



ABBAY PHYSIC
COMMUNITY GARDEN
GROWING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

What we are

Abbey Physic Community Garden (APCG) is a beautiful, organically managed, walled garden in the heart of Faversham, offering a healing space for all.

APCG provides a place of safety and wellbeing, for people of Faversham and Kent. founded on a core belief in the therapeutic value of a garden and gardening. We actively support people isolated by their mental health, or social and economic disadvantage, and give them a community to feel a part of.

There is something for all: Benefits include social connections, self-confidence, physical and emotional wellbeing, and refuge from a life outside which may be chaotic or troubled.

This tranquil, award winning space is living proof of the many therapeutic benefits for good mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Who is it for? Everyone

The APCG helps breakdown social isolation through informal networking by providing a space to meet casually, to relax, to learn, laugh, think, play or to take part in the wide range of activities offered throughout the year.

We focus on the Gardens ability to affect good mental and physical health for all by providing:

- Therapeutic Gardening
- Horticulture accredited training.
- Faversham Community Kitchen - Grub Club - healthy eating/cooking on a budget and a shared meal with others.
- Ground Force Action Team - St Mary's Churchyard - greening community spaces.
- Faversham Men's shed organisation
- Coping with Depression run Kent Mind
- Coping with Anxiety and Stress run by Kent Mind
- Weekly Peer support - Kent Mind and APCG trained members
- Happiness Café - monthly Well being
- Art and crafts - willow basketry, pottery
- Green Woodworking

Why are we needed?

We know the statistic of 1 in 4 experiencing a mental health problem, and we know rates of self harm in the UK are the highest in Europe.

We also know that people with mental health issues are amongst the least likely of any group with a long term condition or disability to

- Find work
- Be in a steady, long term relationship
- Live in decent housing
- Be socially included in mainstream society.

Our questionnaires provide valuable feedback from members:

“I can sleep at night now instead of all day. I have some very good friends and lots of good thoughts. I think my life will be ok.”

“For many members, the garden’s continuance in its present form is not an ideal preference but an essential necessity. The garden members rely on the garden to improve their mental health, maintain it, and have a reasonable quality of life as opposed to no quality of life.”

“The garden gradually helped me integrate back into a small community at a time when my illness had led to extreme isolation. Slowly but surely I found myself becoming less paranoid and more comfortable in social situations.”

“When the mental health support team discharged me, I felt scared and alone. The garden helps me feel safe and supports me with everything. They have set up an email address and help me look for properties and come with me to view any. They are helping me with my ESA forms and will come with me to my interview as my anxiety makes it difficult for me to communicate with people. I love the garden. It’s the only thing that keeps me going.”

What is our story?

2019 will see the APCG celebrate its 25th anniversary. The origins of the garden was born collectively from local residents, local GPs and support from the Schizophrenia Fellowship. They wanted to provide a service for people with long term mental health issues. In 2006 it gained charity status, added the word 'community' and has evolved into an awarding winning garden, that now also serves the wider community.

We have 196 members and are open 6 days a week, with typically 18-32 people a day - approx. 45-55 individuals a week. Some members travel a 50-mile round journey. We have an open-door policy and no time restrictions for participation.

What's next?

Our plans for the next 3 years include developing:

- A Community Nursery using sustainable eco practices and training.
 - Widening the reach of our Community kitchen with regular guest chefs.
 - Our accredited training with NOCN
 - Playing a larger part in Faversham's Food Festival
 - Widening our relationships with other organisations.
 - Reaching more people
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- You can help us to achieve our goals by donating using the link on our website www.abbeyphysic.org/membership-donations
 - Become a Member
 - Make a Donation.

