

Communities in Action



CASE STUDY: Social Prescribing - The Adam Practice

Tell us a bit about your group

Our group is made up of patients, who have an interest in gardening and have volunteered their time to make our Hamworthy Surgery more wildlife-friendly. They meet once a week at the surgery and work well together and have created a lovely friendship group. They stay in touch outside of the weekly group and use WhatsApp to communicate with each other about watering the plants and arranging other things. They are very friendly and talk to patients as they go past about what they are doing and invite people to join the group.

What actions did you or your group want to take and why?

We wanted to make the grounds more wildlife-friendly and a better environment for our patients, as well as creating a growing social group for patients who frequently visit the surgery for non-medical/social problems.

What have you done for nature so far?

We decided to move some large shrubs which were blocking a disabled parking bay at the front of the surgery. We dug them up, which was quite an effort! Then we replanted them on an uninteresting grassy slope at the rear of the garden, which now looks lovely and full of colour.



Raised bed created by Poole Men's Shed © Anona Dawson

In place of the shrubs, we built a raised bed, which was created by another community group called Poole Men's Shed, an organisation dedicated to improving men's mental health. The raised bed has been planted with sensory plants and herbs to encourage wildlife, and it smells good and looks nice.

Dorset Wildlife Trust helped us build bird boxes and these have been put up in the trees. Sunflowers have



Patient Champions removing bushes to be planted elsewhere in preparation for raised bed for pollinators and people! © Roy Sharpe



The raised bed was planted with sensory plants and herbs © Anona Dawson

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“ A lot of staff and clinicians have commented on how proud they are that we are able to offer this to our patients on top of standard GP work. ”

been planted outside the front door and an avenue of lavender and rosemary has been planted alongside the main entrance for pollinators and patients to enjoy. We also built a compost bin at the rear of the car park.

What resources or support have you used?

As well as Poole Men's Shed creating the raised bed at the front entrance, we have been helped by Dorset Wildlife Trust to guide us through ideas on what we can do to make the grounds more wildlife-friendly. We started by inviting our Patient Champions to a community mind mapping session guided by Dorset Wildlife Trust. They gave us a presentation and we watched a short film on community gardening for wildlife. We then just had a chat altogether, about what we would like the garden to look like and wrote down our ideas on a big sheet of paper.

A local garden centre has donated some plants. We've promoted the group on Facebook, our website and put posters on noticeboards around the practice.



Newly planted flower bed attracting pollinators © Anona Dawson

HOW HAS IT MADE PEOPLE FEEL?

We have had lots of positive feedback from our patients and staff, both saying how nice the grounds now look. A lot of staff and clinicians have commented on how proud they are that we are able to offer this to our patients on top of standard GP work.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR FAVOURITE NATURE MOMENTS OR ENCOUNTERS WITH WILDLIFE WHILST DOING THIS?

Seeing the bees and other insects around the flowers and plants that have been planted. Smelling the herbs as you go past the flower bed. Seeing the strawberries grow. People asking to take cuttings from some of the plants.

Did you involve others?

Patients have been invited to join the weekly group, which the practice supports and patients are welcome to attend at other times more suitable to them. Members of the group make decisions about what they are going to do each week and consult the practice as needed. We have asked our Social Prescribing and Clinical Teams to signpost patients who may be lonely or isolated to the group.



Planting up the new raised bed. © Anona Dawson

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What changes have there been because of your actions?

An increase in community engagement and patient wellbeing. It has made the grounds look better and improved accessibility by clearing the pathways and improving the space next to the disabled bay, giving patients more space to get in and out of their cars with bushes being removed.

We were outside watering the raised bed one morning and a lovely couple stopped to tell us how lovely the garden was looking and how much easier it was to get into the disabled space now.

What do you plan to do next?

We continue gardening every week and want to develop the wilder garden near the compost bin to include a dead wood habitat and also provide space for hedgehogs! We are going to rewild the garden at our other Practice in Lytchett Matravers. Patient Champions from Hamworthy Practice will be encouraging the community to get involved with this garden by having conversations and showing the film they made of the Hamworthy garden. Dorset Wildlife Trust will again guide us in a mind mapping session.

Find out more from:

[The Adam Practice](#) | [Facebook](#)

All welcome to join us, please just turn up outside Hamworthy Practice on Thursdays between 12.30pm-14.30pm.



Front entrance to Surgery behind the Verbena © Anona Dawson



Patient Champions and The Adam Practice Community Coordinator accepting Dorset Wildlife Trust Wildlife-friendly Space Award © Roy Sharpe



Dorset Wildlife Trust Wilder Community Officer and Dr Owen congratulating Rory and other Patient Champions © Roy Sharpe



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