENT This press release tells the story



HERE IS A LINK TO SOME PHOTOS

https://1drv.ms/a/s!Apb_wslVDrhRhLQ-3Txw20yaNcHDAw

Award winning Chelsea Garden 'Life without Walls' will up sticks and head for a Council Estate in Cricklewood.

An entire garden is moving from the prestigious Chelsea flower show to a council estate in North London. The power of plants will benefit many disadvantaged groups; from those with HIV to dementia sufferers. It will brighten up the grounds of a tired plot and help knit a community together.

The CHERUB (CHERUB is one of the first cooperatives of UK Biomedical Research Centres to explore one of the most exciting new fields of biomedical research – HIV Cure) garden was conceived by Dr Sarah Fidler Professor of HIV medicine at Imperial College London and John Frater Professor of Medicine at Oxford and designed by Naomi Ferrett Cohen to raise

awareness of young people who have grown up living with

Professor Fidler explained “The garden was launched at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and designed by Naomi Ferret Cohen, who won a silver-gilt medal for her first ever Chelsea garden. The ‘Life without Walls’ garden is a landmark project for, and about, people living with HIV.”

Dr Fidler continues “the garden centres on a young person living with HIV and the journey they face, exploring stigma and marginalisation.”

A disproportionate number of people with HIV live in London, and indeed some of the clinics run out of Northwick Park Hospital in Harrow so it is fitting that the garden should move to Brent.



Everyone involved was very keen that the garden have a life after Chelsea – so much creative talent and energy, and money had been poured into the project. But the garden was destined to be broken up, until Karen Levi introduced Professor Fidler to Brent Councillor Lia Colacicco who says:

“I nearly bit her hand off! For years I have been wanting to create a dementia garden project. During a dementia workshop run by local charity Ashford place, I was touched by the strong desire of dementia



sufferers to contribute to society. They spoke of being 'wrapped up in cotton wool' by the people who love them, but as one man put it -" I've lost my memory not my marbles."

Cllr Colacicco said "My father was a strong, active man who had dementia for nearly 15 years and I know he would've loved to work in a garden. My mother refused to go to any support groups but would have enjoyed this more informal coffee-and-chat arrangement."

Gardening relies on muscle memory and is a

comforting activity for many people who have lost their sense of purpose.

Cllr Colacicco says "I immediately thought of the site on the Watling Gardens estate, and everyone loved the idea, but it was difficult to find somebody to commit to the horticultural side of the project so it was consigned to the back burner. Of course as soon as Karen mentioned the CHERUB garden I couldn't believe my luck. People are so excited at the idea of the Chelsea Garden in the neighbourhood that offers came flooding in."

Councillor Colacicco continues "Then another reality check. Budget. With funding from central government slashed by 77 per cent councils have no spare money." Literally everything has been donated - from steel toecap boots, to top soil, to trucks. Local garden designer Sally Long has worked on an adapted design for Watling Gardens using Naomi Ferrett Cohen's planting.

The project has really captured imaginations – offers are pouring in, and Twitter is alight. We are also inviting social isolation groups to join in with the maintenance. This really is a gift which just keeps on giving – every day we make a new connection.

Gerry Weston, Secretary of MapRA the local residents' association has been in charge of logistics. "It has been a textbook example of a community pulling together and making something happen in just two weeks. Veolia volunteers have prepared the site and will help plant the garden, B&Q have donated kit and Good Gym will be unloading the truck and moving trees, but mostly it is been resident good will and enthusiasm."

Karen Levi concludes "through a chance conversation, rather than being broken up, the garden has spawned two versions of itself – The University of Oxford will also recreate the garden and make use of the hard landscaping whilst the plants are already learning to live next to the busy Edgware Road. I really hope that the garden not only gives pleasure to local residents but also keeps young people with HIV in the spotlight. "

ENDS

Contact details

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Big thank you to our sponsors, volunteers and supporters.

We have been totally dependent on the people and businesses of Cricklewood and Brent

The list so far

Veolia – preparing the site and planting large plants, providing 5 tonnes of mulch
B&Q – steel toecap boots, loan of trolley, four cafe tables and 16 chairs with cushions
Good gym – unloading plants from trucks and planting
MapRA – general gardening and transport
FOGP Planting
Brent Council: Chris Whyte and Amanda Haines for saying YES
Watling G residents - loan of the transport and daily watering
Garden friends Fordwich Road – planting
Sally Long and Helen Goodsell: design
Gerry Weston: Logistics
Residents
TMO
Management
Moran

Remaining items

Path / paving Selco tbc
Paving contractor – Wayes tbc
Benches
Plaque – ask Funeral parlours in Cricklewood



Twitter has been alight with excitement. Check @LiaColacicco

Request for paving



Where

Watling Gardens on shoot up Hill, access next to the bus stop

Just behind the community hall (yellow rectangle)

with vehiccle access close by

There is also water on hand

What

The main item remaining is a path which is wheelchair friendly.

The path bisects the garden, And is roughly 15 metres long with a spur of 5 metres stop rotavated.

Not a straight line - and soil compacted by many boots

Selco are providing the paving. I would really appreciate some help specifying a suitable paver and other necessities.



When



ASAP please. Budget

We are hoping that a contractor will carry out this job as part of their corporate social responsibility remit .Everyone who has worked on this project has loved it – the enthusiasm is infectious.

Why

Team-building for the workers to feel they are putting something into the community. Improve visibility, image and reputation amongst the public. Press coverage of official opening and on Twitter