

Northampton Hope Centre: Report to the Nineveh Trust

April 2022

In our original bid in 2017, we said we would use the funding as follows:

'To part fund the salary costs of a garden trainer/grower, who will lead the training of people in horticulture. This post is crucial. We have land, we have all other set up funding for polytunnels and equipment, we have our own recycled tools, and we have a volume of funding for training which requires match funding to draw down. We need to kick start this project with paid time to train people and get it going. We anticipate paying a salary of up to £28000 for the grower at full time and anything you give will be spent entirely on this item.'

The funding you awarded was use directly for that purpose in the second year.

Project Timeline



From this:



To this:

The project has been fully operational since the period of our last report in 2018 and has expended dramatically since then.

We started offering off site garden maintenance and landscaping in Summer 2019.



The Finnis Scott and Leathersellers trusts funded a minibus to bring service services to the site in summer 2019.

We started teaching the growing of veg to the public in 2019



We have groups on site everyday and as well as people accessing from Hope's own homelessness, mental health and addiction projects, we also now run an ecotherapy programme which commenced in October 2020. This gets referrals from social prescribers and includes people with are older and have isolation issues.

We grow a significant volume of food which we supply to our foodbanks.

We are opening a new area this growing season offering the ecotherapy and around 0.2 of an acre to add to the existing 0.6. We have fundraised extensively for this and the Finnis Scott trust, RHS and National Garden Scheme have all contributed.

Please watch our short film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSDRHITdBPk> and this one, which out the garden in context with everything else we do: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dn4U32SQTU>

Staffing

The former gardener who we reported on last time, James Boddington, left in January 2019. He was replaced by Joe Cummings, shown above, who remains our gardener today. He is a very experienced gardener with Level 2 qualifications who has run his own gardening businesses. Again his salary consumed the whole of your grant made for the 2018-2019 year and it remains a challenge funding his post.

Our ecotherapist is 3 days a week and she is funded by the Masonic Foundation since October 2020 and runs until 2023.

Spend

The current annual budget is here:

Cost item	Value
Gardener salary costs	35000 ¹
Ecotherapy salary costs	18000
Equipment and consumables	5000
Overheads (accountancy/insurance)	2500
Capital costs (eg new greenhouses, ecotherapy area)	7000
Other revenue (travel etc)	1000
Total	68500

Progress

This project, although a struggle to fund in full, especially for revenue items, continues to thrive and expand. We have received Garfield Weston Foundation funding for this year that part covers the cost of the gardener.

We continue to win Northampton/East Midlands/ Britain in Bloom awards



¹ Includes on costs at 8% and includes additional summer seasonal staffing

Achievement of benefits

We said in our original bid:

- The project will benefit the environment: we will turn urban land that is currently only grass or not under cultivation into thriving growing eco-systems with capacity to produce food and improve pollination in nearby gardens and allotments ACHIEVED
- We will provide opportunities for gardening as therapy for groups of clients, from Hope and elsewhere, with benefits for such issues as mental health and substance misuse ACHIEVED and exceeded
- We will create work opportunities for garden trainers and managers and for trainees ACHIEVED
- We will provide training opportunities for people with complex needs to give them a way back into society without reliance on charity or benefits ACHIEVED
- We will create access points to healthy food within food deserts ACHIEVED
- We will reduce food miles and add to bio-diversity inside Northampton ACHIEVED
- We will regenerate unused land ACHIEVED

In terms of your aims, we said:

- The Grant will improve the health and wellbeing of people in acute poverty by providing cheap, accessible fruit and veg, and of the growers, as above ACHIEVED
- It will provide opportunity to study horticulture and widen awareness of the natural environment amongst learners and recipients of food and those adjacent to the land used, who will be able to co-garden and share the produce ACHIEVED
- Study of opportunities in land management – although focused on urban land management, there will be valuable lessons about urban food production and use of urban land that arise. NOT fully achieved

We haven't achieved an evaluation yet but form an exemplar of good practice. We have created and lead a local network of community growers – see <https://goodfoodwnorthants.org/wnorthantscommunitygarden.html> - and work as part of the West Northants Sustainable Food Place promoting growing as a contribution to sustainable food systems. A contract to promote community growing has just been awarded to us as part of a wider food project from West Northants Public Health.

Summary

Since the end of your last funding in 2019 the project flourishes. Our plans for this year are ambitious; to continue to offer the benefits of gardening to people in need, but also to sell more affordable food boxes to people on lower incomes as a source of income for us, and to complete our ecotherapy area.

We hope that the trust may be willing to fund us again this year and we will produce a bid if this is welcomed.

Thank you for your essential support that helped us to start our work.

Read about us on our website: <https://hopeenterprises.org.uk/gardening.html>