

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Creating a Community Garden in Croydon

We were delighted to read recently an article in Inside Croydon about how Croydon u3 member Charles Barber is involved with creating a Community Garden in Selhurst. We asked him to write about the project and his article follows.

We know that many Croydon u3a members volunteer with community projects and would be very pleased to hear from you about these.

“When I first discovered my local park, Whitehorse Road Recreation Ground in Selhurst, I was both disappointed and very underwhelmed. The garden clearly received minimal maintenance from our ever cash-strapped Council with its grass cut occasionally and all the shrubs pruned to a standard 1 metre height once a year in the spring. As someone who had spent most of my working life, trying to make customers’ gardens more beautiful and wildlife friendly, this seemed like a scandalous waste of space. Surely with a bit of care and hard work, it could be turned into a Community Garden for both people and wildlife to enjoy.



In 2015, Croydon had a free monthly magazine called The Croydon Citizen to which wannabe, amateur journalists such as myself were allowed to submit articles. I wrote an article about the neglected garden and then I and three friends set up *The Friends of White Horse Park* to try and improve it.



Sadly, those three friends have now moved away from Croydon, but Tracy, Rose and Catherine have now joined me on the committee and together we are attempting to create a relaxing, beautiful haven for humans and a useful larder for pollinating insects. We also organise a monthly litter-pick on the last Saturday of each month. Having worked as a solo gardener for most of my adult life, it has been a joy and education to work as part of a team, but we could do so much more if we had more volunteers. We have plans to grow more drought resistant plants and a variety of herbs around the garden. **If any u3a members would like to know more, or maybe even get their**

hands dirty, please email me at: charles.barber13@gmail.com “.

Charles Barber