

Progress Report: Greener Gardens Initiative on our Conservation Project

Prepared For: The Nineveh Charitable Trust

Date: 12th December 2022



We are sincerely grateful to the Trustees of the Nineveh Charitable Trust for their very kind support of Caring For Life over many years, and particularly for your generous grant of £2,000 that you sent us in March this year to help us purchase a new mini tractor and woodchipper for our Conservation Project.

The Conservation Project, which has been running since 2000, has been successful in giving beneficiaries a new-found purpose and structure to their week, and has inspired beneficiaries to appreciate and care for nature, educating them on how to grow and nurture plants, create habitats to provide for small mammals, birds and insects, and take pride in maintaining the gardens and public areas around the farm which are open to a host of different visitors.



Hedgerows at Crag House Farm

I am pleased to include an update on the new equipment which your kind grant has helped purchase as well as some other recent highlights from other areas of the charity at the back of this report. I do hope you enjoy reading about the progress that has been made.

A recap of the problem and need

Caring For Life is a Christian charity based at Crag House Farm in Leeds that works with vulnerable and at-risk adults, some of whom have experienced childhood trauma, abuse, or have grown up in the care system, and who may be struggling with or are at risk of homelessness or living in unsuitable or unsafe housing. Caring For Life provides practical and emotional support through our Being There housing support team; two supported living homes that can accommodate up to eight men and eight ladies who need greater long-term support; and currently 12 therapeutic daytime projects at our farm base that provide a place to make friendships, learn new skills and grow in confidence. One of these daytime projects is our Conservation Project.

As part of our Greener Gardens Initiative, aiming to make the Conservation Project more environmentally friendly and sustainable, we launched a fundraising campaign to purchase a mini tractor and woodchipper. The aim was to greatly improve the maintenance tasks associated with our 8-acre conservation area, allowing us to recycle cuttings, either to be left as wildlife habitats or easily removed as valuable mulch which could be used to repair bark paths or as a fertiliser for our beds and borders. We also wanted to be able to increase beneficiary involvement in larger conservation jobs, by making them less physically demanding, and more accessible to those less physically able whilst also improving the efficiency of maintenance jobs, to free up time for other important, educational, and therapeutic conservation activities.

Items purchased

After we managed to secure 99% of our fundraising target of *£28,260 (Note price increase of equipment from original quote) from a small number of charitable trusts, including the wonderful contribution from yourselves we have then been able to go ahead and purchase the items below. The woodchipper arrived in Spring this year while the tractor finally arrived in August owing to various lengthy delays in shipping. Unfortunately, it arrived shortly after our annual supporters (open) day, but still in good time for all the Autumn jobs!

- Kubota B2261 – compact tractor including tractor, loader, trailer with mesh sides, counterweight.
- PTO 100G woodchipper



The new tractor shiny clean after it had just arrived!

Progress report from Jake Auty, Conservation Project Leader.

"The purchase and use of the new mini tractor, trailer and wood chipper has been nothing short of transformational for the conservation project and our 'Greener Gardens Initiative'. Conservation tasks that would otherwise have involved the slow and arduous removal of materials using wheelbarrows alone or else leaving unsightly piles of waste to be collected later can now be tackled swiftly and efficiently.

To take the example of hedge trimming; the tractor and trailer takes all our tools and ladders and safety equipment to the job site, as material is cut down it is neatly and tidily put in the trailer and then once full taken away to be shredded.

Having the chipper means that brash and cuttings from such jobs don't need to be left around but can be processed into chippings that can go onto our grounds as a valuable weed suppressing mulch. (see pictures below) This reduces our need for burning such piles of waste and recycles the nutrients into our grounds.



Project Leader Jake Auty driving the new tractor



Before...

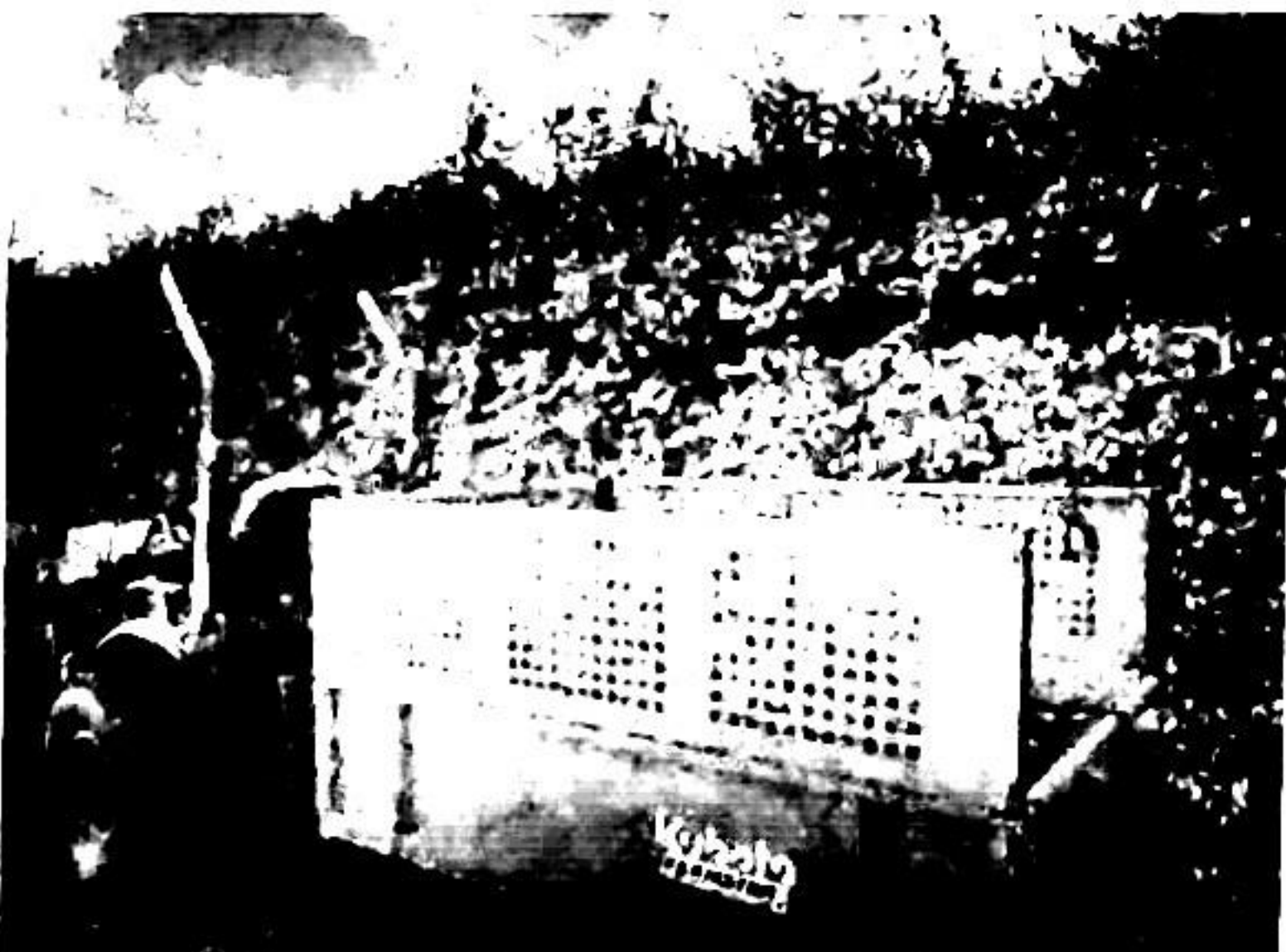


Chipper in use....



After... Chippings laid down as ground cover

This equipment means conservation tasks can now be tackled in a more efficient manner (enabling us in turn to meet more of our habitat management goals) but most importantly this equipment has been a real encouragement to our beneficiaries.



Hedge cutting and moving all chippings with the tractor and trailer



Chipper set up to clear large piles of brash

Great encouragement for our beneficiaries

Repeating tasks such as hedge cutting and hedge laying, tackled with no fewer than 10 help means these jobs are not so daunting and even for those who may only attend for just one day in the week, it can be a great difference to what they have done before and on the day.



Fig 10: Working with the new tractor and woodchipper



Fig 11: Cutting trees

Being involved in productive therapeutic work throughout the colder autumn and winter season has great benefits to our beneficiaries physical and mental health at a notoriously difficult time of the year. Seeing progress made and goals achieved is a real boost to team morale and individual confidence and self-esteem.

Summary of key outcomes and benefits of new equipment

- Our team are delighted with the new tractor and woodchipper and 14-15 individuals are benefiting from its use on the project regularly each week.
- Slow and arduous conservation tasks now quicker and more efficient leading to more enjoyment and a greater sense of fulfillment.
- Equipment enables those less physically able to play a more active role.
- Great environmental impact as woody plant material from trees and hedges can be recycled at the farm and used as weed suppressing ground cover or valuable mulch.
- Continues the development of the project, keeping it new and fresh for those attending with great mental health benefits.
- Great benefits of the equipment in Autumn/Winter conservation maintenance that helps our beneficiaries gain understanding into the rhythms of the seasons, how they are contributing to a bigger picture and to look to the possibilities of the future.



Fig 12: Working with the new tractor and woodchipper



Fig 13: Working with the new tractor and woodchipper

Great Encouragement to our Beneficiaries

Recurring tasks such as hedge cutting and hedge laying, tackled with such mechanical help means these jobs are not so daunting and even for beneficiaries who may only attend for just one day in the week can see a real difference in what they have done by the end of the day.



One of our beneficiaries loading the trailer with Jake



Tractor moving old tree stumps

Being involved in productive therapeutic work throughout the colder autumn and winter season has great benefits to our beneficiaries physical and mental health at a notoriously difficult time of the year. Seeing progress made and goals achieved is a real boon to team morale and individual confidence and self esteem."

Summary of key outcomes and benefits of new equipment

- Our team are delighted with the new tractor and woodchipper and 14-15 individuals are benefiting from its use on the project regularly each week.
- Slow and arduous conservation tasks now quicker and more efficient leading to more enjoyment and a greater sense of fulfillment.
- Equipment enables those less physically able, to play a more active role.
- Great environmental impact as woody plant material from trees and hedges can be recycled at the farm and used as weed suppressing ground cover or valuable mulch.
- Continues the development of the project, keeping it new and fresh for those attending with great mental health benefits.
- Great benefits of the equipment in Autumn/Winter conservation maintenance that helps our beneficiaries gain understanding into the rhythms of the seasons, how they are contributing to a bigger picture and to look to the possibilities of the future.



One of our beneficiaries carrying out essential maintenance with a new pair of loppers



Beneficiaries from our Art and Music projects enjoying a picnic in the gardens - July-22

Summer day trips out – 2022

Many in our care have suffered difficult upbringings and carry hard and challenging memories into adulthood. But one of the true joys and privileges of Caring For Life is to draw alongside people and offer the opportunity to create new and happier memories in a loving, caring and supportive environment, which can ease the burdens of the past, and be a welcome distraction from painful challenges in the present.

In June the gentleman from **Tindall House**, our supported living home had a break from their daytime projects at the farm and were treated to a range of **day trips out** – from a day trip to a local park in Leeds, to a visit to Harrogate and then off to see the sea at Whitby! They had a fantastic time exploring together and having lots of fun.



Our **Agriculture Project** took a trip in June to the '**Lincolnshire Show**' to show some of our sheep and had a great time doing so! Attending Agricultural shows each summer is a highly rewarding experience for beneficiaries, as they get to show off the sheep or horses, meet with the public, and often see their hard work and dedication rewarded by prize winning at the shows. At this year's show CFL was rewarded with a first place shearling ram, who went on to be crowned champion male! Plus we received second and fourth for our shearling ewes!



Many of those we look after don't have friends or family to celebrate with. And some don't live in safe areas where they can feel relaxed about getting together with their neighbors. In addition, many are struggling with the increased costs of living and might not be able to splash out on treats and celebrations. We were delighted then to be able to host a lovely **Jubilee afternoon tea party** at the farm on the Monday after the Platinum Jubilee weekend. There was lots of noise, fun, laughter, party games and wonderful party food prepared by our Catering Academy and a great time was had by all.



Twelve of the ladies and gentlemen who are supported by our **Being There** team had a **short break away to Bassenfell in the Lake District** in May. For vulnerable and at-risk ladies and gentlemen who struggle with anxiety, some who have never left the city where they were born, building up the courage to go away is a big challenge but the group that went got on really well and really supported each other. The group comprised 6 gentlemen and 6 ladies. One of the highlights of the trip was that 6 managed to walk up to the top of Aira Force which was a fantastic achievement. Afterword's someone commented "everyone should have the chance to come somewhere as stunning as this!"

Conclusion

We are deeply grateful to the Trustees of the Nineveh Charitable Trust for their wonderful support this past year, helping us to buy two significant pieces of capital equipment for our Conservation Project and in so doing supporting us to sustain and improve our care of extremely vulnerable people whilst also helping us to improve our environmental impact. We are sincerely grateful to the Trust for their generous support.