

ROOT-AND-BRANCH OUT CIC IMPACT REPORT 2019/2020

NURTURING COMMUNITY THROUGH NATURE

For all of us, locally, nationally and globally, things have changed this year. Our academic year started out with much promise, passion and commitment during the winter months. The second half of the year has been affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic but we haven't let that get in the way of our community work and response. We have been creative in our approach to working during this time to ensure future sustainability and to meet current needs in a way that we are able to as a CIC.

PROJECTS

Forest School

The first part of the academic year was a very soggy autumn and winter for our Forest Schools! We got used to putting up and taking down tarpaulines to shelter us from the elements. We had to invest in new boots to protect our feet from the mud and our waterproofs had to be washed after every time we had worn them! Our woods took a battering from the impact of bad weather and people's use. We had to ensure we stuck to our environmental impact plan to protect our footpaths and seating areas. We wondered if our woods could ever be dry again! (They are now!) The number of people we met wanting to forest school increased this year. We are working with three primary schools, one pre-school, a Home Ed/Flexi school group and a parents and toddler group. We had built a new partnership with Rutland County Council Visions centre and had a new Forest School Trainee/Mentoring partnership ready to go in March! This has had to wait. We have been joined by our trainee, Jo Davis, who has successfully completed her Forest School training and is now a fully fledged member of the team.



Woodland Management

We are extremely fortunate to have a keen group of volunteers who have actively been involved on a weekly basis to maintain and find new areas of the woods at the Rutland Farm Park. We have found an old path in the woods and some old steps and planted areas that form the banks of the stream that goes through the woods. The Ball family, who own the Rutland Farm Park were delighted that these parts of the woodland have been opened up again and will one day be open to the public.



Community Allotments

We have continued to manage and get food into the ground in our community allotment at the Rutland Farm Park and other sites. A partnership with Rutland Community Ventures and Kendrew Barracks has seen the establishment of a community garden with planted food and flowers in some keyhole beds, for local residents to use. This will be a space for children and families to meet up and hold BBQs and enjoy the sunshine. We have planted up the old beds outside Rutland Plastics factory, with flowers, fruits and vegetables and herbs for all the community to share. Oakham Beavers and cubs and their families helped to start the project in the autumn, and we dug out weeds, added new top soil and planted spring bulbs. Since then more fruit and veg have been planted and this is being regularly watered by some local volunteers.



Grubs Up!

We held some cooking courses with the Rutland Home Ed group and some local families in Uppingham and Oakham. We tried a variety of meals using some locally grown food and food from the Zero waste stall at the market and our smaller supermarkets. The participants really enjoyed cooking and eating together, trying new flavours, learning about new foods and looking at food sources.

Fill Yer Boots

Our Surplus food café in an Uppingham Primary School has continued to offer around 50 breakfasts a week. It is only open on two mornings a week, for half an hour each time so it is a well-attended café! Since it opened in 2017 we have saved over 4 tonnes of food from landfill.



PANDEMIC RESPONSE

The lockdown and movement restrictions stopped all of our face to face work. Our Forest School sites have recovered from the weather in the winter and are now ready again for when we are able to continue with Forest School. Not being able to meet our participants and volunteers, meant that we had to change our focus in order to remain a sustainable organisation. Our voluntary sector networks supported our intention to continue collecting surplus food from Tesco and distributing it among the schools in which we work. Staff and volunteers from within the schools direct this food to families who will make good use of it! We have widened our donations to other schools in the county to make use of the available food donations from Fareshare. Our impact report from Tesco states that we have saved over 10,000 meals worth of food since we started intercepting food in 2017, although we know that we have collected around a tonne in surplus food since the start of lockdown, saving waste and supporting families with food. Its a win win !

FUTURE PLANS

Lord-Lieutenants Mini-Meadows Project
Wildflower Ceramic Art Mosaic and Botanical Art exhibition
Partnership with RCC and Visions - Forest School
Community Fridges
Grow Together – community growing and allotments
Family workshops with Active Rutland
Rutland Green Gym
Continuation of Forest School

RECOGNITION

Runners Up – Rural Community Awards
High Sheriff of Rutland Award, Nomination to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party 2020

FUNDERS

Windmill House
Awards for All
The Co-operative
David Cock Foundation- Growing Communities Fund
Arts 4 Rutland
Healthy Rutland Grant – Rutland Wellbeing Service
Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation
Neighbourly
Fareshare
Oakham Trust
High Sherriff of Rutland
WRAP



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