

The Sylvia Bowditch Building, Cherry Tree Nursery's new offices, is almost complete!

We are delighted to report that Phase 3 of the Sustainable Building Replacement Programme at Cherry Tree Nursery is almost finished, and that we have now moved in to our new offices. We can't believe the amount of space, and how much light we have, and that the roof and windows don't leak!

We would therefore like to thank you very much indeed for helping to make this wonderful new structure possible. We now have a large and spacious office and reception area, a staff room where we keep the safe and CCTV, a room for meetings and visitors which we use daily, and a small first aid room. Previously we often had to talk to people outside, whatever the weather!



The feeling of being in natural sustainable living buildings is indescribable. There is a remarkable sense of peace, and all the love that went into the creation of the structure remains within it.

The building work started in April and continued almost every weekday until the end of December. During the construction our badly-leaking portacabin was moved to the end of the nursery, so we were based at a distance from the entrance, and it is

lovely to be back where we should be again.

Work still to be completed is the installation of a metal ramp to make access easier and the removal of the old abandoned offices. One of the aspects we are most pleased with is the establishment of proper wheelchair/disabled access to the toilets. This has been achieved by laying tarmac between the information centre and the volunteers' tea rooms. It also enables trolleys of plants to be unloaded much more easily.

The building completes the complex started five years ago, surrounding a narrow courtyard, with all the rooms in phases 2 and 3 now linked by a corridor. It is built of local sustainable materials with a timber frame of Douglas Fir pre-constructed in a timber workshop. The walls are filled with straw bales and the whole structure is very well insulated. The timber frame has been left visible in the roof and it is fascinating and beautiful to look at the wooden beams.

This is the last building to be erected by the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills as they are now concentrating on consultation and training. We have been fortunate to have their expertise throughout the replacement programme.

The impact on the volunteers

The volunteers were very happy that their new tearoom was secured in Phase 1, but are thrilled that all three phases are now in use, in time for our 25th anniversary year! They have a huge sense of pride in all that the buildings represent in terms of recognition of our work, and a statement that we are here to stay. At a time when so many services are closing, it gives reassurance that Cherry Tree will still be here for us all and people who once felt rejected and without self-esteem now feel part of a project that has become a valued part of the community.

The Future

Our next step (Phase 4!) needs to be to enable a covered customer area to be constructed, to encourage people to come in in all weathers. We need to increase our income from plant sales, and talking to customers shows many more people would visit over a longer period if they were protected from wind and rain.



2015 is Cherry Tree's 25th anniversary year. We know that the best way to celebrate this remarkable event would be to secure the future of the nursery for the next 25 years. We know from the inquiries and referrals we receive that the need for our services continues to grow, and our priority is to be here for those who need us for as long as they need us. For this reason we have launched our 25th Anniversary Appeal and hope that many of our supporters will be able to contribute.

As well as offering our grateful thanks to all the organisations and individuals who so generously donated towards the funding of this lovely building, we also want to thank the builders who became part of our family while they were here. We hope you will all be able to visit us to see the new constructions for yourselves.

The new offices are named in honour of the late Miss Sylvia Bowditch, who as the Senior Trustee of the Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charity Foundation made a huge contribution to the development of Cherry Tree Nursery. Her enthusiasm for and belief in our project were fundamental to our success and we remember her with gratitude and affection.

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