

Growing Together

Sessions for 0-5s

Impact Report

Year 1 to June 2025



Contents

Horton Community Farm (HCF) is a 2-acre green oasis in inner-city Bradford.

The organisation has grown from a small group of volunteers in 2008 into a not-for-profit cooperative run by 3 paid directors. We now have more volunteers than ever and we're hugely grateful for their vital contributions.

In this report, you will read all about the free *Growing Together* programme:

- A stay and play
- For families with children aged 0 and 5
- Every Monday 10-12pm and 1-3pm

Food growing, bug hunting, sand pit play, boulder clambering and outdoor crafts.
What could be better for little minds?



2. 3. 5. 6.

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With thanks to some of HCF's funders over the years.















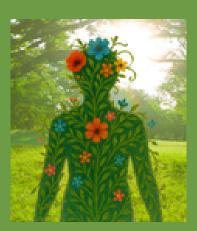
About Us

Horton Community Farm









Jonathan Pollard

Sam White

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Horton Community Farm began as 2 acres of abandoned, overgrown and fly-tipped plots on a 5.5 acre allotment site and over two decades has been transformed into a valuable community resource.

The site is based on a third of Cecil Avenue Allotments and features a horticultural therapy garden, wildlife areas (including a pond with newts), an orchard, polytunnel and cabins. There is also a special play area with a willow dome, clambering boulders, sandpit and parachute shelter.

The other two thirds remains allotments and benefits hugely from HCF's site maintenance, provision of a compost toilet and secure cabin storage. HCF work with the allotments society and the council to increase poor plot take-up.

Our work is creating an inspirational permaculture centre for food growing, nature and community resilience through the 5 strands reflected in our logo:

- Environmental education
- Volunteering
- Wildlife
- Green therapy
- Food growing

Our programmes are aimed at families with 0-5's, those in pregnancy, sanctuary seekers, people wishing to improve their mental health and adults with learning difficulties.

We aim to use nature and food growing to improve people's enjoyment of life, increase biodiversity and continue the site's regeneration.

The Timeline Of HCF

Look where we started!

2006 - The seed is sown

The Common Garden, a small, early precursor to HCF is established on the massively neglected Cecil Avenue Allotments & the regeneration begins. This project winds down after a year but 3 plots are retained personally.

2008 - Inspiration visits Bradford

The UK <u>Transition Network</u> visits Bradford, bringing inspiration with it. The environmental group that forms visits the allotments and begins clearing rubbish.

2009 - Plans form

Permaculture designs are created. More rubbish is removed (36 skips eventually!). Ground is broken and the first crops are planted.



A fraction of the rubbish that's filled 36 skips!

2010 - A foothold on site

First cabin installed to store tools - a major confidence boost!

2011 - First major grant, incorporation and a 15 year lease

Horton Community Farm is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee, and secures a £76,000 grant from The National Lottery. Polytunnels, a toilet and another cabin are installed, and staff employed! This leads to securing a 15 year lease. A further £10,000 comes from the Royal Horticulture Society.

2014 - Green therapy

The Social and Therapeutic Garden is built and includes accessible raised beds, a small polytunnel and privacy hedging all the way round.

The Timeline Of HCF

Look how far we've come!

2016 - Growing Hope and an orchard!

With £10,000 from The National Lottery, the Growing Hope programme for asylum seekers and refugees is established. The orchard with 35 fruit trees is planted.

2020 - A programme for Children

A partnership forms with <u>Grow to School, Better Start</u> <u>Bradford and Better Place Bradford</u>, delivering sessions for children. We adapt to Covid lockdowns by switching to providing seed packs to families.

2021 - Forest school fun

Forest school sessions for children begin in school holidays, thanks to grants from the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, and Betty's and Taylors.

2022 - Family area expanded

The Family Area receives clambering boulders, parashelter posts and a sand pit. The pond is completed, bringing wildlife with it. The farm is awarded

'Garden of Sanctuary' status.

2023 - Weekly sessions

£10,000 from Awards for All means children's sessions become weekly!

2024 - 3 Years of sessions!

£30,000 a year awarded from The National Lottery allows children's sessions to run weekly for 3 years! A mud kitchen is installed & proves very popular with children.



Growing Together

The Growing Together programme is a stay and play group supporting children aged 0 to 5 to explore the outdoors and grow fruit & veg. It's a partnership between Horton Community Farm and Grow to School that's been going for 5 years.

There are activities for parents and children along with a special play area with raised beds designed to get kids moving, growing food, discovering nature, and crafting.

The programme takes place each week on a Monday with 2 sessions - am and pm.



Crops have been grown, harvested and eaten, 'meals' cooked in the mud kitchen, a splash made in the paddling pool on hot days, sand castles built, adventures had on the slack line, soft toy animals hunted for in our large nature area, worms held, minibeasts discovered under rocks plus a wealth of other outdoor activities!



Growing Together sessions are the highlight of our week. My two preschoolers love the farm and the activities.

Parent

Such amazing interactive sessions that have enabled my children to experience nature in a positive and nurturing environment. They have grown in confidence every week - I have seen them explore their surroundings in a way I have never seen them do before!





Open Day

21 September 2024

Horton Community Farm sends thanks to all the providers who made this such a wonderful event for all the children and families who attended (104 people in total).

There were a wealth of fun activities to get involved in, the weather was kind and loads of samosas and tea and coffee consumed!

Fearless People CIC helped kids create a whole gaggle of wild looking robots and creatures. Starting with a wooden block they added all sorts of bits and bats such as screws, bolts & washers for eyes, legs and whatever else their wild imaginations came up with! (1)

Children enjoyed super fresh apple juice that they'd helped press themselves using apples from Horton Community Farm! Made in a traditional press with help from <u>Bradford Environmental Education Service</u> (BEES). (2)

<u>Green Man Learning</u> guided children and adults in how to craft beautiful wooden gypsy flowers from sticks, using traditional tools and shave horses. (3)

Many lovely natural prints of flowers and leaves were created using the process of Hapa Zome, led by Grow to School.

Qais, an apprentice ranger with <u>Better Place</u>, ran a stall for children to make their own felt coasters.

Bubble making was popular all day and added a lot of atmosphere! Many children received colourful face painting designs and lots of people took part in picking the abundance of blackberries to take home.









Our Practitioners



Beckie Earnshaw, Practitioner
Grow to School



Jules Francesconi, Practitioner Horton Community Farm



Parents have often found their preconceived ideas of what their children might enjoy have been changed when on the farm. Children who have previously refused to try new foods have tried and liked fresh vegetables like peas and beans straight from the plant, and even less common veg like Achocha. Other children who we are told dislike being dirty have dug and played in the soil.

The slow, child-centred approach that we have has meant that children can come and repeatedly do what they enjoy. For example there is a 3-year-old that spends most of his time digging and finding worms - he doesn't have access to this at home.

Other children enjoy the variation of the activities we set out, and come up with new ideas which we try to accommodate in future sessions. For example we did mark making with mud and natural materials and moved on to using natural inks in the next session as they wanted to try new ways of mark making.

These sessions have created a real sense of community. Friends have been made amongst strangers as parents come together at the sandpit and chat. Old friends make dates to meet up at the sessions. Our produce goes home with parents and occasionally comes back as samosas or other snacks, or we may receive a photo of the children making a soup or a stew with the veg.

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What Families Think





How satisfied are you with the sessions so far?

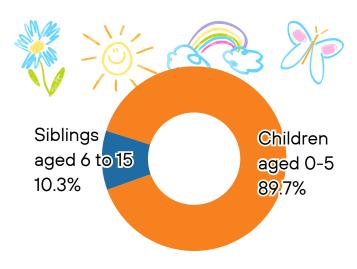
My son absolutely enjoys coming and even if it wasn't free, I'd still pay and bring him as staff have been very welcoming. I like how it's outside as it is very refreshing and calm for us mums too!

Parent

580 attendances
More than seven
0-5s per session!



of respondents rated sessions 5/5



Me and my child really enjoyed the sessions at the farm. He really looked forward to planting and watering the vegetables.

Parent — 99 ———

Progress

How far have the children come?



My children have gained new skills since they began attending Growing Together sessions.

My children spend more time outdoors since they began attending the sessions.

91% Strongly Agree

83% Strongly Agree

My children are more likely to eat fruit and vegetables since taking part in the sessions.

During sessions my children discovered insects or wildlife they haven't seen before.

82% Strongly Agree

100% said yes!

-66----

The ladies who run the sessions are amazing and have lots of knowledge that they not only share with the children, but the adults as well.

Childminder



Our Other Programmes

Horton Community Farm is home to a range of other free programmes and activities, combining horticulture, nature, mindfulness and wellbeing.

Growing Hope

The Growing Hope programme is an opportunity for sanctuary seekers, refugees and asylum seekers to relax, socialise, be in nature and make new friends. There is food growing, gardening and cook and eat sessions.

Mindfulness Garden

The Mindfulness Garden programme provides short courses. These are for people aged 50 and over, and carers of any age. They include breathwork, meditation, nature connection, food growing and relaxing in nature.

The gardening activities are tailored to suit a range of different abilities and energy levels.

Mums, Bumps and Babies

This programme is for those in pregnancy or with babies under 24 months. The beautiful green space is the perfect setting for meeting others, connecting with nature and learning new skills, as well as introducing nature to our youngest participants!

Inclusive Volunteering

Volunteer days are twice a week attended by a wide range of folk including those with learning difficulties, sensory impaired folk and people just wanting to enjoy being outdoors making a difference. We are hugely grateful to everyone who volunteers. The whole project wouldn't be possible without you!



Amazing therapeutic sessions, much needed time out for parents and children alike. Amazing staff, very welcoming and warm!

Parent — 99 —



Get In Touch



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Growing Together Bradford

A partnership between...





