

European Local Democracy Week 2017
9th - 15th October 2017

“Launched in 2007 to foster citizen participation and promote democracy at the level closest to the citizens, the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) celebrates its 10th anniversary this year – officially between 9 and 15 October 2017. On this special occasion, local and regional authorities of Europe and their associations are encouraged to organise participatory events to celebrate local democracy, as a shared value across the European continent.

More than 1000 local authorities and their associations from the 47 Council of Europe member states and beyond have participated in this pan-European voluntary initiative since its creation, having organised a large variety of activities to meet and engage with their citizens.....”

The subject for 2017 is: ***Citizen participation, consultation and commitment: for a thriving local democracy.***

The Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux took part in 2015 and 2016. Again this Year it chose 3 meriting examples, the description of which you can read below.

A win-win situation for all

MENTALLY HANDICAPPED AND ALLOTMENT GARDENERS – AN EXAMPLE FROM THE GARDEN ASSOCIATION OTV – LEIDEN (NL)

OTV is a garden association with their site in the middle of the Oostvlietpolder in Leiden. Four years ago the garden site was expanded with 83 new garden and public green that was intended as ecological zone by the city of Leiden. The public parts were maintained by the association.

One of the association members works in an institution for the mentally handicapped.

The so called care farm of the institution was looking for daily activities for their clients. They asked if OTV could play a role in the daily activities.

Two years ago OTV started a project. They involved the clients of the care farm in the regular maintenance of the public parts of their garden site. This is a win – win situation for all. Meaningful daily activities for the clients of the care farm and the volunteers of the garden association can focus on others jobs.

A permanent team of 4 members of the garden association guide at turn the group of girls and boys of the care farm. They start with a few hours of work and after that enjoy coffee and cookies in the clubhouse.

For the clients of the care farm this is at last an opportunity to work in the real world and not just stay at the care farm. They do work that helps others, they enjoy it and they are appreciated for their work.



Thanks to the city of Leiden the members of the association can practice their hobby in a beautiful place in Leiden under favourable conditions. OTV finds it more the normal that they give something back to society.

The certificate of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux was given to the allotment association OTV in Leiden on 26th August 2017. This project was chosen for the European Local Democracy Week 2017 as an example on how to strengthen the sense of mutual responsibility between citizens, elected representatives and their communities and on how to develop exchanges between citizens.

The International Office du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux, by the remittance of this certificate and the publicity made on local, regional, national and international level, wants to give a European dimension to this project highlighting the “Citizen’s participation and commitment for local democracy.”



Certificate

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This certificate is awarded by the
Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux a.s.b.l.
during the European Week for Local Democracy to the association

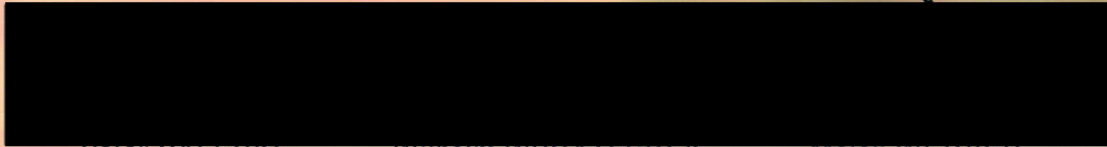
OTV
in Leiden, the Netherlands

for their engagement in community life.

This project is an example on how to
stimulate the allotment gardeners
all over Europe to strengthen the sense of mutual responsibility between
citizens, elected representatives and their communities.

This diploma aims at sensitizing the authorities to promote
a participative culture and at stimulating the population and other allotment
gardeners to develop exchanges between citizens.

Leiden, August 2017



Peter PASCHKE
President

Wilhelm WOHATSCHER
Chairman of the executive board

Malou WEIRICH
Secretary General

Local authorities: for and with the citizens

PROJECT: CONNECTION FROM GARDEN ASSOCIATION MARIAHOEVE IN THE HAGUE (NL) TERMINATED

The quality of the water surrounding and on the garden park worsened. This was strange as the ditches are in direct contact with the ecological connection zone *De Schenk*, a connection zone, which the city of The Hague speaks proudly of.

After intensive research the association discovered that there was a connection terminated in the ecological connection zone. A dam was built during major roadworks. After the work was completed the dam was not removed although everyone was under the impression that there was a new connection between the areas. There was no stream flow and nothing alive in the water.



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The association reported their findings by telephone, by mail and through a web

form to the authorities. There was no response.

Then the association took the initiative, wrote a thorough report and presented their conclusions to the water authority. This time there was a response and after the necessary discussions the water authority took action, changed the dam into a stop log (klepstuw) that fish can pass.

This story started in 2013 and the new movable dam was finished in January 2017. The result, the quality of the water has already improved significantly and the fish is back.



Thanks to the persistence of a group of citizens of The Hague, who helped local authority to understand and solve a problem:

- The water quality not just in and around the garden site but in the whole neighbourhood improved significantly;
- Since many years there is fish swimming again in the waters surrounding the garden site;
- There was a cooperation between the water authority, city of The Hague and the garden association Mariahoeve;
- A water covenant was concluded between the garden association and the city of The Hague;
- Excellent cooperation with the city of The Hague: local authorities for the citizens of The Hague, but also together with them.

The certificate of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux will be granted on October 11th, 2017 to the association Mariahoeve. Representatives from the municipality and the regional water authorities will attend the ceremony. This project has been chosen as an example for how to promote a participative culture by engaging citizens in community life and so to enhance the quality and intensity of citizens' participation in local affairs.

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Mariahoeve
in the Hague, the Netherlands

for their engagement in community life and in local politics.

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stimulate the allotment gardeners
all over Europe to enhance the quality and intensity of citizens'
participation in local affairs.

This diploma aims at sensitizing the authorities to promote
a participative culture and at stimulating the population and other allotment
gardeners to act in the same way.

The Hague October 2017

Peter PASCHKE
President

Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK
Chairman of the executive board

Malou WEIRICH
Secretary General

Allotment gardeners, the local authorities and partners work together for a more inclusive society



Wilderness Allotments Association in Porthcawl, South Wales, has been working for several years in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and their agents - Trinity Care and Support to deliver an award-winning Grow Your Own Club for adults and young people with mental, physical and learning disabilities. A plot on the site was adapted with the help of

corporate organisations keen to widen participation and inclusivity within the community - Wates Living Space, A Plant, Travis Perkins and The Construction Training Centre; the local authority also provided financial support. The enthusiastic teams from the community undertook various tasks including site clearance, laying paving slabs, erection of a perimeter screen and renovation of raised beds; other volunteers from the association support the project on an ongoing basis. The community energy involved in the disabled allotment projects has been harnessed and now underpins regular general Woodland Management volunteer activities in the wider Wilderness allotments area led by the local authorities (BCBC) and Parks and Keep Wales Tidy. These have included planting native tree whips, coppicing, removing ivy, hurdle-making, bird-box making and tree-felling.

Another added bonus has been that the Trinity Care staff, carers and volunteers have also found the activities therapeutic and look forward to their visits. The project has been led by an inspirational volunteer co-ordinator who has really enthused the gardening club members (who have severe learning and physical disabilities) and shown them how to plant, cultivate and harvest in accordance with environmentally sustainable and organic gardening principles.



Gardening in this way has diversified the flora and fauna we used to have on what might be described as a "traditional" allotment with an unnecessarily

heavy reliance on pesticides and herbicides. They now grow over 24 different crops, and then go on to cook up the produce for a luncheon club, as well as selling chutneys and pickles.

'The club has opened up the world of growing, tending, cultivating and cooking up produce to individuals who would never contemplate an allotment', said Wilderness Allotment Association Chairman David Rowe.

'The fact that we have severely disabled individuals on the site has been a two-way success story,' Dave added. 'For the disabled, exercise, fresh air, learning about gardening, harvesting and cooking their own produce; for the community generally, having our views about the limitations of disability challenged in a gentle way.'



Club members have a 40-minute return walk from their base in town to the allotment. 'By any indicator - carbon-footprint, food miles, costs, etc - the project has been tremendously successful,' David also said. 'But the biggest achievement has been the simple pleasure of growing and cooking.'

The Wilderness Allotments Association in Porthcawl, South Wales now received a second Green Flag Community Award.

The Green Flag Community Award is the benchmark for parks and green spaces which are managed by volunteers; an indication that the site is an exceptional place with the highest standards. Wilderness Allotments have won this award for the second year running thanks to the improvement strategy that has been in place since 2012. Over the past few years, they have created a disabled plot with raised beds, incorporated disused land (a fly-tipping area), created a disabled car-park and laid water mains. David Rowe, Allotment Committee Chairman, said that his vision is to make the Wilderness Allotments open & welcoming to all. The next stage in this journey is to build a disabled toilet that will benefit everyone on the site.

The certificate of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux will be given to the Wilderness allotment association in Porthcawl, South Wales on October 9th 2017 for their engagement in community life. This

project was chosen for the European Local Democracy Week 2017 as an example on how to strengthen the sense of mutual responsibility between citizens, elected representatives and their communities for a more inclusive society.



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Wilderness
Allotments Association
Porthcawl, South Wales, Great Britain

for their engagement in community life.

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to strengthen the sense of mutual responsibility between citizens,
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Porthcawl October 31st 2017



Peter PASCHKE
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