

Main achievements 2023-2024

- Grow 4 Good SW Ltd has continued to consolidate its work with adults who are at risk of social isolation, primarily due to poor mental health; this work is being achieved by using horticulture as a therapeutic tool at an organic community gardening project based within the grounds of Dartmoor Zoo in Devon. A few volunteers have been attending for many years, while others have gone on to find employment. For some volunteers we are their only point of contact with other adults during the course of a week. Volunteers comment that they like the welcoming and friendly approach and feel they are in a 'safe' and non-judgemental environment while learning and experiencing new opportunities - and this helps increase their self-confidence enabling them to be a part of their local community.
- The project continues to maintain links with a range of agencies that it has worked with over the years and who refer volunteers to the project, whilst continuing to explore new opportunities to work with other agencies such as the local social prescribing team in Plymouth.

Corporate and strategic matters

- Trustee meetings are usually held quarterly, and key areas of the organisation (e.g. governance, marketing, and resources) are monitored using an approved 'health-check' document to ensure we maintain good practice whilst also identifying areas that require focus. Action plans for these are made and implemented where necessary.
- All policies continue to be reviewed and approved annually at trustee meetings and include an Adult Safeguarding Policy, a Child Safeguarding Policy, a Health & Safety Policy, an Equality and Diversity Policy, a Secure Storage, Handling, Use and Retention & Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information Policy, Volunteer Policy, Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy, Appraisal Policy and an Environmental Policy.
- Management accounts are produced by the accountant for the Trustees using information supplied by the project manager at Grow 4 Good. The annual budget is also drawn up by the accountant, again using information provided by staff, and the budget is approved by all Trustees.
- Trustees continue to rotate the role of Acting Chair at each meeting, and one trustee and a member of staff from the project share the tasks involved as Company Secretary.
- In 2023-2024 the project had five appointed trustees.
- All reporting requirements were met during 2023-2024.

Funding and partnerships

- Our work with Dartmoor Zoological Society (DZS), also a charity, continues to flourish with ongoing works/upkeep of the zoo grounds – the zoo does not have their own dedicated gardening team and so rely on the work done by the Grow 4 Good teams. We sell our organic mixed leaf salad bags to the zoo restaurant and, during the growing season, we sell organic salad bags and vegetables, together with young organic vegetable/flowering plants to zoo staff/volunteers on a weekly basis.
- The project continues to trade seasonal organic produce to a local café, selling mixed leaf salad bags, cucumbers and tomatoes whilst also attending a local farmers market

during the growing season to sell produce and plants and promote the work that we do.



Volunteers ready to sell produce and talk about their experiences at the project

- Grow 4 Good SW Ltd has continued to work with several agencies during 2023-2024 including Livewell South West and the Social Prescribing team at the Wolesley Trust. We have also attended several events to promote the work that we do attending the Social Isolation Conference in Plymouth, the Health and Well Being Network event, 'Always Apples'. We also gave a talk and presentation to the Age Positive group, part of Improving Lives. All of this work is vital to raising the awareness of the work Grow 4 Good does and the staff remain very focussed on promoting the project to a wider audience.
- The project has hosted a number of corporate days with HM Land Registry who sent groups of twelve employees on six separate occasions. Other days were hosted for Premium Credit, Francis Clark and Chaddlewood FANS. The feedback we received was very positive with many wanting to return next year.
- We continue to work with a LANTRA assessor, who makes a donation to use our site to run brush-cutter and chainsaw courses.
- Grow 4 Good has continued working with local Cooperative stores, and were successful in receiving a local causes community fund of almost £2000. We also received a grant from Local Giving for £500.
- In 2023-2024 Grow 4 Good worked with Cornwall college offering two students a one day a week placement during the academic year.



A group from HM Land Registry ready to work hard!

Volunteers (including referred volunteers)

- Volunteers at the project consist of adults who face social isolation and are either referred by an agency or they self-refer. We also have a few adults who are retired or have spare time and who enjoy attending the project and giving something back to their local community. In addition, three of our trustees attend the project regularly to help support volunteers, strengthening our commitment of inclusion and a non-hierarchical ethos.
- In 2023-2024 the project had six potential volunteer visits and four adults started volunteering at the project during this time period.
- In a typical week the total number of volunteers involved at the project on any given day was usually 10 with the total number of volunteers attending the project during 2023-2024 standing at 20, which included one occasional volunteer who has work commitments.
- The age range of our volunteers is 29 to 74 years old, and several have volunteered for five years or more. Many volunteers comment on how friendly the project is, that it feels a 'safe' environment where they can be themselves, and how it gives them opportunities to meet new people who also experience social isolation. In addition, many enjoy the experience of being part of a working team together with learning new skills in horticulture.



- Recognising the contribution that volunteers make we continue to celebrate the number of hours volunteers give to Grow 4 Good by handing out certificates to our volunteers when they reach 100 hours, 250 hours, 500 hours, 1000 hours, 1500 hours, 2000 hours and an incredible 3000 hours. In 2023-2024 we handed out 9 Certificates, with two being awarded for giving 2000 volunteer hours to the project, two for 500 hours, and five for 100 hours. Once new volunteers complete 100 hours, they also receive a Grow 4 Good T-shirt.
- As a charity we are very fortunate to have a number of volunteers who are able to continue to commit to the project for such a long period of time – including our amazing trustees.

- Total volunteer hours for 2023-2024 were up again on the previous year from 2242.25 hours to 2469.75 hours
- These extra hours, in part, enabled the volunteers to create a new wildlife pond area thanks to a grant from Local Giving



Having fun building the new pond



As in previous years we continue to celebrate individual volunteer birthdays (as most people love to celebrate a birthday!) with personalised cards made by the project coordinator together with cake - all volunteers at the project seem to really appreciate this!



Volunteer social events continue to remain an important part of the Grow 4 Good calendar as a way of showing our appreciation for all their hard work and commitment to the project. During 2023-2024 staff and some of the volunteers went bowling during Volunteer week

which was paid for by the charity.

Volunteers and staff enjoying an afternoon of bowling



This year
staff at
Grow 4
Good also
hosted a

celebration/fun day event before closing for the Christmas break. Volunteers received a 'fun' certificate i.e. the best cake maker, a jar of chutney, and a parsnip each! The group then enjoyed a few traditional games i.e pass the parcel and musical chairs.

Grow 4 Good's first celebration and Christmas fun day



For the second year running the project offered volunteers the opportunity to make a Christmas wreath to take home – this was popular, and will now become an annual event due to volunteer requests, together with coffee and mince pies!

showing off his wreath!

One volunteer proudly

Onsite works and work in zoo grounds



Weeding and ‘rabbit proofing’ the plot

- Volunteers continue to actively work on the Grow 4 Good site maintaining and working the raised beds, looking after nursery stock plants, planting in the polytunnels, and growing salad, fruit and vegetables. During 2023-2024 more raised beds have been built by the volunteers allowing for a bigger growing area, a massive tidy and sort out of the site recycling many items in new and imaginative ways.
- The number of hours spent working in the zoo grounds by our regular volunteers during 2023/2024 was 401.75 which is slightly lower than the same time in the previous year due to continued redevelopments on the Grow 4 Good plot including the nurturing of seedlings to sell at markets! However, hours worked in the zoo by corporate groups with Grow 4 Good totalled 226 hours, and with these groups we generally tackled bigger jobs, for example clearing and tidying in the animal enclosures. All the work completed within the zoo grounds continues to be highly valued by the zoo team, and also the general public who frequently stop to congratulate the volunteers on the work they are doing
- During this period the regular volunteers at Grow 4 Good have continued to clear, maintain and improve public areas in the zoo grounds such as maintaining shrubs and planting out new plants in the borders around the zoo.
- Facebook and Instagram are an important focus for the charity as a way of keeping in contact with our supporters and volunteers with several posts each week and updates on the work in progress at the charity. We also have a web page via Local Giving.

Financial Review

Income for 2023-2024 was as follows:

General donations with gift aid £10803.57

Personal donations £34959.00

Total income for sales £ 2758.72

The Charity Trustees reserves policy is that if the bank funds fall below a set target this will precipitate a trustee meeting to take further action.