Company Drinks

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March 2023

1. About Company Drinks

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Company Drinks is a community space and social enterprise based in Barking and Dagenham, where we make drinks with and for each other.

Company Drinks started out in 2014 to bring people back together through the act of picking and reconnecting with local green spaces and nearby countryside.

Company Drinks is now a co-working space and an expanding network of users, collaborators and partners, who come together to pick, grow, make, learn, unlock and share the resources and knowledge around us.

Like the seasons, Company Drinks changes and adapts, and is shaped by those who are involved. We collaborate and champion the ideas of those around us, encourage each other to re-imagine new ways of working, trading and existing together, through conversation, care and good company.

Company Drinks was set up in as an art commission, and registered as a Community Interest Company in 2015.

We see ourselves as part of a larger community-focused ecosystem of care, that strives for an equal, just and non-discriminatory world.

Where does “going picking” come from?

Most east Londoners born before the 1950s know about ‘going picking’and associate it with going down to Kent to pick berries, apples, and most famously, hops. “Going Picking” or “Hopping” stands for the annual mass exodus of families – mainly women and children – to Kent to make some extra money from fruit and hop picking.

A lot has changed since these hopping days.
The geographies and demographis of east London have shifted dramatically, resulting in less clear divisions between city and countryside and a much more diverse population. Fruit and hops are still grown in Kent but are either machine picked or harvested by seasonal workers who now predominantly come from Eastern Europe.

Company Drinks invitation to go picking again is as much a reflection of the past, as it is a suggestion to do something together, that unites many of us: memories and knowledges of nature, food and community.

The way we work

Company Drinks exists since 2014, and we are organised in a circular way. We move with the seaons and each step of **Company Drinks' Cycle** is open to others to join. Groups and individuals join for a one-off activity or for a particular project, and can also get more permanently involved as keyholders or part-time members of the team.

Company Drinks is registered as a Community Interest Company, and **we are organised in a cooperative manner**. Each programme strand is looked after by a part-time member of the team. Our strands are:

- **Growing, Herbalism and Well-Being**
- **Picking and Trips**
- **Making Together: Food, Drinks and Politics**
- **Families and Young People**
- **Heritage and Social History**
- **Community Economies and Art**
- **Sharing and Tending our Home**

The **current team members**, their roles and days per week are

- Cam Jarvis (3days/week), Lead: Community Food and Keyholder Programmes. Plus: communication, programme coordination.
- Shaun Tuck (3days/week), Lead: Grow Club, Herbalism, Drinks Production. Plus: Trips, Growing Networks.
- Walt Hall (2days/week), Lead: General Management, Policies, Finance
- Kathrin Böhm (1 day/week) Lead: Community Economies and Art, Plus: admin, governance, coordination

Regular Project Leads

- Grace Duggan: Summer Programme Schools (HAF)
- Martin Osman: Wild and Well
- Pip Field: Happy Hoppers, Thursday Group

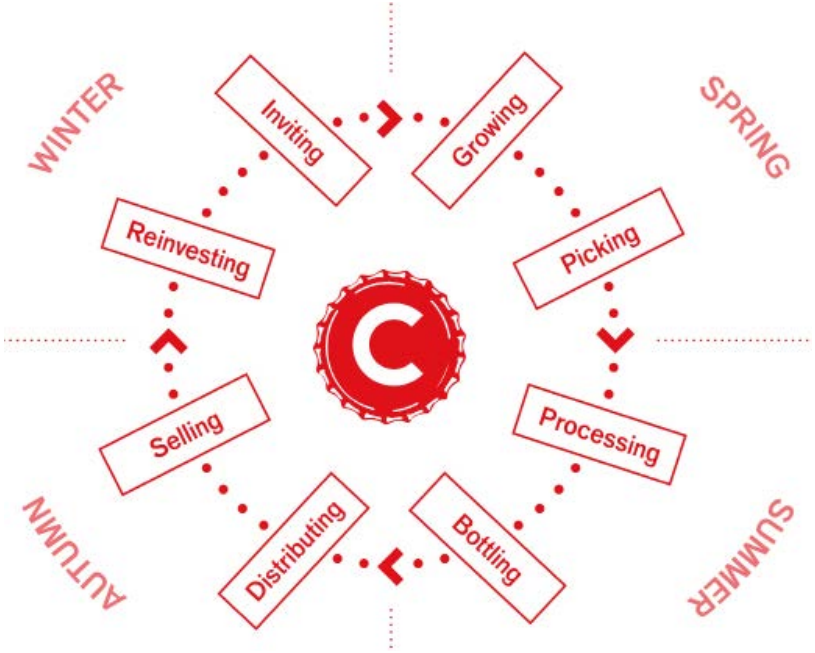


Image: The initial Company Drinks circular concept (2014) of making drinks for and with each other. Each step of the production process is open to groups and individuals.

In 2023 we do not focus on communal drinks making anymore, but on sharing resources in general. The seasonal and circular focus - with community making in the centre - remains.

COMPANY DRINKS SET OF VALUES

Be inclusive, our space and workshops are accessible to all, and we welcome everyone.

Be transparent, we are open and visible with the inner workings of how we run things.

Be anti – oppression, we are supportive of all marginalised groups, whether this affects race, age, sexual orientation or ability.

Give more than we take – we want people to leave us with more than they came to us with, this could be knowledge, food, drink or social interaction.

We are all teachers and learners – and respect everyone's knowledge.

Being flexible – to change, we want to learn and grow as a community company and are open to changes to help us grow.

Promote positive community collaboration – we want people to work together collaboratively and in supportive environments.

Sharing healthy food and growing knowledge, giving people information and hand-on opportunities for healthier food choices.

Practice an economy that cares about the well-being of our minds, bodies and planet.

Currently being reviewed with all regular user and Keyholder groups (March 2023)

How are we organised?

Company Drinks is a Community Interest Company (CIC).
The year round programme is led and organised by a team of paid part- timers: the **Company Drinks Team**.
We work co-operatively with no managerial hierarchies, and identify clear competences, responsibilities and interest for each team member. We have weekly team meetings for ongoing activities, and monthly meetings are used to co-ordinate and cross-fertilise programmes, and to make decisions on organisational matters, such as policies, procedures, building work, etc.

A **Keyholder Steering Group** started in early 2022, a group of artists, gardeners, volunteers, creatives, makers and organisers who run their own community activities at our pavilion and garden. Every 6 weeks we're meeting up to talk about what people are up to, find ways of working together and accessing and sharing resoucrdes together, such as funding, knwoledge, training, networks, etc.

The **Company Drinks Board** is a statuatory element, and members meet four times a year. The current board is in transition and has currently three directors who organise the changes. Until now 50% member of the board ('directors") have been from LBBD. The board is open to team members.

Company Drinks Team

- facilitates regular programmes
- special projects
- organises admin and governance
- supports regular groups
- looks after the site

- equal pay £16.50/hour for everyone
- meets weely & monthly
- works co-operatively

Company Drinks Board

supports & complements the Team

- unpaid/paid
- meets quarterly
- legal body
- currently 3 members (volunteers and team members)

Keyholder Steering Group

- regular users of the site
- weekly use
- have keys

- paid £16.50/hour
for Keyholder Steering Group Meetings/activities
- meets bi-monthly
- sharing resources

Organisational Transparency

Company Drinks has issued an Anti Racism Action Plan, with the aim of making our processes and decisions transparent, and being held accountable. In line with this new accountability we will communicate structural and organisational decisions, such as appointing new team members. In accordance with new colleagues, and in respect of everyone's privacy and right to self-representation, we agree on a short statement that explains the new appointment.

Recruitment Policy for the Team and Board

Company Drinks wants the team and board to reflect the diversity of the communities we work with. We recognise that Company Drinks and the growing/craft food industry does not currently represent the population of the UK, and more specifically, that of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and we are committed to addressing this in our recruitment process. We encourage applications from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, disabled and LGBT background as they are underrepresented in the team.

Our Home in Barking Park

We took on the former Outdoor Bowling Pavilion in Barking Park in September 2017 and the location and size of building are perfect for us.

Our ‘Club Room’ can host up to 60 people and is used for everything from community lunches, to workshops, socials and learning and discussion events.

The Making and Training Kitchen is used for family and kids’ workshops (up to 20 people), and we have recently moved our cordial production here.

We have sufficient storage for our drinks and tools, and a small team office.

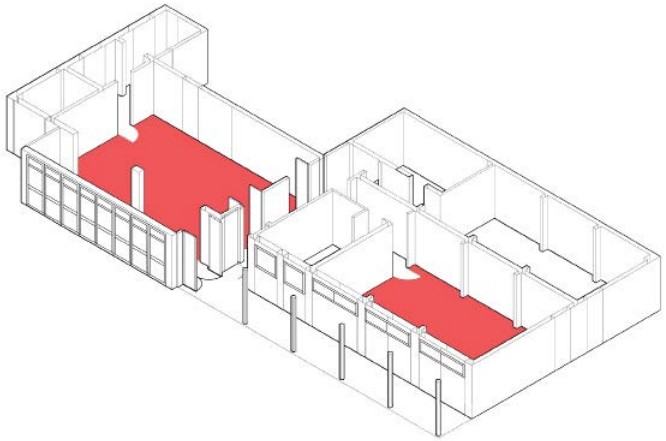
The large and fully enclosed outdoor space has a community growing area, wild flower meadow areas and the former bowling lawn for events and workshops.

We also help look after two community orchards, one in Barking Park and one in Eastbrookend Country Park.

In its first four years Company Drinks was nomadic, which seemed the best way to get to know our home turf, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

Not having a building meant we spent our time exploring spaces and places, making connections, meeting groups, organsations and individuals.

We took on the former Outdoor Bowling Pavilion in Barking Park in September 2017 and the location and size of building and garden are perfect for us.



Images clockwise: Our pavilion with the former bowling green.
Our Club Room and Community Kitchen.
The communal growing area is designed around access and bio-diversity.
Company Drinks is involved in the maintenance of two community orchards in Barking Park and Eastbrookend Country Park.
Smaller satelite growing sites in partnership with other organisations exist across the borough.

Our Code of Conduct

We at Company Drinks want to bring a community of people together to learn, create, grow, and have and share memorable experiences. We understand that “made by many” and “picked together” means bringing together individuals, families and groups with a wide range of cultural and geographic backgrounds, experiences, genders, ages, and abilities. With this may occasionally come prejudices and assumptions that could cause harm in a shared space. Company Drinks acknowledges that systemic racism exists, as do other forms of discrimination, and we want to do our best to make the spaces we work in as safe as possible for everyone to participate.

This Code of Conduct is a guide to how we as staff, volunteers, and as community groups want to be more aware of our own behaviour, and that of others around us. The list will be updated regularly in order to ensure we’re responding to the needs of the wider group. If any of this is unclear to you, or you wish to add to the Code of Conduct, please chat with us separately, we’d love to hear what you think.

We acknowledge that we do not know everything. We want to learn more and grow. We are here to explore our own ideas and each others’ ideas together, and we welcome new perspectives and experiences.

We will listen to each other, and respect that others may think or feel differently to us. If we do not understand something, we will ask questions [not interrogate] and will aim to come to an understanding

Language can be interpreted in many ways, and to make sure everyone is on the same page we will use accessible language to help others understand. We will try to use kinder words, such as “and”, instead of “but”, to respond to something we don’t understand or agree with

Conflict can be helpful if it is constructive and leads to positive changes, but we acknowledge that this process can also cause harm. Sometimes conflicts may have to be raised in a separate, safe space, in order to reduce harm caused to others in the group.

Discrimination and assumptions get us nowhere, and do little to help to bring us together. Before making assumptions and acting on them, we will aim to listen to and learn from each others’ differences, such as race, gender, age and ability.

Compassion is an important skill, and something to be practised whenever possible. We aim to support each other as best we can, championing great ideas and celebrating the different skills we all have, as individuals and as a community.

We believe in the value of making things together for the communal good. We will support and encourage each other to contribute as much or as little as we want; acting in a way that benefits the wider group.

We will treat others in a way that we would like to be treated ourselves, with both our words and actions. This may just mean respecting others, and the time they choose to spend with us, or making sure we don’t talk over anyone.

Boundaries are important for us all to feel safe, and they vary from person to person. We encourage everyone to respect each others’ physical, mental, and emotional boundaries and to remember that some people in the group may have different boundaries to your own.

With this in mind, we also need to respect our own boundaries. We will honour our own abilities and skills, and will acknowledge that we have our limits, to help keep us feeling safe and able to support the group where possible.

2. Main Activity Strands and Groups

Company Drinks started with “going picking” and over the years we developped a broad range of regular activities and programmes, open to everyone with an interest in what we do. Some activities are year round, with a regular group of collaborators and partners, such as the Grow Club, the Happy Hoppers and the Good Food Collective. The on average 6 - 9 Keyholder Groups run a variety of self-organised weekly activities, such as art and crafts, volunteering, well-beeing etc. Other activities are more seasonal and drop-in, such as the picking trips and visits elsewhere.

Regular

- **Growing, Herbalism and Well-Being**
- **Picking and Trips**
- **Making Together: Food, Drinks and Politics**
- **Families Young People**
- **Heritage and Social History**
- **Sharing Tending to our Home**
- **Art and Community Economies**

Digital and Online

- **Our Website listing all weekly activities and blogs for ongoing programmes and themes**
- **Bi-weekly Newsletter and Social Media**
- **Online Activities and Programmes (during Covid 19)**

Occassional

- **Markets and Bars**
- **Socials and Celebrations**
- **Exhibitions**
- **Workshops and Talks**

Growing and Well-Being

Grow Club
Since March 2018

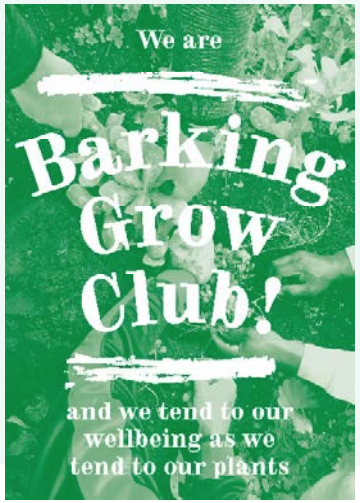
Every Friday
Company Drinks Garden

Who comes?
A weekly club for 12-20 adults, many via mental health support service referrals, and some are accompanied by carers.

Who runs it?
Shaun Tuck

What?
Seasonal growing and gardening activities, maintaining the growing area, with additional well-being activities and herbal tea production.

Other sites:
Community Orchard
Barking Park
and Eastbrookend Country Park



Herbalism and Growing Network
Since March 2021

Project related

Who comes?
Residents with an interest in /knowledge of herbs and how to use them, or with space for growing herbs for the community.

Who runs it?
Shaun Tuck

What?
An informal Community Herbal Network in Barking & Dagenham.

Other sites involved: Plantastic, Kingsley Hall, Valence House Garden, River Roding Trust etc

Family Well&Wild

Weekends and Holidays

Company Drinks Garden and elsewhere

Who comes?
Local families and carers with their children. In addition we offer sign-in HAF programmes for Primaru School children during the school holidays (nature, food, play).

Who runs it?
Martin Osman
Grace Duggan (HAF: Holiday Activity and Food Programme)

What?
Fun and hands-on nature based activities.

Picking and Trips

Picking Trips

When?
2-4 coach trips to working farms in the nearby countryside (Essex, Kent)

Who comes?
Local families, individuals, age range 4-90, sometimes guests.

Who runs it?
Core Team

What?
Day long picking trips to working farms, where we pick and glean summer fruit, mainly currants, cherries and strawberries.

Foraging Walks

April - November, mostly on Saturdays

Who comes?
Local families, individuals, age range 4-90, sometimes external guest, often members from the Grow Club and Thursday Group.

Who runs it?
Shaun Tuck

What?
We forage flowers, herbs and fruit for our cordials and fizzy drinks, respecting nature and the need for birds and bees to feed. The walks also allows us understand and make use of what grows in the places where we live.

Sites: Local parks and open green spaces, community gardens, sometimes outside of the borough.

Trips Elsewhere

April - November
Monthly

Who comes?
Local residents, often members from the Grow Club and Thursday Group.

Who runs it?
Core Team

What?
Afternoons spent visiting community growing projects elsewhere in London, connecting, networking and learning from each other.

Making Drinks and Food to Make Community

Drinks Production
Since 2014

In House Production:
Cordials
Soda in kegs
Juices
Teas

External:
Sodas (bottled) and
beer (one/year)

Who runs it?
Shaun Tuck
(Projuicer)

Good Food Collective
Since February 2020

Who?
Group of mainly women food producers, chefs, growers and educators.

Who runs it?
Currently self-organised

Networking Activities and Events
Bi-annual networking events to connect with other local and London-wide groups and individuals.

Products and Markets
Promoting products made locally, including launching product ranges and running market stalls.

Food Research, Reports and Community Meals

Good Food Plan

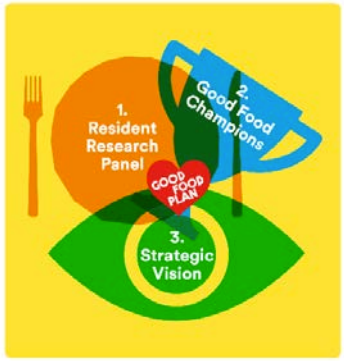
January 2023

Who?

Community-led research into producing a report for LBBD to inform future decisions and policies to coinicide with the three London Food Wholesale Markets moving to Barking.

Who runs it?

Cam Jarvis



Community Meals

Celebrating the rich and diverse food culture of the borough by collecting and sharing recipes, cooking for the community and running communal lunches.

Community Meals are sometimes part of programmes and research, such as the Digesting Politics Lunches.

At other times community lunches are organised during the winther months to offer free warm space and warm food.

Young People Programmes

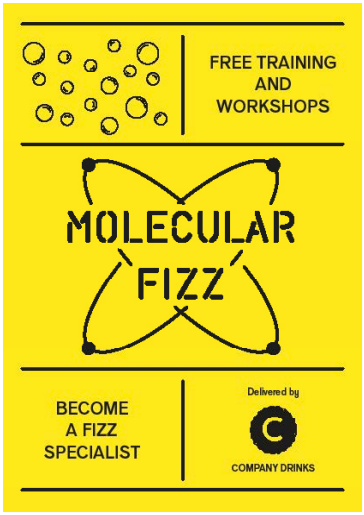
Molecular Fizz

When
First in 2016 (project funding dependent)

Who comes
Children, Young People, College Students

Who runs it?
Cam Jarvis

What?
Hands-on educational and fun activities to understand the production and distribution of soft drinks.



Heritage and Social History

Hopping Afternoons

When
Monthly at Valence House

Who comes
Former Hop Pickers and residents interested in local history

Who runs it?
Pip Field

What?
2 hour long meetings to reminisce about the Hop Picking heritage and Local Social History. Occassional trips locally.

Annual Hop Picking Trip
To Kent in early September, or alternatively at our garden

Community and Social History

When
One-off events - often in partnership - to visit and explore histories that are of relevance to what we do, e.g.

- Day trip in collaboration with Radical Essex to the Plotlands Museum, followed by a panel with historians at the pavilion afterwards

- Foreign Pickers Film and day trip to the Hoppers Hospital in Kent in collaboration with Toby Butler from East London University and Delfina Foundation.

Community Economies and Art

Centre for Plausible Economies

When
Since 2018

Who comes
Researchers, activists, artists and organisations with an interest in alternative economies

Who runs it?
Kathrin Böhm in collaboration with Kuba Szreder (Warsaw based curator and researcher)

What?
A discursive platform and working space for mapping and reimagining economic systems, in the arts and beyond.

Commissioning of artists, workshops, lectures, publications and writing.

In collaboration with the Economy Community Institute (based in Sydney and working internationally) and others.

Fotos: Art as a Drinks Company as a Bar, Space Studios launch event, Ilford / International Mapping Community Economies Workshop with the CERN Network / Trade School with Cam Jarvis and college students.

Digital

Newsletter

When
Weekly during lockdown
Otherise 1-2 per month

What?
- announcements and news
- introducing upcoming activities
- featuring new team members
- celebrating and reffering people to projects WE LOVE
- links to local resources during Covid-19
- publishing poems, artworks and articles
- compiling links to relevant and connected activities elsewhere in the borough

A printed version is available and sent out to everyone who prefers printed and/or faces barriers to accessing online content.

Stories from the garden

When
Once a month during lockdown

What?
- updates from what's growing and happening in our garden and the community orchard
- guided wellbeing sessions with Shaun

Remote activities

When
Occassional during lockdown

What?
Remote activities we can share across different places and homes, e.g.
- Tea by Post
- Lockdown Harvest
- Circulating Local Goodness
- Holiday Activity Packs
- Window Gardens and Window Wednesdays

Company Drinks Elsewhere

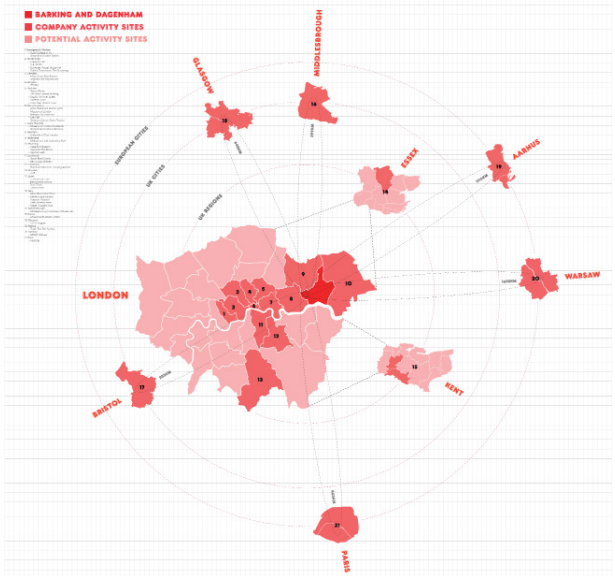
Company Drinks is at home in Barking and Dagenham and we are planning to be here for a long time.

At the same time we are connected with many others elsewhere, be it colleagues, friends, organisations and networks.

Company Drinks is reguraly written about and invited into public programmes and exhibitions nationally and internationally.

Here are some examples.

Fotos:
Twinned Drink in collaboration with Bottle of Ginger and CCA, Glasgow, 2018.
At the ‘Food: Bigger than the Plate’ exhibition at the V&A Museum, 2019.
Stall during the 2016 Utopia Festival at Somerset House, London.
Book launch of the Company Drinks book at the ICA London in 2015.



Inside Cities exhibition, Arup HQ, London, 2016
Create Art Award at Bank of America, City, 2015
Thursday Group at the Design Museum, 2018
Landcape Exhibition, Compton Verney Museum, 2018
Company Drinks article in a Bejing based Landscape Journal, 2019
Cam presenting Company Drinks in Colchester, 2019.

4. Our business

What kind of company are we?

We mean and practice the double meaning of the word company: to be an enterprise and to be in good company.

We are a drinks company and a community space, a grow club, a picking crew, a training space, a kitchen, a social enterprise and a research centre, to name a few. We are happily many things because we enjoy the richness that comes from allowing more than one thing at a time. Our ways of working and spending time together say a lot about how we would like wider society to be. The reason we are also a company is to be able to set our own business terms, and to create a community economy that acknowledges everyone's contribution.

Why drinks?

Drinks are something we all know, drinks are popular and they can easily connect many different interests and cultures: food cultures, rural farming cultures, cultures of hospitality, picking cultures, local and global cultures, and so on. Our drinks are drinks, and they also are a memory of what we made together, and reminder of what's possible together.

What economic model do we support with our drinks company?

Community Economies.

We want our company to support a local economy, an economy that is regenerative and that doesn't exploit people or the planet. Money is important to all of us, but we want to feature and celebrate all the contributions we make that are not monetary. We see the "economy as an iceberg", and want to shine light at all the economies that are less visible but equally important.

We acknowledge and honour the many different economic aspects that allow us to do what we do: the financial aspects, the things we can count and also the contributions that can't be quantified. The Cherry Ade label to the right explains what we mean by that.

Are we a charity?

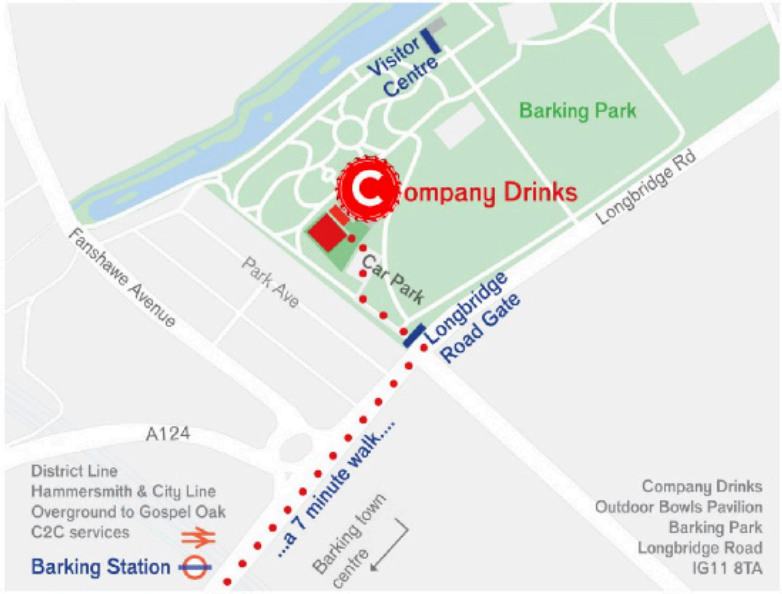
No, not really. We try to avoid thinking in binary terms of provider and receiver or producer and consumer. We see the economy as something we are all involved in, and Company Drinks is about collectively and communally making use of the resources, ideas and ambitions we have access to. We are more like a common, where we use and produce something useful, with and for each other.

Green Hop Tonic ECONOMICS		THE FINANCIALS	
THE QUANTIFIABLES		£0	paid to pickers. No expected quota for picking
42	people came for the day	£588	for the coach
50kg	of fresh hops picked for our beer and tonic	£480	staff costs for preparation and on the day
3000 bottles	made by Square Root Soda for £0.75 per bottle	£5.50 £3.50	retail price/pint at Frieze retail price/pint locally
5000 l water	gifted by the UK climate, sold by Thames Water	£3.00 £1.50	retail price/bottle at Frieze retail price/bottle locally
1:3	ratio drinks sales : funding in Company Drinks turnover	£12.50	hourly rate paid to everybody who works regularly for Company Drinks
THE UNQUANTIFIABLES		£0	for what we pick, but the farmer likes the extra publicity and feedback on the hops from the brewer
• Sun to ripen the berries gifted by the solar system • Sun on the day for happy mood • Meeting new people • Companionship • Time away from the computer • Fresh air • Learning new things • Escape from the neighbour • Something different		• cakes donated by Vi & Andrew • A wondeful day down memory lane • The smell of hops • Looking at amazing machines • Spontaneous tractor ride free of charge	

Bottling
Distributing
Reinvesting
Company Drinks
companydrinks.info
follow us @goingpicking
Heavy Nettle
Novelltea
AD

Contact

Barking Pavilion
Outdoor Bowls Pavilion
Barking Park
Longbridge Road
Barking IG11 8TA



Website
www.companydrinks.info

E-mail:
contact@companydrinks.info

Vimeo page
https://vimeo.com/companydrinks

E-mail:
contact@companydrinks.info

Social Media
@goingpicking
on Insta, Facebook and Twitter