

# GREENING FOR WELLBEING: IMPACT MEASUREMENT CASE STUDIES AND TOOLS

Action Hampshire

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# PART 1: CASE STUDIES

## Case Study: Hart Health Walks

Hart Health Walks are organised walks for all ages, led by Hart Voluntary Action's trained volunteers. All the walks are free to join and are led in 7 areas of Hart District. Overall, through the walks, Hart Voluntary Action is aiming to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase people's physical wellbeing
- Increase people's social connectedness
- Improve people's mental wellbeing

As part of their participation in Greening for Wellbeing, they undertook a workshop with 10 Hart Health Walk attendees to discuss impact measurement tools and their accessibility. Staff shared that undertaking this workshop provided an opportunity for them to explain the importance of impact measurement, which supported participant buy-in, and staff reported high levels of attendee engagement. After these discussions, participants helped to develop a short anonymous survey to send out to other walk attendees.

Paper copies of the survey were given to walk leaders who were asked to share these with their walk attendees during the tea/coffee break at the end of each walk. This was done across their 7 weekly walks over a period of 3 weeks, resulting in 61 individual survey responses.



Responses to the survey highlight the positive impact Hart Health Walks are having and how they are achieving their outcomes. 92% of survey respondents stated that participating in Hart Health Walks maintained or improved their level of fitness and 61% reported improved mental wellbeing. Arguably the most interesting findings are around social connectedness. 89% of people shared that they had increased their social connections as a result of attending Hart Health Walks and positively 85% indicated they believe they have a high level of social wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> When viewed in conjunction with some of the open text responses, it is clear that this is one of the main and most important benefits experienced by participants.

*“Thank you for providing this facility. As a relative newcomer to Fleet, it has helped me to integrate.”*

*“Really enjoy walking with a lovely group of people we now regard as friends, and socialise with several outside of the walk.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Selected a value of 8, 9, or 10 when answering the question “How would you rate your wellbeing in the following areas?”



Furthermore, 77% of respondents said participating in Hart Health Walks increased the time they spent outdoors. If this is viewed in conjunction with the high percentage of people reporting increased mental wellbeing, it could be suggested that time in outdoors/in nature supports mental wellbeing.

Overall, the data collected using their co-created measurement tool indicates that Hart Health

Walks are having a positive impact on physical wellbeing, social connectedness, and mental wellbeing, thus working towards the achievement of their intended outcomes.

## **Case Study: Minding the Garden**

Minding the Garden is community garden on the edge of Fleet, where members of all ages grow vegetables, fruits, and flowers. The garden is an inclusive and accessible place, with wide even paths and a large pergola for members to take breaks. Members can join either as an individual or as part of a group, with the garden having links to various local organisations and their communities. Minding the Garden aims to positively impact members' physical, mental, and social wellbeing by providing a space where people can do light exercise, make friends, relax, and spend time in nature. As part of their Greening for Wellbeing project, they decided to focus on the impact of participating in the garden on people's social connectedness.

Before delivering their Greening for Wellbeing workshop, Minding the Garden provided all members with a slip of green paper which asked members '*What does being part of Minding the Garden mean to you?*'. The purpose of this activity was to provide staff with a baseline understanding of the individual impact the garden has and to get members to begin to think about impact measurement. After this activity, Minding the Garden delivered their workshop with 11 members, in a separate space away from the garden. A staff member began the workshop with a short presentation on the project background and what Minding the Garden were trying to achieve.

Staff members reported that members were really engaged in the session, resulting in lots of interesting discussion and considerations that staff would not have previously thought of. As part of the session staff provided some sample survey questions that the group discussed and edited, and a final survey of 7 questions was produced. Similar to other organisations involved in the project, members did not like the wording of questions about social anxiety and being provided with number scales (e.g. 1 – 10) to answer questions, so the survey was altered to address these considerations.

In addition to a survey, members stated they wanted something to immediately show how they were feeling after each Minding the Garden session. To do this, they came up with the idea of collecting wooden beads in two jars labelled 'Yes' and 'No', with a question next to them that reads '*Do you feel better after today's session?*'. Members would be encouraged to put a bead in a pot after the session, so they do not have to start the session by focussing on how they are feeling, which was noted by staff as potentially distressing. Overall, members engaged with Greening for Wellbeing really well and were excited to be part of developing something that could be used elsewhere and therefore mean they are part of something bigger than the garden.

The survey has recently been disseminated and current data indicates that members feel part of the community of the garden and experience an individual and collective sense of achievement being part of the garden. To improve Minding the Garden, members reported that it would be beneficial if they could come to the garden more frequently at difficult times.

Staff will begin implementing the other measurement tool in early 2024.

## **Case Study: Incredible Edible Winchester**

Incredible Edible Winchester are a group of volunteers who maintain a community allotment at Edington Road allotments, growing a range of fruits, vegetables, and plants. Volunteers of all ages help at the allotment during their two weekly sessions that are held on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Although originally started with the purpose of reducing food waste and encouraging people to grow their own food, Incredible Edible Winchester now also hopes to capture the impact participating in the community allotment has on volunteers' social connectedness and mental wellbeing.

For their participation in Greening for Wellbeing, the lead volunteers undertook a workshop with their Tuesday group at their allotment on a lovely sunny morning. They decided to focus their workshop on the NHS's 5 steps to mental wellbeing:

1. Connect with other people
  2. Be physically active
  3. Learn new skills
  4. Give to others
  5. Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness)
6. Connect with nature – was added as a 6<sup>th</sup> step by the lead volunteers as they felt this was important.

Large sheets of paper were attached to the shed and participants were given post-it notes and pens, which made the workshop interactive and ensured everyone could provide feedback in different ways. This activity helped to facilitate a really interesting discussion on what questions should be asked to understand the impact of participation in the allotment on these steps to mental wellbeing. The lead volunteers recorded this discussion and used it to create a questionnaire that addressed all points raised by the group.

When they put their questionnaire into practice, the lead volunteers noted enthusiastic engagement from other volunteers, just as they had experienced when creating the tool through the interactive workshop. However, some respondents noted an issue with one phrase that was used within the questionnaire. Although this was perhaps a minor negative element of engagement, having the opportunity to trial their impact measurement tool ensured another opportunity to consult community members and adapt the tool accordingly, which is arguably a positive result.

From the data collected using their co-created impact measurement tool, it is evident Incredible Edible are having a positive impact on many volunteers' mental wellbeing (as defined by the 5 steps to wellbeing). Connect with other people, give to others, and be in the present moment were the areas in which people had experienced the biggest impacts, with the majority of respondents reporting that they enjoy working as part of a team and that they feel a sense of belonging at the allotment. Furthermore, all respondents stated they find it easier to be in the present moment on the allotment, when their mind and body are active.

Although not as significant, positive impacts were still seen for the remaining areas. All respondents agreed that work on the allotment helps them feel more connected to nature and most agreed that time at the allotment has helped them to develop new skills. Results for 'be physically active' were more mixed but the majority still agreed that work on the allotment helps keep them physically active. All of these findings indicate that participating in the allotment helps volunteers to achieve the 5 steps to mental wellbeing, as well as connect to nature, resulting in a positive impact on mental wellbeing.

## Case Study: Love Outdoors CIC

Love Outdoors CIC are a social enterprise who deliver projects that enable communities to access outdoor activities and form stronger connections. One of their projects is The Willow Incredible Garden, an under-utilised area of grass that is being transformed into a community garden by volunteers, such as young people from a local charity and targeted patient groups. Love Outdoors CIC now run a weekly Willow Welly and Wellbeing group, that brings together volunteers (both referred and self-referred) to help maintain the garden. Through all these activities, the social enterprise is aiming to have a positive impact on people's wellbeing.

Previously, Love Outdoors CIC have given volunteers a questionnaire to complete once they had attended the group for several weeks, to measure the impact of participating in the garden on volunteers' wellbeing. However, staff had not involved their volunteers in the impact measurement creation before and felt the workshop was a good opportunity to bring them together to find out more about their purpose for attending the garden and share the importance of measuring impact and what it would be used for.

Love Outdoors CIC delivered their workshop outside, in the garden, with 10 volunteers. Staff reported that all volunteers were enthusiastic and contributed to the discussion, despite worries not everyone would want to. The group decided they wanted to capture how spending time in the garden impacted wellbeing and workshopped different questions and ways of collecting information on this topic. Developing a question and tool that all volunteers were happy with proved difficult, but such discussions resulted in a creative tool that was accessible to all. The group stuck five pictures of different types of weather, with different faces, to a magnetic whiteboard. At the top of the board read the question "Right now, I feel..." and volunteers were asked to choose a ready-made counter to place next to the weather picture that best reflected how they felt. Volunteers were encouraged to do this both coming into and leaving the garden, to measure the immediate impact of the garden on wellbeing.



Love Outdoors CIC trialled the tool for 4 weeks with volunteers that attended the led garden sessions. The data collected shows that after spending time in the garden, everyone's mood either stayed the same or improved. Apart from one session where two people still felt 'Angry' (i.e. thunder), all attendees left the sessions feeling 'Ok' or 'Happy' (i.e. sunny and cloudy or sunny). Staff felt this was an accurate reflection of the volunteers based on their casual observations of the volunteers' participation. Therefore, these sessions are helping Love Outdoors CIC to achieve their aim of having a positive impact on people's wellbeing.

The volunteers shared that they found the tool easy and enjoyable to use and understood how to take part very quickly with little to no explanation. They also reflected that the faces on the weather helped them to identify how they were feeling and that a visual tool was much more accessible, particularly to those with learning disabilities. As well as these positives, staff also noted elements of the tool that could be improved for future use. For example, using stronger magnets that have been waterproofed and setting a reminder to take photos of the board. Moreover, during this project volunteers remained anonymous by choosing a different counter to use each week. However, staff suggested that in the future volunteers could be given a set counter every week to monitor changes in mood over a longer period of time.

As the implementation of their tool was a success, Love Outdoors CIC feel the question could be adapted to monitor the impact of other green health and wellbeing projects.

### **Case Study: Plants for People**

Plants for People is a project run by Mayfield Nurseries which sees people of all ages and abilities participate in gardening projects in community spaces on social housing estates. The project aims to improve open spaces, community connections, and people's wellbeing.

For their Greening for Wellbeing project, Solent Mind hosted a workshop that centred around understanding why participants of Plants for People attend the project and what they gain from it. During the workshop, attendees shared that the project helped them to develop a stronger sense of connection with others in their community, build friendships, feel closer to nature, gain new skills and feel a sense of achievement. As well as discussing the project's impact, staff also introduced the group to different validated wellbeing scales and asked the group to share their thoughts on these. Through these discussions it became clear that wording is extremely important to participants, and many felt current validated scales could induce negative thoughts and had wording that was off-putting. Therefore, staff and participants spent the remainder of the session discussing ideas and coming to a consensus on the most appropriate wording.

Since the workshop, staff have created a survey, using the workshop insights as a basis for the questions. The first 8 questions are part of a matrix that asks respondents to state how often they have felt or acted a certain way on a scale of 'none of the time' to 'most or all of the time'. The final two questions are open box answers so participants can provide qualitative feedback to staff about the biggest changes they have experienced and anything else about their project experiences they want to share. Participants have reported that the survey is user friendly, and they have enjoyed completing it.

### **Case Study: Basingstoke Hindu Society**

Basingstoke Hindu Society are a voluntary organisation based at Carnival Hall in Basingstoke. They lead many different events, one of which is their weekly health walks that take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays 6-8pm. The walks have been taking place for the last 7 years, with regular group of around 12 people attending (although there are over 40 members). The locations of the walks are varied as Basingstoke is surrounded by lovely countryside, so walkers can take in the beautiful scenery and benefit from being in nature. The purpose of the walks is to positively impact walkers' physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

As part of their Greening for Wellbeing project, Basingstoke Hindu Society delivered an interactive workshop with the regular walkers who attend their group. Volunteers provided post-it notes to participants so they could share the reasons why they attend the group and what benefits they gain from doing so. This activity resulted in a wide range of answers that were categorised into 'nature', 'loneliness', 'medical', and 'mental health'. These findings were then used to produce a survey that was distributed to wider members, to capture the overall impact of the walking group.

The survey received 17 responses. All survey respondents agreed that attending a Basingstoke Hindu Society health walk has had a positive impact on their physical wellbeing and all but one respondent agreed that attending had a positive impact on their mental wellbeing and social wellbeing. These positive outcomes were perfectly summed up by one participant in particular, who said that they "*feel refreshed, energetic and happy*" from being in nature as part of a Basingstoke Hindu Society health walk. The only question which indicated a potential area of improvement was around loneliness, with 5 respondents stating that attending the health walks had increased their loneliness. However, it could be suggested that these participants misunderstood the question due to the overwhelmingly positive responses to the other questions. Therefore, future surveys should consider the wording of questions which could also be explored with participants. Despite this, the findings highlight that the walks are achieving their intended outcomes.



# PART 2: IMPACT MEASUREMENT TOOLS





## Introduction

In order to gain an understanding of the impact that Hart Health Walks are having in the local community; we have produced this survey to gain a better awareness of wellbeing. We would be most grateful for your participation.

## Survey questions

1. Do you feel that attending a Hart Health Walk has had a positive impact on your wellbeing?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
  
2. How has attending a Hart Health Walk made an impact on your wellbeing? (Please tick all that apply)
  - Maintained or improved level of fitness
  - Increased social connections
  - Increased time spent outdoors
  - Improved physical health condition
  - Improved mental wellbeing
  - Decreased isolation
  - Made no positive impact
  
3. Do you set wellbeing goals for yourself? (For example; walking every day or achieving a certain number of steps per day)
  - Yes
  - No
  
4. How regularly do you attend a Hart Health Walk?
  - More than once/week
  - Once/week
  - 2/3 times/month
  - Once/month
  - Rarely
  - Stopped attending

Please turn over...

5. In order to set a baseline for the general wellbeing of our participants, how would you rate your wellbeing in the following areas?

Please answer on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'

Physical Wellbeing    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Mental Wellbeing    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Social Wellbeing    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

6. Please use the box below to write any other comments you may have about the Hart Health Walks.

Please complete this survey before 30<sup>th</sup> September.

This survey is completely anonymous and the results will help to determine the direction of the health walks programme across the Hart District. Thank you for your participation from all at Hart Voluntary Action (Registered Charity No. 1119912).



## Minding the Garden – Social Wellbeing Survey

*The Garden seeks to reduce isolation, improve confidence and wellbeing in people, so it would be helpful if you would please answer a few short questions.*

*Your answers will help us enormously when it comes to obtaining funding for Minding the Garden and in helping us identify ways in which we can improve the Garden for members.*

*One of the things we'd like to know is if you feel part of a community at the Garden and if attending Minding the Garden helps you feel connected to wider communities in the Hart area (directly or indirectly, for example Yateley Food Pantry or one of the groups who use the Garden).*

**Please circle your answers.**

**(1) How often do you visit Minding the Garden?**

Weekly / Monthly / Less than each month

**(2) Since joining Minding the Garden,**

- **Do you feel part of a community?** Yes / No
- **Do you feel more included in the wider Hart community?** Yes / No
- **Do you feel attending Minding the Garden has improved your mental health?**

No - Not at all / No – not much / Not Sure / Yes – a little / Yes – a lot / N/A

- **Do you / would you find coming to the Garden more often helpful when life gets/is difficult?**

No - Not at all / No – not much / Not Sure / Yes – a little / Yes – a lot / N/A

- **Do you feel more confident?** Yes / No / Not Sure

**(3) Have you learned new skills through attending Minding the Garden? (e.g.**

**gardening, social, creative, organisational etc)** Yes / No / Not Sure

**(4) If you have gained new skills through coming to Minding the Garden, do you feel they have benefitted you in your daily life?**

No - Not at all / No – not much / Not Sure / Yes – a little / Yes – a lot /  
N/A

**(5) Would you recommend Minding the Garden membership to others? Yes / No**

**(6) Do you feel being a member of Minding the Garden has had a positive effect on your wellbeing?**

No - Not at all / No – not much / Not Sure / Yes – a little / Yes – a lot /  
N/A

**(7) As a member of Minding the Garden, do you feel a sense of individual or collective achievement or pride?**

No - Not at all / No – not much / Not Sure / Yes – a little / Yes – a lot

***Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions, we really appreciate it!***

**Action Hampshire Greening for Wellbeing  
Impact Measurement Toolkit Programme 2023**

**IEW Community Allotment Impact Measurement Tool**

This six point questionnaire aims to measure the impact of your social connectedness and mental wellbeing as a result of participating at the community allotment. Your feedback will help us to ensure work on the allotment is positively benefiting all participants. Please complete the questionnaire below and add any comments. **Thank you.**

5 = strongly agree	4 = agree	3 = neither agree or disagree	2 = disagree	1 = strongly disagree
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*Please tick the relevant box*

Questions	5	4	3	2	1
<b>1 Social connectedness</b>					
• I enjoy working as part of a team at the allotment					
• I feel a sense of belonging at the allotment					
• I feel more socially connected with my local community					
<b>2 Connect with nature</b>					
• Work on the allotment helps me feel more connected to nature					
• Being outdoors, in a different environment, reduces my social anxiety					
<b>3 Be physically active</b>					
• Work on the allotment helps keep me physically active					
• I feel more relaxed after working on the allotment					
<b>4 Learn new skills</b>					
• Time at the allotment has helped me develop new skills					
• Learning by doing with others builds my confidence					
<b>5 Give to others</b>					
• I enjoy the group's sharing of skills, ideas, recipes etc					
• I now eat more fresh fruit and vegetables					
<b>6 Be in the present moment</b>					
• I find this easier on the allotment when my mind and body are active					
• The collective, shared responsibility of work on the allotment helps me focus on the moment and takes my mind off other worries					
<b>Comments:</b>					

Love Outdoors CIC: Interactive Whiteboard Question





## Plants for People Outcome Tool

Date:

Name:

Please take the time to give us your feedback. Your feedback will help us to improve what we do.

For each of the following statements, please tick one box that best describes your thoughts and feelings and over the few weeks.

Statements	 None of the time	Only occasionally	Sometimes	Often	 Most or all of the time
1. I've been feeling welcomed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I've been feeling close to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I've made friendships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I've been feeling confident in myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I've been feeling connected with nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I've learned new skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I've had more energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I've been feeling more active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. What is the biggest change you've noticed in yourself since coming to plants for people?					
10. Please use this box to add any other comments about your experience					

## **Basingstoke Hindu Society**

Developed a Google form that can be viewed by following this link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdyaNaqotywwuj0aLG9Fjs9Vif65-sz7J6CqMyCDpJruuifIA/viewform>