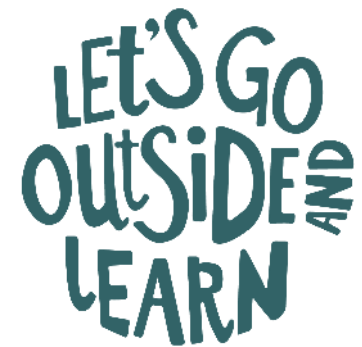


Meadway Orchard

YEAR 1 PROJECT EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

April 2025



Supported by Richmond Council Parks team & Heathrow Community Trust

CIC Registration number 9435120

Introduction



CIC Registration number 9435120

Context

The Richmond Green Gym ceased abruptly with limited notice in January 2024.

In 2024/5 Let's Go Outside and Learn worked with the members of the group to form Friends of Meadway Orchard, a constituted group. LGOAL have led activities to maintain and improve the habitats in line with the Lower Crane Management plan working in partnership with LBRuT parks team. The aim is to ensure that activities support biodiversity action plans, develop community involvement and liaising with other organisations working in the local area. LGOAL have taken on the safeguarding of new vulnerable people to the group, acted as a point of contact for referral, and taken referrals from other organisations.

Aims

The initiative aims to:

- use conservation volunteering to support local people to benefit their health/wellbeing, to feel connected to nature, to learn new skills, play an active role in their community and to create personal networks.
- work with young people giving them experience of conservation volunteering and learning new skills.
- maintain and enhance sites local to the River Crane in Twickenham – Meadway Orchard, and green space sites from Mill Road to Mereway Nature Park.
- In 2025 the group worked for the first time at Mill Road Open space planting a new native hedge to improve the biodiversity of the site and create habitat connectivity with Crane Park.

Habitat enhancements by volunteers 2024/5

Woodlands	Hedgerows	Meadows	Other habitats
Thinning young and semi-mature sycamore at Mereway Nature Park to diversify the structure of the woodland.	230m hedging planted at Mill Road Open space, Kneller Gardens and Mereway Nature Park	Increase diversity of meadows at Meadway Orchard – spring bulbs and meadow species	Weekly litter picking: Removed 56+ bags of litter over year from local green spaces
Using traditional conservation management practices to let more light into the wooded areas at Mereway Nature Park.	150m of dead hedges created in Mereway Nature Park and Kneller Gardens using material from woodland thinning.	Decrease the dominance of prevalent undesirable species such as bramble/burdock/ green alkanet at Meadway Orchard and Mill Road Meadow.	Loggery at Meadway Orchard enhanced and stag beetles from compost heap re-housed in the loggery.
Planning for future woodland enhancements with Richmond Council officers, including renovation of the woodland area in Mereway Nature Parks where there are old fruit trees left over from allotments. The work will begin at the end of birdnesting season 2025/6.	Planning for new hedges in Kneller Gardens over winter 2025/6 to join up existing gaps in hedgerows.	Improve the structural diversity of scrub habitats at Meadway Orchard and Mereway Nature Park e.g. Classroom area by managing scrub	Planned and planted a new bed of pollinating garden species and perennial vegetables in a previously unproductive space at Meadway Orchard.
	Removing blackthorn suckers from hedge line in Kneller Gardens	Removing sycamore regeneration from meadow areas.	Planning for small new wetland areas in Meadway Orchard and Mereway Nature Park. To be developed 2025/6.
		Management of orchard meadows by volunteers through handheld tools to minimise impact.	

Skills and knowledge 2024/5

New skills	Improved knowledge and learning	Improved volunteering capacity	Engagement with young people
Coppicing. Workshop for participants to learn how to correctly coppice hazel for use in managing local spaces	Bat walk in spaces along river Crane to identify bats using the spaces September 2025. 5 species identified.	Friends of Meadway Orchard constituted November 2024 and formal structures in place.	Action day with Radnor House School for 15 students 15-16 years July 2024 (Current planning for July 2025)
Hedge planting. Workshop for participants to learn how to correctly plant a hedge using native species. Workshops for college students.	Butterfly identification at Mill Road Meadow and Mereway Orchard July 2025 9 species identified.	The project team worked in partnership with community and environmental stakeholders to recruit new members to the group	Developing relationship with Richmond College Department of Building Construction. 4 plumbing students attended January – February 2025
Vegetable planting in raised beds.	Hoverfly identification Summer 2025	Open day held February 2025 with another planned for August 2025	Richmond College Supported Learning students worked with staff to learn about hedges and other habitats at Mereway Nature Park. January to July 2025
Planning and planting a new bed of pollinating garden species and perennial vegetables planted in an unproductive space at Meadway Orchard.	Visit to Kew Gardens to look at the fruit and vegetable gardens to explore different horticultural techniques. Autumn 2024	Successful fund raising by Friends of Meadway Orchard to buy new tools for the group, hold an Open Day and develop a rainwater harvesting system.	
Water saving through additional funded project to install water butts.	Reorganisation of site to incorporate a new shed for All Ability Cycling meant that volunteers had to think about the layout of the raised beds to maximise space and disabled access.	6 new regular volunteers have joined the group to supplement existing volunteers.	

Volunteer attendance

8/3/24-16/4/25

Total number of attendees

29 adults

Total number of activity sessions

56

Volunteer attendance
(Total sessions)

525

Total volunteer Hours

1575

Average number of sessions attended

20

School and student attendees

26

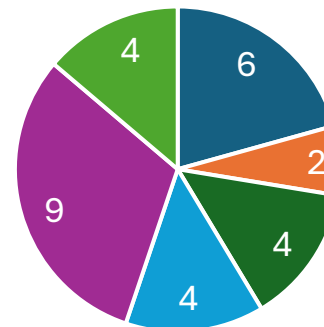


Volunteers working in Meadway Orchard Winter 2024



Students working at Meadway Orchard Spring 2025

Annual attendance of participants
n=29 people



■ 40-50 attendances

■ 30-40 attendances

■ 20-30 attendances

■ 10-20 attendances

■ Less than 10

■ Students

Signposting and referrals

Number of
events
attended to
promote offer

12

Number of
talks and
presentations

6

Number of
partner
social care
organisations
actively
signposting
to activities

4

Number of
community
events

1

Number people referred to activities by social care organisations

11

WHAT WENT WELL?

This is what participants said that they enjoyed about the project:

- *Socialising with others and making a difference to the local area.*
- *Being outdoors in all weathers. Interacting with others, learning about conservation, plants etc. and mixing with different types of people.*
- *Learning new skills and knowledge about the environment. Feeling part of an inclusive group who are welcoming and supportive.*
- *Surveys, being part of a team, new experiences, making friends and giving back.*
- *Meeting new people and working outside with the community.*
- *Making the dead hedges and planting flowers/veg and seeing them thrive. Litter pick.*
- *Tea break and catching up.*





WHAT WENT WELL?

This is how the participants benefited from the project:

- *I enjoy doing outdoor projects. I like the routine and enjoy being outside and active.*
- *Good to have a regular time every week to be committed to go to. I've enjoyed learning and socialising with different people.*
- *Improved my mental wellbeing and feeling connected to the community. Having recently retired I have had a sense of purpose in improving the environment and habitats*
- *Nature, outdoors, friends, tasks, learning more*
- *Learnt new skills and made friends*
- *Happy with achievement. In contact with like minded people who are local and share same idea of nature. I like being out in touch with nature.*

PROJECT IMPACT – HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In evaluating the first year of project deliver we sought to:

- understand the impact of the project on individual participants,
- to measure and evaluate project outcomes for use in future project planning,
- and to understand how we can improve project delivery.

Methodology

Regular project participants were asked to fill in a health and wellbeing form that tracked impact from the start of the project in 2024 and took a snapshot of health and wellbeing after one year. This will be repeated in year 2 so that we can monitor change.

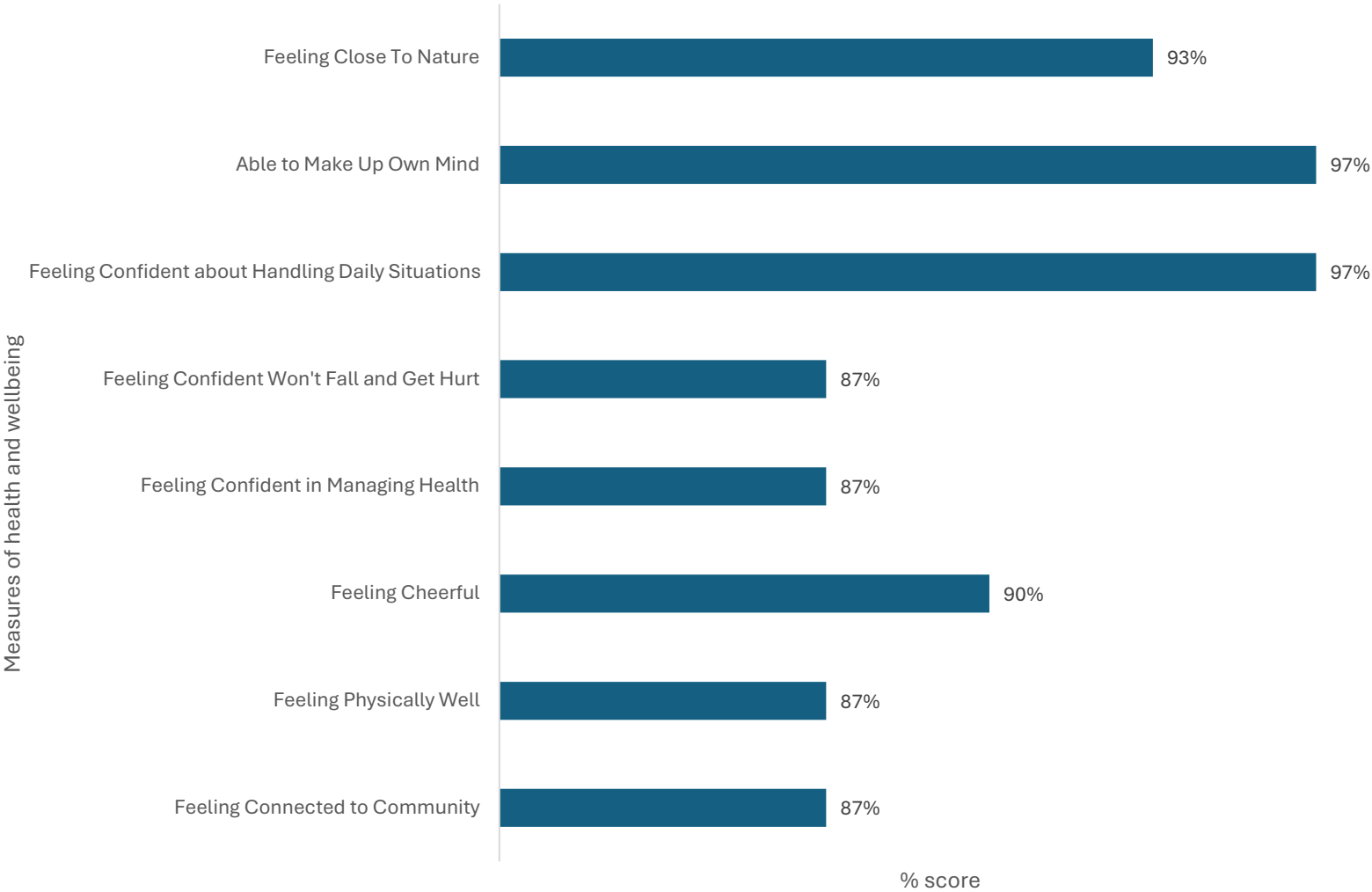
Volunteers were not required to fill out the forms and we did not require anyone to identify themselves so that comments could be given anonymously.

The feedback includes 8 scored health and wellbeing statements, and opportunities to give more detailed comments and suggestions about the project and project delivery.

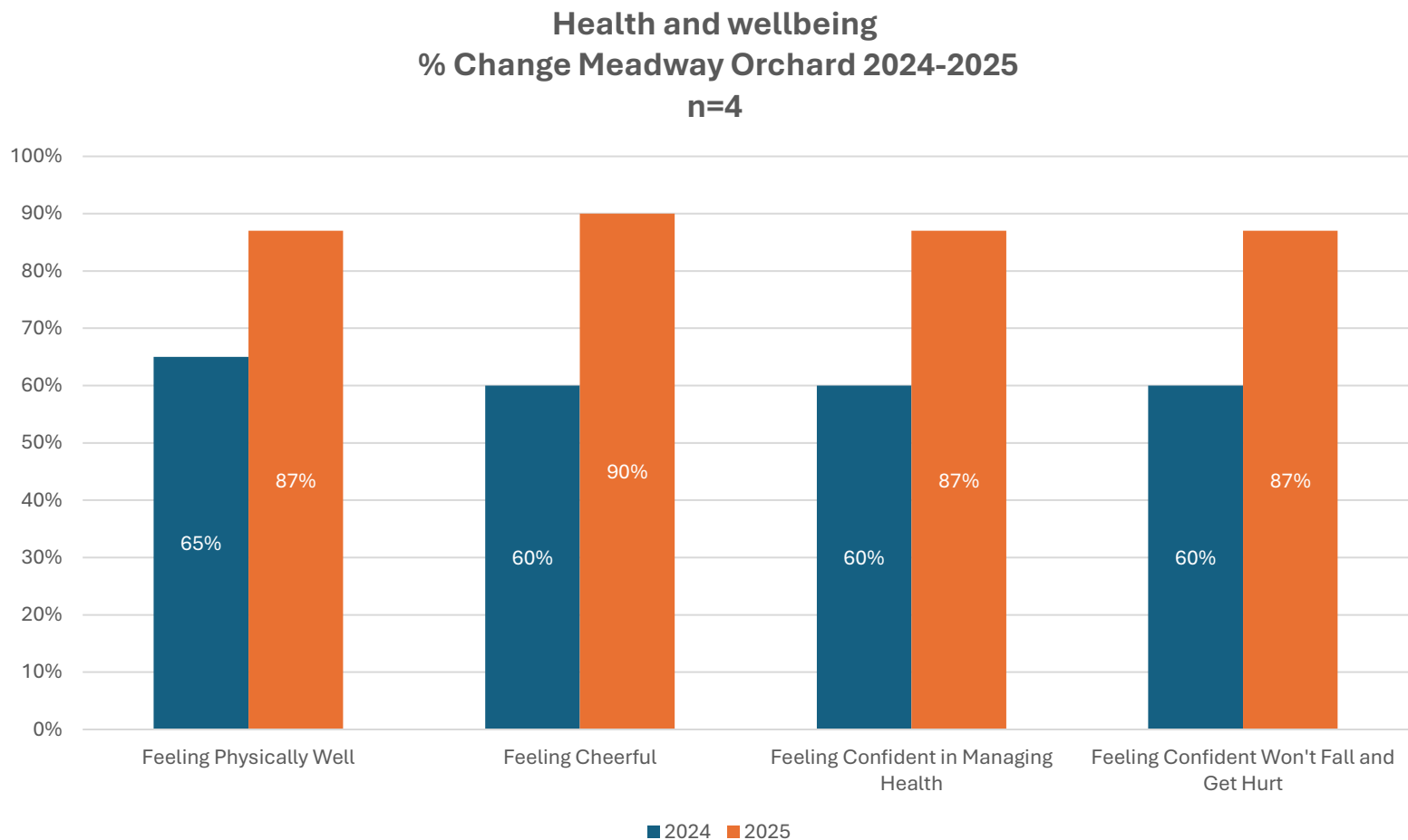
The impact form used has been developed by LGOAL so that we can compare project impact across multiple projects.

Health and wellbeing impact

Heath and wellbeing scores Meadway Orchard April 2025 n=8



Health and wellbeing change





WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE BETTER?

These are the changes that the participants would like to see:

- *Perhaps more exploration of plants and plant types. I live in a flat so am very not knowledgeable about plants.*
- *Days out, like to Brighton beach.*
- *Photography to engage with nature in the orchard.*
- *We need more volunteers.*
- *No, thoroughly enjoyed the sessions*
- *Perhaps inform group at end of each session what the plan is for the following week and stick to the plan.*
- *Tool safety and accident prevention. Correct position while using tools and working.*
- *Greater emphasis on safety with tools for new people and ongoing attendees.*

ANY THING ELSE THAT YOU WANT TO SAY?

- *It's been a brilliant year thank you.*
- *Maybe now that we are more established, we could focus on communicating objectives of the group and how we align with council objectives.*
- *Thank you for all the volunteer opportunities that I have worked with. I have been volunteering for 8 years and stay loyal.*



Barriers to engagement

The project team identified several barriers to engagement with the project:

Hot, wet and cold weather and muddy paths

Limited access for people who are less mobile e.g. no paths, limited disabled access

Unwillingness to engage due to a lack of sense of belonging to the local community

Lack of knowledge of benefits of conservation volunteering in referral agencies.

Cultural factors e.g. preference for other leisure activities

Working patterns are changing with fewer retired people available to volunteer.



PROJECT FUNDING

The project is funded through grant funding from Heathrow Community Fund and a contribution from Richmond Parks team. We are grateful to the parks team for funding the re-arrangement of the site to incorporate a new area for raised beds used for community gardening.

The Friends of Meadway Orchard have been successful in raising £4,047.92 from the Crane Fund and from Richmond Council Climate Action Micro-grants. This funding was spent on new equipment an Open Day, new water butts and pond liners and plants.

We are grateful for all the support offered to the project.





What next?

Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC and Friends of Meadway Orchard will continue to work in the linked network of high value environmental green spaces forming a wildlife corridor in the lower Crane Valley. The project will continue to support the enhancement of the natural environment and promote biodiversity in line with the borough management plans.

We will continue to support community engagement, teach new skills and raise awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of conservation volunteering.

For further information:

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Twitter: [@LetOutside](https://twitter.com/LetOutside)

CIC Registration number 9435120

