



Worcester community garden
a great place to grow



Floating Office and Tool Store Project Report

Evaluation of National Lottery Community Fund Project, ID 20211321

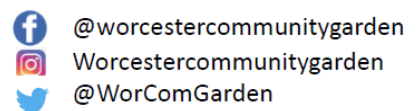


July 2023

Further information:

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Worcester Community Garden is a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) registered with the charity commission no. 1198580

The Issue

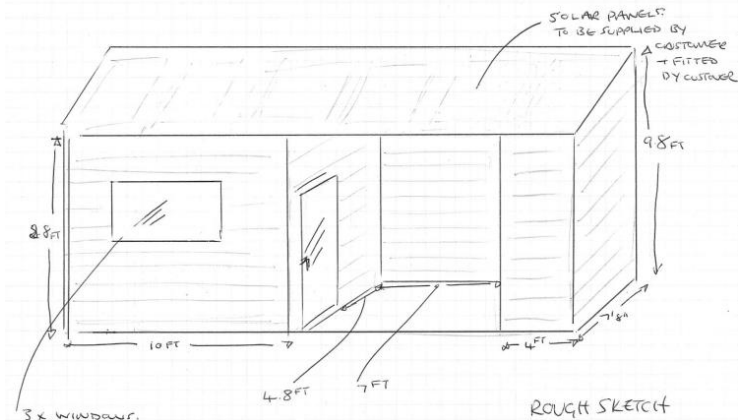
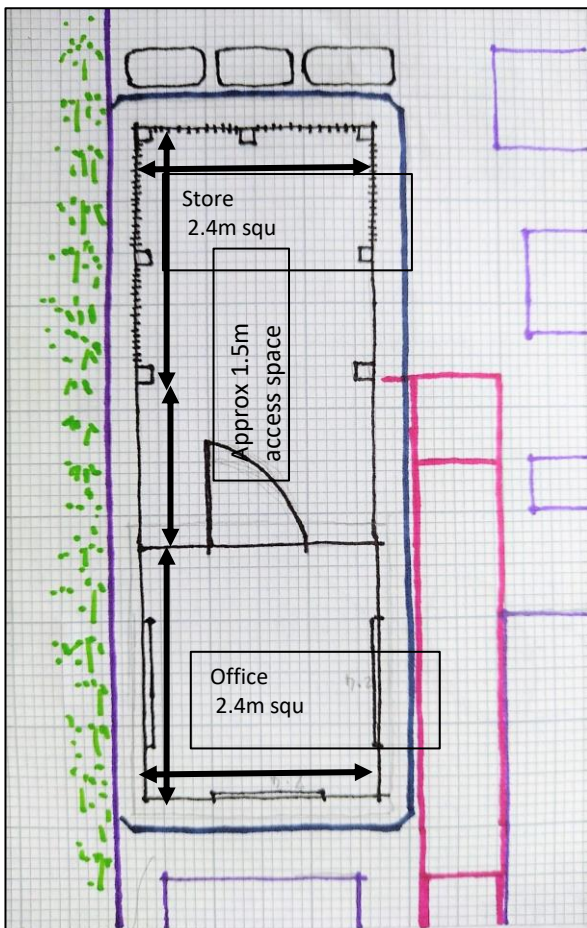
Worcester Community Garden (WCG) is a half-acre site, open to the public 7 days per week. Staffed entirely by volunteers, WCG produces fruit, flowers and vegetables all grown in-line with organic no-dig principles. The garden is also developing bee keeping, medicinal plants and aims to provide a sanctuary/safe haven for people with poor mental health. WCG is wheel chair accessible. WCG is situated on the edge of Pitchcroft, a site liable to regular and sustained flooding whenever the River Severn bursts its banks. WCG is flooded each year (the highest recorded water level in the garden is 4'10"). The floods cause considerable damage to the gardens, eg damaging the tool storage area, causing tools to become rusted and requiring replacement.



The Aim

WCG would like the funds to buy a wooden meeting room and tool shed; and to put this meeting room and tool shed on a (floating) anchored pontoon which will rise and fall with water levels and protect our equipment, etc. A protected meeting room and tool shed will allow WCG to:

- Increase its core number of volunteers from 40 per week (present) to 50+, partly by having a base to offer more formalised induction training.
- Continue to widen the different social backgrounds of volunteers, at present WCG is aware that many of its volunteers are otherwise socially isolated, thriving on the social interactions.
- Develop a small but growing work experience programme which has seen regular volunteers move back into full time employment.
- Increase the number of users experiencing poor mental health - already local agencies working with stroke/ transition/abuse-sufferers have visited the site and would welcome a respite/counselling area which could facilitate longer and more intensive visits to the garden.
- Offer a shelter/tea room in all weathers for all users and volunteers.



The Achievement



We're thrilled to have been awarded £10,000 from the national lottery community awards.

The funds will be used to build a floating pontoon to house a new tool storage area. This will protect much of the garden's resources from the regular flooding experienced each winter.

We are extremely grateful to Keith Slater (pictured, centre) of Community Boost who worked with the community garden's chair of trustees, Steve Dent, on the bid, providing his time, advice and expertise to help us secure this funding.

Keith himself said of the community garden *"no doubt in my mind that this oasis of peace and tranquillity is a hidden jewel in the city and is a first rate example of the work that committed and dedicated volunteers can produce"*



STEP 1 (Oct / Nov 2022)

Site Clearance

Volunteers Cliff and Chris demolish the old tool and wood store.

Old water tanks sold and donated to the nearby Arboretum Pocket Park.

STEP 2 (Nov / Dec 2022)

Anchor posts and pontoon delivery

Trustees Jon and Steve installed the scaffold poles - essential to stop the new structure from floating away.

Delivery and connecting the pontoon, by volunteers Mick and Olly, with Jon and Steve.



STEP 3 (Jan 2023)

Test against the flooding



Success - The pontoon has floated above the flood.

STEP 4 (March 2023) - Office and Tool Store

Skilled craftsmen from Worcester Timber Products delivered and installed the office and tool store. Leon Hopkins, managing director, donated a beautiful carved sign of our logo and strap line to fix to the structure and make it our own.



STEP 5 (March 2023)

Grand Opening - Ribbon cut by volunteer bid writer Keith Slater



STEP 6 (April 2023 – on-going)

Fit out and use

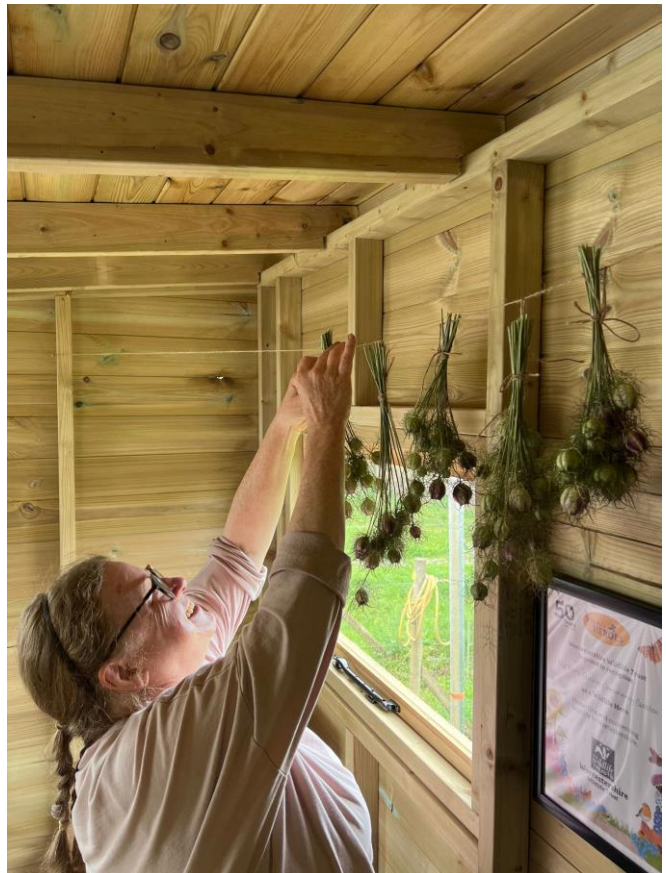
Volunteer Matthew helping to fix the tool clips.

Volunteer Dave constructing heavy duty shelves for our reference library and other essentials – that can all be kept dry now.

New uses:

Volunteer Pat is drying flower bouquets for sale; and drying bulbs and seeds for next year.

Storing donated wool for various uses across the site, next to the full bee keeping cupboard and the jobs list notice board.



Impact and next steps

Over the past 12 months Worcester Community Garden has seen an incredible growth in numbers of people volunteering and visiting the garden. Data to 9 June 2023 show:

- 862 volunteer shifts (compared to 636 in 2022), which equates to
- 2411.5 hours (compared to 1771 in 2022)
- We've also had 2124 visitors (data not collected previously)

We have also increased the number of partner organisations working and visiting the site. New partners this year include:

- Age UK
- New Opportunities Worcester
- NHS
- OnSide Advocacy

Part of evaluation process has led us to planning a **floating greenhouse** as a next major project.

Budget

The budget has been adequately managed in relation to planned and actual spend.

INCOME	
National Lottery	£10,000
Worcester City Council	£5,000

EXPENDITURE	
Timber office and toolstore	£7999.78
Pontoon	£4,914.00
Scaffold poles	£184.49
Sundries (mooring ropes, battens and clips, preserving oil)	£168.82

There is a balance of £1,732.91, which will be used for connections and materials required to install the donated **solar panels**, plus external protective treatment with brushes and cleaner.



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Thank you National Lottery and Worcester City Council



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