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Make a gate

Install a sign

Maintain a willow structure

Sow a wildflower meadow

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NORTHERN NETWORK

OUR BIG GREEN GUIDE TO GREEN COMMUNITY HUBS



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WHAT WE DID

The Northern Network is a new movement powered by Groundwork that connects green community hubs across the North of England. Shared green spaces such as community farms, parks, fields, and allotments can all help to create thriving and resilient communities. They have the potential to bring people together, enhance prospects, improve health and wellbeing, and take positive action on the environment.



GREEN COMMUNITY HUBS

Green community hubs are natural, outdoor spaces that are activated as a base for community activities. They might be community gardens, parks, nature reserves, or even just a small pocket of land on a housing estate. Whatever form they take, they become part of the social infrastructure of a neighborhood or community – the places and spaces that enable social connections to flourish. Although all Green Community Hub is unique, they often all share a series of recognisable, and replicable, features and are able to deliver broadly similar outcomes for people and places:

Social Spaces

Green Community Hubs are fundamentally social spaces that help people to broaden their networks and foster a sense of belonging.

Equality and Inclusion

The contribution of every individual is valued equally at Green Community Hubs, no matter their starting point.



Enhancing Prospects

Green Community Hubs can act as stepping stones, helping people into employment or back into education.

Health and Happiness

People who spend time at Green Community Hubs report a significant impact on their health and wellbeing.



Enabling Community Life

Green Community Hubs bring together people from different walks of life, fostering greater community cohesion the skills and knowledge of dedicated staff play a crucial role in enabling community life in and around the hub.

Improving the Environment

Green Community Hubs help to improve the local environment on the sites themselves, promote connection to nature and horticultural skills, ‘green’ the local area, and can play a role in raising awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss.

For the past 18 months, we have been working with five pilot communities across the North of England to test out different ways of running Green Community Hubs. We have gathered together resources and guides to share our learning and help others to create their own Green Community Hub in their area. We hope this guide is helpful, and gives you some great ideas to start running green activity where you are!



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ANGELA'S TOP TIPS FOR RUNNING A COOK & EAT SESSION

1 Hygiene is very important! Ensure that there is always a member of staff or a volunteer who has a Food Hygiene Level 1 Certificate who is overseeing or running the session.

2 Make sure there is a station available for participants and volunteers to wash their hands before starting the session. Ask people with long hair to tie their hair away before they start the session and provide aprons for those who want to wear them.

3 When you are tasting food, always use a clean teaspoon and only use it once! It may be handy to have a stock of teaspoons available so you can taste as you go. You can wash them all at the end of the session.

4 We run our **Cook & Eat** sessions inside our polytunnel, which ensures that we have a dry area available for cooking. However, if you don't have a polytunnel, you could use a gazebo set up, or if it's a dry day, cook completely al fresco!

5 We use a standard camping gas burner that you can pick up from camping shops to cook on. Always make sure the area you are cooking in is well ventilated to avoid carbon monoxide exposure.

6 Try using organic principles when growing – treat pests with companion planting and introduce predators who will predate on pests without having to use pesticides. This is much healthier for the people coming to the project. Another idea is to use enviromesh to cover plants such as brassicas instead of plastic based covers.

7 Make sure you have a compost area to ensure that you are using everything you have grown! All the parts of the vegetable that you don't use you can compost, ready for growing next season.

8 Don't worry about leftovers – hand them out to volunteers to take away with them (having a stock of paper/card takeaway boxes helps with this) or ask people to bring with them some Tupperware to the session that day to save on waste.



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SPRING

COURGETTE AND FETA FRITTERS

This is a quick and easy recipe for using up spring and summer vegetables, with the added sharp kick of feta cheese.

The ingredients for fritter can be changed – whatever you have a glut of will work. If you need to make this vegan, you can use extra flour and some oil instead of the egg to bind the fritters together.

We have chosen to serve ours with a fresh salad and dressing made from vegetables grown at our allotment. We are cooking as usual on a camping gas burner in our polytunnel.



INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

Fritters:

- 200g of self-raising flour
- Juice of one lemon
- 3 medium courgettes – 400g approx.
- 200g block of feta
- 1 egg
- Olive oil for frying
- Mixed herbs, we chose fresh dill, oregano, basil, salt and pepper

Salad:

- Freshly washed salad leaves – iceberg
- 3 tomatoes
- 2 carrots
- Some cavolo nero

Dressing:

- 4 tbs olive oil
- 2 tbs white wine vinegar
- teaspoon Dijon mustard
- mixed Italian herbs

HOW-TO

1. Grate your courgettes and carrots on a cheese grater, and dice the garlic and the onion.
2. Combine the courgette, onion and garlic together.
3. For some additional flavor, add herbs to courgette, onion and garlic: we have chosen dill seeds from dill plant, thyme and four twists of salt and pepper. The herbs we have all grown fresh, but you can also buy them in the shops.
4. Mix flour, zest of a lemon, and egg together to make a wet paste.
5. Chop feta cheese into cubes.



6. Put approximately half of the chopped courgette, onion, dill into the mix and combine. Then add the rest and feta cheese – make sure you mash up the feta cheese after you have added it in. You may need a bit of water if the mixture is too dry, or you may want to add more courgette if it's too wet.
7. Now heat up a wok or a frying pan – cover the bottom the pan with oil.
8. Take spoonful of mixture into pan to shape into a circle. Don't make them too thick as they have to cook in the centre.



9. Cook on one side until they are golden brown, and then turn them over to the other side to cook.
10. For the salad, chop up the salad leaves and tomatoes, and combine with the grated carrot.
11. Chop up some more herbs for flavour – we are adding marjoram and chives to ours.
12. For the dressing, combine four tablespoons of olive oil, one or two white vinegar and toss the salad.
13. Serve the fritters with the salad and the dressing and enjoy!



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SUMMER VEGETABLE STEW



This nutritious one pot stew is easy to cook, tasty, and great for using up a glut of vegetables at your growing project. The ingredients can be varied according to what you have grown at your project. We have chosen to serve ours with a flavoursome cous-cous – perfect for a warm summers day.

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 8 - 10)

- 1 large onion
- 2 to 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 tin of tomatoes
- half a tube of tomato paste
- 1 preserved lemon or lemon rind and juice
- 200g green beans
- 1 tin of chickpeas
- olive oil
- 4 courgettes
- 3 squash
- 1 stock cube
- a large handful of Cavello Nero or spinach
- 2 teaspoons of harrissa
- 1 teaspoon of mustard
- 1 teaspoon of smoked paprika
- pinch of dill seeds, smoked chili flakes

HOW TO

1. The first thing to do is to chop up all your vegetables. Dice the onion and chop up the squash, courgettes and tomatoes and new potatoes.



2. Start by heating olive oil, and saute the onion and garlic on a medium heat until they are translucent.
3. Add the tin of chopped tomatoes and half a tube of tomato puree into the pot. Add water to the mixture as well – judge by the amount of vegetables you have.
4. Now add the cubed vegetables – squash, courgettes and tomatoes, and then the cavolo nero/spinach. Give the pot a good stir.
5. Finally add in the new potatoes, green beans and preserved lemons. Allow the mixture to cook down for 5 minutes.



6. Now add the spices – a handful of chilli flakes, 2 teaspoons of harrisa, 1 teaspoon of mustard and 1 teaspoon of smoked paprika.
7. Add in a tin of chickpeas to the pot. Fill up the tin with water and add it to the pot again to loosen the mix.
8. Use a clean spoon to taste the mix – make sure you don't put the spoon back in the pan.
9. Add a few twists of salt and 5 – 6 twists of pepper to taste.
10. Add a stock cube to the stew, and cook it down for 30 mins.
11. To make the couscous accompaniment, cook the couscous according to packet instructions with stock and boiling water. We have chosen to flavour ours with preserved lemon, some coriander, a small amount of turmeric, and a small amount of harissa – you can flavour yours however you like.
12. Serve the stew with the cous-cous and enjoy!



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AUTUMN

PUMPKIN RISOTTO



Each year at Grow Blackpool we grow pumpkins, ready for autumn harvesting. This year we are harvesting our biggest pumpkin: the “big Max”! We are using some of it to make a pumpkin risotto for our volunteers. We grew the pumpkin in the polytunnel all summer, feeding it via string from a saucer of milk. It’s so big that it needs a saw to chop up just a portion of it for this risotto, but you can also use 1 or 2 smaller squash or pumpkin if that works better for your project. We grew the spring onions, garlic and leek at Grow Blackpool as well. This recipe takes a bit of prep, as you need to pre-roast the pumpkin, but it’s well worth it!

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- 1 litre of vegetable stock
- 1 pumpkin or butternut squash
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 leek
- 8 spring onions
- 25g butter
- 200g risotto rice
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 50g grated parmesan
- Small handful of coriander



HOW-TO

1. Start by chopping up the pumpkin into large chunks. Put into a large metal tray and season with S&P, and add some olive oil. Cover with tin foil and roast for at least 45 mins – hour, until the chunks are soft and falling apart. If you have a pizza oven on your site, you can roast the pumpkin chunks in the pizza oven, otherwise a normal oven at home before your session will work too.

2. Next, chop up the spring onions, leek and the garlic.
3. Melt the butter in a large pot, and add in the chopped onions, leek and garlic. Make sure that you keep stirring and don’t allow them to catch on the bottom. Allow them to soften and turn translucent.



4. Once the onions and leek have softened, add in the risotto rice to the mixture, and stir so that all the grains are coated. Next add in a teaspoon of cumin, and half of the stock.
6. Keep stirring until the stock has evaporated and the rice has expanded in size. Slowly add the rest of the stock, ladle by ladle, until all the stock has been used and the rice is a nice creamy texture. If you want to check for flavor, use a clean teaspoon once.



7. Once the rice has cooked and you have used all the stock, add the cooked roasted pumpkin – it should fall apart and almost have a puree like consistency.
8. Add the grated parmesan and the coriander for flavour, and continue to stir until it’s a puree consistency and a lovely orange colour. We served ours with some garlic bread we cooked in foil in the pizza oven – yum!



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BEETROOT SOUP

WINTER

This is a great recipe to use up beetroot, we harvested ours in the summer but beetroot is a hardy vegetable that will grow much later into the year – and it’s a great option to use to make a lovely soup to warm yourself up on a cold winter day. Just like the pumpkin risotto, this takes a bit of extra preparation for the beetroot, but it’s well worth it.

We used chioggia and cylindrica beetroot. You will need two pans (and potentially two burners, if you have them), for this recipe – otherwise just switch the pans as needed.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large or 4 small beetroots (about 750g)
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard
- 200g Egyptian/Spring onions
- 3 cloves of garlic
- Finely chopped thyme
- Olive oil
- Balsamic vinegar, to taste
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Buttermilk, yogurt or smetana, optional

BEETROOT PREP

1. The beetroot were sowed in modules of 3, to create a bunch. We sowed in polytunnel and transplanted the module into raised beds, half a foot apart for growing.
2. Once the beetroot have grown, we harvested them: pulling firmly from the stem, and twist to pull up the root from the soil.
3. Next we will start to prep the beetroot: We won’t use the tops –so we will compost them. Take the tops off using secateurs and cut off roots as well. All the scraps will go into compost.



4. Next, wash and chop the beetroot into large cubes. Make sure you give the beetroot a good scrub – we use wire wool to get all the dirt off.
5. Boil the beetroot in 2 litres of water in a large pot for at least an hour until they are soft, and once they are soft, peel the outside. Make sure you reserve the liquor, as we will use it in the soup.

TO COOK SOUP...

6. Chop up the onions and garlic, and finely chop the thyme. The reason why we are using the onions is that they have a mild flavor. We have kept the offsets and replant them to reuse.
7. Put the olive oil into a frying pan so that it coats the bottom. Fry off the onions and garlic on a medium heat, until they are translucent. Once the onion and garlic have cooked add the thyme.

8. Add the peeled beetroot back into the liquor to cook again until they are very soft and falling apart. There is no stock in this recipe – all of it is coming from the flavor of the beetroot.
9. Once the onion, garlic and thyme have cooked, add in a teaspoon of Dijon mustard to the mixture. Cook this off until it has combined with the onion and garlic in the pan.
10. Once the beetroot has softened, add in the onion, garlic and thyme mix to the beetroot, and allow to cook for a further 10 minutes.



11. Using a stick blender, puree the soup and some balsamic vinegar to taste, for sharpness. If you don’t have power at your site for a stick blender, you could use a potato masher and stir!
12. If you like, before serving add some buttermilk or yoghurt to the soup for added creaminess.



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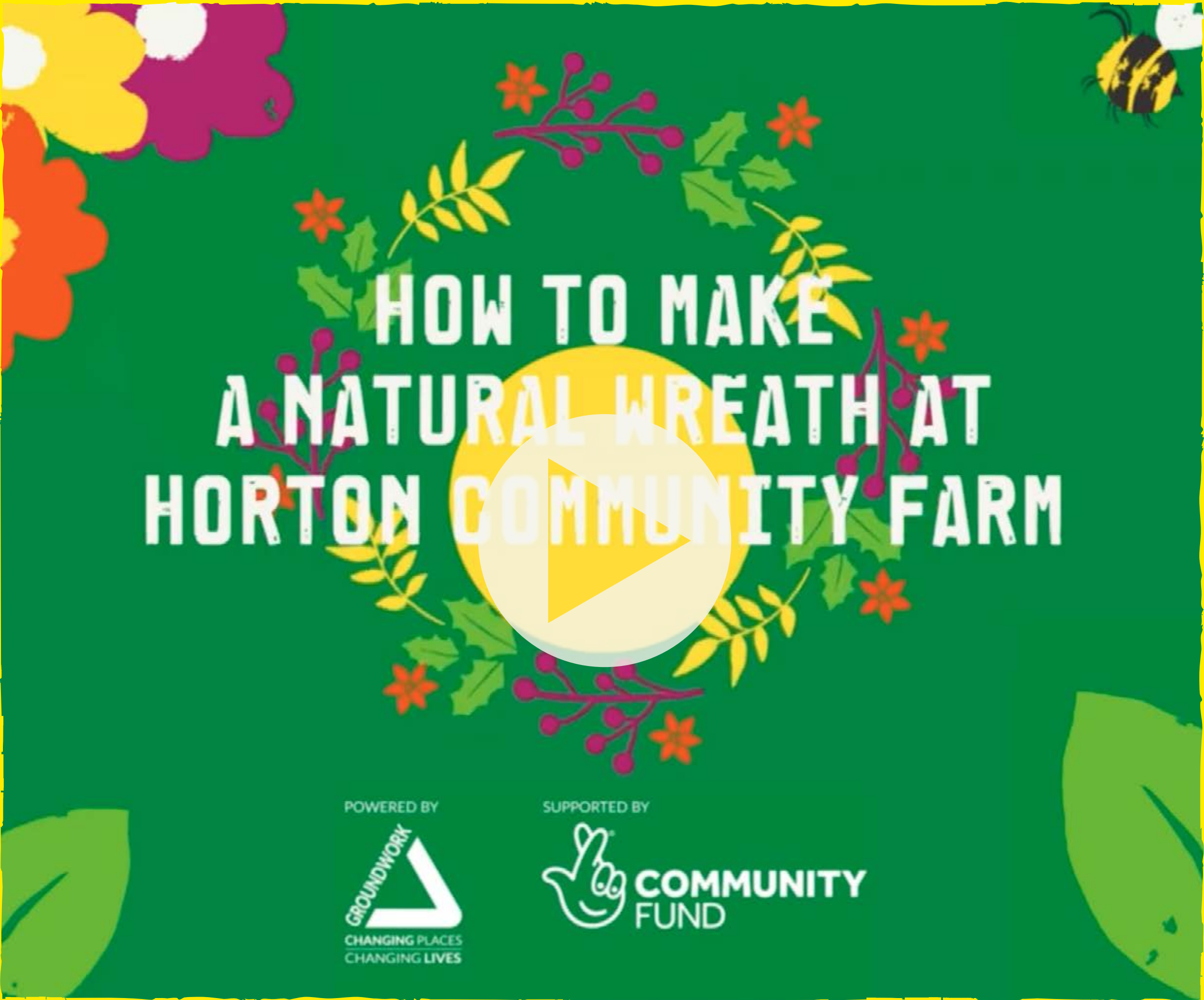
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MAKE A
WREATH

Join Lou in the polytunnel at Horton Community Farm as she makes a wreath to celebrate the winter season out of natural materials she has foraged. This is a popular and easy activity that is great to do at your Green Community Hub, and is a great way to use natural materials to show off nature’s beauty even at the coldest time of the year!



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USE AN APPLE PRESS

Lou and the team from Horton Community Farm are back again to demonstrate how to use an apple press. If you have a small community orchard, or a glut of apples (or pears!) then perhaps you may think of having an apple juicing day for your local community?

It’s a great way to use up the apples and spread the word about your site, as well as providing your neighbours with some lovely juice.



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MAKE A GATE

It’s amazing what can be done with an old wooden pallet. Here, Lou Ross, our Project Facilitator for Groundwork Yorkshire, offers a guide to making a gate...

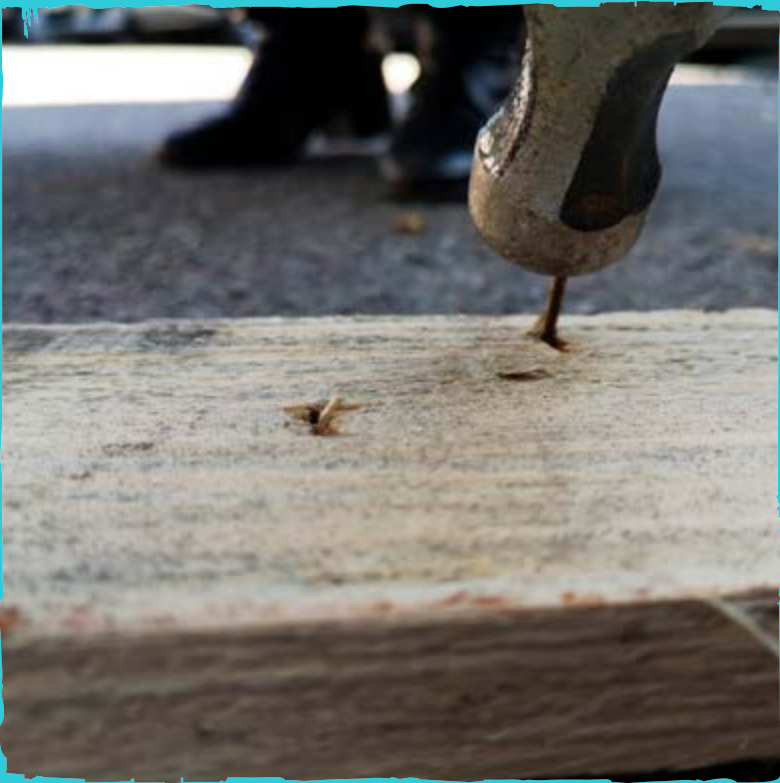


TOOLS REQUIRED

- Pallet breaker – available from Screwfix
- Screws
- Screwdriver – manual or bit for electric drill
- Electric drill
- Pallets – we asked a local firm who was being charged to dispose of them, but, a walk around will often find unused or fly-tip pallets. You could also try asking on Gumtree or even Facebook.
- Saw
- T-hinge
- Lock/bolt
- Marker pen
- Hack saw
- Metal file
- Sandpaper
- Wooden posts

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Break up pallet.
2. Knock out nails with a hammer.
3. Measure gate hole.
4. Make sure the pallet wood is the same height. Pallets come in all sizes and if you need to use wood from more than one pallet then it’s best to check they are the same height.
5. Mark horizontal wood with the length needed, don’t forget that it will be hanging off the wall, don’t overlap it with the brick.



6. Lay out the pieces to be fitted. We used 5 lengths of wood going vertically, one at the top, and one at the bottom going horizontally.
7. Line up the top of the gate so they are all at the same height.
8. Leave a gap between the vertical pieces of wood for the wind to be able to escape through to give longevity to the gate. We left the width of two fingers (or 3.5cm) between each piece.
9. Drill pilot holes in the wood where the vertical and horizontal pieces cross to make screwing easier. Consider putting a piece of scrap wood underneath to stop the drill bit from going through to the tarmac too. We used a battery-powered drill which meant it was transportable to the back street. Match the drill bit to be slightly smaller than the girth of the screw. the drill bit for wood should have a spike to penetrate the wood.
10. Screw in the screws.



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MAKE A GATE CONTINUED...

12. Make a cross piece to improve strength. Place wood that meets both the top and bottom piece of wood. Mark with pencil/pen the excess to be taken off. Saw off the excess.

Screw in at the top, middle, and bottom cross sections after making the pilot hole first.

12. File off any nails sticking out with a metal file. This is best done before hanging so that you can put weight behind the filing. The alternative way, if there is a large number of excess screws is to use a hacksaw with a blade that is suitable for metal (lots of small teeth – the more teeth, the better), then file the small stump down.

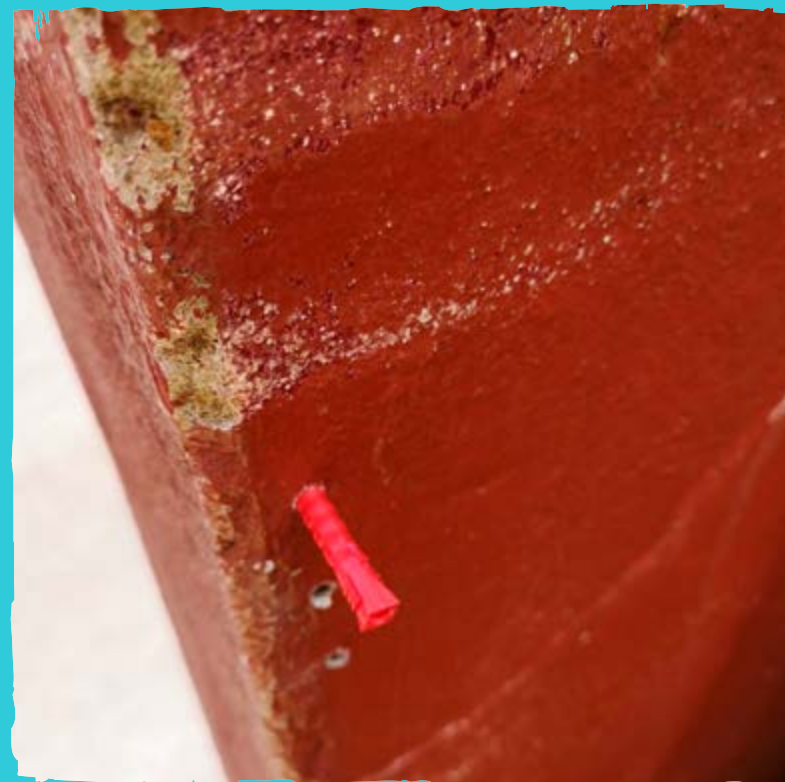
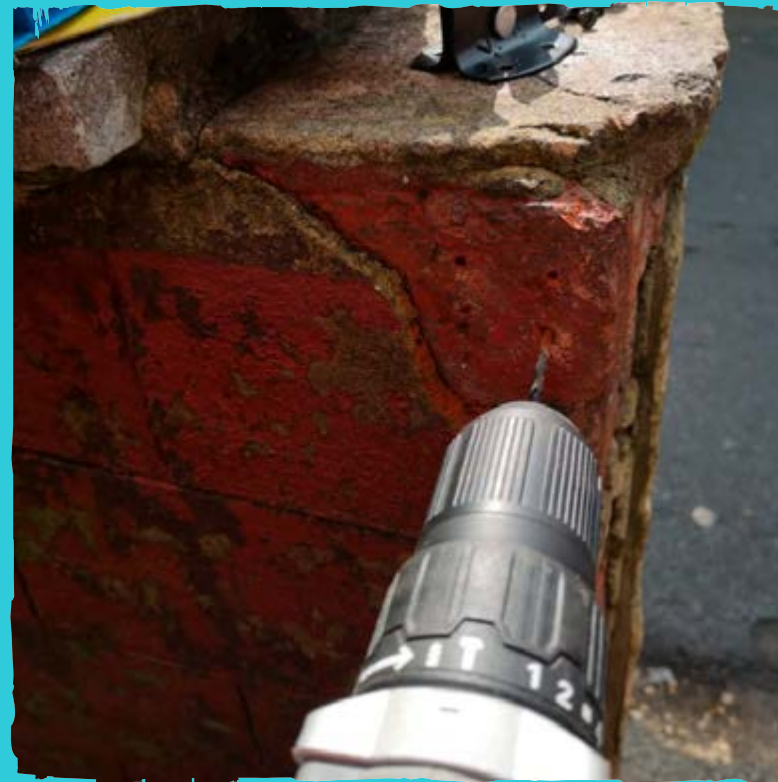
13. Add a T hinge. The T hinge should reach a third of the way across the width to be strong enough to hold the weight of the gate. Hold the gate up in the hole in the wall/in the place it needs to be fitted and mark with a pen where the t hinge needs to screw into the wood and mark the wall hole positions. this is best with a pen or marker pen.



14. You may consider adding a wooden post if there isn't already one attached to the wall. This provides a nice straight line for the gate to hang to, rather than a wonky wall.



15. Drill a pilot hole then add screws to attach the T hinge. Drill a hole in the wall using a masonry drill bit. We used the highest tork settings and hammer settings. We started at a slower speed and then moved to a faster one once an initial hole was established in the correct position.



16. Add a plastic wall plug to the hole. These are colour coded for size and packs often have advice about which size is best to use for the drill bit and screw size.



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INSTALL A SIGN



Want to direct your community to your Green Hub with a sign? Well then, you will need to know how to put it up! Here is a handy guide from Horton Community Farm, one of our pilot hubs, to show you how.



TOOLS REQUIRED

- Set square
- Lump hammer
- Sledge hammer
- Saw
- Trowel
- Tape measure
- Circular saw
- Spirit level
- Spade

YOU MIGHT ALSO NEED:

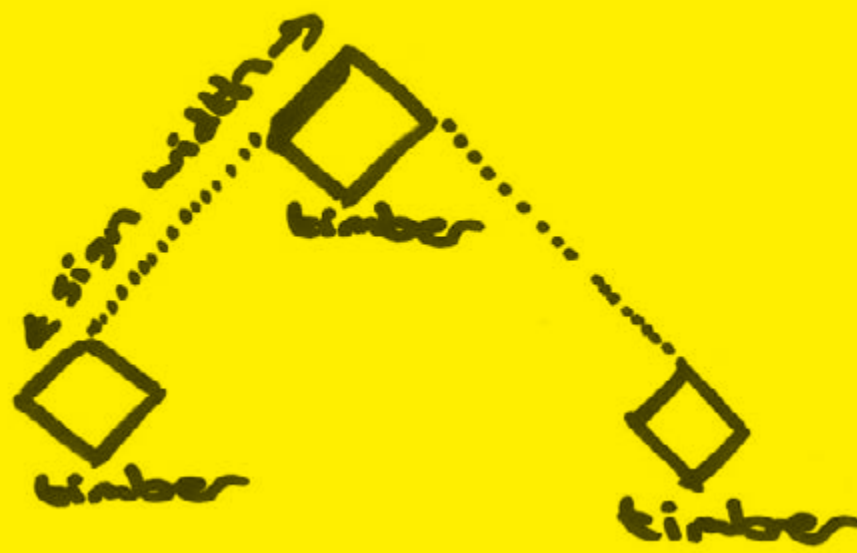
- Buckets for collecting removed soil, stones etc, (or a sheet on the ground)
- Secateurs or loppers for cutting through branches or roots
- Knee pads
- Wheelbarrow

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Decide where you want your sign, look from a distance to see how it will look, and make sure the site is clear for the whole size of the sign. Dig the middle hole, making a diamond shape so that the timber will fit flush to the top corners, and then make it big enough for the spade to get in and move the soil (try a spade width on all four sides). The hole should be 1/3 the length of the post height).



2. Once the post is in place, use a spirit level down the side to check if it is straight, add bricks in the hole to secure it in place, check both sides regularly with a spirit level and add more bricks to the two sides of exposed timber in the hole. Once you have the first layer, add soil, use the lump hammer to tamper the soil into place, then add a second layer of bricks, making sure nothing protrudes above ground level, then add more soil, checking the spirit level and adding thinner slithers of stone and slate if needed to correct.



3. Measure the width of the sign from the first post and dig another diamond-shaped hole just as deep, use the trowel to get extra soil out once it gets beyond the spade depth. You might consider using a kneeler at this stage. Repeat as above, making sure that the outside edge of the timber is in line with the original. Do the same on the other side to make the third hole.



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INSTALL A SIGN CONTINUED...

4. Measure the cross piece of wood and mark it at the top of the post and at the bottom. This should be the distance that you’ve measured between the posts but it’s better to measure and cut against the reality in case there is a slight difference. We used a circular saw and a set square to cut the wood to size, but you could use a saw, utilising the handle as a set square to mark a straight line before cutting. We measured the wood to fit inside the gap so that the sign could sit flush against the upright timber and additional support screws in the middle of the sign. Think about what screw head, or countersunk may damage the sign so truss, pan, or round head may be better, or don’t tighten all the way in. If you have not got self-tapping screws, it may be worth making a pilot hole first by pre-drilling a hole to ease the screw in and reduce the risk of the wood splitting.



5. Next, we placed the sign against the upright timbers and marked with a pencil where we wanted the holes, which were about the middle of the upright timber. We made pilot holes in the Dibond (aluminum with plastic in the middle) frame using a metal drill piece that was the same size as the screws we were using. To make it aesthetically pleasing we made sure that all four corners were the same distance from the top and from the edge by measuring with a tape measure. Once the four corners had holes we offered it up to the timber frame and drilled it into position. Once attached we added additional screws in between to strengthen.



6. Stand back and enjoy!



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MAINTAIN
A WILLOW
STRUCTURE

Willow structures are a great and natural way to create a sheltered area in a community garden. Willow’s fast growing branches mean that garden structures made out of willow need to be maintained at the correct time of year so that you can keep your structure looking neat and tidy. Janine from Groundwork Greater Manchester headed down to our hub at West Gorton Community Park and, along with our facilitator Suzanne, has recorded this short video showing how to look after their willow structure.



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SOW A WILDFLOWER MEADOW

From the 1930s to the 1980s, we lost around 97% of wildflower meadows in the UK. However, more recently there has been a surge in popularity due to the far-ranging benefits they offer, providing a colourful landscape thriving with wildlife. This guide from Groundwork aims to help you establish your own meadow for the community to enjoy.



BENEFITS OF WILDFLOWERS

The collective effort since the 1980s to increase and improve the country’s wildflower meadows remains fairly unclear, but what stands acutely unmistakable is their importance to our ecosystem. Their main associated role is providing bees, butterflies, and other pollinators with a source of food throughout the seasons, but they’re also a brilliant nesting ground for birds.

They can act as a welcome invitation for biodiversity to blossom within urban environments too, as well as give its people a colourful reason to get outside and enjoy the natural world. An added bonus is the potential maintenance cost of a successful meadow; to keep the flowers in a decent condition they require seasonal care, in contrast to lawns and grass verges that sometimes need twice weekly care between Spring, Summer, and Autumn.

WHEN TO GROW?

It is generally preferred to sow in Autumn, between August and October, as weeds will be less prevalent, some seeds also require a cold spell or a frost, to encourage germination. Alternatively, you can opt for Spring, between February and May, and still sow a successful meadow.

A NOTE ON ‘WEEDS’

Although plants such as dandelions and stinging nettles are native wildflowers, they are known to be very successful in a wide range of habitats, leading to their acknowledgement as a ‘weed’. A weed is defined in the dictionary as ‘an unwanted wild plant which often overgrows or chokes out more desirable plants’. You may choose to keep these native species in your wildflower meadow, however, depending on your seed mix, the dandelions may outcompete the other flowers.

1. PREPARATION

To optimise the area for wildlife, the larger the space and the more diverse the wildflower mix the better for attracting insects, though if you’re limited, an unused area of lawn space or flower border can work well too. Either way, ensure that your chosen space is open and attracts as much sunlight as possible.

Now it’s time to kill off grasses, weeds, or any other unwanted plants within the proximity of your desired area to ensure as little competition as possible. The likelihood is that your soil is going to be overly rich with nutrients, which will allow grasses and weeds to re-emerge. To reduce the soil’s fertility, remove its top 5 inches using a spade or a turf cutter, before topping the level back up with sand or fine gravel to retain moisture.

2. DIGGING & COVERING

At this point, make sure that you remove any obvious tap roots and stalks of unwanted plants such as brambles and docks, as well as getting rid of any further undesirable weeds you may find under the surface. If you are turning a weed infested area into a wildflower meadow, it’s possible to cover with black plastic before Spring, and leaving it for the Summer so you’re ready to clear the bed for sowing in Autumn. Covering will be beneficial for re-emerging weeds within this time frame, as they eventually germinate and die off.



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3. SEEDS AND SOWING

It’s important that you populate your space with native wildflowers, which have evolved over time to best fit growing conditions and times, as well as being most beneficial to native wildlife. Non-native species often create a risk to native wildflowers; carrying disease, over-competing for space, pollination and even water.

A good mix may include Red Clover, Wild Carrot, Wild Grasses such as Crested Dogstail or The Meadow Buttercup. For further information, check out not-for-profit seed supplier, **Meadow In My Garden**.

To sow, use around 3-5g of mix per square metre of your designated area. To ensure you get a lovely even spread of mixture, blending the seeds with dry sand will help coverage – especially in larger meadows. Tread over the soil with a firm stance to establish the seeds firmly into the ground, and continue to water frequently until the meadow has formed.



4. MAINTENANCE

Though meadows are often very robust and adapt naturally over time, to certify a flourishing wildflower meadow you will need to take part in some maintenance work. Once the plants have concluded flowering, normally towards the end of the season from September and October, keep on top of your area by going over it with a strimmer.

Make sure when working with annuals that they have generated and dropped seeds before cutting back so you have plants for the following year (this does not apply to perennials).

Remove any cuttings to the compost bin so the soil does not build up nutrients, and keep your eye out for any weeds that may emerge over time or those you could have missed when first sowing.

PERMISSIONS & LEGALITIES

It’s important to consider the community if you are thinking about creating a wildflower meadow in a public place. Not everyone is overly keen on vegetation and grasses that aren’t mown, an example might be roadside visibility, hay fever, or their ability to collect litter. Your local community will be much more supportive if they are consulted prior to sowing, and may even lend a hand!

It is highly recommended that, before you purchase wildflower seeds, you have the correct landowner permissions to sow them for the following reasons:

- Casual introductions may disturb natural patterns of distribution, which can be subtle and involve sub-species and varieties.
- Legislation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) makes it illegal “to uproot any wild plant without permission from the landowner or occupier” in Britain.

- Your efforts may go to waste if landowners have pre-existing plans for that area, like tree planting, felling or building works.

There are a number of ways you can source Landowner Permissions:

- Find and contact your Local Authority, who among other things will be able to provide you with park departments and staff details.
- Contact your local Electoral Registration Office, which may provide you with the address of the selected site and the name of the landowner.
- If you think the land might be a preserved park, for example The National Trust but you’re unsure, you can use their Land Map or get in touch by contacting them.
- Ask around! Your local community is a bank of information, and more often than not they will point you in the right direction.

WHERE TO BUY SEEDS

Most local garden centres now stock UK wildflower seeds, though make sure you double check the label which should say ‘UK Native’. There is also a reason for caution when purchasing ‘Mixed Bags’ of seeds, as exotic seed examples may be included for colour purposes – as mentioned above this could be detrimental to local wildlife and existing native wildflowers.

FIND OUT MORE

Groundwork’s landscape architects and landscape management teams offer commercial services for sowing and maintaining wildflowers. If you’d like to speak to a member of the team about commissioning them to do this work, get in touch!



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WORM FARM

Lou, the Northern Network’s Project Facilitator with Groundwork Yorkshire, has been supporting our pilot hub Horton Community Farm and has created a fantastic video on making a worm farm!

In support of Plastic Free July, the team at Horton Community Farm were keen to find a use for some of their plastic containers so, with guidance from **The Urban Worm**, they set about creating a mini worm farm.

After preparing their containers with drill holes, they added bedding of shredded paper from the office, before foraging for some worms!

Once complete, they’ll feed the worms regularly with kitchen scraps and will be able to harvest worm manure and worm tea – an excellent liquid fertilizer!

Why not have a go at your Green Hub?



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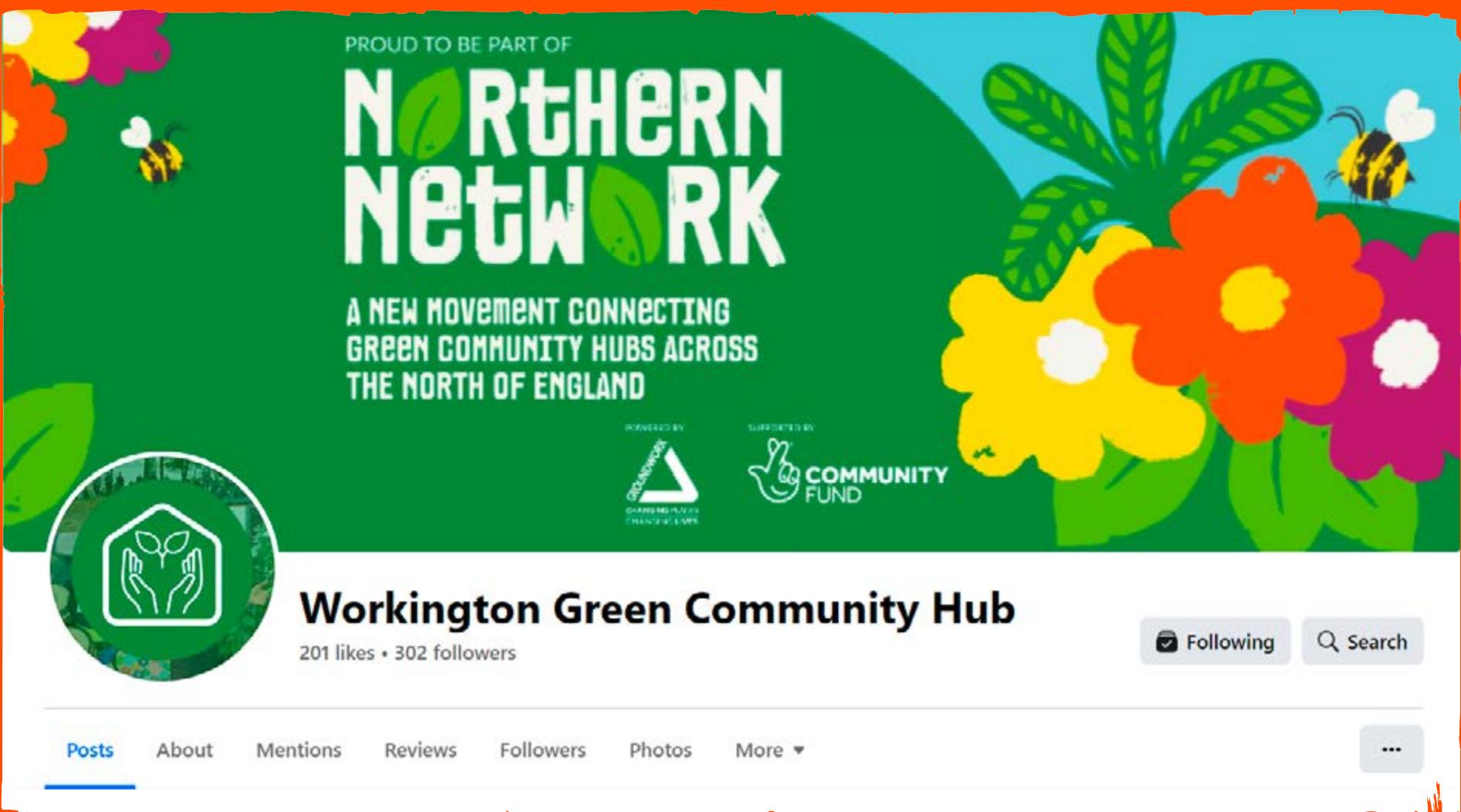
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USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be an effective (and free!) way to reach a large audience and generate and maintain interest and involvement in your Green Hub. But it can only be effective if it can be updated regularly, and the messages are appropriate and interesting.

Here are some tips on how to use social media for your Hub:



CREATE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Start by creating social media accounts for your Hub on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These platforms allow you to reach different audiences and share information about your garden so think about which one might be most appropriate -ask around to understand who uses what.

SHARE UPDATES

Regularly share updates about your Hub, including photos and videos if you can (checking that people are happy to be photographed). Share images and information about the progress of the Hub, any upcoming events, things that have happened recently, and any new developments.

USE HASHTAGS

Use hashtags such as #communitygarden, #sustainability, and #greenhub to make it easier for people to find your posts. Encourage people to share their own photos and experiences with the Hub. Respond to comments and messages to build a relationship with your audience.

COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS

Partner with other organisations or voluntary groups in your community to cross-promote each other’s projects. You can tag them in your posts, or share their posts on your feed. This can help increase awareness of your Hub and attract new followers.

ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT

Encourage people to share, comment, and like your posts to generate buzz about your Hub. For example, you could ask followers to share their favorite gardening tips or their favorite activities at the Hub. Or, you can run a poll to see what people what to do more of.

SHARE OTHER CONTENT

It doesn’t have to all be about your Hub. Share other content about gardening, sustainability, and the benefits of community gardens. This can help build engagement with the bigger picture and increase support for your project.

Social media can be really beneficial for your Hub but it needs regular attention. Consider who might be able to help with this, perhaps it could be shared between a few people, or on a rotating basis. Or it may be that there is a student or person wanting to boost their work experience in this area, who could commit an hour or two per week.

LEARN MORE

If you’d like to learn more about using Social Media for your Green Community Hub, including understanding social media channels, creating a social media marketing strategy, and managing a content calendar, you can watch our webinar on our website.



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PROMOTE YOUR GREEN COMMUNITY HUB

Are you looking to promote your Green Community Hub and get more people involved? Raising awareness of your project can help increase participation, recruit volunteers, sell event tickets, raise funds, celebrate your work, and bring people together.

Here’s a few tips to help you spread the word and grow your green community:



DEFINE YOUR MESSAGE

Start by identifying what’s unique about your green hub. What is the message you want to convey? And consider specific goals too. Do you want to recruit more volunteers? Are you looking for participants? Are you promoting an event? Use this message as the basis for your promotional efforts.

CREATE SOME MARKETING MATERIALS

Posters and flyers displayed in local venues, such as libraries, community centers, and coffee shops can help raise awareness. Remember to keep it simple and don’t forget the basics: What, where, and when. Banners or signs pointing to your Hub will also help.

USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful (and free!) tool for connecting with people in your community. Use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to share updates, post photos, and promote events.

REACH OUT TO LOCAL MEDIA

Reach out to local newspapers and radio stations who may be interested in your work. Focus this around a key event and invite members of the press. It can also be helpful to write a press release (a short article about your activity, usually describing what is going to happen, some details about how people can get involved, and including some quotes from members) to send alongside the request, so that the journalist can understand a bit more about what you are doing, and the release can be published in local media too.

HOST EVENTS

Hosting events is a great way to get people involved in your Hub. Consider hosting a planting day, a harvest festival, or just an open afternoon with guided tours and refreshments. Encourage participants to bring friends and family members to help spread the word about your Hub.

PARTNER WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Partnering with local organizations can help you reach new audiences and build relationships in your community. Consider partnering with schools, churches, and community groups to promote your garden and encourage participation.

OFFER ACTIVITIES

Offer classes, workshops, family sessions, or tours of your Hub to help people learn more about gardening and the benefits of fresh, locally-grown produce. Specific activities also give people a time and place, and a reason to engage.

Try following these tips, and you’ll be able to promote your community garden to build a strong, engaged community around it.



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SET UP A ‘FRIENDS OF’ GROUP

A Friends of Group is usually set up to enable a group of volunteers to undertake practical projects.

Any community of people can set one up and it’s a great way to manage a Green Community Hub. The key to success is passion and commitment, but there are also some key steps you need to follow, these are outlined below.



SET UP A COMMITTEE

Every member has a voice, and committee meetings are a place to share ideas, develop learning, and agree on future plans. There are certain roles you will need including a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. See below for information on each of these.

WRITE A CONSTITUTION

This is a document that sets out exactly how your group will be managed, your aims and objectives, and how meetings will be run.

AGREE A CODE OF CONDUCT

This outlines what behavior is expected during meetings. It usually references things like the use of mobile phones, the importance of respect for each other, and the way meetings will be run.

HOLD AN AGM

Groups will need to hold an AGM (Annual General Meeting) in the first instance to formally adopt its constitution to fairly elect committee members. AGMs should then be held each year as a way of re-electing committee members and presenting an Annual Report, including financial accounts, to other members of the group.



SET UP A BANK ACCOUNT

Once your group is formally established, it should set up a bank account so that any funds can be managed appropriately. The account should be in the name of the group and will require at least two people (usually committee members) to act as signatories each time a transaction is made.

DON'T FORGET INSURANCE!

Every time a public activity, such as a community clear-up, event, growing session, or fun day, is organised, public liability insurance is needed to cover accidents on a public site. Risk assessments are also required for each activity, in order to identify potential risks associated, and to put in place measures to reduce the risks.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ROLES

Chairperson: The Chair helps to organise meetings and ensures that they run smoothly. They will set the agenda for the AGMs and should also manage other members to ensure that all the tasks are being undertaken properly.

Secretary: The secretary will take minutes during meetings and maintain the admin of the group. This includes ensuring that records of meetings are stored and shared effectively and that all legal documents are correct and up to date.

Treasurer: The Treasurer is responsible for the finances of the group. This includes managing the bank account, and ensuring that all receipts are recorded. They also usually manage funding bids and financial planning.



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WORK WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE



Successful Green Community Hubs are able to fully engage their local communities and this will often mean welcoming and supporting members of the community who might be considered vulnerable.



It can be difficult to define a ‘vulnerable person’ – after all, everyone is vulnerable to harm at some point in their lives, but some people could have a range of past or present experiences that make them more vulnerable to harm or exploitation, than others. Such experiences could include poor mental or physical health, neurological concerns, learning disabilities, and many other issues.

Vulnerability is also often linked to health and social inequality and as such vulnerable people can often experience further issues such as social isolation, poor housing, poverty, and lack of access to support.

To help Green Community Hubs welcome and support vulnerable people into their spaces, we’ve prepared a short guide:



DO THEY FEEL SAFE?

People coming to your Green Hub should feel emotionally and physically safe. This will be achieved by how you work with someone. It is really important that you create a safe working environment and you can achieve this by:

- Ensuring that you have appropriate risk assessments
- Being aware of your safeguarding policy
- Creating accessible spaces. Think about access and movement around your site, including for people with sensory issues
- Creating an induction for newcomers, including site rules to give clarity to expectations
- Keeping people updated and informed on any changes to your site

GIVE PEOPLE A CHOICE

It’s important that everyone has a sense of agency and control over what they do. This means giving people choice. You can ensure this by:

- Listening to what the person wants
- Being clear about what will happen and what they have control over
- Adapting activities to enable people to take part if they wish to
- Always explaining clearly the task at hand
- Giving people the opportunity to say no, or to opt out of an activity without any shame or embarrassment.

BUILD TRUST

Building trust is crucial for continued engagement with vulnerable people. You can do this by:

- Being open and honest with everyone.
- Fostering a relaxed, friendly, and open atmosphere
- Managing expectations and never over-promising
- Making sure you do follow up on any promises that you make
- Allowing people to develop a role within the group. Give people roles of responsibility within their capabilities.
- Ensuring people are consistently supported.



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WORK TOGETHER

It can be helpful to work in a person-centered way. Spend time with your volunteers and get to know them. What are their likes and dislikes? What are their passions? What are their skills? Actively listen and be positive. Work together by:

- Asking what volunteers need
- Making sure that people are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the group
- Signposting volunteers when they need extra support. Work together with local agencies and other support organisations or community groups.
- Designing activities that can be tailored to a range of vulnerable people

EMPOWER YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Feeling part of a community group is about feeling empowered to contribute to it. Empower your volunteers by:

- Validating their feelings and engaging with them in a non-judgemental manner
- Actively listening to what they need and ensuring they are signposted or referred to the correct support



EMBRACE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Everyone is different and we can each bring something unique to the table, so, when combined, it’s our differences that can help us achieve our shared goals. Embracing difference means considering and giving space to differing cultural values. You can do this by:

- Having an awareness of your own cultural values and an acceptance of cultural differences
- Empowering all volunteers and staff to challenge any discriminatory language or behavior
- Being aware of, or familiarising yourself with the worldviews of cultural groups other than your own
- Having an open and non-judgemental attitude

USEFUL TRAINING

To further support you in your work with vulnerable people, you should also explore specific and formal training on:

- Risk Assessments
- Equality and Inclusion Training
- Safeguarding
- Understanding DBS, Disclosure, and Barring Service
- First Aid, including Mental Health First Aid
- De-escalation Training
- GDPR
- Other more specific training for example, on the Autistic spectrum, mental ill health, addiction, dementia, and abuse.



You will also find lots of helpful guidance about safeguarding on the NCVO website here: www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/safeguarding/



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WORK WITH PARTNER GROUPS

To ensure the success and sustainability of your Green Community Hub and its activities, it is really helpful to make links with similar organisations working in the local area.

By working with others, you can increase your capacity, reach, and resources, helping you to achieve your goals more quickly. Partnering with others also brings more people together, increases the potential for funding and support, and creates more resilient and sustainable communities. So, how do you work with partner organisations?

Here’s a guide to help you link in with partners at your green hub:



IDENTIFY AND CONNECT WITH ORGANISATIONS WITH SIMILAR OBJECTIVES

Start by researching and identifying key local organisations in the area. Who has an interest in green spaces and nature-based provision? Who has a focus on building resilience and enhancing the skills of individuals in the local community? Who has an interest in ensuring equal access to green spaces for everyone living in the local area?

Once identified, make contact via email, phone, or face to face. Set up meetings, spread the word about what you are trying to achieve with your Green Community Hub work, and see if others are keen to get involved and support it.

BRING PARTNERS TOGETHER

Once you have identified a range of partners, hold a virtual or in-person presentation about, or even a tour of, your hub. Share your ideas for the hub and make it clear what you hope the outcomes to be, but be open to taking on new ideas from partners. This will help you build stronger foundations for your hub, reach out to more individuals, and even gain access to more green spaces within the community.

SET UP REGULAR PARTNER MEETINGS

Take feedback from partners on how often they would like to meet up, usually monthly or quarterly are good options, and discuss whether this is better to be done in person or virtually. Once this is agreed upon, ensure that during meetings you give updates on the activities your hub has been delivering, the individuals or groups you have reached, the green spaces you have connected with, and the financial situation of your hub. Reach out to partners to take on new ideas of how to improve your hub and for ideas on gaining more funding to support further development.



INVITE PARTNERS TO JOIN IN WITH HUB ACTIVITIES

Some partners may like to come up with ideas for your hub in terms of activities and funding, some may have groups or individuals that they work with that may like to get involved in activities, and some may want to deliver activities through your hub or get involved in one-off events. Be open to all of these options, and where possible, enable this kind of working, through idea sharing, planning, and delivering.

REFER TO YOUR PARTNER'S SERVICES

Find out what services your partners already provide and think about whether the individuals or groups you are working with may benefit from these also. Referring to partner services will ensure individuals have more options to continue to engage with green spaces and receive support for their health and wellbeing.

WORK TOGETHER

Building rapport, listening to each other, and working together enables information sharing, and access to resources and information, and allows meaningful links to be created between people, organisations and green spaces.

By following these steps, you will be able to create meaningful links with partners who will support you and what you want to achieve from your Green Community Hub.



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RUN A REGULAR ACTIVITY

Are you looking to run a regular activity at your Green Community Hub and get more people involved on an ongoing basis?

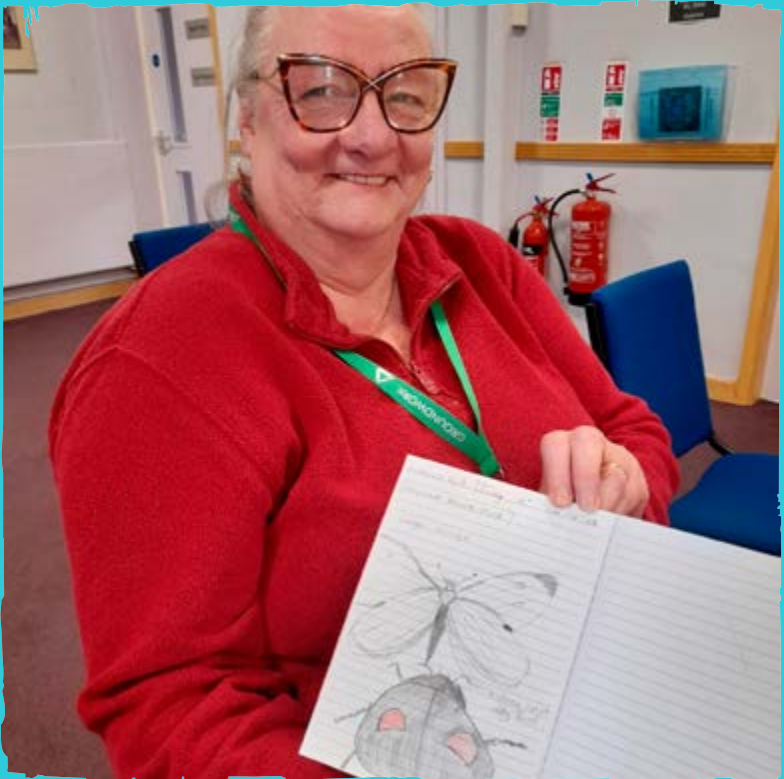
Finding out what activities are wanted or needed in the area by local people and organisations will help you build the foundations of a well-attended regular event. Then, raising awareness of your activity can help increase participation, recruit volunteers, and bring people together. Finally, ensuring you create a warm and welcoming atmosphere where individuals feel comfortable and listened to will support retention.

Our guide to helping you run a regular activity has been written by Hannah Wright, our Project Facilitator for Workington Green Community Hub. Hannah runs regular Gardening and Nature Journaling activities and you can find out more about them in Workington for members of the public.



ENGAGE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Start by talking to local people and organisations to find out what the gaps are in provision, what barriers local people are faced with in terms of accessing services, what activities could be beneficial to the local area, and what will bring people joy, going to enhance skills and build resilience. Communicating with the right people and knowing the answer to these questions will enable you to design and deliver an activity that is wanted/ needed and therefore people are more likely to engage.



CHOOSE A BASE

Once you have your feedback from the local community, link in with partners and choose a base location to hold the activity. Consider whether the activity will be indoors or outdoors and if outdoors, make sure you have thought about what to do in bad weather! You will also need to make sure that there are toilet facilities nearby and consider accessibility to ensure that your activity is accessible to all.

ENSURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT RESOURCES

Depending on what your activity is you will need to make sure that individuals taking part will have access to the necessary resources. You may need to provide them or you could ask a partner your working with or ask individuals themselves. Alternatively, you could look for a grant to provide funds to buy resources. You will then also need to consider storage options.

CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT

Before running and activity, you will need to carry out a risk assessment. To do this, you will need to identify, evaluate, mitigate, monitor and review the risks. For more information on this have a look at our ‘How to write a risk assessment’ guide.

You will also need to make sure you have the correct insurance in place and ensure any partners you are working with, have a copy of your insurance documentation.



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RUN A REGULAR ACTIVITY CONTINUED...

PROMOTE YOUR ACTIVITY

You are now ready to promote your activity. Start by defining your messages and creating some marketing materials that are targeted toward the individuals or groups you wish to attract. Use social media to reach a wide range of people, but also consider using other methods such as a ‘flyer drop’ in the local area or putting up posters in local businesses to ensure you reach those who aren’t online. See our ‘How to promote your Green Community Hub’ guide for further information.



CREATE A WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE

Once you have your activity up and running, you should focus on creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere to ensure individuals feel comfortable. For a lot of people, joining a new activity, with individuals that they don’t know can be extremely stressful and can trigger anxiety. Get to know people, find out what they want to get from the activities, take a relaxed approach, and be flexible. You could consider a community-led approach whereby you act as an enabler rather than a leader. You will find most people have varying skill sets that they are super eager to share with others. Alternatively, depending on funding you could get someone with greater expertise in that specific area to deliver activities for you.

BE RELIABLE AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Ensure you run activities when you say you will and if you are unable to be there, ensure there is cover or ensure effective communication to let people know if the activity is postponed and why.



By following these, you can design and run an activity in your green hub that individuals are likely to want, need, enjoy, and return to on a regular basis.

ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

Depending on your funding, your activity may have a limited time frame in which to run. Link in with partner organisations and make introductions between your groups early so that connections are made and awareness is raised of ongoing provision in your area.



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CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT

Carrying out a Risk Assessment is a practical way to reduce the chances of harm during events or activities that take place at your Green Community Hub.

It will help ensure that everyone, including the people who are delivering your activities, as well as those who are taking part, is kept safe.

Doing a Risk Assessment isn’t as scary or as complicated as it might sound – actually, it can feel a lot like putting common sense down on paper. Writing one can be a genuinely helpful exercise for thinking about all the potential risks, including some that you might not have considered otherwise. It’s also a great way to get members of your group on the same page when it comes to how best to manage different risks.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

The National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO) has lots of information about volunteering and health and safety on its website, including details on legal obligations and health and safety policy, and you can find out more here...

Ncvo: Volunteering And Health And Safety:

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/volunteers-and-the-law/volunteering-and-health-and-safety/#/risk-assessment>

IN THE MEANTIME, WE’VE PREPARED A SHORT GUIDE FOR YOU BELOW...

There are 4 simple steps to walk through as part of a risk assessment:

1. Identifying the risk
2. Evaluating the risk
3. Mitigating the risk
4. Monitoring and reviewing the risk

1. IDENTIFYING THE RISK

Spend some time thinking about the hazards for your event/activity. It can be helpful to walk around your site or play the event out in your head while you do this. When thinking about the risks, think who might be harmed and how.

Consider ‘what’:

- The equipment/resources you’re using: Could anything go wrong here?
- The weather: What might happen in storms, rain, or sunshine?
- Food/refreshments: Consider things such as allergies
- The location: Are you near busy roads? Are there any trip hazards?

And think about ‘who’:

- Who are the participants/people attending your activity?
- Will any members of the public be passing through
- What staff/volunteers will be there, including yourself?
- Give extra consideration to children or vulnerable adults who might be present.



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CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT CONTINUED...

2. EVALUATING THE RISK

This part of the assessment is about considering how likely is it that something could cause harm. And, how serious would the outcome be if something happened?

Use 2 numbered scales to help you assess how likely, and how dangerous the hazard is. For example, for likelihood, 1= very unlikely that harm will happen, and 5 = almost certain harm will take place. And, for the severity of consequence, 1= minor injury, and 5 = fatality.



3. MITIGATING THE RISK

Now that you have identified and evaluated the risk, you can consider a range of measures to put in place that would help reduce the likelihood of harm, and which will reduce the severity of such an outcome.

For example... If you are preparing for an outdoor event on a hot summer’s day, you may have evaluated the risk of participants experiencing heat stroke and sunburn to be likely. So, to mitigate that risk, you could decide to provide a gazebo offering shelter from the heat, provide water so that everyone stays hydrated, and ask participants in advance to bring sunscreen and a hat.

Another example could be... To reduce the chance of harm from using hand tools when running a gardening event, you might mitigate that risk by carrying out a tool safety talk beforehand. You could also want to check if volunteers have existing health issues (such as back pain) so you can allocate tasks accordingly.



4. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE RISK

Remember to keep your Risk Assessments up to date so that they respond to any changes made to your activity, or any new precautions that should be considered.

Monitoring your Risk Assessments regularly also gives you the opportunity to review your evaluation of risk on a regular basis. For example, have any accidents or near-misses taken place? If so, you should review your evaluation of that risk and look for more mitigating actions to take.

Remember risk assessment should be realistic for the activity you’re running, it’s about getting a balance between achieving what you want to do with your activity while reducing the risk of harm within what is reasonable and possible.

RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

If you work for a charity or another kind of organisation, it is very likely they will be able to offer you full training on Risk Assessments and they will provide you with a Risk Assessment form. However, we have included a template for you here if you need it...

Risk assessment template:
<https://www.northernnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Risk-Assessment-Template-1.pdf>



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FIND FUNDING FOR YOUR GREEN HUB

<https://www.northernnetwork.org/how-to-find-funding-for-your-green-hub/>

Funding your Green Hub activities is always going to be one of your key concerns. But don't despair, it doesn't need to be scary, read our top tips and you will be well on your way to success.



1. MAKE A PLAN

Before you start, plan out a few key things that will help you in your search for funding. Think about:

- Who do you want to work with? Children, adults, families? Diverse groups?
- What is the theme of your work? Is it themed around the environment, food insecurity, homelessness, and isolation?
- What are you asking for money for? Is it a one-off event, or a six-week project?
- Are there staff members that you need to pay to run your hub, or will it be run by volunteers? (Remember, volunteers don't equal "free" – you still need to factor in costs of brews and uniform, equipment for your volunteers!)
- Will you make money from your events, and re-invest this in your organisation, or use the money earned to pay people?

2. WHAT TYPE OF ORGANISATION IS YOUR HUB?

This will determine what types of funding you can access. Are you a CIC or CIO, or a fully registered charity? Are you a constituted community group (a community group with a governing document)? Quite often you will need some sort of structure in place, as many funders do not fund individuals or sole traders.

3. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN OPERATING?

Some larger funders only fund organisations that have been operating for a minimum amount of years – sometimes 2 years or more. Sometimes you may need a minimum turnover as well.

- Some funds support small, start-up organisations – try UnLtd if you are interested in funding an idea for a social enterprise/charity that you have not launched yet, or are in the process of launching.

TYPES OF FUNDING

Do you have a fund in mind, or are you looking for any type of funding?

- If you are just starting, look for small grant programmes. Some key funds that will fund Green Hub activities include the National Lottery Community Fund – their Awards for All programme is ideal for small projects and requests for under £10,000. Another key funder is People's Postcode Lottery which have a small grants programme.
- Often supermarkets and big chains will have foundation trusts that help groups. Key ones include Tesco (administered by Groundwork), Coop, Screwfix and B&Q.
- If you live near an on-shore, or off-shore windfarm, then they will usually have funds available for community projects. Grantscape is a good source of information on funding available from energy companies.
- If you live near a waste disposal unit/tip, they often have open funds. Grantscape is another good one to have a look at for these.
- Trusts and Foundations are usually a good place to go for small, specialist grants.
- Some funders will fund "core costs" or "overheads" as part of a funding application. Others may offer "unrestricted" funding, which is funding that can be used for anything, including energy bills, and staff salaries, that doesn't have to be fixed to a specific project.



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FIND FUNDING FOR YOUR GREEN HUB CONTINUED...

- More and more, funders are looking for partnership projects. Especially if you are a small organisation, think about your network and how you can work together with others to apply for bigger funds to maximise your reach and impact. Remember, together you are stronger!
- Be strategic with what funds you apply to – make sure they are relevant and appropriate to your organization. Writing funding bids takes time, and you don’t want to spend a long time on a bid that is not appropriate for your organization.
- Join organisations such as GrantFinder (paid site) to find funds. Look at your local CVS website, which usually has local funding opportunities. Lancashire County Council, for example, runs a free-to-use funding page that covers the whole of the UK.

HOW TO APPLY

Now you have worked out which fund you would like to apply for...how do you apply?

- Each fund is different. Don’t reuse a full application – you can reuse bits, but make sure you tailor each application to the fund you are applying to. It can be obvious if you haven’t read the full details available.
- Sometimes funds will ask you to make an online application. In this case, you may be able to copy and paste the questions into a Word document to work on offline and copy and paste your answers back online when you are ready to submit.
- Funds will usually ask you to submit a costed budget plan alongside your written application. Take time to research this properly, and obtain quotes if you need them. Demonstrating that you have taken time to cost out your proposal will show funders that you are committed to delivering the work.
- You will usually have to answer four to five questions, detailing the history of your organisation, what you will do with the money, who you will be working with, how that will help the intended beneficiaries, and if you are working in partnership. There may be other more detailed questions localised to the fund or specific aims of the fund.



TIPS

Here are a few final tips for writing a slick application

- Make sure you write in the present and future tense, rather than the conditional tense. Instead of “if we got the money, we would spend it on (x)”, write, “With this funding, we will buy (x) and develop (y) project”.
- Make sure you ask someone separate from the project to have a look over your application. Your project is your baby, and you know all the ins and outs. But it’s easy to forget to explain something when it becomes second nature to yourself.
- Be concise. The more to the point, the better – funders have to read lots of applications, and a clear, concise application that demonstrates why you are the best candidate will stand out the most.
- Make sure you are clear about who your beneficiaries will be, and include any demographic statistics if you think it will help. You can find demographic statistics on the government websites and your local authority public health team should have publicly available statistics for your area.
- Reach out for help. Some funds will have grant advisers who are there to support you through the process – Groundwork funds are often like this. Also, reach out to your local CVS organisation, they usually have a dedicated funding officer and run courses to support your development.
- Remember – writing funding applications is a skill. It may seem daunting at first, but the more you do, the easier and less overwhelming it will become. It’s a competitive market out there, but the more practice you get, the better. Have a look at our funding page for information on open funds.
- And most importantly, Good Luck!



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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE SHARED GARDEN

Author: Hannah Wright
Project Facilitator, Northern Network, Groundwork Cumbria and North East

Workington Town Council owns a community garden in the park in the centre of town, which is run by a fantastic organisation named Grow Well, who have a reliable group of volunteers who visit and work in the garden every Thursday.



They approached us to see if we could encourage more local community members to volunteer and to see if we could facilitate the opening of the garden on alternative days. Additionally, we were asked to see if we could support the opening of a small building (owned by the council) placed within the garden’s perimeter.

So far, we have set up weekly sessions to encourage more volunteers to get involved. Some have been joining us to design nature-based murals which will be painted on the building and some have been gardening in a greenhouse nearby, where it is a lot warmer.



THE CHALLENGE:

Our first challenge was to reach as many local community members as possible and encourage them to come along and get involved in the Grow Well Community garden. We realised that this was not an easy task and started to think about different methods of reaching people. This was another challenge- finding and using the right methods.

Once we overcame the first challenges, we needed to think about how these individuals could be involved in the garden and how we could keep them engaged... It was coming up to winter and the actual garden would be closed. So, we needed to source a venue and supplies to hold related activities during the cold winter months, keeping the momentum and enthusiasm of the individuals going.

Then, as Spring approached we were challenged with assessing and opening the building within the garden to encourage more users to come along and utilise the garden.



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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE SHARED GARDEN CONTINUED...



THE SOLUTION:

We spoke with our partners – Workington Town Council – who agreed to give us use of their community room and greenhouse, every Thursday 10-11am. For free!

We created posters and flyers and advertised weekly ‘Arts & Garden Sessions’. We circulated these amongst all of our contacts in and around Workington and asked them to encourage their participants/service users to come along. We also distributed flyers in the local area and advertised on social media.

We wanted to make this group accessible to everyone (including those who don’t like or can’t garden due to physical disabilities). So, we had a nature-based arts activity, where participants designed murals that are to be painted onto the shutters of the building in the community garden, as well as gardening for those more ‘green fingered’.

We sourced match funding for supplies and were able to buy a range of art supplies and gardening tools.

Our last challenge was to open and utilise the building in the garden. So, we have arranged for an assessment to be made by another of our partner organisations – CAFs.



RESULTS:

Currently, around 8-10 participants join us for weekly ‘Arts & Garden’ sessions. Some have designed some fantastic environmentally themed murals which are due to be painted on the shutters of the building in the garden. Some have been planting and growing in the greenhouse and have had great success – even in winter! And some, have been using pallets to build raised beds from scratch, to be placed in the garden when it reopens, which means that it will be more accessible for those with certain types of physical challenges.

We are having the building in the garden assessed and once that is complete we hope to make the building self-sustainable so that local community members who want to utilise that garden can do so, with access to shelter and other facilities – for free!

LESSONS LEARNT:

It is important to utilise as many methods of reaching people as possible- social media, flyers, known contacts etc.

During winter, people are put off by the weather and often don’t engage in outdoor activities. Therefore, we learned to adapt the activity to fit in with the weather and gave individuals an option of carrying out nature-based activities indoors.

A ‘community’ garden is for the community. Let’s make it accessible to everyone!

This case study was written by Hannah Wright, a project facilitator for Groundwork Cumbria and North East. You can find out more about her work in Workington below.

<https://www.northernnetwork.org/groundwork-cumbria-and-north-east/>



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RUNNING AN
OPEN DAY TO
BUILD LOCAL
PARTNERSHIPS

Green Community Hub: West Boldon
Lodge

Author: Katherine Mason-Gage,
Project Facilitator, Northern Network,
Groundwork South and North Tyneside



THE CHALLENGE:

West Boldon Lodge has primarily operated as an environmental education centre since it opened. While the education team would hold public events during the school holidays, there haven't been consistent opportunities for the public or other community groups to use the site, with the majority of residents in the area either not knowing the lodge existed at all or not knowing what happens there.

The introduction of the Green Hub project means we are looking to collaborate with a host of partners from the public and community groups to businesses and social prescribers. Therefore, we needed to find a way to introduce possible partners to the lodge, give them a tour of the site and demonstrate what our plans for the future are and what partnership working would look like.

THE SOLUTION:

We decided to hold an open day and invite community and residents' groups, charity sector organisations, and other businesses, to explain our plans for the future, and to invite them to think of ways in which they could use the site to help their service users.

We had two time slots that people could book via Eventbrite and the sessions were publicised on social media platforms as well as using an established information-sharing platform in South Tyneside. We also sent out targeted, personalized email invites to organisations or groups that we were particularly interested in working with.

The sessions themselves were a combination of presentations and a site tour. Included in the presentations were introductions to the team and the work at the lodge up to this point, and explaining what we were trying to achieve through the Green Hubs and Northern Network, then how they could get involved in our future plans. Following the presentations, we took the participants on a site tour and spoke about what the site has to offer and how they could access it through collaborative work.

RESULTS

The open day was a massive success, the feedback we got was really positive and almost every person who came contacted me again to discuss how their organization could utilize the site. We have already begun working with several different partners, some of whom have already begun to use the site, others of which are still in the planning and logistics stage of development.

LESSONS LEARNT

From this Open Day, we learned that our plans for the lodge are definitely fulfilling a need in the area and that organisations are keen to be able to use a green space to support their service users.

Although the open day was a massive success, which facilitated a lot of new partnership work, we also realised that the time we held the session wasn't convenient for a lot of voluntary sector participants. We have decided to hold another Open Day outside of working hours to allow members of the voluntary sector and members of the public to visit and see what we have to offer and discuss their ideas for groups or projects they think they want to start. We have already started planning this Open Day and are confident that we will have a similar response.

This case study was written by Katherine Mason-Gage, our Northern Network project facilitator for Groundwork South and North Tyneside. You can find out more about her work at West Boldon Lodge below.

WEST BOLDON LODGE: <https://www.northernnetwork.org/groundwork-south-and-north-tyneside/>



WELCOME

What we did

RECIPES

Running a **Cook & Eat** session

Vegetable fritters – spring

Vegetable stew – summer

Pumpkin risotto – autumn

Beetroot soup – winter

HOW TO ACTIVITIES

Make a wreath

Use an apple press

Make a gate

Install a sign

Maintain a willow structure

Sow a wildflower meadow

Set up a worm farm

HOW TO GUIDES

Use social media

Promote your hub

Set up a ‘friends of’ group

Work with vulnerable people

Work with partner groups

Run a regular activity

Carry out a risk assessment

Find funding for your green hub

CASE STUDIES

Community engagement in shared garden

Running an open day to build partnerships

» **Planting a native hedgrow in the park**

Building a sensory garden

Fundraising for your hub

CASE STUDIES

A NATIVE HEDGEROW PLANTING EVENT

Green Community Hub: Clay Pitts Park, Morecambe

Author: Angela Nagorski, Project Facilitator, Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside

The friends of the Clay Pitts park subcommittee held a native hedgerow-planting event within the park.

18 participants attended the park including volunteers from the Bay Blue print to Recovery Group.

The event was devised to allow local people to meet the subgroup, communicate the plans, receive feedback, and meet the Bay volunteers and tree officers from Lancaster City Council. The Event was prepared by the Friends of Clay Pitt’s park subcommittee consisting of people who live near the park, Lancaster and Morecambe City Council Realm office, LCC parks and the Bay Blueprint to recovery. The MENCAP clubhouse was involved opening greeting and providing refreshments and toilet use.

THE CHALLENGE

The park had been the target of anti social behaviour and the community were scared to use it. Five of the new participants who attended on the day had poor mental health and 3 participants had physical disabilities and had significant issues around isolation and had been the focus of anti-social behaviour in the park. The Friends subgroup wanted to let people know they were working in the park and were available to support the community with issues they faced.



THE SOLUTION

The event was designed to improve communication, and support the Friends in their plans for the area. It also allowed participants to enjoy learning a new green skill. The event showed people how to plant native hedgerows and habitat creation, supporting local biodiversity. The chair of the friends led the session to local participants and felt confident after her mentorship from the Green Facilitator (myself). The boundaries of the park planted to protect local people’s gardens after a consultation with local residents.



RESULTS

The event was fun and many hedge whips planted. It gave some of the participants the opportunity to share their knowledge and meet people in their local community. It also gave people some time outside in a green space and increase their heart rates. It also reduced isolation and gave them the opportunity to relax. The chair of the Subcommittee reported she felt more confidence leading this group and teaching a green gardening skill.

LESSONS LEARNT

This event was reasonably cheap to run and delivered an increase in community links, communication about the friends and their aims and support from the local people, and a net gain in biodiversity for the park and local area. It increases the support for the Friends aims and a better dialog with the local people. All hedge whips were obtained by the subcommittee from the Woodland trust.



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CASE STUDIES

BUILDING
A SENSORY
GARDEN

FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS IN
WEST GORTON COMMUNITY PARK



Since the Friends of West Gorton Park were formed, they have wanted to create a sensory garden to support local children with additional needs access their park.



The Friends worked with the community to develop the garden, helping them to choose and plant the new features, with support and direction from Groundwork’s landscape architects and Green Community Hub facilitators. The Project team were also able to bring in some corporate volunteers from a nearby construction firm to help finish off any last-minute changes and make sure it was ready for the community to use.

The garden includes scented plant choices such as lemon balm and lavender, as well as edible food growing beds with herbs, fruit, and vegetables. It is hoped that by providing such a dynamic and vibrant space, the new garden will enable more people to connect with nature and enhance their feelings of wellbeing and mindfulness. The garden was opened at a community fun day, with over 50 members of the community attending, alongside the Lord Mayor and local MP.



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CASE STUDIES

WILD ISLES FUNDRAISING CASE STUDY

We spoke to Jonathan at Horton Community Farm who has recently raised £11,896 through Aviva’s Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund to ask him how his experience of the process was.



After reading through the advice on publicity from Aviva on the website <https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/learn> they decided to make a video to support their need and to help people understand the site as it is currently and what they’re hoping to get out of the fundraising (https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/urbangreenoasis?fbclid=IwAR20hJiwbT7C-86Q2uMOWMP_mXDHEaeCBR67arsfgTnWUiKS-vQEexoPt78). They then set a target that they wanted to achieve.

A common misconception of crowdfunding is that you need to set a realistic target that you will most likely achieve otherwise you risk losing the money that you managed to raise. This isn’t true, and Horton Community Farm were able to set a stretch target of £50,000 which meant that they didn’t miss out on any opportunity to increase the amount raised. They originally set a target of £10,000 which was what they were realistically hoping to achieve. Another common misconception is that if you don’t hit your target, you don’t get any of the money you have raised. This is not true for all funds, and wasn’t true for this one, which was great news for Horton Community Farm!

Horton Community Farms project fits in well with the criteria for Wild Isles funding so for every £1 that was raised, Aviva matched it with another £2. The advice from Wild Isles was to target/concentrate on support closest to the Farm, such as people who had benefitted from the service, people who had been on site, and organisations who had worked with them before. They ended up raising £11,896.

Overall it was a good experience and one that the team would do again and were pleased to be a part of.

<https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/urbangreenoasis/updates#start>



ANY TIPS?

“I think the website’s advice is very helpful. We followed their advice and targeted people close to us quite heavily but went as broad as possible at the same time. The biggest donations came from people we know but some still came in from the wider public. We did a video as they recommended which may have helped...and we did quite a few reminders on Facebook. We created a page on our website but not sure if that helped. The website provides graphics of raised amount milestones etc to use on social media which we used too.

We raised £4000 from donations from individuals, £7500 was added by the Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund and £400 of Aviva money was channelled to us by 10 Aviva employees.”

EXAMPLES:

Horton Community Farm
17th July 2023

Thanks. Such generosity! We are on track...

Hello to our amazing Crowdfunder supporters, we have been bowled over by your generosity so far and are also hugely grateful to the RSPB and WWF for their match funding.

We have a couple of weeks left to make it to £10,000 and give our project the best chance of preserving a vital urban green space for the long term and being able to continue to provide activities for the community that make nature fun and engaging.

Do you have a moment to share our campaign via social media to help us get over the line? <http://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/urbangreenoasis>

Best regards,
From the Horton Community Farm team,
Jonathan, Maryam and Laura

Thanks to your generous donations and 2:1 match funding from RSPB and the WWF, we have raised £11,896! This money will fund one volunteer session per week for a year, and will enable our projects to run smoothly and successfully.

We are so proud of this achievement and want to say a huge thank you to every person who donated and shared this Crowd Funder.

Massive love from the HCF team,
Jonathan, Maryam, and Ru (aka Laura)
Facebook