

# Streetscape: Our Closing Message

At the end of 2017, due to financial difficulties that we had been proactively attempting to tackle for some time, we made the heart-wrenching decision as a board to wind down Streetscape. Over seven successful years, we remained resolutely true to our core purpose: to enable 18-25-year-olds who were long term unemployed (>6 months) and would find it difficult to find employment in any job market, strong or weak, to move into and sustain work. We did so by providing rigorous year-long apprenticeships in landscape gardening.

We transformed lives thanks to the support of our donors, staff, customers, friends, family and the local communities in which we worked.

You can read more about the rationale for the decision to close in our Annual Report and Accounts 2017 [here](#). However, we thought we'd provide a few highlights of the journey below:



2010

A pilot project was completed at Stepney City Farm with three unemployed young people, where we designed and built the farm's entrance garden with a donation of £17,000. We concluded with a summary report, in which we

outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot project.

2011

The pilot project showed promise. James quit his job, Guy went part-time, and Streetscape was set up as a registered charity. Our first landscape trainer, Luke, was recruited. He managed and trained our first two apprentices, Jerone and Jordan.

2012

Jerone and Jordan both completed their apprenticeships and progressed into work - a big proof of concept for our model! Now based at the inspirational Myatt's Field Park, we expanded to two landscape/maintenance teams, providing apprenticeships to four young people at a time.

2013

Four more young people graduate and move into work, as we seek to strengthen our apprenticeships through the introduction of industry-influenced 'Skills Tests' for the first time. We win a Silver-Gilt medal as a contractor to *The Garden Pad* at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and build the *RHS Product of the Year Stand* at RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

2014

We take on our first two female apprentices as we grow from two to three teams (two landscape, one maintenance), providing up to nine apprenticeships a year. Trade income hits £345k for the year, pointing (we thought!) to strong future sustainability. We rebuild the Gold-medal winning *RBC Waterscapes Garden* (Hugo Bugg) at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens and win a Silver-Gilt medal at RHS Chelsea as the lead contractor for the *Perennial Garden*.

2015

Our first female apprentice, Cheyenne, graduates and is accepted onto a prestigious two-year apprenticeship at Kew Gardens. Another recent graduate, Eli, is already Team Leader at his place of work. We are profiled by Lambeth Council in their 'Do the Right Thing' campaign - with such dubious privileges as appearing on the side of dustcarts! Jay Osman is promoted to CEO as James moves to Sierra Leone.

2016

Our total number of graduates hits 16 by the end of the year, with 14 remaining

in work. We build three high-profile on-street gardens/spaces for Southwark Council and win a Silver medal at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, for the first time as the sole contractor for *Streetscape's Summer in Sussex* (Will Williams). John Anderson takes over as CEO.

## 2017

Financial pressures began to bite in 2016, but we continue to provide up to ten apprenticeships at a time as we seek to grow trade and philanthropic income. The incredibly sad decision to close is lightened a little by the inspiring response of our apprentices, eight of whom secure employment/further education during a period of managed wind down. Any funds remaining at dissolution will be distributed to other charities showing high impact in supporting unemployed young people to move into and sustain work.



Our overall achievements are summarised below:

### Recruitment Days

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Number of Recruitment Days Run | 65  |
| Number of Attendees            | 285 |



**Number of Apprenticeships Offered** 54

**Apprenticeships** **Number of Young People**

Apprenticeships Offered 54

Passed 3-Month Probation Period 38

Graduated (+ secured positive destination  
on early exit due to closure) 18 (+7) = 25

**Sustained employment following  
graduation (12-month check-in, inc.  
self-employed, or on track to do  
so)** **16**



A perennial challenge was retention. However, what these statistics show clearly is that **Streetscape's apprenticeships worked**: of those who graduated, 88% remained in work after 12 months.

Many thanks from all of our board to everyone who joined us on this tough but

rewarding journey. We were often told it was impossible to train apprentices from tough backgrounds and deliver high quality design and build gardens. The more people that told us this, the more determined we were to prove them wrong.

**If Streetscape has taught us anything, it's that you can achieve anything if you really want it** - with hard work, passion and determination. Of course, it's sad to see the end of Streetscape, but the overwhelming support we have received during the wind down period is evidence that the spirit of Streetscape will live on.

We encourage others to follow the example of our trustee, Angus Cunningham, CEO of Scotscape, by setting up their own apprenticeship schemes to provide meaningful opportunities to inspire and help young people to grow careers in this great industry.

You can stay in touch with us through [guy@architecturalplants.com](mailto:guy@architecturalplants.com) or [jdgubb@gmail.com](mailto:jdgubb@gmail.com). Guy is now Managing Director at Architectural Plants, Sussex ([www.architecturalplants.com](http://www.architecturalplants.com)) and would welcome a visit from any friends of Streetscape.

Best wishes

Guy Watts & James Gubb  
Co-founders

