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Lindsay C's Story

A Baptist Regional Minister named Lindsay C. moved into Portishead and wondered how she could bless the town in which she was now living. She thought that speaking to the local doctors' surgery might be helpful - surgeries always know lots about their community! The surgery Practice Manager told Lindsay how she and the Partners had wanted to use their surgery's land as a community garden for social-prescribing (social-prescribing is when health professionals refer to non-clinical services in the community). Evidence suggests that such prescribing can improve the health and wellbeing of many, including but not restricted to older people, those who are lonely and those struggling with mental or emotional health issues. The surgery had no-one who could cultivate such a garden or be a regular presence within it, so Lindsay was asked whether she could help. Lindsay went away and considered and pondered and prayed.

A few weeks later, for various unconnected reasons, Lindsay met up with another Lindsay (Lindsay S). Lindsay S had grown up in the town. As the two Lindsays' shared a pot of tea and conversation, Lindsay S spoke about how she felt called to train for ministry, but also to stay within the town. She then mentioned something about how she was horticulturally trained and loved gardening. Meanwhile Lindsay C's brain cells were doing somersaults. What was God doing?

Lindsay C took Lindsay S to the plot of land and explained the conversation that she had had with the surgery.....and there was an immediate feeling of 'rightness.' Lindsay C contacted the surgery again and soon plans started to develop.

In the meantime, Lindsay S had been accepted to train as a Deacon Pioneer within the Church of England and it was agreed that this 'garden project' could form the practical part of her placement, a placement that would be overseen by Lindsay C (whose specialism is pioneering and new forms of church). It is wonderful how God works across denominational boundaries! Things are obviously at the very early stages.

Agreements are being drafted, a simple organisation being set up and interested businesses being invited to think together about how 'The Garden' can best be owned by and serve the community.

Lindsay S's Story

In these early stages “The garden ” feels strangely safe, it’s undulated from the reality of growth and failure. It’s like a pregnancy that’s yet to be formally announced. It’s considered the social norm to keep these hopes and dreams between a few trusted people Sharing the story of garden so early seems risky. It adds to its vulnerability.

“The garden” will be an imperfect community garden with Jesus at its centre. A place of Shalom, offering peace, wholeness and harmonious growth. This ecumenical project will transform a large piece of land which is attached to the doctor’s surgery into a garden.

This unique project will work along professionals to provide a self-prescribing garden that has Jesus at the centre. Our journey in the garden is just beginning but it’s been so obvious that God is ahead of us on this project.

If we could measure the garden on the wow moments, the moments in which we feel God’s presence then we are doing something right. Before we even dig the soil, the joy and knowledge gained from of the garden’s gestation will always be part of the gardens story.

The story of the garden will hold and intertwine the stories of all those that journey though the garden. Each story as valuable as another each encounter with the storyteller a precious moment in time. We see this garden as an expression of church, an imperfect garden that will be open to gardeners and non-gardeners. A place where not everything will grow, some of the things we plant will not flourish. Some of the ideas that we try might never flourish too. But that’s ok we will sow and retry. Our Jesus centred garden will benefit the community offering Shalom to all those



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