

ARENA DESIGN CENTRE

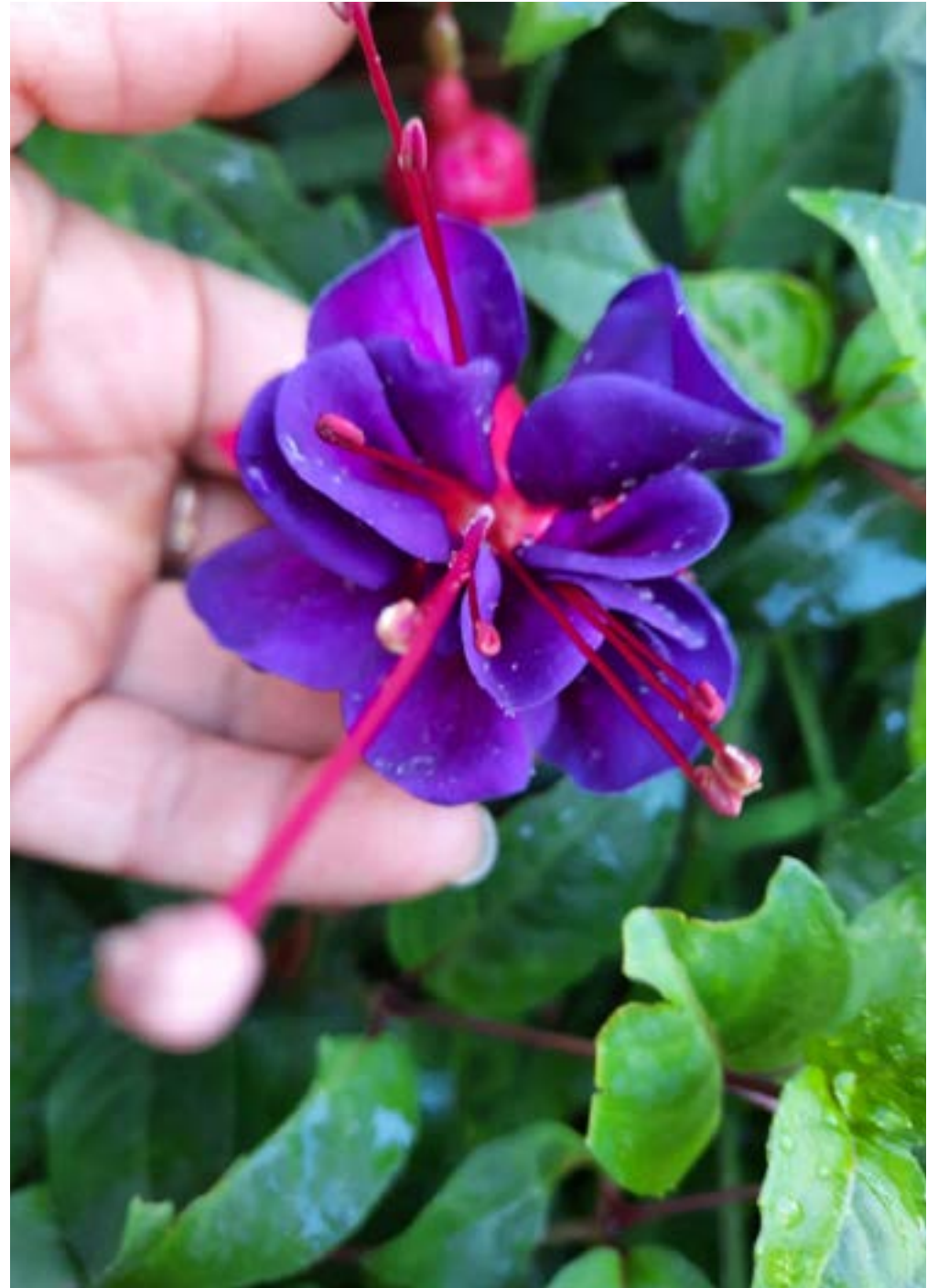
Gardening & Recreation Spaces



The objective of this Presentation
is to let the wider
community know about The
Garden Project and inspire
future possibilities.







How it started...

Rebecca, Jamie, Tom and Natali discussed a way to stop the area from becoming a PARKING SPACE after the removal of a big trampoline, plants and rubbish.

- Nicknamed THE APOLCALYPTIC PLAYGROUND

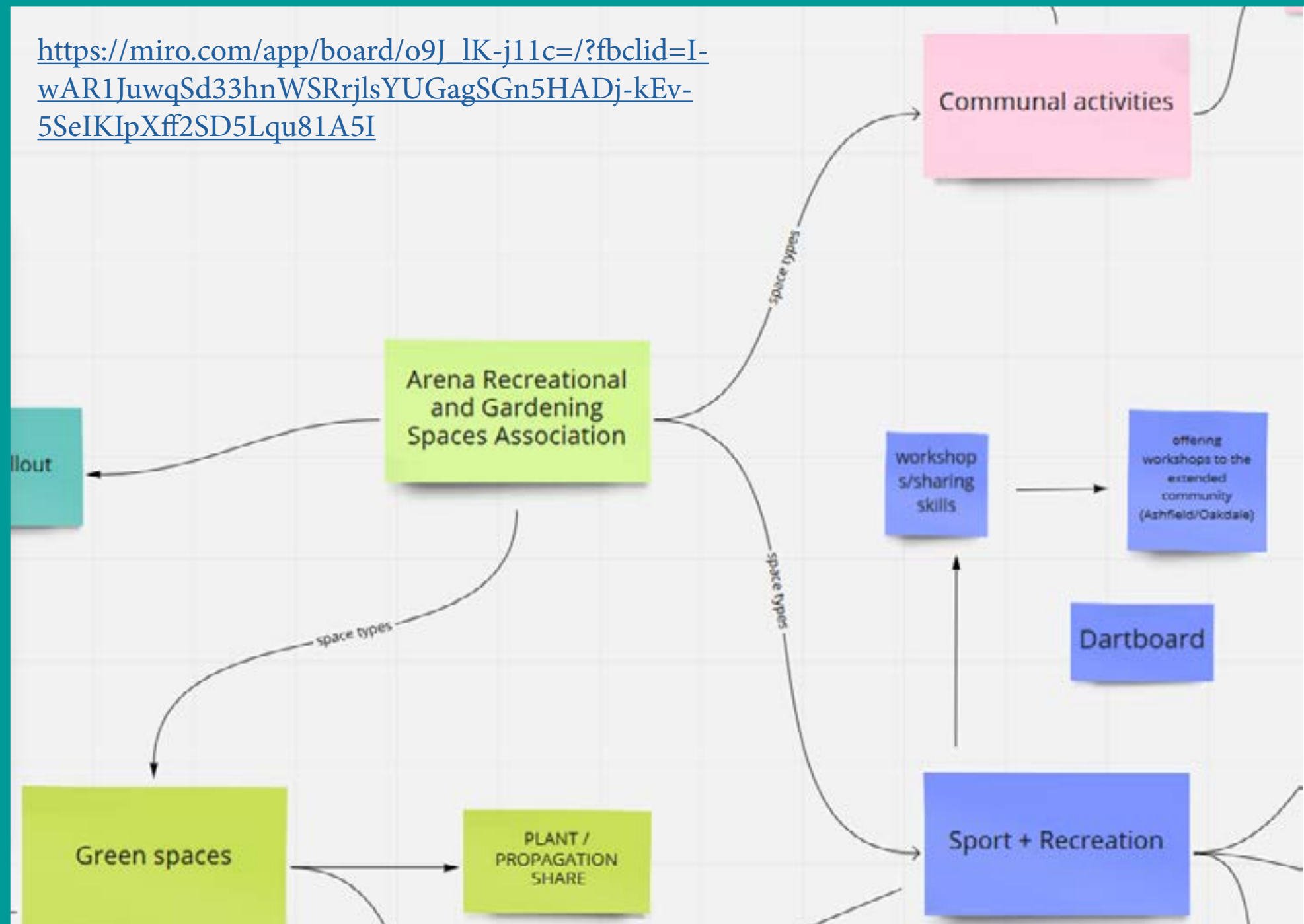
A BOTTOMS UP, GRASS ROOTS approach was decided,
A FACEBOOK GROUP was set up, residents were invited and we spread the word knocking on doors with flyers.

After receiving over 60 requests to join
the group the first
consultation was created.

We asked....

“What would you like to have
in the space?”

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Residents expressed a desire for Playful recreational and gardening activities.

We launched the first community weekend (Spring) There was a big support to the Project bringing people together to share skills, build, donate plants and materials.

We kicked off the weekend by getting organised to build benches and planters out of 100% recycled wood and palettes.

There was a footfall of over 40 people who participated for different lengths of times and with various tasks, not just making but cooking, taking photographs, dj ing, showing up, tidying up and cleaning.





















The second Community Weekend

(Summer) was organised through word of mouth, flyers, posters, FACEBOOK groups, and knocking at doors.

This time we wanted to get fertile soil ready for the plants that were growing, for more planting, including edibles, and more medicinal herbs.























This one was difficult

because there was **covid** in Arena

...and we asked the units with cases not to show up, Plus people were on holidays, however had a footfall of **17 people**, which raise up to **30+** in the evening when residents decided to put a turn up and watch the final football match there.



The Garden brought people together

over a healthy, sober activity and left an invitation for people to hang out in the space, do gardening, chill out, time for solitude as well as to socialise in an outdoor, neutral space, building community bonding.

Currently The Garden needs to
get ready for winter

cleaning, pruning, clearing, planting winter veggies.

Though people don't fancy gardening
in the cold and dark.

The Project has run entirely
on a voluntary basis.







We believe The Garden as a Potential to become a Permaculture landmark of the Warehouse District, a sustainable hub from clean crops and cultivation to Permaculture building (Greenhouses, chill out roofed areas), water and other resources recycling.

A Place to learn about hands on-sustainable-urban living.

It's important to work on the Playground element as well. Really, the vision is found on the Vision board (Miro). We would like people to use the space in constructive, playful and nourishing ways and a place to support the residents do strengthen their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Strength and weaknesses of the Project

Strengths

- Offered a space to meet local human needs of community, interaction, attention, movement, time in nature, rapport, achievement, breathing and human connection.
- We worked with a sustainable and ecological approach, using recycled materials, donated materials, donated plants, clean soil and organic soil cultivation.
- Brought natural life to Arena, over 11 medicinal plants, over 40 types of ornamental flowering pollinator plants who brought bees, beetles, butterflies, moths and a diversity of insects (we even had a bee hive!), rescued over 10 bamboos, various type of grasses and 2 trees.
- In this Oasis people found time to spend safe time outdoors, time on their own; morning coffees, reading, chatting to neighbours etc
- We mainly managed to keep sound levels very low (not amps, no parties, no gatherings after 10/11 PM)
- Community initiatives: various residents took on organising some fun things: movie nights, yoga, bonfires, gardening, etc.
- Wider local gardening groups networking: Finsbury Park Community Garden, Growing in Haringey, Stamford Hill State Gardens. This and other local bodies supported the project on a voluntary basis. This meant a strengthening of the community network over wellbeing activities.

Weaknesses

- The fact there was no funding at all meant we relied on people's will and spare times (e.g. people were more up for it over the spring, more up for travelling over the summer, not so much available over autumn).
- Some people in the back units reported not feeling that was a communal garden because mainly people from the front units were using the space.
- Moving forward with the results of our consultation in mind means accessing more resources (funding/support). This means stepping into a bureaucratic field the core group was not up to deal with on the first place.
- Some residents felt limited in their desired to use of the space due to the sound level restriction (e.g. barbecue, shows, more cinema nights, etc)
- The pile of wood became messier and messier as residents started to use it as a DIY dumping corner. : (
- Communication management-core group-management was not fluid. Management accepted to have the first community weekend but later became more critical of the project.