



Mr Robert Lewis  
Nineveh Charitable Trust  
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23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019

Dear Mr Lewis,

In April last year, the Nineveh Charitable Trust kindly supported the Farm with a grant of £14,174 towards year one of the Wildlife and Wellbeing Project. This has enabled us to deliver a variety of wildlife conservation, land management and horticulture activities to people experiencing disadvantage, whilst communicating the importance of nature conservation to the wider public. As we end the year's funding, we wish to provide you with a report on the progress and outcomes of your support.

### **Project Delivery**

During the funded period, our dedicated Volunteer team has been instrumental in achieving a range of outcomes and objectives, described below:

1. Engaged 138 volunteers in the care and conservation of the Farm's green spaces so far.
2. Delivered 102 land management, conservation and nature-based sessions, described below.
3. Carried out one plant survey, which is currently being fed into the 2020-23 Boiling Wells Management Plan. This is due to be completed before the end of March 2020.
4. Ran volunteer led stalls at four events, including the Farm's Apple Day, Summer Fair and Winter Fair, as well as Picton Street Winter Fayre. At these events we sold various wildlife friendly products to the local community, emphasising the importance of wildlife conservation.

**Activities delivered include:**

### **Land Management Placements**

We have run three 12-week placements (currently in our fourth programme), with 6 volunteers attending each programme at Boiling Wells, our outdoor education reserve. A wide range of people have engaged in the sessions, including people suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), head injuries, long-term unemployed, Asperger's syndrome, depression and people in recovery, amongst other problems. These sessions are the most physical that we offer and have been a popular choice for people wishing to get their 'boots muddy' as part of their therapy, whilst learning a range of new practical skills. Activities that we have undertaken since April have included: rebuilding our amphitheatre, which will enable us to run events and weddings to generate future revenue; extending our woodland by planting several oak trees; planting an edible hedge along a field boundary; repairing steps and re-wood chipping paths; building a kitchenette and storage in our roundhouse, which has enabled various groups to site share and increase the number of people accessing the site for educational and therapeutic sessions.

### **Nature and Craft Placements**

We have run three 12-week placements (currently in our fourth programme), with 6 volunteers attending each programme at Boiling Wells and our education facility at the Farm. People who have benefitted from the session include those suffering from depression, long-term unemployed, PTSD, epilepsy and chronic muscular pain, amongst others. As our most creative programme, it has been a popular choice for creatively minded people and those unable to do physical activities. Products we have made include: bird boxes; insect hotels; solitary bee homes; bat boxes; goats milk soap (using milk from our goats); beeswax lip balms (using wax from our beehives); willow pea climbers; a variety of chutneys and jams (using produce grow on site and from our numerous fruit trees), amongst other things. All products that we have made have been sold in our Farm shop, as well as at several events and markets held across Bristol, which have been run by volunteers who have attended the sessions. As well promoting the importance of wildlife conservation to members of the public, running the stalls has improved people's confidence and increased their interaction with their local community.

### **Conservation and Horticulture Sessions**

Our weekly drop-in session, delivered at Boiling Wells, has consistently engaged 10-15 volunteers from a variety of different backgrounds. These have included: those with learning difficulties; people in recovery; people experiencing anxiety and depression; BME communities; long-term unemployed, Asperger's syndrome; homeless; amongst others. Delivered by two members of staff, the Conservation and Volunteer Manager and Volunteer Officer, the sessions have been designed to offer both physical tasks and gentler therapeutic activities, which has enabled a wide variety of people to access our service. Activities have included: planting and weaving a willow dome, which is frequently used by forest school groups; repairing steps, paths and other site infrastructure; bee keeping; rebuilding our amphitheatre; building and replacing raised beds; propagating and growing vegetables; turning our compost bays and using compost for raised beds; managing our herb garden; carving a totem pole under the guidance of a retired sign carver (lead volunteer); preparing for weddings and events held at Boiling Wells, which enables the Farm to generate unrestricted funds; amongst other activities.

### **Community Action Days**

We have delivered four Community Action Days as part of our weekend events, which have enabled people from the local community, who don't otherwise have access to our services, to volunteer on the project. Events have included May Day, Summer Fair, Apple Day and Winter Fair. Volunteer tasks at the events include: assisting in apple tasting activities; running children's creative activities; fire marshalling; helping the event run smoothly. As well as being an integral part of the Farm's fundraising machinery, the events are very well attended (over 7000 people) and provide families the opportunity to engage in our inner-city green spaces.

### **Practical Conservation Training Sessions**

To date, we have delivered two one-off training sessions, held at Boiling Wells. These were delivered in partnership with A Band of Brothers (ABOB), a local men's group who mentor young disadvantaged adults in practical tasks and therapeutic outdoor activities. Their objective is closely aligned with the Farm's vision to develop people's knowledge and interest in nature, as well improve their practical skills for future employment. Activities include: rebuilding steps so people can gain access to our woodland; building two raised bed. The Farm and ABOB have developed a strong relationship and are planning to deliver further one-off sessions in the near future.

## Social Impact

The Wildlife and Wellbeing project has had an extremely positive impact on people's lives, which has been measured using entry and exit reviews of those attending the 12 week placements and weekly drop-in sessions. Of everyone reviewed:

- 94% of volunteers reported that their knowledge of wildlife conservation, horticulture and the environment has improved. Volunteers told us that they learnt: *'how to manage trees'*; *'how to identify trees'*; *'that native plants are better for indigenous wildlife'*; *'that bees can be solitary or social'*; *'how to manage land to increase biodiversity'*.
- 94% of volunteers reported that they have learnt new skills whilst volunteering with us, including: *'carpentry and using power tools'*; *'sawing and working with wood'*; *'how to measure accurately'*; *'digging out brambles'*; *'how to use tools safely'*. However, only 31% of people told us that they are using these skills in other volunteering, training and employment opportunities that they have taken up since they started with us, as many people had started roles outside of the environmental sector, such as at volunteering at Marie Curie charity shop or starting a part-time employment as a librarian and care worker. Only those who started volunteering or training in outdoor roles, such as with the Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Windmill Hill City Farm and a gardening internship said they are using skills learnt at the Farm.
- 100% of volunteers reported that their overall physical and mental wellbeing has improved as a direct result of volunteering outdoors at the Farm. Breaking this down, 88% reported that they spend more time outside and do more physical exercise; 58% feel more confident; 71% feel happier; 65% feel more motivated.
- 88% of people reported that volunteering at the Farm has helped them make new friends and connections, and they feel less isolated.

Comments that people have made include:

*'Because of the warmth and ease of your delivery I was actually able to progress all the way into being able to hear, follow, understand and complete the task. Your consistent encouragement, kindness and skill in supporting me was a great part of this. I have begun to believe I can recover, think, understand and participate again. It even gives me a little hope that I will be able to work again.'*

Conservation and Horticulture Volunteer

*'Just wanted to say that I'm really happy that I joined the volunteering group on Tuesdays. I've had a bit of a recent flair up of anxiety and being able to come to Boiling Wells and be in such a nice positive space with nice people and things to do when feeling fragile helped ground me loads. Felt much better during and after the session today so thanks to you and all involved for giving people such a positive opportunity.'*

Land Management Volunteer

## Project Future

Once again, we would like to thank the Nineveh Charitable Trust for your support. Attached to this letter are photos of our volunteers engaged in activities. As you can see from this report, your support has had a massive impact on the lives of a number of disadvantaged adults, as well as increased the wildlife value and access of the Farm's sites, which has enabled the local community to engage with a healthier environment.

We would be grateful if you would consider funding the Wildlife and Wellbeing Project for a further year, so that we can continue improving our sites and engaging those most at need across Bristol. As described in our first application, we wish to deliver the Wildlife and Wellbeing Project over two years, at a total cost of £83,982, including staff salaries, resources and materials, marketing and publicity, refreshments, equipment, training, management costs, and project overheads (see Appendix 1 for financial breakdown). Thanks to your kind donation of £14,174, which covered 50% of the Conservation and Volunteer Manager's salary in the first year, we were able to achieve a great deal. To optimise our impact further we are asking the Nineveh Charitable Trust to support the project in its second year, with a grant of £14,755, which will again cover 50% of the Conservation and Volunteer Manager's salary. We will secure the outstanding balance through applications to other trusts and foundations and generated income.

I have enclosed a 2 page summary as per your guidelines, a separate Proposal budget, and photos of the volunteers' achievements over the past year (3 copies of each). Our financial statements can be found on <https://www.swcityfarm.co.uk/vision-and-plans/>.

Please do not hesitate to ask if you require further detail.

Yours sincerely

Alex Bowsher  
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