



Partnership Search

Abbey Gardens is an open-access harvest garden in the East London borough of Newham where anyone is welcome to participate in the communal growing of flowers, fruit and vegetables. Unlike the traditional allotment system, at present no one has their own patch and users garden together at regular sessions led by an experienced gardener. The produce is shared among volunteers and is also available to the local community in return for donations from one of the garden's two Honesty Stalls. Abbey Gardens has been operating for over 10 years, thanks to the tireless local support, effort and engagement that has enabled the initiative to endure beyond its planned 2 year lifespan. The Garden continues to bring the local community together through free gardening sessions, team building days for local organisations, health and wellbeing events, food & craft markets and an annual Harvest Festival.

The Abbey Gardens site is one of only two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Newham and contains the remains of a 12th-century Cistercian abbey where monks once ran a kitchen garden. In 2006 a group of local residents formed Friends of Abbey Gardens, initially with the aim of rescuing the derelict site from vandalism and neglect. With the commissioning of an arts project entitled "What Will The Harvest Be?", the plan was made to turn Abbey Gardens into an open-access park and harvest garden. The soil was found to be contaminated, but with time and effort this setback was overcome and a beautiful artist-designed harvest garden was created in 30 long raised beds.

The Trustees of the Garden, the founding artists and the volunteer community group are reaching out to find a new partner or organisation to move the garden to the next stage of evolution. In these roles, you have the opportunity to be involved in the evolution and improvement of a rare green space in urban London, which has incredible potential for creative and exciting gardening and social initiatives.

Abbey Gardens is a rare green space in Stratford that provides an opportunity for a local organisation to establish a new business opportunity or to expand on an existing venture.

The 1 acre site is currently an open public space, which has historical significance and strong local and community support. Currently run as a not for profit community garden, the trustees and local volunteers are inviting a new partner to write the next chapter of the gardens' history. We are open to discussions with potential partners that could contribute to the overall aims of the garden:

- To build a strong local and community initiative to support health, wellbeing, social connections and positive mental health.
- To engage a wide range of community groups in connecting with nature through planting, growing, harvesting, and maintaining a healthy green space in which to connect with nature.
- To champion Abbey Gardens as an innovative and engaged community group, enthusiastic about building a positive and healthy future for the local area.
- To build a sustainable business model to ensure the long term viability of the space, building on opportunities to sustain revenue and success of the garden space/land.

We'd love to hear from you and discuss your proposition for the garden space, please get in contact with your:

- Proposal vision & overview
- Intended timelines & resource requirements
- Budget and financial plan
- Key objectives

Please send your expressions of interest to: abbeygardens.e15@gmail.com by March 23rd 2019. Applications will be reviewed and selection process will take place w/c March 25th 2019.