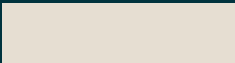


harvest @home



GROWING SPACES



Report on expansion of Harvest @ Home
Greenspace Gardens via the Growing Spaces
funding.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS PROJECT IS INTENDED TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN AREAS OF DEPRIVATION

OUR GOAL

Increase well being in the community through creation of new growing spaces to support culturally relevant food growing for those with financial, social, and medical vulnerability

OUR PATH

- We more than doubled the number of growing spaces
- We supporting existing growing spaces and homegrowers
- We strengthened networks and partnerships
- We Worked with other nature-based providers
- We collected data and insights to evaluate and improve our approach

OUR VISION

Long term transformational change through building local foundations for food security, social interaction, and empowerment for the vulnerable.

OVERVIEW

KIDLINGTON, BICESTER, BANBURY GREENSPACE GARDENS

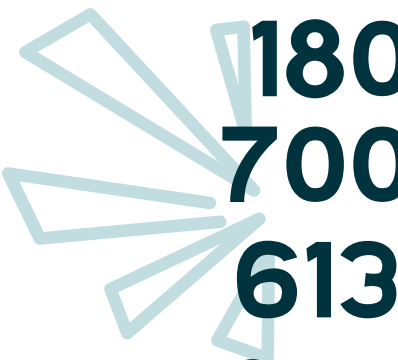
We created safe spaces in gardens so outdoor space can be used for safeguarded activities, social prescribing, reflection and relaxation/healing.

Greenspace gardens are intended to empower individuals to be part of their own food provision and to increase social connectedness as well as connectedness to nature.

This dual-flow model works well in Cherwell Collective in Kidlington and these funds supported expansion of that model into Bicester and Banbury in addition to the physical creation of new community gardens, and support for existing gardens in those areas.

In 2021 we managed 4 Greenspace gardens in Kidlington. We now manage 12 such spaces in the district: = 6 in Kidlington, 3 in Bicester, 3 in Banbury. We have identified 2 more ideal locations in Cherwell District for gardens and are actively seeking funding to support that work in addition to maintenance of these spaces long term.

IN THE LAST 15 MONTHS


180

Regular workdays held at Greenspace Gardens in Cherwell District

700

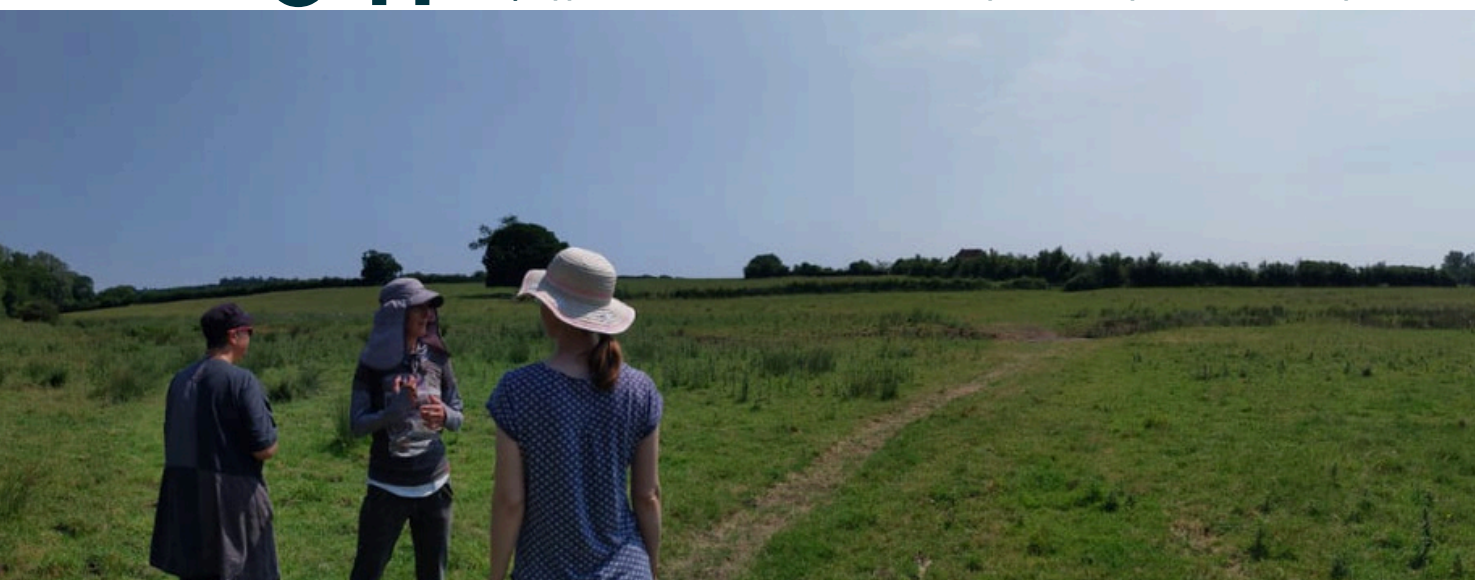
People attended special activities/ open days in gardens in addition to....

613

People attended regular garden workdays including 114 SEN or BAME individuals

841

Views of our Public Garden map:
<https://www.cherwellcollective.com/about-us/harvest-home/>



AIMS

Cherwell Collective worked with CDC to run activities to promote access and connection to the natural environment, to reduce loneliness, and to promote healthy eating.

NEW SPACES

- Kidlington: Lyne Road Green
- Bicester: Garth Park
- Bicester: Grebe Road
- Bicester: Nightingale
- Banbury: BYHP
- Banbury: RVS: Cornhill Centre
- Banbury: Chatsworth Drive (Adult assisted living)
- Banbury: Redlands (Coming Soon)



The "Kidlington Unicorn" installed in an existing GreenSpace Garden.

BICESTER

HARVESTATHOME.BICESTER@GMAIL.COM

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WE HAVE THREE SITES IN BICESTER ALL RELATIVELY NEAR ONE ANOTHER BUT PROVIDING THE COMMUNITY WITH A DIFFERENT BENEFIT.

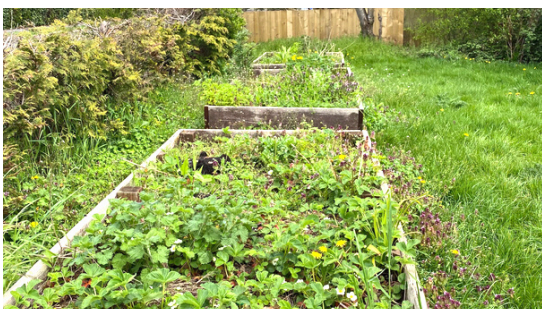
Partners: Bicester Green, BBOWT, Bicester Town Council, Nai's House, Bicester Green Gym, Bicester Fridge



Garth Park Walled Garden. Partnership site for individuals who need private access to garden. We have repaired and created more substantial growing space including repairing a derelict greenhouse. Long term plans include community nursery and gardening course delivery on site.



Grebe Road. An outdated play area was converted to raised beds by Bicester Town Council. The beds were not suitable/ productive, were waterlogged, and not useful. Nearby residents joined us to lead transformation of the space for humans and wildlife.



Nightingale. An overgrown set of raised beds has been converted into arbored fruit and flower beds that are fully accessible to the public on grounds known locally to be safe spaces for LGBT community. See large photo at top for "after" image

We recently engaged Bicester Village in corporate work days in Bicester. Take a look at after photos below....



BANBURY

BANBURYHARVEST@GMAIL.COM

[FACEBOOK GROUP 242 FOLLOWERS](#)

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TARGETED SITES FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Banbury Youth Homelessness Project originally intended to be a partnership with BBOWT but which has included work with local Scouts, support from businesses, and regular upkeep by local vulnerable community who had previously been Cherwell Larder users. In particular, a family with a SEN father and child have not only become regular volunteers at this garden but also have been supported to start growing their own food at home. They report substantial well being improvement and will be assessed as a case study for evaluation.



RVS: Cornhill Centre a small tidy up and few raised beds have made a massive difference to the mostly elderly users of this site. Long term options include more comprehensive use of this centre for nutrition-focused outreach alongside gardens.

Campden House is an assisted living site for adults in Banbury which we have equipped with a growing space. This is a private site where we consult and provide support and would longer term like to be more able to offer courses and better evaluate impact.

We have recently agreed to pursue another site in Banbury to support those with additional mental health challenges on Redlands site and are still looking to collaborate with the Hill in the future, provided we can secure funding.

SUPPORTING ONGOING WORK

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In addition to the regular garden work we directly facilitate outdoor time, we also try a number of different strategies to get people building healthier habits:

TAKE HOME TUTORIALS

GARDEN REUSE

GIFTS

KIDS CRAFTS

HEALTHY EATING

ON-SITE EXPERIENCES

We have also introduced more social interaction into our activities: houseplant repotting in the winter with refreshments and conversations and a sense of community. Teas and biscuits at events in addition to water. So far participant feedback suggests this creates a shared "experience" and is one of the reasons they come back.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

We created a living sculpture in one of our GreenSpace Gardens this year for the coronation. Over 50 volunteers were involved in creating this sculpture, and many brought their own plants to contribute to it. People report feeling connected in new ways through those projects and have already asked us to make more in every park in Kidlington.

EXPERT-LED TRAININGS



GROWING TOGETHER

Seed saving workshops
DIY wormery
Permaculture principles
Seed and seedling swaps



COMMUNITY COMPOST

3 Community bays
Public one on one sessions
On-site trainings



HEALTHY EATING

Portions and Proteins
Eating the rainbow
Cooking on a budget

NETWORK LINKS

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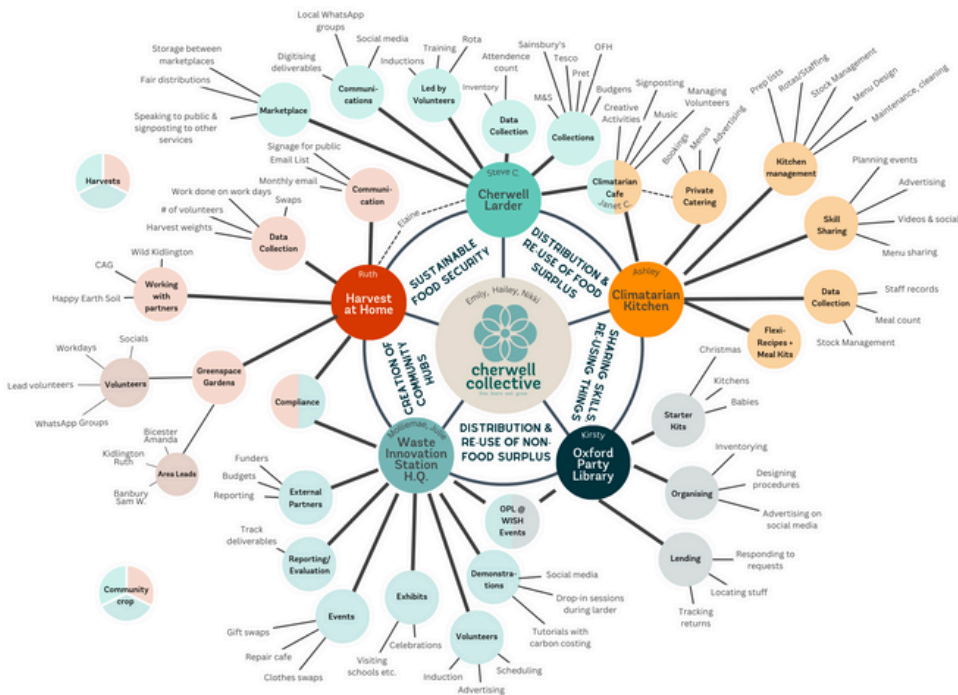


Figure: A visualisation of how Cherwell Collective is structured

We had a multi-tier communications approach wherein Harvest @ Home team directly contacted local social prescribers, we sent several different types of letters to local GPS, put up posters, and hosted open days.

You can view a selection of comms here for recruiting people to our spaces.

- Each group around the central hub has contacted local GPs and connected to care networks
- We recruit through any group with the end goal of having people engage in growing and outdoor activity
- Our work supports evidence-based theory of behavioural change that the garden work, which is slowest/longest reward is lowest retention
- Increased community growing spaces like ours are part of county-wide waste strategy to influence policy change
- We also engaged with stakeholders at multiple events including CDC meetings, local festivals/open days, older people celebrations, on site in Banbury, and at Bicester Town Council meetings.
- We have also been featured in social prescription blogs and spoken at OCC Social Prescribing research conferences.

INITIAL LOGIC MODEL

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We hypothesized that well being improvement and loneliness reduction both result from our activities as outlined in this model here: [Logic Model Draft](#)

We are currently drafting a bid to test that model in a structured, formal format with colleagues from Public Health and University of Oxford.



GROWING

We engage people in growing together, and engage growers in sharing skills and resources. The more people growing, the more people connect to nature

TIME SPENT OUTDOORS

We know well being increases with time spent outdoors, so does being connected to nature

CLIMATE AWARENESS

Connecting to nature is correlated with more awareness of climate issues and increased carbon literacy

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

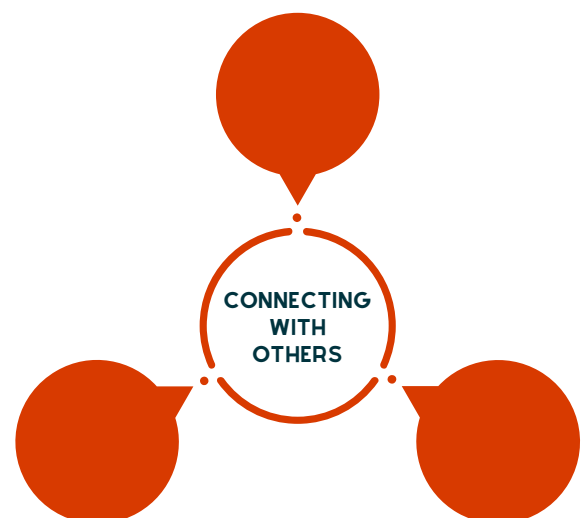
Feeling a sense of community is one of the most often stated "perks" of our services and model, so the plan is to increase the community and size of our bubble through hubs

INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY

Investing time in others increases connections and social capital

FATE OF THE HUMAN RACE

People feel a "greater purpose" working with us and that has benefits to health that we think might be preventative against loneliness and general physical ill health



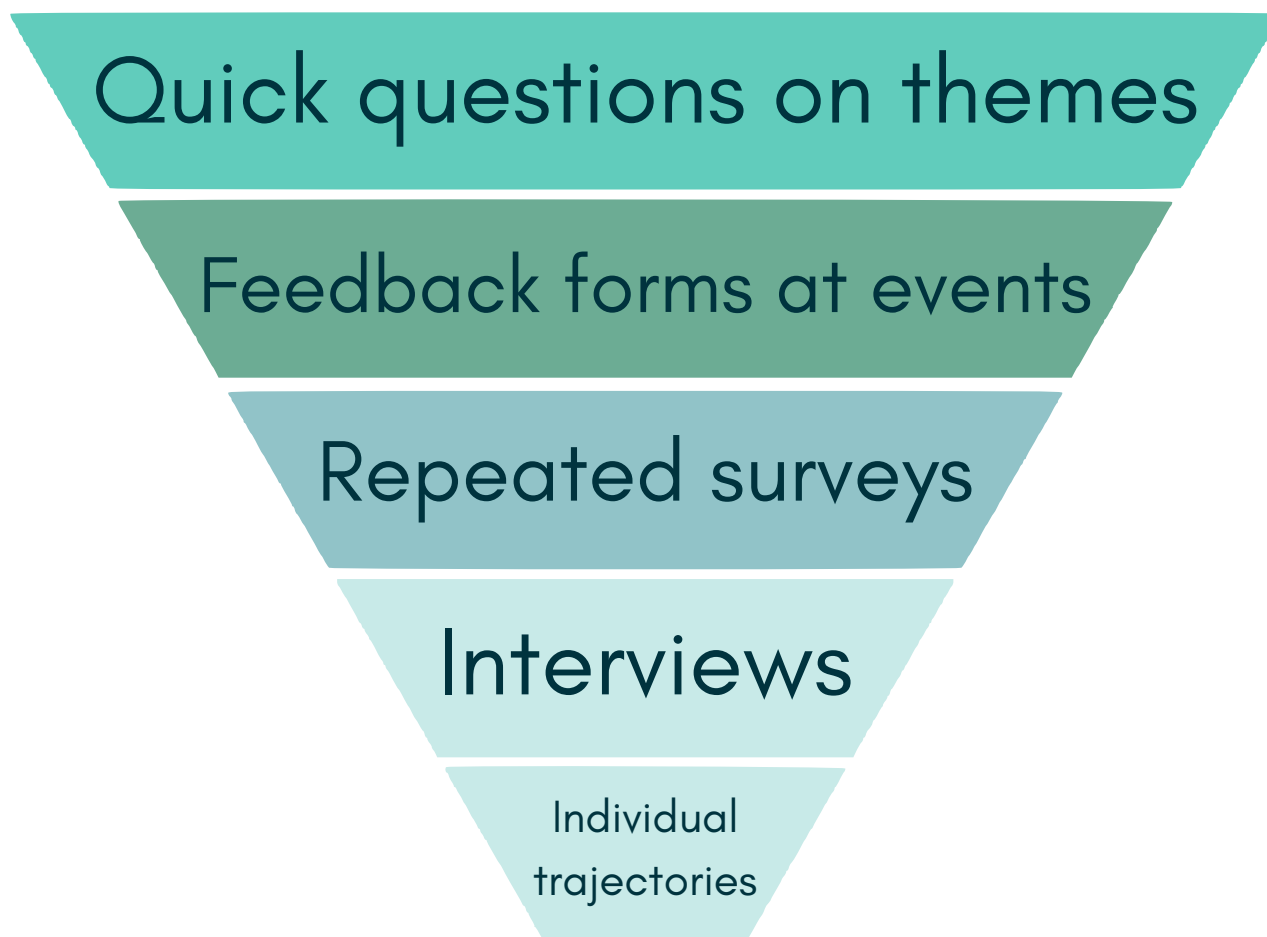
EVALUATION

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Our evaluation framework facilitates real-time community shaping and provides evidence for our impact. Interim Reports linked here

We use several streams to evaluate our impact:

- Surveys to collect demographics, wellbeing, connectedness measures, attitudes, and behaviour patterns
- Deep interviews to understand the stories of change in people who participate in our project
- Feedback during specific climate action events
- Quick questions/ open ended statements to look at broad strokes trends in attitudes



EVALUATION: OVERVIEW

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COMMUNITY CROP

Six schools started growing

3+ tonnes of produce gleaned from
local farms and estates

6 tonnes of food grown locally

LINKS TO DEEP INTERVIEWS WITH
OUR GREENSPACE GARDEN
PARTICIPANTS ARE HERE:

[AUTUMN 22](#)
[SPRING 23](#)

IN THE WORDS OF OUR BENEFICIARIES

"I THINK ANY CONTACT WITH
GROWING THINGS, NATURE,
PLANTS AND SO ON IS
BENEFICIAL TO PEOPLE'S
MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.
YOU KNOW, ANY OPPORTUNITY
YOU CAN GIVE THEM TO DO
SOMETHING LIKE THAT IS
GOOD."

"I ENGAGE WITH THESE KINDS OF
ACTIVITIES PARTLY BECAUSE I
HAVE MS. I FEEL THAT IT HELPS ME
TO BE OUTSIDE AND ACTIVE."

"I FELT SO MUCH BETTER FOR IT,
JUST BEING AROUND PEOPLE,
HAVING DONE SOMETHING
PRODUCTIVE AND HELPFUL. BEING
OUTDOORS IN THE SUNSHINE AND
HAD I NOT BEEN INVITED, I WOULD
HAVE STAYED INDOORS AND
ESCALATED A LOT WORSE. THEY
CREATED A REALLY SAFE PLACE TO
GO OVER TO YOU KNOW, I FEEL
SAFE GOING THERE."

"I THINK BECAUSE OF THE PANDEMIC, I'VE HAD A BIT
OF A ROUGH TIME WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH OVER
THE LAST YEAR, AND THAT WAS ALSO PART OF THE
MOTIVATION TO FIND A PROJECT, THAT IS LIKELY TO
BENEFIT MY MENTAL HEALTH AS WELL. I LIKE BEING
OUT AND BEING WITH SOME OTHER PEOPLE IS
REALLY, REALLY NICE. I MUST SAY, ALSO THE WHOLE
KIND OF NATURE CONNECTION."

CHALLENGES

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SPACE

Each garden and what you can do there are very different. This has broad appeal and should be determined by local residents. Take Bicester:

Garth is going to be the safe space for wellbeing, it's more private

Grebe is going to be one for the immediate community to gather around and work together in and share the benefits. It's quite wildlife focused, and could help lonely people in the area to come together.

Nightingale is community based, and a more fun and relaxed space, and might include more food production.

TIME

It's very time consuming and difficult to engage the vulnerable. There are very real challenges getting people into gardens (even with the help of social prescribers). There are very real challenges getting them to continue coming to gardens, and finding safe and suitable tasks. There is also a serious "seasonal" element to this work. During the summer we have more requests for volunteers than we can handle, and in the winter we have no one to maintain the space.

RESOURCES

One of the learnings from our Bicester Lead is the impact of having a pictorial plan and how that inspires volunteers to work together and achieve a vision. We have noticed that previously in Kidlington as well. But it takes resources in terms of man hours and supplies to make a plan, as well as see that plan through. Moving forward ongoing funding will be needed for compost, publicity, organising, equipment, and the planning work for these gardens in addition to the leads who really hold that vision together.

LESSONS LEARNED

SEASONALITY

This work is very seasonal, as is the interest of social prescribers and their clients. On several occasions we had individuals prescribed time in the gardens who instead asked to be included in activities on site in Exeter Hall due to inclement weather. We are looking to increase the number of indoor activities during the winter months to support the realities of this seasonality.

INVESTMENT

There is a reality with growing spaces. Growing takes time, engaging the public takes time, and the long term investment in this work should reflect an understanding of the delay between work and reward that is part of a growing system, in addition to the reality of the long term well being and health benefits that cannot be realised within small funding terms. These projects should be funded for 5-10 years instead of 1 to accurately understand impact.

In Bicester it took almost a year before access was granted to space, we are still spending hours of administrative resources trying to solidify an agreement and to hold the town council to account for basic hookups that are obviously on site in addition to basic repairs. Other sites have been sold to developers in a matter of weeks after we identified their potential.

CONCLUSIONS

Fund growing spaces for longer term, 5 – 10 years. The first year is infrastructure and negotiating space, the next is planting and basic ground clearance/preparation. Year 3 you will see yield, Year 4 you will see an interest by people reluctant to participate in growing programs and Year 5 you can dream big.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

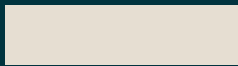
We have recently conducted a social return on investment (SROI) estimate of to quantify benefit of investment in our work. This is based on the average individual-level impact of using Cherwell Collective on life satisfaction as an increase of about 25% well-being. We know from user data that we have at least 900 unique monthly beneficiary households and the average household size is 2.5 in our population, so we can estimate 2250 unique monthly beneficiaries which includes people using growing spaces and people receiving food grown.

The estimate for SROI is 34.67 which means the investment from CDC in growing spaces returned £2 million in benefit to the community.

FUNDING

- We currently have bids under consideration that would fund our work from January 2024 potentially forever. Partners on those bids include:
 - Botley Solar Farm
 - Eden Projects
 - Oxford City Farm
 - Begbroke Science Park
 - Public Health/ NIHR
- We are actively seeking match funding and maintenance funding for our work through 2023 to support continuity until these legacy bids are realised.





*Cherwell Collective,
On behalf of Harvest @ Home 2023*