The Growing Localities Awards 2014
We have been quite overwhelmed by the response to the Growing Localities Awards in 2014. Even more entries have been made this year and it has proved once again very, very difficult to select a shortlist. We congratulate all competitors on the high standard of their efforts to beautify our wonderful city.

BILLY DOVE MBE JP
Chairman of the City Bridge Trust Grants Committee
City Bridge Trust was delighted that 164 organisations across London entered for the Growing Localities Awards this year – nearly double the number that entered last year.

Entries came from large and small organisations across London in all the categories. The range of people involved with the projects was tremendous: children and young people, adults with learning disabilities, people in recovery and with mental health problems, older people and families. The projects involved thousands of volunteers and many had had a transformational impact on their residents and neighbourhoods – often with little or no money. The judges were particularly impressed by the universally high standard of the entries – even higher than last year.

They represent the best spirits in our communities: aspirational, local, neighbourly, co-operative, caring and committed.

As we said last year the Awards recognise and empower the emerging people’s movement committed to nature and its benefits, particularly for some of the most excluded and worst off people in our communities. This has grown out of the lives of ordinary people without much money but lots of energy and goodwill. And it seems that movement is growing and growing. We hope these Growing Localities Awards give an extra impetus to the growing and spreading movement of people in nature reaping enormous benefits in community and well-being.

Gerard Lemos
Lemos & Crane
London, May 2014
Awards categories

01 Gardening and growing food
For communal eating and small-scale enterprise

02 Looking after animals
Bees, chickens, pigs, etc for the experience of care but also to farm

03 Nature-themed arts and crafts
Woodcraft, photography, film-making, writing, etc

04 Educational activities about nature and wildlife
Including trips and excursions to teach people about flora and fauna

05 Reclaiming and developing wasteland
Projects initiated and led by residents and tenants

06 ‘Green’ exercise
Groups for walking, cycling, running, etc with a nature theme
The Edible Bus Stop
Crystal Palace Bus Station

Originating as a guerrilla garden project adjacent to a bus stop in south London, The Edible Bus Stop aims to transform neglected sites across London’s transport network into valuable growing spaces. These spaces break away from the stereotype of the generic community garden through the use of creatively inspired design, forging instantly recognisable landmarks in the process.

The gardens have become village greens on which people can relax in among the hectic urban hustle and bustle. The original Edible Bus Stop on Landor Road in Brixton is used and enjoyed by many people including volunteer gardeners, commuters, workers and neighbours who come to enjoy its splendour. The redesign has also resulted in a considerable improvement in the way people use the gardened spaces; litter and anti-social behaviour have been significantly reduced. Local businesses have also been very supportive of the work carried out, and many have used produce grown in the garden.

The Winner’s prize of £1,000 will contribute to the development of the latest garden project at Crystal Palace Bus Station garden.
Headway East London
Growing for Life

Headway East London’s Growing for Life project offers brain injury survivors meaningful occupation in maintaining a large canal side garden. Any vegetables and herbs grown on the plot are used in a lunch club for Headway members, staff, and people from the surrounding residences and businesses.

The garden has also been expanded to include a cob oven made from clay and sand, which will be used to bake pizzas for summer events.

Over 20 members have been involved in the project, which greatly bolsters users’ self-esteem in allowing them to make significant contributions to the Headway community. In addition, 200 members of staff and volunteers are able to enjoy a thriving, beautiful garden.

The Growing for Life project was awarded a Runner Up prize of £500.
Bee Urban

Keeper’s Lodge Project and Camberwell Subterranea

Bee Urban renovated Kennington Park Keeper’s Lodge, extensively transforming the unused garden and carving out new growing beds: planting fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers in 2008. A large timber ‘Bee Barn’ has been built to house an educational resource for beekeeping demonstrations and training sessions. The site is open to the public for events and open-access sessions.

The Subterranea project began in March 2012, converting four garages and a utility building into usable space for workshops on gardening, bicycle repair, beekeeping, painting, carpentry and plumbing. The space has also been enhanced by ten large raised beds for growing fruit, vegetables and herbs.

Bee Urban’s environmental projects engage people from all walks of life to develop unused areas in South London for learning and growing hubs. Vital links are established within the community and people are introduced to nature on their doorstep that is often overlooked.

The Keeper’s Lodge Project and Camberwell Subterranea was awarded a Runner Up prize of £500.
Spitalfields Crypt Trust
Reclaiming land, rebuilding lives

Spitalfields Crypt Trust’s Reclaiming land, rebuilding lives scheme enables people in recovery to create a beautiful garden space in an inner London churchyard, reaping benefits for themselves and others while building links with the local community.

Gardening sessions instruct students on horticulture and are run two days per week. The patience required in planting and maintenance is a powerful metaphor for the patience and time needed for recovery in their own lives; working for something that will last and that has a future.

The students, most of whom have been homeless, develop self-esteem and independence, providing the opportunity to get back to work through a range of courses that also fit within Spitalfields Crypt Trust’s complete recovery pathway – ‘from a sleeping bag to a job’.

The Reclaiming land, rebuilding lives project was awarded a Highly Commended Entry prize of £250.
Forty Hall Community Vineyard Ltd
Vineyard Volunteering for All

Forty Hall Community Vineyard is a community-led social enterprise based on a beautiful organic farm in Enfield. The farm is accessible by public transport and is only a short bus ride from built-up areas of high deprivation.

The vineyard, which was first funded in 2010 and now has ten acres of land under vine, is London’s only commercial-scale vineyard and the UK’s only community-led vineyard. The project supports under-represented and vulnerable communities to get involved in volunteering. Participants have benefitted from improved psychological and physical health and well-being, improved communication and vocational skills as well as greater employability.

Vineyard Volunteering for All was awarded a Highly Commended Entry prize of £250.
Ripple Primary School
Outdoor Classroom and Nature Garden

Ripple Primary School’s Outdoor Classroom and Nature Garden project has been developed from an unused wasteland area and transformed into a thriving resource that gives children the opportunity to learn about the wildlife that is on their doorstep. After-school clubs take place in this area, giving children the opportunity to learn about gardening and nature. Teachers also use the area to help calm distressed and upset children. The therapeutic surroundings are peaceful and offer an escape from the familiar boundaries of the classroom. The area has nurtured an enthusiasm for nature in many students and has helped to ignite what could well be a lifetime passion – and even a future career.

The Outdoor Classroom and Nature Garden was awarded a Highly Commended Entry prize of £250.
Ten good reasons to support environmental projects

01 Green spaces bring people together. Shared outdoor projects provide space for people to forge new relationships and to strengthen pre-existing ones, encouraging social confidence and reducing social exclusion.

02 Gardeners get to do everything from pleasant gentle exercise to strenuous physical work thereby improving physical well-being and health.

03 Outdoor activities attract a wide range of people who may not be drawn to more traditional ways of working, allowing a wide range of people to develop new skills, confidence and qualifications.

04 The benefits of horticultural projects are far reaching. Participants may enjoy specialist benefits, while the whole community gains from the transformation of the area.

05 Participating in environmental projects allows people to be part of ‘something bigger’ and long-lasting, which provides a positive sense of perspective.

06 Participation in gardening projects can encourage the reduction of stigma and isolation, and redress negative perceptions, through engaging in a shared or highly-visible positive activity.

07 Organisation of green space projects can come from anywhere, and successful participation is accessible at all levels, from enjoying a transformed space or its produce to cultivating the land and educating local residents.

08 Environmental projects allow participants to experience the benefit of stepping back from normal routines and environments, ‘clearing your head’ and taking more time for yourself.

09 Horticultural projects work with structured methods and clearly defined aims, which is very welcome for people whose lives may be unfocused, chaotic or not stimulating.

10 Outdoor environmental activities for children support confidence, skills and health, and go a long way towards protecting the natural environment for future generations by ensuring it is understood, respected and enjoyed today.