



Hands of Hope

IMPACT REPORT 2022





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Our Vision

To become a beacon and landmark at the heart of the community with focus on tackling food poverty, loneliness and rural isolation as well as improving physical & mental health by connecting people to nature and to each other.

Our Delivery

INPUTS

- Board of trustees
- Trained staff & volunteers
- Accessible site
- Vehicles for outreach activities
- Grant funding
- Public service contracts
- Earned income
- Donations and in-kind contributions
- Project Management

OUTPUTS

- Food Growing
- Food Poverty schemes
- Horticultural Volunteering & Training
- Heritage & Rural Country Crafts
- Social Clubs & Activities
- Organic Food Boxes
- Young Market Gardeners/ Work Placements
- Beekeeping
- Bricklaying
- Environmental Conservation

OUTCOMES

- Improve health & wellbeing
- Improve environmental health
- Reduce loneliness & isolation
- Skills & education
- Reducing food poverty
- Reducing food waste
- Preserving & sharing rural heritage
- Conserving Hope Farm Community Garden
- Sustainability

IMPACT

- Enhanced community cohesion
- Improved awareness & appreciation of rural heritage
- Community development
- Reduced rural poverty
- Job creation
- Upskilling
- Climate mitigation
- Healthier communities



Chair's Introduction

Set up in 2016 by the current Trustees, we are restoring & developing a neglected walled kitchen garden and 22 acres of AONB land in Hawkhurst, located on the Kent and East Sussex Border – “Hope Farm Community Garden” - whilst conserving the site’s natural heritage.

Since securing planning in January 2019, we have been delivering programmes aimed at tackling food poverty, rural isolation and loneliness as well as improving mental, physical & environmental health for communities throughout Rother, Hastings, & West Kent. We have a no-dig, productive, organic, market garden, with Soil Association Accreditation & extended our growing capacity in 2021 to support our new in-season Box Scheme, Hope Farm Organics.



I am pleased to disclose that although the last year remained challenging for many charities, Hands of Hope continued to thrive seeing an increase in visitor numbers, volunteering hours and session delivery, extending our partnerships, increasing our impact on people’s lives whilst continuing to preserve and develop Hope Farm Community Garden.

In the last twelve months we have focused on improving the delivery of our core services as well as widening the diversity of our beneficiaries. Additionally, we have improved facilities on site and now have access to 3 new classrooms via the restoration of the derelict pump house which includes a disabled toilet and a new inclusive growing area specifically designed for visitors with mobility issues. Additionally, we have purchased a new mobile kitchen which supports delivery of “Field to Fork” activities as well as in-season cookery and nutrition classes. We have erected a new outdoor learning structure in the gill woodland as well as a 20m glasshouse.



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

In June 2022 we received The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service and in August 2022 we secured funding to deliver a new, 2-year project “The Living History Programme” supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund as well as improving our capacity building & long-term sustainability with 3-years support from National Lottery Community Fund. With this support we are now able to recruit a new General Manager to lead the charity through the next stage of our development.

I would like to thank the Trusts and Foundations and all our other donors including local schools and community groups, who supported us. We are extremely grateful for all the financial support we receive, which allows us to continue to have a positive impact on our communities. I would also like to thank our staff and all our volunteers & supporters whose efforts and enthusiasm allow us to continue making a difference. I would especially like to thank my fellow founding Trustees who work tirelessly to ensure our services reach those who need it the most and without whom, many our projects would not happen.

The next twelve months will be our busiest in regard to delivery and outcomes and I very much look forward to sharing the results with you.

James Doran

Founder and Chair



Public Benefit

“Improve the health and wellbeing of people and planet by connecting communities to nature and each other.”



Main Objectives

- ✎ Use Nature & Nutrition to improve physical, mental & environmental health outcomes throughout Rother, Hastings, and West Kent.
- ✎ Improve community cohesion by bringing people together from a variety of backgrounds and age groups, breaking down barriers through shared physical activity.
- ✎ Increase the skills base amongst people by providing access to and training in organic food growing, environmental heritage & nature-based activities, heritage rural crafts and nutrition/cooking.
- ✎ Enable people to grow their own food and eat seasonally and locally, sharing their surplus and therefore reducing food waste whilst tackling food poverty.
- ✎ Restore, maintain & promote the natural, rural and community heritage of Hope Farm Community Garden, for future generations.
- ✎ Create a landscape that educates and engages through innovating agriculture strategies, improved trail systems for improved engagement & community access, and protecting diverse habitats.
- ✎ Develop regenerative agriculture and home-scale production suitable to the site.
- ✎ Enhance outdoor spaces for communities through nature education elements using a balance of wild and cultivated areas.
- ✎ Develop sustainable land management systems that decrease reliance on off-site inputs and encourage communities to live more sustainably – reduce, reuse, recycle.
- ✎ Using regenerative agriculture techniques, improve the health of the soil and increase biodiversity on site and share this knowledge with the wider community.

Supporting

- ✎ Introduction of Kent & Sussex heritage crop production maintaining and sharing, regional, heritage seed varieties.
- ✎ Protection & increase of biodiversity and habitats for pollinating insects and wildlife.
- ✎ Preservation of ancient landscapes including Gill Woodland and Wildflower Meadow.
- ✎ New employment opportunities.
- ✎ New Volunteer opportunities.
- ✎ Improvements in Physical, Mental and Environmental health outcomes.
- ✎ Access to Apprenticeships, Work experience and Training programmes.
- ✎ Preservation and promotion of regional, heritage skills that are slowly eroding.
- ✎ Specialist services – DIG (Dementia Inclusive Gardening), STG (Social Therapeutic Gardening), Nutrition classes, Cookery classes, etc.
- ✎ Learning through play for children, educational establishments, and families.
- ✎ Access to a healthier and more sustainable diet and communities making sustainable choices.
- ✎ Improvements to local food systems.
- ✎ Reduction of Food Waste.
- ✎ Long-term sustainability of Hands of Hope.



Key Achievements

With the support of our incredible Volunteers, Members and Staff between July 2021 and July 2022...

400+

visitors welcomed to site

1000

Get Growing Grow Kits distributed to communities throughout Rother, Hastings and West Kent - supporting early years, schools, residential care settings, community gardens, families and lone residents

Successful delivery of Hope Farm Organics with 72 weekly customers in the first year

200

organic gardening sessions delivered

100 families provided with fresh food support

60 children introduced to growing and cooking sessions

104 adults
96 children introduced to practical beekeeping activities

RECEIVED



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

9000

hours in volunteer time accrued

50 metres

of Edwardian market garden wall restored using original salvaged bricks under our Great British Brick Off campaign

2

phases of our Get Growing project launched

45% increase in active volunteers on site

Featured in BBC

South East News bulletin & on BBC Website

EXPANDED

our Trustee Board welcoming Sonja Colman

464 social hours
156 corporate hours of volunteering support for the Great British Brick Off

25 adults
15 young people given traditional hedgelaying training

SECURED

funding for a new charity General Manager AND a new Programme Manager

Distributed TONNES of weekly fresh produce to local foodbanks tackling food poverty

8 hours a day
40 hours a week volunteered on average by founding Trustees in the period

An Overview Of Our Delivery

Get Growing

Get Growing was initially launched in July 2020 as a direct response to COVID-19. The aim is to teach people how to grow in-season fresh food, tackling food poverty and reducing food waste and food miles. In the period July 2021 to July 2022, we delivered two phases of the project, successfully producing & distributing 1316 Grow Kits to 733 settings, up from 152 settings in the previous year. The number of potential growers reached (e.g. how many growers per household/group) was over circa 13,000 - up from 800. We provided Windowsill Kits for those with indoor space only, Garden kits for those with a garden and Patio Kits for those with no green space.

Additional outcomes in the period included:

- 👤 3 weekly volunteer sessions to prepare Grow Kits over 4 months
- 👤 24 x 'Grow Along' videos produced, covering the varieties provided
- 👤 Distributed 10,956 plug plants including Tomato, Courgette, Lettuce, Beetroot, Chilli, Strawberry, Thyme, Chives, Peas, Squash, Leeks, Radish and Mint
- 👤 Distributed 5,745 packets of seeds including: Microgreens, Edible Flowers, Basil, Dwarf French Beans, Carrots, Radish, Spinach, Rocket, Marigold, Chard, Turnip and Sunflower
- 👤 111 'postal kits' released to those outside of our catchment area
- 👤 Created a thriving online community on Facebook which has 330 members



Great British Brick Off

The Great British Brick Off launched in May 2022 and is an 18-month project which sees traditional bricklaying skills & pointing with Lime Mortar taught under the supervision of a skilled bricklayer, utilising volunteer support from retired bricklayers as well as wider members of the community who are interested in acquiring this skill. By restoring the Edwardian wall, the project's legacy will be the preservation and restoration of a historical space whilst creating a safe and secure space, for vulnerable people to learn about horticulture and nature-based activities.

To date we have achieved the following:

- 👉 50 metres of Edwardian wall restored
- 👉 Funding received from McCarthy Stone, Bernard Sunley, The Steel Charitable Trust, Arnold Clarke Foundation, Hastoe Housing, Webbes Restaurants and Kingsley Knapley
- 👉 We are grateful to the following private donors: Karen Hantun, Olaf Siedler, Jo Hughes, Nick Foreman, Quentin McCormick, and Faith McArthur
- 👉 Materials donated by Bourne, Parkers, Michelmersh, H&H Celcom, Paxton and Pam Vicem
- 👉 Featured on BBC South East
- 👉 Welcomed corporate volunteers from Hastings Direct, Catch a Fire marketing agency, IBMG and Vinci Facilities covering 5 full days of support, engaging with 63 corporate volunteers
- 👉 31 New Volunteers to HoH
- 👉 30 Social and 5 Corporate Sessions
- 👉 4000 bricks cleaned and reused





Bee in Company


Bee in Company is an inclusive community beekeeping project that offers multiple benefits to people & planet. Based at Hope Farm Community Garden, the bees live in the heritage orchard helping to pollinate our amazing walled market garden and 22-acre AONB site. Sessions are free and open to all ages.

Delivered by our Head Beekeeper & running bi-weekly April to September & weekly October to March - including holiday activities, Bee in Company is an educational, social & environmental project covering:

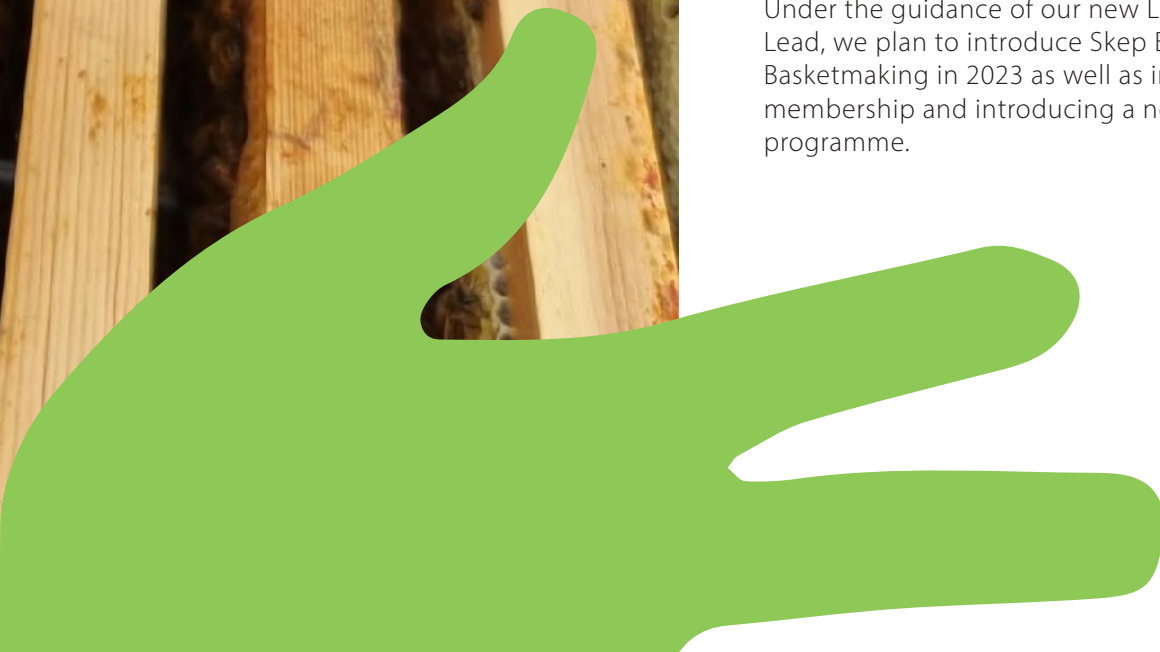
- i. Beehives & Equipment
- ii. Basic Bee Biology
- iii. Inside the Hive
- iv. Inspecting the Colony
- v. Preparing for a Honey Crop
- vi. Pests & Disease
- vii. Summer Management
- viii. Taking the Honey Crop
- ix. Autumn Management
- x. Preparing for Winter
- xi. Crafting with Beeswax
- xii. Gardening for Bees

In 2022 we introduced a new Autumn and Winter calendar which includes crafting sessions working with beeswax.

Key outcomes for the period included:

-  New schools & family activities introduced resulting in 96 children engaged in practical beekeeping sessions including children from our local primary school in Hawkhurst
-  109 people engaged in Bee in Company with participants aged from 6yrs to 86yrs
-  We welcomed 7 Ukrainian families made up of 15 children with ages ranging from 4 to 16 as well as 9 adults

Under the guidance of our new Living History Programme Lead, we plan to introduce Skep Beekeeping & Skep Basketmaking in 2023 as well as increasing weekly membership and introducing a new school's educational programme.



Helping Hands Lunch Club

Peasmarsh Lunch Club was originally launched in November 2018 to tackle rural isolation and loneliness in older people. The club was suspended during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 and was relaunched fully in January 2022. Additionally, we introduced Hawkhurst Lunch Club in 2022 which will move to the new buildings at Hope Farm Community Garden in 2023.

This newly created space has been designed for people with mobility issues and will offer members and beneficiaries the opportunity to get involved in multiple activities including, growing/gardening,

cooking and natural crafts. The outside area is paved and covered and has been designed with raised beds for wheelchair users and those wanting to enjoy gentler gardening.

Key Outcomes:

- 👤 Supported 70 members
- 👤 8 Volunteers delivering the lunch clubs
- 👤 5 Volunteer Drivers transporting members



Accessible raised beds at Hope Farm Community Garden



Holiday Hunger

Working with Active Hastings & Optivo, Holiday Hunger provided a healthy lunch for over 100 children living in Hastings, St Leonards, and Bexhill during the school holidays. Part of the Government's HAF project, the sessions were delivered from our Food Truck and labour was provided by the Trustees as well as Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers.



Horticulture Activities

This project is aimed at Building Knowledge and Connections. We are indebted to our amazing volunteers, many of whom have been with us since the beginning to deliver:

- 👉 4 x weekly Horticulture sessions April to September
- 👉 2 x weekly Horticulture sessions October to March
- 👉 Volunteer activity increased by 45% on the previous year
- 👉 20 Schools horticulture activities delivered in the period



150m of
traditional
hedgelaying
completed

Countryside Management & Conservation

- 👉 Fruit Tree Pruning training sessions for 20 Volunteers followed by a traditional Wassailing Ceremony with 40 attendees
- 👉 150 meters of traditional hedgelaying carried out with 6 Volunteer sessions including participants from Groundworks Southeast and Great Dixter as well as local "Wild About" groups
- 👉 New wildlife pond installed to improve biodiversity



Hope Farm Organics



Hope Farm Organics was launched in July 2021 to support our longer-term sustainability with key outcomes as follows:

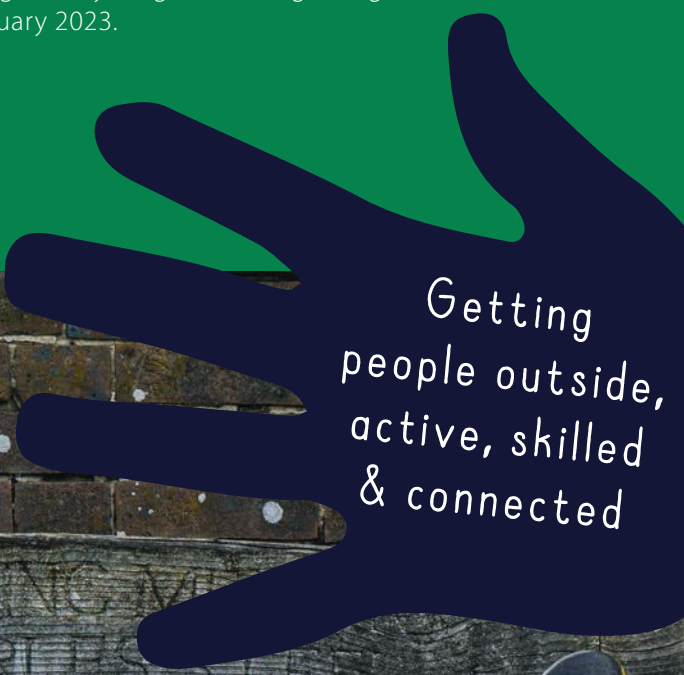
- 👉 72 weekly subscription customers
- 👉 800 Volunteer hours accrued for packing and delivering
- 👉 Inspiring communities to buy local, in-season, organic food, thereby reducing food waste and food miles

Hawkhurst Shedders



The Shedders group disbanded during COVID-19 but resumed briefly in 2021 with significantly reduced numbers.

We have now invested in recruiting a Project Lead who will run 2 weekly sessions aligned with our new Living History Programme beginning in February 2023.



Getting
people outside,
active, skilled
& connected



Funders & Supporters

We are extremely grateful to the following organisations and donors for their faith and support:

- Reaching Communities – National Lottery
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Sussex Community Foundation
- Kent Community Foundation
- Co-operative Community Fund – Cranbrook Branch
- Dulverton Trust
- Involve Kent
- Awards for All
- Tesco Bags of Help Scheme
- Waitrose Community Fund – Hawkhurst Branch
- Cole Charitable Trust
- Chalk Cliffe Trust
- Kingsley Knapley
- LUND Fund managed by High Weald Partnership
- Social Farms and Gardens
- Marlborough House School
- Ewhurst Church
- Rye Ukes
- The Samphire Trust
- Nineveh Trust
- Sandhurst Horticultural Society
- Ernest Klienworth
- Hastoe Housing
- McCarthy Stone
- Arnold Clarke
- Bernard Sunley
- South of England Hedgelaying Society
- Colyer Fergusson
- Investec Bank
- Network Rail
- J Perigoe & Son Funeral Directors
- Peasmarsh Parish Council
- Hawkhurst Parish Council
- Michelmersch
- Parkers Building Supplies
- H&H Celcom
- Paxton
- Dolphin Bathroom Supplies
- Webbes Restaurants
- Day Marketing & PR
- Ann Chown Photography
- Pam Vicem
- Karen Hanton
- Olaf Siedler
- Jo Hughes
- Nick Foreman
- Quentin McCormick
- Faith McArthur

Partnership/Collaboration

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide horticulture, nutrition & nature-based wellbeing activities for:

- Active Hastings
- Optivo
- Heart of Sidley
- Involve Kent
- Yes Futures
- Catch a Fire
- Vinci Facilities
- Hastings Direct

We are also grateful to the following charities and organisations who offered support and advice in the period:

- Wellbeing in the Weald
- CAP
- Kent Country Partnership
- RVA
- HVA
- Hastings and Rother Food Partnership
- High Banks Garden Centre
- Waitrose – Hawkhurst Branch
- Great Dixter
- Groundworks Southeast
- Tamar Local



The Year In Pictures



I enjoy coming to hands of hope I like the company of people I'm involved in forestry work tree feeling involved in the garden I've done tree pruning here we do hedge laying here we do fruit and veg deliveries we are happy to be doing some green wooding work and I've enjoyed every minute of it.

