



PROGRESS REPORT 1: COMMENCEMENT OF STAGE ONE OF THE CHERRY TREE NURSERY SUSTAINABLE REPLACEMENT BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR VOLUNTEERS' TEAROOM, KITCHEN AND TOILET BLOCK

Following the granting of full planning permission, and the signing of the contracts between the Trustees of the Sheltered Work Opportunities Project and the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills, work began constructing the timber frame and prefabricated wall panels of the new building in the Dorset Timber workshop at DCRS. A group of volunteers went on a visit in March to see the progress of the timber construction, a process expected to take at least seven weeks.

As previously reported, the white poplar was felled during early March and the stump has been ground out. We have had to make extensive alterations to the car park involving the removal of a large bamboo and the reduction in size of the flowerbed in order to accommodate the proposed cycle shed. The car park area has been enlarged to allow for lorry turning.

A full Health & Safety Audit and Risk Assessment has been completed and all building works will be fenced off squarely for safety purposes. A Health & Safety officer has been appointed.

The Contract Administrator and the Site Manager visited the site on 6 April to finalise the details of the work programme. The temporary tearoom was delivered on 8 April. This will take the form of two portacabins which will be connected to the electrical services, water and drainage for volunteers' use during the busy period of the building works. Two small portacabins and the very large old tearoom will need to be dismantled and removed, along with the current recycled area which is being relocated.

As much as possible of the demolition work will take place on site after the nursery has closed, in order to reduce any distress to the volunteers. The first stage of the buildings will be the laying of the foundations and the installation of services.

Many of the materials have now been purchased. The first three payments of £25,000 + VAT have been made. Work done according to the schedule is inspected and signed off by the Site Administrator before any payments are made. There will be around ten workmen on site at any one time.

Part of the preparatory work will involve the moving of the Computer/Training Room two metres.

It needs to be recorded that we are very aware of how much effect the disruption of the normal routine of the nursery has on our volunteers' mental health. We are

already seeing mental distress caused by the fears of change, uncertainty and interruption in the normal pattern of the working day at Cherry Tree. We are endeavouring to inform all carers, key workers, relatives and friends of volunteers so they can carefully monitor their mental well-being. Volunteers are very excited about the provision of the wonderful new facilities. These will enhance their quality of life at the nursery, but it is important to take into account the traumatic effects of the prospective changes.

We are also aware of the possible reduction of income from plant sales resulting from the building work. We will endeavour to maintain as normal a process as possible for customers, but there may be some unavoidable delays or difficulties.

We hope you will put the date of our Open Day in your diaries. It will take place as normal on Thursday 7 July between 10am and 12.30pm. The building work will not be completed at this time, but it is anticipated that substantial progress will have been made and our guests will have the opportunity to view the progress and obtain information about this exciting new development. As there is a shortage of sustainable environmentally friendly builders in the Bournemouth area, we hope a lot of interest will be generated by the use of local natural materials to produce the most sustainable building possible.

We will continue to work with the Ecopsychology section of Bournemouth University in order to monitor any improvements to mental well-being which may be achieved by working and relaxing in very natural living buildings.

Finally, we would like to most sincerely thank all our generous funders who have made the first phase of this most essential and exciting venture possible. The roof of the old tearoom has finally collapsed and we could not have continued to operate without your support! We would welcome visits from our funders to view the progress of the building.

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