

10/03/2023

WCGN - a way forward

Following informal discussions by some steering group members, here are some potential scenarios being put forward for discussion with the wider membership:

Option A - Stay as we are/grow the organisation

Continue fundraising, and delivery of centrally organised activities. Continue with formal structure - (non-profit company limited by guarantee), directors, elected officers, paid coordinator.

Recruit a replacement paid coordinator (1 or 2 days per week) and increase efforts to revive the network, and the voluntary administrative structure to make it viable.

We estimate this option would need five new network members to offer ten hours a month each to support. If this were forthcoming, some current steering group members would be very happy to support handover to new members, but would then step away.

Option B - Transition to a decentralised network

Transition to a decentralised, unfunded model, and reduced structure. A network, not an organisation.

Our early thinking of what this could look like:

- A change in our network culture, emphasising the value of decentralised structure, and clear communication about this.
- Maintain existing WhatsApp Group & basic website.
- Secure a minimum commitment from network members i.e. members commit to inviting members to their garden once a year;
- Retain option for members to collectively organise a central WCGN event, if members want to. Some years this may not happen, and that would be ok.
- Retain option to fund a central WCGN event through support from a lead garden or TRA.

Some other suggested variations to this model include:

Use the existing funding:

-to support a time-limited period of engagement with new gardens, and to support transition to this new unfunded model.

-to adapt the visual identity and existing website in keeping with the new model.

-to develop resources to cover the things that our members are always looking for such as How To guides.

Website options:

-website could state what we do, and how to connect with the network, but not create the impression/expectation that it is regularly updated.

-website could be updated by occasional posts by member gardens, or by linking to a social media channel.

-investigate use of a messaging app that allows for archiving and searching of useful chat discussions for future use.

If occasional funding was still thought to be required:

-investigate accessing LBS GiG funding (£5k instalments), with GiG funding potentially administered by an existing TRA chair & treasurer.

-investigate/request minimal support from Southwark Council that avoids the need for a WCGN administrative function.

Option C - Call it a day

Stop now. Simply continue with a WhatsApp group and the relationships that have been developed. All current assets of WCGN could be transferred to a like-for-like local non-profit organisation. Return of funding where needed. Perhaps hold a final get-together to celebrate successes?

Option D - WCGN hosted/run by a bigger organisation

Ask a local charity organisation to run the network e.g. Glengall Wharf / Walworth Garden. (No one yet has said they think this is a good idea!)

We look forward to discussing these, at a meeting on Tuesday 21st March 7.30
link:

Best

Olivia, Richard and Debbie, Tom