

Trustees

The Nineveh Charitable Trust
Park Farm
Frittenden Road
Biddenden
Ashford
TN27 8LG

4 May 2023

Dear Trustees,

Thank you so much for awarding The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) a grant of £5,000 towards our student gardens last year. Although not completely finished as the students are doing the majority of the planting work, it is really starting to take shape. As it is just over a year since you awarded the grant, I thought that you might like to hear of our progress.

The project and the need.

The lockdowns and being cooped up inside with a computer screen highlighted the need for an outside area where students could spend their free time, relax and recharge between learning. Although quite lucky to have a nice green campus with plenty of trees, grass and nature, students felt that it would be good to have a dedicated area where they could sit and enjoy their surroundings. What makes this a really good project is that the students came up with the idea themselves, organised regular meetings with relevant members of staff and helped with a lot of the planting work. This is how the idea of a sensory garden came about.

The other phase was the working garden, a paved area with drainage and barriers which house our two polytunnels. The students who are studying gardening, as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award or as part of their BTEC level 1 introductory courses and students who elect to study gardening as part of their learning and leisure session are using the polytunnels to grow from seed and cuttings. The polytunnels have had new coverings and have adjustable workbenches for students requiring tables of a different height.

Progress reports

The sensory garden is almost finished, all of the hard landscaping is complete, there are three benches on each circular seating area, are flower beds lining each path and around part of the perimeter of the garden, a water feature and birdboxes which the woodworking students have made. The flower beds contain roses and lavender plants, and more brightly coloured or highly scented shrubs (hydrangea, choisya and hardy fuchsia) are waiting to be bought. The roses are bred locally to be disease resistant and have single blooms which allow pollinators to easily access the nectar. The lavender plants will also be attractive to pollinators and provide a beautiful scent.

This photograph shows students planting lavender plants in a flower bed edging the path. The tactile paving is very visible.



Photograph shows garden between learning/office block (on the right) and hall of residence. Two circular seating areas are joined by wheelchair accessible paths, edged with a shoreline of tactile paving. The water feature is to the left of the seating area to the right of the photograph.

This photograph shows the garden from the residential hall. In this photograph the water feature is very visible, as is the flower bed showing roses and lavender plants, covered with bark to suppress weeds.





The working garden was completed earlier in the year, as it consists of a large area of hard landscaping and had a relatively smaller amount of elements.



Inside one of the polytunnels, showing the paved floor, height adjustable workbenches and plants ready for the plant sale tomorrow. RNC students regularly hold plant sales, where the students studying business admin join with the gardening students to sell the plants that they have nurtured to staff and the public. The business admin students organise each sale, write labels including braille signs and handle the money. This is then used as evidence for their BTEC qualifications. The money raised from these sales then goes into a pot for the gardening students to spend on items such as compost, pots and other sundry garden items.

As you can see from the above photos, the student garden is a great asset to the College and will be enjoyed by many generations of students.

Thank you so much for your support.

Yours Faithfully

A. Spivey

Alice Spivey
Fundraising Officer

The Royal National College for the Blind
incorporating thePoint4 leisure facility and gym

Registered charity number 1000388 | Company limited by guarantee 2367626

thePoint 

All income generated at thePoint4 supports
training for young people with a visual impairment