

## THE THERAPY GARDEN – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### Executive Summary

A new application for revenue funding has been received from the Therapy Garden, a Charity which operates a two-acre site in the village of Normandy at which a variety of gardening projects are provided, including the Green School, Cultivating Skills and Stroke of Genius.

The Green School offers secondary school age students the opportunity to achieve an entry Level City & Guilds qualification 'Skills for Working Life: Horticulture' or a City & Guilds Level 1 or Level 2 for GCSE age learners. Students are referred by both mainstream and SEN schools.

The 'Cultivating Skills' project offers social and therapeutic horticulture to adults with a range of physical disabilities and additional needs. Adults with mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety are also offered therapeutic horticulture.

The 'Stroke of Genius' group offers social and therapeutic horticulture to stroke and brain injury survivors. Stroke survivors work with a team of experienced horticulturists and volunteers to develop new horticultural skills that are transferable to home.

The Charity has applied for revenue funding of £5,000 towards the core costs of the service. Whilst the Charity charges fees for clients to attend, these only covers approximately 40% of running costs. Remaining costs are covered by fundraising. Covid-19 has impacted significantly on the Charity's activities and accordingly the applicant is exploring new sources of funding, including Woking Borough Council, noting that a number of clients attend from the Borough.

The application represents a new revenue call on the Council for an existing service and has the potential to lead to ongoing support needs from the Council. It is not felt that the application has justified support from the Council and in view of this, the position of the Council's budget and the comments of the Council's Family Services Manager, it is recommended that the application is not supported.

### Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

**RESOLVE That** no grant be awarded.

Reason for Decision

The application has not provided sufficient justification for the Council to award revenue funding for an existing service and in view of this, the position of the Council's budget and the comments of the Council's Family Services Manager, it is not felt that the application should be supported

**The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendation.**

### Background Papers:

2021/22 Application Form.

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## The Therapy Garden – Application For Financial Assistance

<b>1.0 Summary of Application</b>	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>The Therapy Garden is a horticulture and education charity that works to have a positive and significant impact on the lives of people facing challenges in life, whether by giving a sense of purpose to children with special needs; or by reducing the isolation of a young person living with autism or someone older living with dementia. The Charity also seeks to build confidence in adults recovering from a stroke or help to equip young people who have additional learning needs for a possible future in the workplace.</p> <p>Formed in 1998, the Therapy Garden is based at a 2 acre site in the village of Normandy. The Charity supports over 40 clients each week, with the Garden open for 50 weeks each year.</p> <p>The Charity's objects ("objects") are specifically restricted to the following:</p> <p>"The prevention or relief of physical or mental sickness or disability, and the preservation, protection and promotion of mental and physical health and wellbeing for those living within a 50-mile radius of Normandy, Surrey by the provision of therapeutic services and education in the use of land through all forms of horticulture and gardening."</p> <p>The Charity's 'Green School' programme gives teenagers aged 12-18 the chance to gain a City &amp; Guilds qualification in horticulture. For those aged between 19 and 25, the Charity runs a 'Transition - Grow to Work' programme providing support for the transition from school or college to the workplace by offering further training and work experience maintaining local gardens.</p> <p>The Charity works with the Stroke Association and the local Alzheimers Association to offer therapeutic horticulture to stroke survivors and those living with dementia. The groups are popular and the Charity operates a waiting list for those wishing to attend.</p>
1.2 Employees	<p>9, comprising the Centre Manager (20 hours/pw), the Fundraiser (12 hours/pw), the Financial Assistant (15 hours/pw), an Admin Assistant (3 hours/pw), the Head Horticulture Tutor (35 hours/pw), and four Horticulture Tutor (36 hours/pw, 14 hours/pw and two at 7 hours/pw).</p>
1.3 Volunteers	<p>50+, whose activities include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for clients and students in their horticultural activities</li> <li>• Independent work in the garden</li> <li>• Fundraising</li> <li>• Volunteer drivers</li> <li>• Administration support</li> <li>• The Board of Trustees</li> </ul> <p>In 2017 the Charity was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK</p>

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1.4 Clients/Users	<p>40+ per week, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 male</li> <li>20 female</li> <li>40 disabled</li> <li>3 ethnic minority</li> <li>10 resident in Woking</li> <li>30 aged 11-18</li> <li>10 aged 19-65</li> </ul> <p>The cost of attending the Therapy Garden is £75 per client, per day, based on attendance of 40 clients per week.</p> <p>For younger clients, the referring schools pay a fee of £35 per student per day to allow children to attend the Therapy Garden programme. The applicant has advised that the Charity raises funds to cover the shortfall. Adult clients are funded through their adult social care budgets or are self-funding.</p> <p>The charges made to client for attendance account for approximately 40% of the Charity's revenue. The balance is met through fundraising activities and funding received from Trusts and Foundations. The attendance charge for clients is regularly reviewed but kept at the absolute minimum possible to allow access to the services for as many as possible.</p>
1.5 Members	None.
1.6 Sum Requested	£5,000 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	<p>The funding requested is to be used towards the core cost of running the Therapy Garden.</p> <p>The applicant has advised that the Charity works hard to ensure that the costs of the different horticultural programmes and groups are met. Specific fundraising is undertaken for salary costs and for capital expenditure including equipment and materials for the clients to use, resources needed to maintain the garden, and for new projects that arise, for example, for a new shed or a raised flower bed.</p> <p>However, there are costs which are integral and unavoidable to the running of the charity, such as the lighting, heating, telephone, insurance costs etc. which do not fall into any particular project bracket. The Charity's heating costs, for example are high, due in part to the heating of outdoor poly-tunnels which enable clients to garden throughout the year.</p>

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### 1.8 Cost breakdown:

The Group has provided the following details which show the actual core costs for utilities only for 2017 to 2019, and the budgeted core costs for utilities for the current year.

<b>Costs (£)</b>	<b>Actual 17/18</b>	<b>Actual 18/19</b>	<b>Budget 19/20</b>
Building maintenance	4,163	5,157	6,000
Catering	1,840	1,597	1,750
IT	784	1,489	1,000
Utilities	4,974	3,263	3,400
Cleaning	1,808	2,092	2,100
Insurance	2,018	2,050	2,800
Health and Safety	817	1,899	1,500
Printing/Postage	1,102	920	1,500
Legal/professional	275	4,199	2,000
Accountancy	4,243	2,390	2,600
Recruitment	213	486	250
Security	623	697	750
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,851</b>	<b>26,239</b>	<b>25,650</b>

### 1.9 Community Benefit

The applicant has advised that the Charity is the only registered horticulture charity in the area that is able to professionally offer young people the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification in the field of gardening. The Charity has a strong relationship with all its referring bodies, schools, social services etc. Strong local links are maintained in the local community and students take part in community work, maintaining the local war memorial and peace garden as well as tending local private gardens. The work provides a sense of purpose and meaningfulness for the students and fosters a sense of pride, dignity and self-confidence.

The Therapy Garden works with a number of local charities such as Disability Challengers, Surrey Young Carers and Carers Forum to organise activity days to support children. The clients supported are some of the most vulnerable members of society, socially excluded because of circumstances, nature of their vulnerability or available support systems. The clients are sometimes marginalised with limited opportunities to make new friends or interact fully in local life.

Referrals are made to the Therapy Garden via the schools, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Family and Children's Services, Social Services, through associated support groups and directly. Through an initiative conceived by the local borough council, children in mainstream schools who, through a variety of circumstances, are under-achieving, in danger of dropping out of school altogether and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) are being identified and referred. Once these children have been referred, the Therapy Garden replaces one day a week at school with onsite vocational education and training.

Each client comes to the Garden for one full day each week during the academic year and throughout the holiday periods. The activities they take part in include garden maintenance, growing, harvesting, propagation and other gardening based activities. The programmes at the Therapy Garden are constantly being developed and adjusted to make a practical difference and step change to the learning experiences of clients. For students in years 7, 8 and 9, the Charity offers City & Guilds entry level qualifications. For students in years 10 and 11, the Charity offers City & Guilds Levels 1 and 2, equivalent to

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	<p>GCSE grades A to C (level 2) or GCSE grades D to F (level 1). Older students are offered Royal Horticultural Society training and Forestry School training.</p>
<p>1.10 Covid-19 Impact</p>	<p>The Therapy Garden had to shut its doors at the beginning of March 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis. During the following 3 months, the Garden had to make two staff positions redundant and the remaining staff were furloughed on rotation with just one office member, one horticulturist and one fundraiser on duty at any given time. The board of trustees, especially the Chair and the member responsible for Health and Safety, were very closely involved in the day to day operation of the Garden in order to be able to ensure the Charity was ready to welcome back clients at a moment's notice.</p> <p>The Charity kept in contact with clients through newsletters, emails, telephone calls and zoom calls to make sure the clients were safe and being supported to some degree. Constant contact with the clients themselves and referring bodies indicated that the young people were more ready and more in need to return to the Garden on a weekly basis than the adult clients. At the time of the application, the Charity was therefore adapting and preparing its facilities initially for the return of the young people. The Charity was keen to ensure they could return to a relaxed, happy and safe atmosphere, so although the facilities had to be safe, obviously, the Charity was also striving to make sure the children did not feel worried or intimidated by the change in facilities. For example the Charity arranged for some port-a-loos to be delivered so there was adequate toilet and hand washing facilities. The facilities would be decorated them in a jolly and homely manner to encourage a more relaxed reception to them.</p> <p>Coronavirus has added untold pressure to many of the clients the Charity works with. With all schools being closed and the lock-down, the pressure of living in an environment that may be hostile or combative only goes to exacerbate the frustrations of an already vulnerable person. Some have been tempted to break lock-down and behave anti-socially just as a way of combating the frustrations and it is charities such as The Therapy Garden that understand the need and are able to help a person make better decisions and find fulfilment down more constructive avenues.</p> <p>The Charity has, even during lock-down, been contacted by several schools confirming that as soon as the schools return they would be referring children on a weekly basis. Private enquiries have been received from social services and carers of vulnerable people wanting to find an outlet for disturbed and vulnerable young people where they can participate in meaningful occupation. At the time of the application, the Charity was still in lock-down, albeit a more relaxed lock-down, and the enquiries were coming in thick and fast.</p> <p>The Therapy Garden received £10,000 Emergency Covid-19 funding from Surrey County Council in May 2020.</p>

<p><b>2.0 Financial Background</b></p>	
<p>2.1 Budget</p>	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £60,006 in the bank. The sum of £47,766 is identified for reserves. The Trustees aim to</p>

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	<p>maintain a level of unallocated free reserves roughly equivalent to 50% of annual running costs. They believe this represents an appropriate balance between prudent management of the charity's reserves and the desire to maximise the funds used to support our charitable activities.</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2018/19 which show an income of £238,261 (£206,666 in 2017/18) against expenditure of £212,013 (£225,486 in 2017/18), resulting in a surplus of £26,248 (a deficit of £18,820 in 2017/18). The sum of £256,105 was carried forward at the end of the 2018/19 year.</p> <p>The Group has submitted draft accounts for 2019/20 which show that a substantial deficit is anticipated following a fall in income. The level of reserves is expected to fall to just under £215,000.</p> <p>Under normal circumstances, the Trustees' stated aim is to maintain a level of unallocated free reserves roughly equivalent to 50% of annual running costs. The Group believes that this is an appropriate balance between prudent management of the charity's reserves and the desire to maximise the funds used to support the charitable activities. However, one of the reasons for building an appropriate level of reserves as a safeguard for the proverbial 'rainy day'. The Covid crisis is just such a 'rainy day' and the reserves have given the Group greater resilience in incredibly difficult circumstances. In the longer term, the Group will seek to build up the level of reserves.</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	New Application.

<b>3.0 Assessment of Application</b>		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Constitution</li> <li>○ Registered Charity</li> <li>○ VAT Registered</li> <li>○ Equal Opportunities Policy</li> <li>○ Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>○ Reserves Policy</li> <li>○ Quality Mark</li> <li>○ Other funding sources pursued</li> <li>○ Other support by the Council</li> <li>○ Fundraising</li> <li>○ Two quotes</li> <li>○ Regular monitoring provided previously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
3.2 Consultee Comments	<p><u>Nicola Norman, Family Services Manager</u></p> <p>The Therapy Garden is applying for £5,000 to fund different horticultural programmes supporting mental health and wellbeing. Amongst a range of visitors, the Therapy Garden has supported visits</p>	

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	<p>from four Woking schools which it hopes to continue with this year.</p> <p>However, as the Therapy Garden is based in Normandy, outside Guildford it is not easily accessible for many residents within Woking borough. Therefore the benefits to the community as a whole are somewhat limited.</p> <p>Given the budget constraints, I recommend the grant application is refused in order that available funds are concentrated on projects based within the Borough that would directly benefit a larger number of Woking residents.</p>
3.3 Assessment	<p>The Therapy Garden is a two-acre site in the village of Normandy. The garden has been designed with accessibility in mind and includes wheelchair friendly pathways, raised vegetable and flowerbeds, sensory areas and quiet spaces. Activities can be taken in a heated polytunnel classroom or at the purpose built centre, which provides a classroom and refreshment area. The activities include the Green School, Cultivating Skills and Stroke of Genius.</p> <p><u>Green School</u></p> <p>The Green School offers secondary school age students the opportunity to achieve an entry Level City &amp; Guilds qualification 'Skills for Working Life: Horticulture' or a City &amp; Guilds Level 1 or Level 2 for GCSE age learners. Students are referred by both mainstream and SEN schools and The Therapy Garden offers interventional education opportunities when an individual is likely to benefit from vocational learning, in addition to their school curriculum.</p> <p><u>Cultivating Skills</u></p> <p>The 'Cultivating Skills' project offers social and therapeutic horticulture to adults with a range of physical disabilities and additional needs. Adults with mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety are also offered therapeutic horticulture, which promotes well-being through active engagement. Attendees take part in growing, harvesting and maintaining the gardens, alongside cooking with produce grown in the garden and garden related craft activities.</p> <p><u>Stroke of Genius</u></p> <p>The 'Stroke of Genius' group offers social and therapeutic horticulture to stroke and brain injury survivors. Gardening promotes a feeling of well-being whilst providing gentle exercise, which can benefit long-term recovery. Stroke survivors work with a team of experienced horticulturists and volunteers to develop new horticultural skills that are transferable to home.</p> <p>Referrals are made to the Therapy Garden via the schools, CAMHS, Family and Children's Services, Social Services and directly. Children in mainstream schools who are under-achieving, in danger of dropping out of school altogether and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) are being identified and referred. Once these children have been referred, the Therapy Garden replaces one day a week at school with off-site vocational training and education.</p> <p>The Therapy Garden works in partnership with several local organisations including Winston Churchill School, Woking High</p>



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School, Hoe Valley School, Freemantles School, Alzheimers UK, Dementia Friends, The Halow Trust, Anand Milan Seniors, Disability Challengers, Surrey Young Carers, Carers Forum and various care home in the area.

The students take part in community work maintaining the local war memorial and peace garden as well as answering requests to tend local private gardens.

Working with Surrey County Council and Halow, a local charity that supports children with learning disabilities, the Charity has been able to organise one-day gardening breaks for young people. Building on the success of this pilot, the Charity organised activity days for other local service providers such as Disability Challengers, Surrey Young Carers and Carers Forum.

The Charity has applied for revenue funding of £5,000 towards the core costs of the service. The Therapy Garden charges a fee for clients to attend, though this only covers approximately 40% of running costs. Remaining costs are covered by fundraising. The applicant has advised that many of those supported through the Charity are resident in Woking Borough Council; several adult clients live in Woking and the Charity works with several schools including Winston Churchill School, Woking High School, Hoe Valley School and Freemantles.

In recent months, the Charity has applied for funding from a wide range of agencies including Community Foundation for Surrey, Surrey Education Trust Funding, Children in Need, the Coleman Trust, the Ninevah Trust, the Barbara Ward Foundation and 11 further charitable foundations.

The Therapy Garden undertakes a range of fund-raising events. The Garden is opened to public twice a year in conjunction with the National Gardens Scheme and tours are given to local community groups as well as presentations to external clubs and societies. Bridge Drives and Quiz Nights are held throughout the year, though these have been disrupted by Covid-19.

In view of the Covid-19 crisis the Charity is exploring new streams of funding and has accordingly applied to Woking Borough Council for the first time to assist the Charity during the crisis. The applicant has indicated that the Charity is confident that by 2021 its regular funding streams would be back to somewhere near normal. A little extra help with core operating costs is required at the moment until more stable times return.

During the crisis the Charity has used its reserves to ensure that it is able to remain up and running until such time that the Centre can reopen to clients. All capital projects have been put on hold to save money, but there has still been the ongoing maintenance cost for the Garden that have been unavoidable. The Therapy Garden has reduced its staff whilst furloughing other staff. In February 2020 the Charity had unrestricted reserves of approximately £95,000 which by July 2020 had reduced to £47,000. In the foreseeable future, the Charity intends to continue to work with a slightly reduced staffing level and work hard to secure funding for programmes.

The application represents a new revenue call on the Council for an existing services and has the potential to lead to ongoing support

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needs from the Council. It is not felt that the application has justified support from the Council and in view of this, the position of the Council's budget and the comments of the Council's Family Services Manager, it is recommended that the application is not supported.

REPORT ENDS