ROOT-AND-BRANCH OUT CIC

IMPACT REPORT 2023/2024

NURTURING COMMUNITY THROUGH NATURE

Our Aim

Nurture the needs of community through nature connection, food and healthy relationships within a culture of sustainability.

Our Objectives

Outdoor Nature Education
Connecting people of all ages and abilities to thrive through nature and nurturing environments.

Growing Together
Growing knowledge, skills, and networks through gardening, either out in the community or at our flagship garden, Growers Row.

Sustainable Food
Encouraging the people of Rutland and beyond to make sustainable, healthy choices in a climate conscious way.

Dear Friends,

The year since our last impact report has been full of wow moments!

We are continually grateful to our Rutland community for the collaborations that we can create because people say YES!

Believing that people can make change is of great importance to us as we continue to pursue our work around sustainability for our local area and the people within it.

Thanks,
Claire, Alex and Clare

FSA FOREST SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
RECOGNISED
Forest School Provider
www.forestschoolassociation.org

Forest School *for*
5 Local Primary Schools

TOTAL
443 Children Attended Forest School

10 Forest School Groups per week

426 Children for Crafternoons

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Forest School

We continue to provide the children of Rutland with long-term and regular sessions in woodland and natural environments for optimum impact. This year, we have added a Parent & Toddler Group and a new Early Years Home-Ed Group, both of which meet the needs of parents and children who value time outside in nature.

We have again collaborated with Rutland Family Hub Children's Centre to offer Play in the Garden at Growers Row and Dad's Days and Family Days at our Forest School sites across our county, enabling free accessible woodland play sessions.

The Duke of Edinburgh Awards

We have recently become a provider of The Duke of Edinburgh Award and have our first cohort of young people from the Home Education community who can access this provision. Each participant is working towards their own goals in volunteering and developing a new skill and a physical challenge. We are also offering skill building in map reading and camping skills in preparation for the expedition in September.

Crafternoons & Wild Workshops

This year, we held regular Crafternoons at Growers Row and rolled them out into the community, reaching youth groups and 426 children. Wild Workshops for adults and families have returned to our event calendar, starting with evening Star Gazing in February and an early start in May for the Dawn Chorus event.

Alternative Provision Status

After fulfilling the County Council criteria, we have been given the status of an Alternative Provision for children and young people who can't currently attend school. This means a child and family can choose to come to our educational provision for learning, play and support in our woodland environment. Currently we are working with several young people weekly who come for either one to one or very small group outdoor sessions.

Community Fridge

In March 2024, we opened two more Community Fridges in Rutland, Victoria Hall in Oakham and St. Mary's Church in Greetham. We also supported Welly's Work Place with Sunny Skies Enterprise C.I.C. in opening the Melton Mowbray Community Fridge.

These three new Community Fridges helped us expand the Rutland Community Fridges project with Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund (CCLF) Government funding, delivered by The National Lottery Community Fund.

This year, we have welcomed three new part-time staff and approximately 30 volunteers to our team. There have been 3121 visits within our diverse community and we have saved 11.6 tonnes of food. Taking the total number of visits up to 7574, and 35 tonnes of food saved since the project began in 2020.

The Community Fridge continues to collect surplus food from supermarkets, bakeries, and petrol stations. It is also gifted fresh, locally grown produce from Growers Row Shared Garden, Oakham Castle Garden, and private allotments.

Souper Space

Last year, we had great success running Souper Space, a regular Friday afternoon event offering a free bowl of nourishing soup made with surplus food and a warm place to sit and chat.

Souper Space continued for another Winter from October to the end of April with a soup offering, with a small core team of volunteer soup makers throughout this period. During the late Spring and Summer months, Souper Space becomes Super Space, offering refreshments and healthy food pop-ups! During the year, we have had a diverse range of organisations come along from the voluntary and statutory sectors to offer information about local services to hear the views of our customers.

Since May this year, we have collaborated with Peppers, who run the local Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafe, and they are available every week as a listening service for people who would like to talk.

Growers Row Shared Garden

Since opening in March 2021, we have had a steady flow of volunteers through all the seasons, reaching out across a broad range of demographics. This year, we have had 520 volunteer visits and welcomed many more for meetings, events, and garden tours.

In one year, we have harvested 326kg of produce, some of which we have been going home with volunteers and visitors. Any surplus is taken to the Rutland Community Fridges to benefit the wider community.

Growers Row hosts events and workshops that open up the garden to more people within the local community. This year we had Apple Pressing, Crafternoon sustainable craft sessions for children, Potato planting with children, bespoke gardening workshops with local groups and outdoor yoga for the whole family.

TOTAL
326kg
Produce

311
Children Visits

520
Volunteer Visits (Adults)

Linking Branches

The branches of our work, Education, Food, and Growing Together, all overlap; one project feeds another. The food we grow is shared with volunteers and the Community Fridge; the food at the Fridge is shared with people at the garden and children at Forest School; and the garden is used as an educational space for local children. These are just some of the ways our projects interlink.

Community Engagement Events

July 2023
Launched the quarterly Friends of Root-and-Branch Out Newsletter.

July 2023
Growers Row open to the Global Birdfair event.

September 2023
We hosted two professional development courses for staff and local organisations; Safeguarding Training with Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership and 'Supporting Children through Anxiety and Trauma' with Jon Cree.

October 2023
Week-long community engagement with #EatYourPumpkin Campaign.
World Mental Health Day community engaement event in Oakham

Nov 2023
Magical Lantern Walk

Feb 2024
Seed Swap event at Oakham Castle

May 2024
Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh visit Growers Row

Jun 2024
Hosting the Horticultural Marquee at the 190th Rutland County Show

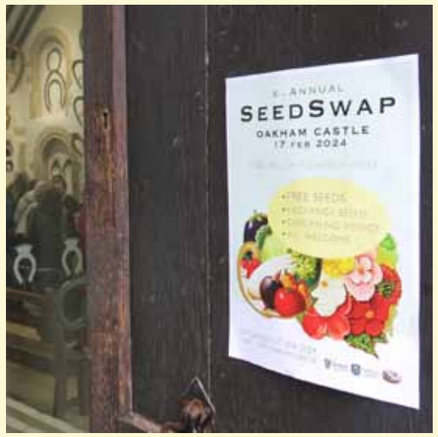
Future Plans

- *Expanding Wild Workshops for adults and Crafternoons for children.*
- *Launching Lerntree, Progressive Education in Rutland for home educated children.*
- *Updating the Root-and-Branch Out website to accomadate our expanding work.*

Thanks

Huge THANKS to our Funders and Supporters!

Windmill House
Oakham Town Council
Change Agents UK
COOP
Anglian Water
Active Rutland
FairShare
Mojo
Neighbourly
Hubbub
Reaching People
High Sheriff, Geraldine Feehally
Sustainable Land Trust
Rutland County Council
Victoria Hall Oakham
David Cock Foundation
Rutland Agricultural Society
Family Hub Children's Centre
Tesco Community Grants
Getting Help in Neighbourhoods
Sport England and Active Together
Pavers Foundation
People's Postcode Lottery
The Lord Lieutenant, Sarah Furness
Leicester and Rutland Community Foundation
Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund (CCLF)



Root -and- Branch Out

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