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The Trustees
The Nineveh Charitable Trust
C/o Mrs Sally Hutchinson
8 Mill Lane,
Saffron Walden,
Essex,
CB10 2AS
12th February 2026

Report on our Compass Lake Project
Date of Grant: 6th February 2025
Grant Offered: £4,000

Dear Mrs Hutchinson,

The Nineveh Charitable Trust very kindly offered a grant towards our Compass lake project equipment in February 2025. We have purchased quite a few items with the grant including PPE equipment, Stihl brush cutter, Tools, Fish, communication radios, underwater camera and the Deeper Chirp 2 sonar.

With your support we have been able to continue our work at the lake helping change the lives of vulnerable young people who are struggling to engage with mainstream education. Since February last year, just over 50 students have received intensive, tailored one-to-one coaching and mentoring at the lake side. This has mainly been boys as we are in the clearing and building phase but their work has opened up space for the young girls attending the project to start coming down and engaging in activities at the site, which they have been.

These young people faced multiple barriers to learning, including anxiety, trauma, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) challenges, and disrupted family lives. With your funding, we have provided a safe, nurturing, and creative environment where participants could rebuild their confidence, improve engagement with education, and take steps towards brighter futures.

The PPE has been very useful when using our equipment and for kitting the students in the right clothing for the work undertaken. This has included clearing the banks in areas and going in the water and clearing areas of reed and making and launching a floating island. The island has some new plants on top and a wire fence underneath to help small fish hide from predators. We recently

stocked over 1,000 small fish (Roach, Bream and Tench) in the lake to grow on and they will be making good use of the reed beds and the island.

The students have learnt how to construct duck habitats, bug hotels, floating islands and angling areas as well as learning how to use hand and powered tools appropriately.



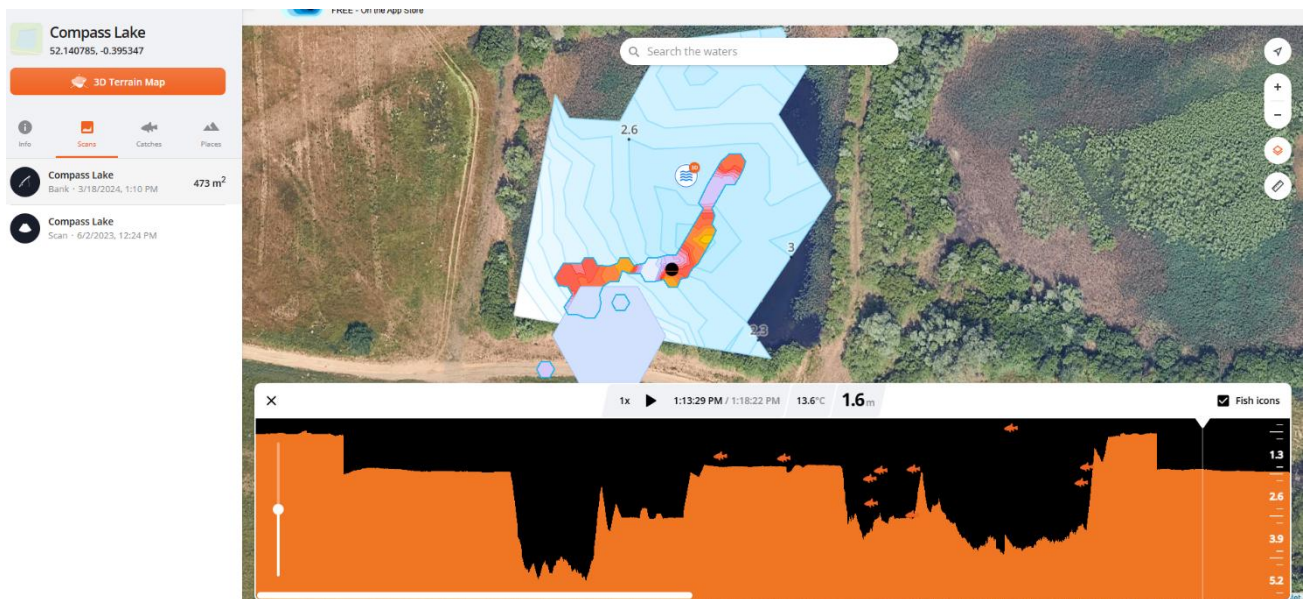
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Radios were purchased to keep people safe around the lake. We use them to keep in touch with the students and each other and have used them down the lake several times during work parties allowing us to check they are ok, and they can send an SOS if needed.

The Deeper has been a very interesting purchase, adding some interesting science to our activities which the students have found fascinating. The Deeper has allowed us to record the depth and topography of the lake to help students better understand why and how the lakes are created and where best to fish for different types of fish.

We have used the deeper at our lake and have recorded several areas where we have deep drop offs and weedy areas to avoid. It also shows where fish are at that moment (the sonar reflects off the air bladder in the fish) This allows a student to try and find the fish using the sonar and then fish for them. It adds another element for us to engage a student and keep him interested; we can teach them how to use the technology whilst providing some very practical information for us. To date not one student has even imagined that this sort of technology was available let alone been able to use it. It is a big success.



The water wolf camera is also a successful technological purchase allowing us to record underwater footage of fish feeding on bait, chasing lures or hiding. We have used this camera when lure fishing and have been able to identify different species of fish (such as the Rudd hidden in the bottom right of the photo below). We have also been able to understand the substrate on the bottom of the lake and how best to manage this in the future. Using the water wolf is enabling us to show the students

how to edit videos back at base as well as teaching the students how and why a fish may or may not take the bait.



All of these items will be used at other sites we visit to keep the students engaged and to help us catch fish, which is the highlight of the day for the students who have not fished before.

With regards to the benefits of the work we do with the students at the lake site and at our office I have included below some information taken from a report we compiled recently.

1. Reduced Anxiety and Improved Wellbeing

Many of the young people who entered our Programmes were struggling with severe anxiety, often refusing to leave home or engage with peers. By providing a safe, one-to-one environment and carefully structured activities, we created space for them to feel heard, valued, and supported.

- 95% of sessions were delivered on a one-to-one basis, ensuring tailored emotional support.
- Students who initially arrived withdrawn and disengaged reported feeling calmer and more able to manage stress.
- Many of the young people learned simple mindfulness and grounding techniques that they now use independently to cope with difficult emotions.
- Parents and carers fed back that their child was more positive at home and better able to communicate how they were feeling.

Coach Comment:

“Student was lacking in confidence, and suffered from severe anxiety. They struggled to engage in the beginning and leaving home for the session was a huge struggle. Student A was able to take on some techniques the coach worked through with her at the lake in a peaceful atmosphere. This resulted in them being able to cope and manage their feelings much better and this then led to them being able to attend for two sessions with us here at Positive Steps. This same student then left us to attend college full time; parents fed back to us that with our help and support we had helped this happen”

2. Increased Engagement with Learning

The majority of the students we support enter the programme with a history of disrupted education, poor attendance, and low attainment. Through hands-on, interest-led projects, they rediscovered the value and enjoyment of learning.

- Students achieved Gateway qualifications in areas such as food preparation (including BBQs at the lake) and life skills – often their first formal qualifications.
- Most students moved from struggling to concentrate for a few minutes to being able to sustain focus for full sessions.
- Literacy, numeracy, and IT skills were embedded in creative activities, giving students practical ways to improve core competencies without feeling overwhelmed.
- Teachers and local authority partners reported improved readiness to re-engage with formal education or specialist placements.

As an example, student B was referred for an indefinite period whilst a suitable school placement was found for. Their referral paperwork indicated that although attendance was not a concern, their engagement and ability to focus was very poor causing them to be a continual cause of disruption to fellow students during lessons. During their time with the Project, he was encouraged initially on a 1-1 basis to listen carefully to instructions in advance of completing an activity and gently reminded when they began to struggle with focus. Eventually he was encouraged to move to a 2-1 session with a student experiencing similar challenges. This helped them to understand the impact of their own behaviour. A suitable placement has now been found for Student B, and he is due to leave us this week after a total of 24 weeks with our provision. During the follow-up PDR it was reported that they have made a huge improvement in engagement and the time and care that they put into set activities. He is able to sit and concentrate for longer periods and is much better at staying in the classroom setting. In a group setting he has also improved in his ability to follow social cues and at giving personal space.

3. Improved Confidence and Future Aspirations

Rebuilding confidence was a cornerstone of the programme. Many of the young students arrived with low self-esteem and a limited belief in their own potential. Through consistent mentoring and achievement opportunities, we saw striking transformations.

- Students began contributing ideas during group activities with some taking leadership roles in shared projects.
- Several young students developed friendships for the first time in years, reducing feelings of isolation. This extended to meeting up in their own time.
- A number of students who previously refused to consider further education have now started at college (September 2025).
- Students expressed more hope for the future in their Personal Development Reviews (PDRs), reporting that they now see themselves as capable of achieving goals.

Coach Comment

“We were initially advised that Student D would be staying with us Post-16 and had expressed an interest in completing a qualification. However, towards the end of the year, Student D informed us that he had been accepted onto a music course at college. Although we were sad to see him leave, we were delighted to witness the growth in his confidence, which enabled him to feel ready to re-join mainstream education”

4. Strengthened Social and Emotional Skills

Beyond academic and vocational outcomes, the programme focused heavily on equipping students with the resilience and emotional intelligence needed for long-term wellbeing. We also have student support leader who works on identified areas of need including emotional literacy as required

- Students who once struggled with anger outbursts learned safe ways to express frustration.
- Some students demonstrated increased empathy, supporting peers during group sessions.
- Exposure to community-based activities (farm visits, walks, creative projects) improved social interaction and reduced social anxiety.

“Student C came to us unable to self-regulate their anger and emotions and was prone to become dis-regulated and then disengaged very quickly. With help from the coach they have been able to learn techniques that will help manage feelings and anger. This then enabled them to then further help other peers who also attend and helped them engage in group activities much more comfortably and calmly”

We recently had a grant funder visit the lake who loved the site and the project and have agreed to grant towards the purchase of the Scaffolding poles and wood to build the fishing platforms and the purchase of a decent shelter where we can conduct education sessions (and hide from the rain if needed). This will enable more students to use the site over the coming year who do not want to engage in clearing and building. We have regular work details scheduled which will help clear more area and bring it into use. This is very much an ongoing project with years of work ahead of us but we are taking our time and doing it properly (and as and when the funds come in to help).

The lake next to ours is a designated wildlife reserve with an abundance of bird and animal wildlife that visits ours. We see Dear, Herons, Egrets, Osprey, Kingfishers, Black Squirrels, Foxes, Badgers Otters, Geese, Swans, Ducks and a lot of other fauna. It is a beautiful site that our students can visit getting them out into nature which they very rarely do. For some it is there first time visiting the

countryside, even though its only a few miles from their homes, and is opening up a whole new world to them where they can truly relax and engage in life changing programs we run.

The ability to purchase some great items with your grant is helping us open up a wonderful new world for our students and is very much appreciated. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address above.

Yours Sincerely



Paul Sutherland





Floating Island



This predator Pike was the first fish caught at the site.

