

A NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN IN STEEPLE ASTON

For some time we have enjoyed our Community Orchard thanks to the many volunteers who nurture it. We are very lucky.

We are proposing a new garden venture specifically to help those with mental health; loneliness ; low self esteem and associated suffering. It will be a community garden but with a specialist agenda.



Where did this idea arise?

Two years ago Rev Harriet Orridge and I met to discuss how the church and community might help sufferers working together. Research shows that meeting to garden is a very healing experience. Thus we decided to find a garden and work with a paid specialist leader.

We needed to identify a location within the village/benefice. The churchyard though excellent is not suitable being too public for people who feel insecure. It is a route way.

Through the generosity of the Allotmenters and their committee we have been offered an ideal plot on the allotments ,namely the grass area by the club house which will be a secluded and quiet area. We are hugely grateful to the allotmenters for this offer.

What is the Church's role in this — why is this a church initiative?

Our church is not just Sunday. It is a living caring community which believes in being of service to the village. For example — the fete; the harvest supper; the church quiz; plus the major civic services such as Remembrance; The Funeral of the Queen; The Coronation , etc. The community garden is yet another offering.

The church also has administrative systems in place suitable for this kind of activity — insurance; accounting , etc., and is automatically an exempt charity. It is an ideal body to run such a venture.

We have already researched what is necessary with a small expert working committee to whom I am very grateful indeed ,and advice from Bridewell Gardens (www.bridewellgardens.org)

We will need to fund a professional lead gardener. To run the garden with a paid leader will cost some £10,000 per year. We already have a generous donation towards this and I am applying to various trust funds and local companies to see if this can be raised. This task was my offering in raising the money for the church re-roofing so I am used to it!

And so - I am putting out a call for voluntary help to all — church and community.

Can you help us set this up and support it further as the needs develop? We need not only funds but also practical energy and willingness to support both now and as a commitment.

The rector, the church and I would love to hear from you to help us set this new venture on the road!

Thank you sincerely for reading this far.

Martin Dale (email: martindale865@gmail.com)