



TCV Community Network

Group case study: Dorothy Parkes Centre, Birmingham

“We felt one of the best opportunities for us to be able to offer a safe and a tranquil outdoor space that would benefit members of our community, would be to take on an allotment.”

Robert Bruce, CEO of Dorothy Parkes Centre

Through the work of The Conservation Volunteers, communities are stronger by working together to improve the places where people live and tackling the issues that matter to them.

The Dorothy Parkes Centre allotment project began in 2018. It started as an overgrown, dilapidated plot and was transformed by its members into a fully accessible, safe and tranquil outdoor community classroom and haven enjoyed by countless members of the community including animals and insects of all kinds. The dedicated and diverse group of volunteers have already put in over 470 hours in 2022 alone, enabling community members to develop life, employability and horticultural skills.

TCV supports nearly 2,000 local independent community groups, involving an estimated 40,000 volunteers, whom we support and empower to connect the community with green spaces.

Source: TCV impact figures 2021-22





"Those that haven't grown anything in the past before, you're helping them to do that. And it's like riding a bike: you don't forget. Once you've done it one year, you know you can do it then."

Paul, Plot Lead

The Dorothy Parkes Centre allotment was specifically developed with accessibility in mind so all members of the community can get involved in the various classes, child play sessions, and other volunteering opportunities available.

Described as an 'outdoor networked community classroom', the purpose of the allotment is to empower the community by teaching invaluable life skills and improving members' confidence and physical activity.

Volunteers of all ages, gender, race, religion, sexuality and backgrounds have come together to create a green space for their community to thrive in. Primary school sessions have taught over 100 students about the benefits of allotments and growing your own food in 2022 alone.



The produce grown at the allotment is also given back to the community, specifically to families in need as well as through the local foodbank.

"I started at the beginning of March, so at that time, we were planting the seeds. Horrible weather, digging in rain and sleet, but coming every week and seeing the progress: it's just given me a new lease of life, really."

Lynn, Volunteer





"What's great about the project is the volunteers that help enable us to get all this produce. The produce is then taken back to our community centre and is distributed then throughout the local community."

Robert Bruce, CEO of Dorothy Parkes Centre

How to get involved

Community Network Membership

If your community organisation would like to receive free resources, help with health and safety guidance, safeguarding support, obtaining insurance at a reduced rate and volunteer recruitment and retention from a nationwide community, please consider joining TCV's Community Network. TCV is committed to supporting groups and organisations who share in our vision of every community in the country having access to high-quality local green spaces – safe, welcoming and loved by their communities – homes to thriving nature and thriving people.

Find a Volunteering Group near you

If you want to take an active role in creating and developing these spaces at the heart of communities, please consider volunteering with TCV, or with our network of community groups. We have projects across the UK and offer a range of activities suitable for all levels of experience and fitness.

Find how TCV's projects, volunteers and Community Network members impact local communities and how you can help by visiting our website.



www.tcv.org.uk

