A ST MICHAELS CHURCH & ST M'S
PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

PAULSGROVE COMMUNITY GARDEN

HOW DOES IT GROW...

IN THE BEGINNING

St Michael's and All Angels church was built in Paulsgrove in 1957, it overlooks the 'Grove' and is affectionally known as 'the church on the green' – it has been surrounded by grass and little else who most of those years.

In 2019, the church was successful in gaining substantial funding from The National Lottery, Reaching Communities fund, for a renewal process to include a complete refurbishment for the rather tired building and the launching of a new events co-operative based in the church, which later became 'St M's'.

Harvest Festival 2019, saw the completion of works and the launch of St M's, with over 200 families attending activities during that initial weekend.
2020 bought a pandemic no-one saw coming and the church and St M's were forced to close for nearly a year, while the local community as with so many others took a real bashing.

As part of the post Covid recovery period, St M's wanted to create an outside offer for the church, that could help with the profile and visibility of St M's and in the event of any further lockdowns or restrictions would still provide a community amenity and safe social space.

Following consultation with the church community and locals it was agreed that transforming the grass area around the church to a sustainable, edible and educational garden could be just the thing.

YOU TOLD US...

Roses please!

A safe space would be nice

Oh to be outside again

Benches for sitting with friends

Something for all ages to do together

Raised beds and a shed

A wildflower meadow for bees and butterflies

Can we have an orchard?

THE DESIGN PROCESS

St M's initially worked with an architect student from Portsmouth University, Linnea Jakobsson, on the original plans for the garden, incorporating the ideas people had shared, we had raised beds for accessibility, an orchard and wild flower meadow.

These plans then formed the basis of a further engagement process with locals around '**how may our garden grow**'. We created 'post it' boards for idea sharing and feedback forms and everyone of all ages was invite to choose the top 3 things they wanted in the garden. We had 48 locals contribute.

This community engagement and involvement followed on from a previous bold and very successful social marketing campaign called [proud to be paulsgrove] - which was essentially about addressing the stigma and celebrating the strengths and good things about Paulsgrove - the gardening project was an invaluable way of making this powerful idea tangible. If we are proud to belong to Paulsgrove we should show this in the state of 'our' garden.

With ideas and views shared, adaptations were made to the original designs and four cornerstones were established for the creation of the community garden.

The community wanted the garden to be:

- An edible growing space
- Environmentally friendly (a haven for wild life)
- Accessible
- Intergenerational

COLLABORATION

The church and St M's joined forces and created an invaluable partnership project for the garden, sourcing funding from all over, including over £10,000 from the local community and business sponsors, a greening grant from Portsmouth City Council. By April 2022, we were ready to get the heavy lifting and landscaping underway courtesy of Hambrooks.

THE BUILD PROCESS

All completed in eight glorious weeks!

PHEW WHAT A SCORCHER!

July 2022, and with 'a little help from our friends' the church garden had been transformed, introducing five raised beds, composting area, a wild meadow along with a small orchard of 12 apple trees and a community wish tree. By now it was steamy hot, with record breaking temperatures, and so began a watering campaign to help with all the new planting – we will always be grateful to all of you who came up daily and helped with this.

ACTIVITY SUMMER '22

Jubilee Party

Our garden and the Jubilee became the perfect mix of celebration, and lots of wishes were tied to the community wish tree.

Sunflower Day

Joint project with children from local primary school Beacon View, where banks of sunflowers were planted across the garden.

Eco Warrior Days

We ran a small number of environmentally focussed days for mini warriors – created a giant bug hotel, two bee bars, a habitat of bat boxes, flower pressing and enjoyed a mini beast safari – 30 local kids attended and helped inform and shape the environmental practices we adopt, around the importance of respecting habitats, creatures and environmental impact.

ACTIVITY IN '23

Easter 2023

Easter garden fun, and the Easter bunny even found the bug hotel.
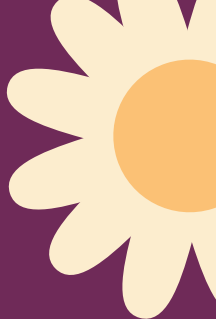
April, A Wilding Day in Paulsgrove

The focus of these days is to encourage people to take positive action to create and enhance wild spaces near where they live, the first Paulsgrove event was run by Seekers Create at St M's. Our community garden is delighted to be a part of this partnership project.
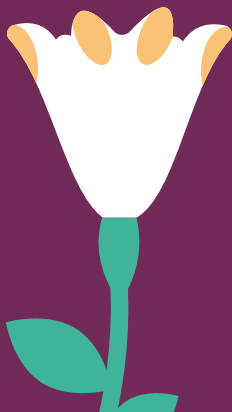
MORE ACTIVITIES PLANNED...

There are plenty of events throughout Summer 2023, including...

- Lots more Eco Warrior days planned, for adults too
- Development of a kids Saturday garden club
- Expansion of food and garden workshops
- Volunteer open mornings, first Saturday of each month - everyone invited
- A Coronation Tea in our garden
- The Smoothie bike returns to the garden for the Paulsgrove Carnival, June 24th 2023
- Wilder Days, Paulsgrove
- GO TO, a creative e-bike scheme set up to combat loneliness through cycling and talking, is based in our garden every Monday

[**proud to be**
paulsgrove]

WANT TO HELP OUR GARDEN GROW?

As a community, volunteer led garden project we need people just like you to help us out, whenever you can. Digging, planting, weeding or making tea are all very important here – we hold a drop in open morning the first Saturday of each month, so come and say hello and we can tell you more, and we have doughnuts! Please follow us on Facebook or Instagram for up to date info on whats going on in our garden.

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www.stmichaelspaulsgrove.org.uk

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND   COMMUNITY FUND   COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY   Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL