

TRANSITION CHICHESTER



19 Jubilee Road, Chichester PO19 7XB

11. February 2018

GROW CHICHESTER Report for The Nineveh Charitable Trust

We have had a busy year making structural improvements to our two community gardens and extending the range of our service users. All this has been done on top of the regular work required to maintain two large garden plots.

Regular gardening sessions

Four weekly gardening sessions are organised during the growing season, and two weekly sessions through the winter months. One weekly session is led by Ed Bowring, our therapeutic horticulturalist while the other sessions are led by volunteers from Transition Chichester. In addition, Ed runs fortnightly sessions during the summer months for young people with mental health issues. Volunteers and service users meet as a group a couple of times during the year to discuss plans for the garden.

The Wednesday sessions led By Ed Bowring are regularly attended by 10 to 12 service users, the majority of whom are vulnerable in one way or another. Other sessions are attended by 6 to 8 volunteers - although this can drop to 3 or 4 on a cold winter morning!

It is four years since we took over the plot in the Bishop's Palace Garden. The plot had not seen regular use for several years, and it was a challenge to bring it back into good condition. This summer was our best growing season yet, providing ample produce for service users to take home. Surplus produce was available to passers-by for a donation, and we raised enough this way to cover overheads like seeds, netting, tool replacements and so on. In addition, we were able to donate vegetables regularly to the local food bank and to the Glassworks, which provides daily lunches for homeless people.

Physical improvements

At our plot in the Bishop's Palace Garden, three new high-level raised beds have been constructed, which enable users with mobility problems to work comfortably. A polytunnel has been erected which allows service users to work under cover and attend gardening sessions all-year round. A number of new compost bins have been constructed, and we are moving towards becoming self-sufficient in compost.

In our Oaklands Park plot we now have a shed offering safe storage space for tools, and a viable water source. These features have enabled us to work more efficiently on the site. We are creating

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wildflower areas to foster biodiversity, and have planted an edible hedge along one side of the garden, using whips provided by the Woodland Trust.

Outreach

We made contact this year with the Alzheimer's Society and integrate service users with dementia in our Wednesday sessions. These sessions also include users with partial sight, restricted mobility, Parkinsons and a recovering stroke patient.

We have established links with a number of other organisations supporting vulnerable adults. One of our regular helpers comes to us from The Apuldram Centre for Adults with Learning Disabilities. As mentioned previously, we also provide sessions for young people with mental health problems, who come to us via MIND.

We always end the sessions with a cup of tea and a friendly chat. The sessions provide a real lifeline for people who are socially isolated, and the amount of work they get through is amazing.

We should add, that through our open-garden policy, we receive numerous visitors, who leave us convinced of the benefits of community gardens. These visits often provide a useful opportunity for swapping garden advice too.

Future plans

Our main concern is to continue to fund the sessions facilitated by Ed, our horticultural therapist, who has been instrumental in attracting a wide range of service users to the garden and has played a huge role in its success.

Other than that, we are planning to create a pond at the Bishop's Palace plot to encourage biodiversity and provide a home for frogs who we hope will help us control our slug population. In Oaklands Park we are planning to experiment with rainwater gardens to harvest water for use on our crops. We also plan to create safe pathways around our gardens to prevent falls when the ground is slippery.

With this report we are providing a number of photos to give you a glimpse of the gardens and our fantastic 'team'.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Nineveh Charitable Trust, for their generous help with this project.

Julia Sander

Secretary to the Trustees of Transition Chichester

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