

Hale Road Allotments, Swavesey, South Cambridgeshire

Introduction to group

Situated on the right-hand side of Hale Road towards the windmill, Hale Road Allotments in Swavesey were set up on Saturday 6 October 2012 on the site of a former arable field.

The allotment site comprises of 61 plots, mostly 125 sq. metres (22m X 5.7m) in area, with some half-size. Members are permitted to have sheds on their plot.



Eight water tanks, plumbed into the mains system, provide easy access to water for the use of the allotment members. There is also a waterless toilet on site, and cycle racks have been installed to encourage plot-holders to leave their car at home.

Rabbit & deer proof fencing surrounds the whole site. A car park is also provided.

Plot holders consist of individuals, couples, and families. Members come from all backgrounds and are of all ages.

“Everyone has found that large quantities of high quality vegetable, fruit and flower crops can be grown successfully with just a modicum of hard graft. The main thing is that all plot holders find that having an allotment plot and growing your own food is not only physically and mentally invigorating but also lots of fun.”

The Need

When CCVS were first contacted by the group in 2015 the plot did not have any toilet facilities. In their own words

“Many plots have ladies as sole-operators and there are also 34 children under the age of 12 years associated with our site”.

This meant there was a time limit for how long people could visit their plots, it was putting people off applying for a plot and it was not appropriate to encourage involvement from schools or other youth organisations.

What was done?

The group had completed a draft application for the Big Lottery Awards for All. The problem was that:

- it made a lot of assumptions that the reader would know and understand how allotments worked
- Did not focus on the outcomes
- Focused on the existing users and lack a vision for how a wider community could participate in the allotments

CCVS supported the group with:

- A series of one to one sessions which involved providing a critical review of the application and helping to understand what the funder's (particularly the Big Lottery) were looking to see.
- Provided opportunity to meet with Big Lottery Funding Officer at a Funding Fair
- Advice on how to use the free Grantgrabber search engine

The Impact/change

As a result of our input and much hard work from the group there was a change of perspective that led to the group:

- Articulating the wider vision that they had for the allotments as playing a bigger part of the local community
- Looking beyond immediate need to the potential outcomes



Our support, training and advice led to the group developing more skills in bid writing and gaining greater confidence. This allowed them to

- Use Grantgrabber search engine to identify funds
- Understand the importance of providing evidence of need; having measurable and achievable outcomes and involving/consulting people
- Attend and benefit from the 'making good funding applications' workshop run by CCVS
- Meet with Big Lottery Local funding Officer
- Understand the benefits of asking CCVS to critically review applications

The practical outcome was that money was raised for a waterless toilet.

“From SCDC Grantgrabber site in December I noticed Saffron Community Foundation. I discussed it with the Clerk to Swavesey Parish Council and we both agreed that there was minimal chance of success because we are geographically well outside their normal area of activity. Nevertheless on 18 December I put in an application for £707, the top-up amount needed above £10,000, mainly to get practice and to focus my mind on the main points to put over in the A4A application. The application form said I would get acknowledgment of receipt within 14 days but I didn't which did not surprise me because I assumed they immediately binned my application. I mentioned this when I met you on 14 January and you agreed there was little chance of success with SCF. So, I put in my Awards for All £10,000 application and I also applied to University Rag Fund (via CCVS) to try to close the gap by £200.



Subsequently I got an invitation to give a presentation to SCF Trustees on the evening of last Tuesday, 1 March, at their head office in Long Stratton, about 10 miles due south of Norwich. The next day, 2 March, they e-mailed me offering the £707. This morning, Saturday 5 March, I have received a letter from A4A confirming an offer of their full £10,000”.

Having the toilet has enable the group to start to realise their aim of playing a bigger role in the community.

“Already things are happening as a direct result of winning the toilet. Next week we will have a bunch of Year 8 students (Wed/Thurs) and a bunch of Year 9 students (Tues/Wed) on our site from Swavesey Village College to do certain tasks, including building a bug hotel for the thirty four under-12-year -olds associated with our site and they will bring packed lunches so they are comfortably on site all day which they would not have been able to do before the toilet was installed.

Furthermore, because plot holders are allowed sheds on site to store tools, and they now have a toilet on site they have less need to drive to the site so we expect more to cycle there which is why we need the cycle racks and as a side effect our plot holders will be physically fitter and less petrol will be burned”.

Testimony

“Thank you to all the support and advice that I received from CCVS because without you I would not have put together such a convincing case to BLF and also to Saffron Community Foundation who kindly supplied the top up above the BLF maximum grant. All throughout you made me focus on emphasising what difference having a toilet would make and what would happen as a result of BLF awarding us £10,000”.