



Feed Leeds In-person Meeting – Monday 15th September at 4pm

St James University Hospital Wellbeing Garden, Beckett Street, Leeds, LS9 7TF

Present: Sarah-Jane Mason (FL and RHS), Sonja Woodcock (FL, FoodWise Leeds); Rosie Atkins (FL and FL Farm Gp), Rosie Hall (FL and Sec Leeds Allotments); Lynn Brown (FL and Beckhill Community Garden); Viv Hargreaves (Season Well CIC); Alison Varley (RHS Community Outreach)

Apologies: Becky Mears (FL, IE Aireborough and Season Well CIC); Rob Moores (FL Chair, P4P); Paul Magnall (FL and Rainbow Junktion), Penny Pinn (FL and Horsforth Community Garden), Ama Chaney (FL and Grow to School), Alan and Gini (Fruitworks co-op), Ed Elcock and Nial (Yorkshire Mushroom Emporium), Paul Magnall (FL and Red Kite), Annie Whitehead (Armley Compost and Food Growing project, FL)



Community Wellbeing Garden at St James' Hospital

This meeting was hosted by Alison from the RHS Community Outreach Team at the newly completed Community Wellbeing Garden at St James' Hospital.

Alison gave us a history of the garden development and tour, explaining that the garden was initiated by the RHS as part of a national initiative, to date the RHS have completed hospital gardens at Lewisham, Colchester, Oldham and now Leeds.

For the past 2 years the Community Outreach team have been engaging the hospital community teaching practical gardening skills through a regular gardening club, and in-person or virtual workshops. They also supplied grow at home kits which could be collected from the hospital for those unable to attend the workshops. Alongside this, they also worked with Season Well to engage local community gardening groups developing the Food for Thought network.

Garden consultations were held with the hospital community to identify the key elements for the garden.

- 3 distinct uses for the space; Socialising - breaks and meetings -, Quiet and Reflective area – to get away from the hustle and bustle and Active spaces - for gardening skills workshops to continue to educate and engage the hospital community.

- The garden should be both ornamental and productive. There should be spaces for the gardening club to grow their own plants and it should be accessible to all.
- Wildlife friendly – in an urban space it is important to ensure that the plants selected boost biodiversity.

The garden was designed by Adam Frost and includes zoned spaces, to accommodate the 3 uses, indicated by the planting and seating selections. The hospital community helped to installed many of the plants in the final design and the completed garden is a real asset for the hospital and already being regularly used. **More details** on the project can be found [here](#). The official garden opening will be on Wednesday 8th October.

Want to join us? Gardening Club is held on Thursdays from 10am-12.30 – everyone is welcome to join in so please drop by if you can.

Where? The Community Wellbeing Garden can be found outside the NHS Trust HQ at the back of the hospital <https://maps.app.goo.gl/PYdMviSEf9RFy2CUA>

MINUTES

Approval of minutes from last meeting (for a copy of the minutes see the Feed Leeds website home page <https://feedleeds.org/>).

1. Feed Leeds Current projects

Get Growing Leeds Campaign update on bean harvests and events



The Feed Leeds and Foodwise teams attended the Gledhow Valley Green Fair on 13th July, sharing information about composting and growing at home. It was a well-attended event with lots of families and young people.

Carlin Peas Growing updates have been received from a number of groups who received the free seeds. Overall the plants grew well if kept watered (this was a very dry year and it did impact on the overall size of plants and the yields) but were rather susceptible to pests such as rodents and pea moth (eating seeds or damaging plants).



Rosie Hall shared this image of the harvested peas from her Hollin Lane allotment, which she is saving to replant next year– she also planted the Carlin Peas with children from Weetwood Primary school.

“I was so pleased to receive the pea seeds and I enjoyed watching them grow. I loved the pink-red flower colour; they were very beautiful. I kept them well watered as advised apart from when I was on holiday.

I don't usually grow maincrop peas on my allotment because of the prevalence of the pea and bean moth. When I harvested the peas about 50% of the pods were affected by the moth, and those would be inedible. Maybe the moths wouldn't have been such a problem in the school garden. I'll be able to see when I go back there, as we did sow and plant peas there too.”

Leeds Farm Group Rosie A – Unfortunately the group were not successful in their funding application for Increasing Agro-Ecological Legume Consumption in the North, Project. However

the interest in Legumes continues with national projects like <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/press-release/nationwide-campaign-get-uk-eating-more-beans-launching> and <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/initiatives/fixourfood> launching this Autumn.

The University procurement project is still exploring economic opportunities for local growers ensuring we have healthy farms and growers who can make a decent living in the city. Councillor Andy Rontree is contacting Asset Management at LCC to explore the future of farms owned by LCC inc. how they are being used currently and plans to improve environmental credentials moving forward.

Leeds Food Growing Network – Sonja

Foodwise applied to the Communities initiative Funding – under the Policy Innovation for Economic Benefit band and were successful in being awarded £10,000 to work with growers to develop initiatives supporting the Food Strategy in Leeds. They plan to engage Food Growers across the city to look at positive impacts on community and livelihoods from local food growing and set up a network to connect all growers. Hyde Park Source are administering the funding and Fruitworks will be completing work on the ground. The team plan to contact all the food growers, whether individuals/groups are growing in a community space, on allotments or through Community Supported Agriculture. This research will feed into a survey and community growers map to gather information. They will deliver workshops to growers including Woman in Growing, Non-binary growers, Nature and food growing and Engaging allotments. Rosie H agreed to contact Alan to share details for the self-manged allotments and the council officers responsible for council managed allotments.

2. FL Members updates

Season Well – Viv Hargreaves

The team have been busy recently, delivering sessions for Healthy Holidays summer clubs, teaching cooking skills to school children across Leeds whilst also developing new projects for the coming year.

They will soon be starting a project as part of the national School Food Matters programme; delivering seasonal healthy eating workshops and teaching life skills, such as meal planning and cookery skills in schools.

They are working with Chapel FM in Seacroft to develop their yard into a social accessible space for young people to use. Chapel FM received funding from the NGS for this project.

ACTION ALL

If you are interested in applying for funding from NGS the applications for 2026 Community Garden Grants are now open until 12 noon on 20th October 2025 <https://ngs.org.uk/who-we-are/community-garden-grants/>

The Food For Thought network is still going strong. Becky recently held a Southern meeting in conjunction with one of Fruitworks' advertised sessions in Belle Isle – this collaboration helps to broaden the reach of both projects allowing groups to learn from and support each other. The Harehills based network are still working in collaboration with the RHS and St James' hospital community to support the Wellbeing Garden development, recently getting involved in planting the herb beds.



The RHS would like to invite our members to:

Gardening Club everyone is welcome to join us at the Gardening Club at St James', held on Thursdays from 10am-12.30 – please drop by if you can.

Community Gardening Meet-Up on Thursday 9th October (see flyer). This free event will focus on Sustainability, specifically Soils and there will be talks from experts and a chance to ask your questions. You can book tickets [here](#)

Leeds Allotment Federation (LAF) – Rosie Hall

The federation had another very successful show garden at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show, achieving a silver gilt medal. This garden involved massive commitment from many members of the federation, everything was grown from scratch which meant starting crops at home on windowsills and nurturing them to plant up at the show.

Rosie is keen to build on the work she completed with Weetwood School and the Carlin Peas. She is now helping to deliver 2 Allotment Clubs with local schools at the allotment. The children visit 8 times a year to take part in growing and harvesting. The school does actually have a small growing space but no volunteers to lead sessions or maintain the space.

We then discussed the media story about the proposal to sell off Headingley allotments and how a simple story can be blown up on social media. You can hear Rosie discussing this and explaining about how self-managed allotments work on the East Leeds Community Radio show, all about environmental matters. Think Global Act Local.

<https://www.chapelfm.co.uk/elfm-player/archive/2025/09/think-global-act-local-41/> (from 1m 10s)

LAF also updated us on the Grants for Self-managed allotments that they provide, these grants are funded through LAF membership (£1 a year) and have been used for a variety of projects; solar panels for community buildings, wood chippers for the site to use, new polytunnel skins etc.

Fruitworks – Alan Thornton

We're keen to make fruit growing a part of the culture in Leeds & Bradford, so each year, we host a variety of events that follow the rhythm of the fruit growing season. Come along to one of our autumn Apple Days and bring with your own apples and bottles, and press fresh juice to take home. All events are listed here <https://www.fruitworks.org.uk/events>

Foodwise – Sonja Woodcock

Although the Zest and Foodwise partnership will cease to operate from December the team are still actively pursuing ways to continue the work in the future, we will let you know our plans as they progress.

We had a great day welcoming a group of Masters students from the University of Frankfurt who were interested in learning more about urban food systems. We started with a tour of Beckhill Community Garden in Meanwood where the local community are transforming waste land into a gorgeous community garden.

We also heard from [Juli Thompson](#) about the [FoodSavers Network](#) and how they provide much more than affordable food.

We then walked down to [Meanwood Valley Urban Farm](#) and enjoyed a delicious lunch at The Barn Coffee Shop and then Andy gave us an informative tour of the market garden. It's always interesting to hear the journey of the market garden and the early autumn veg was looking great! And, the sun shone all afternoon - what a great day to be outside!

It was also fascinating hearing about how food in Germany has changed to greater convenience moving away from traditional bakeries etc. And, that there's a lack of food education in schools particularly for those on an academic path. Hopefully we imparted some food for thought from Leeds. 😊

Beckhill Community Garden – Lynn Brown

Beckhill garden have just celebrated their first anniversary of creating the community garden. They have entered Yorkshire in bloom and the awards will be announced and presented on 25th September. They have been engaging the local school and are working with the Vice Chancellor to explore growing activities at the secondary school.

The next steps for the garden include installation of a greenhouse for the space, kindly donated by a Bloom group in Kippax. The greenhouse will be available for users of the community garden and other local growers such as Incredible Edible, allowing the groups to sow crops earlier and bring them on before planting outdoors and also for greenhouse crops later in the year. The team will also be working with Fruitworks to develop an orchard over the next 2 years.

Lynn also volunteers for Rewilding Leeds based at Heart, a group dedicated to rewilding urban spaces. The group recently attended the MVUF AGM taking part in discussions about developing Green Corridors to link areas for wildlife, the group are exploring opportunities to link Alwoodley, York Gate and West Leeds Activity Centre.

Armley Compost and Food Growing project - Annie Whitehead

Annie Whitehead is working with Armley Climate Action to collaborate with a partner to set up a new small composting and food growing project in Armley this autumn. A decision on the partner will be made imminently. For further information, please contact Annie on anniewhiteheadleeds@gmail.com.

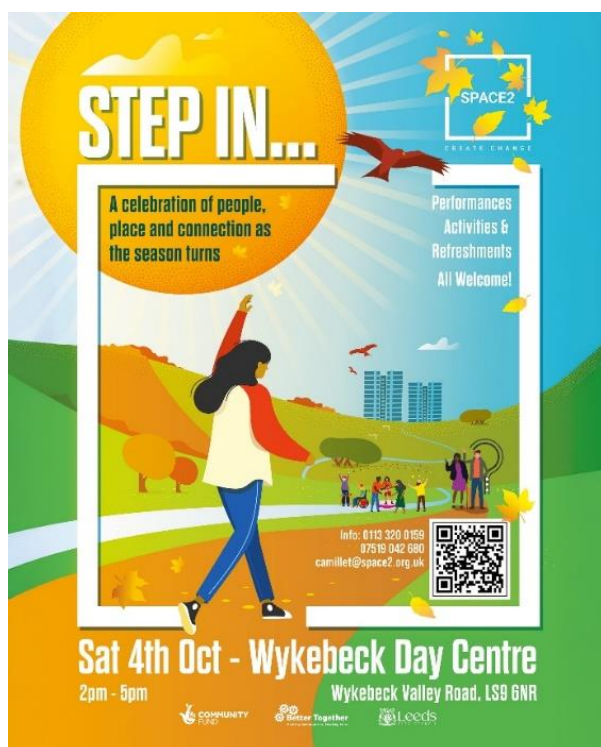
3. AOB

Save the date:

Date of Next Meeting: 4pm Monday 17th November (in person or virtual tbc)

Member events – please show your support

Space 2 Step In Event Saturday 4th October
Wykebeck Day Centre



Winter Wellbeing event at BITMOs GATE in Belle Isle Thursday 6th November, from 1–4pm.

This community focused event aims to support households across Belle Isle in staying well this winter - physically, emotionally, and financially. With rising fuel costs and seasonal pressures, many residents are facing tough choices. Our goal is to bring together local organisations, services, and resources that can help people stay warm, healthy, and informed during the colder months.

We'd love for you to host a stall, run a short activity, or simply come along to network and offer support. Soup and light refreshments will be available to everyone.

If you're interested in attending or would like more details, please email tracey.mcgarra@belleislelmo.co.uk by Friday 10th October.

Swillington Organic Farm Harvest Festival

Saturday 4th October 2025, 2pm – 11pm,
Swillington Barns

<https://swillingtonorganicfarm.co.uk/events/harvest-festival> for more information and to book tickets.

