Annual report

The purposes of WHS OPEN SPACES

The purpose of WHS OS is and has been this last year to: advance the outdoor education of pupils/adults at William Howard School, Brampton, the local Feeder Primary schools and the Brampton Community by providing animal handling/mini farm and horticultural experiences for the entire age range.

We work with children and adults of all backgrounds and ages to offer experience, learning and practical experience with: animal welfare, domestic and farm animal care, environment conservation, conservation of flora, fauna and environment generally. We sustain and develop biodiversity. We offer the community a recreational pastime and an open space for learning, group work and relaxation. We aim to offer families a place to learn and be inspired to grow their own produce.

How do we achieve this purpose?

WHS OS provide facilities and open spaces with education and advice on gardening, horticulture, biodiversity and animal care. Our setting is Brampton, North Cumbria, beside the school in an urban area bordering open land where the community can volunteer their time to get involved with these interests/activities.

The vegetable patch work – in this year we have successfully grown small quantities of vegetables: rhubarb, spring onions, potatoes, carrots, runner beans, French beans, spinach, courgette, tomatoes, cucumber and chard. This area has been used by children and adults from the community and also visited by children from the nearby feeder primary schools, in the Spring and Summer terms. Adults from the local area have worked alongside the group as volunteer helpers. Our most recent adult volunteer also brings fer family to the project both during term and holiday times.

The soft fruit and orchard area- this year we have continued to grow with success in small quantities: strawberries, blackcurrants, peaches, apples, pears, plums, damsons and cherries. This year peaches were better. Our teenagers picked the cherries, strawberries and raspberries; there were very few sloes. Hen eggs were collected by children and teens; the other fruit was picked by the whole group and taken by the community from the 'Produce table' for a donation only. The 'Produce Table' was visited by the local users and also some members of the community, who took produce leaving a small donation. This money went straight back into the charity use. This area was visited by the local community and by children from the nearby feeder primary schools.

Flower beds and perennial border area was used and maintained by the community. This area offered advice and learning on care, maintenance, and colour for all interested. This area has been used by children and adults from the community and also visited by children from the nearby feeder primary schools. The area is used by students of William Howard School on a daily basis.

In addition to the above area being used by the community, two annual events were also held to promote understanding and awareness of our charity. This was the Xmas Fayre in second week in December 2025 and a Summer Fayre in July. Children, parents, families, local community and Feeder Primary school children were invited to attend. They were able to see all areas of the project and to learn about the events and activities possible at WHS OPEN SPACES. These events were led by E Booker and the Open Spaces Leaders who range in age from 12-17 years old and adults who volunteer.

When is this achieved?

The use of the areas continued to be set as between 5-8 hours per week. In addition to this there were weekends and half days offered to the community in the school holiday periods. Two annual events of the Xmas and the Summer Fayres also added to the success of this achievement.

The purposes of weekly work

This weekly work is for the public benefit -in that weekly learning/information and advice in daily and weekly garden/horticultural chores and animal care is shared with those who get involved. They are taught good practice in particular skills for increased vegetable growing and self-sufficiency, for a healthier lifestyle and a greener future. Skills in composting and the three R's of -reduce, re-use, recycle are encouraged.

The restrictions

We give information on the sheep, hens and ducks, but for safety we do not allow small children to go near the sheep and the pond has now been filled in with our own compost and grassed over. The small duck pond is a feature for the ducks only and is not accessible to the community unless under supervision.

Events

The Xmas Fayre in second week in December 2025 was an afternoon event that took place in the school hall and the open air for only three hours. Children, parents, families, local community and Feeder Primary school children were invited to attend. The visitors were able to Tour the WHS OPEN SPACES area to find out about and to celebrate what we do and to see the animals and the horticulture/orchard areas. The students from William Howard School who were most regularly involved were tour guides. The students organised a small raffle. All proceeds were to be used by WHS OS. The young people organised the selling of cakes and refreshments again for donations. A small selection of wreaths were made by the youngsters and sold – the proceeds going back into Open Spaces. Stalls offered the chance to learn about hibernation and environmentally sound habits like feeding the birds, recycling, and also care of sheep in winter. The young people involved with WHS OS organised a Charity Raffle.

The Summer Fayre in first week of July 2025 was an afternoon event that took place outside in the open air and once more offered guided tours of the WHS OPEN SPACES area, by the children involved to families, parents and interested members of the local community. There was an opportunity to celebrate the work and also refreshments were provided for a contribution to the charity. All proceeds are to go back into the work of the charity. Local residents and families/the community were able to learn about WHS OS and also to learn about Sustainable practices: Local residents involved in Sustainability organisations were present to offer information on how to live 'more sustainably'. Representatives of Sustainable Brampton, Brampton2Zero, The Co-operative with Fair Trade information and Information from Cumbria Wildlife were present to offer advice to the visitors on living more sustainably. A visit was made by a group of Primary school children from Longtown, with staff, to learn about what WHS OPEN SPACES do and to learn about sustainable practice. The children involved again organised a raffle.

A demonstration of sheep shearing was also put on by WHS OPEN SPACES in the first week of July, by one of the school staff, for youngsters to watch. This was only attended by those regular Tuesday

afternoon youngsters. There are only five sheep in the flock and lambs- these five sheep were sheared and those interested learnt about how it is done and the reasons why it is done.

Britain In Bloom

WHS OPEN SPACES successfully enrolled and participated in Britain in Bloom, under the direct authority of Cumbria In Bloom. Three categories were entered: Hanging basket Displays/Container Gardening; Biodiversity and Woodland Copse. The judges awarded: Gold Medal- the highest Award for both Container Gardening, Food Growing, Biodiversity habitats and Woodland Copse, commending us on the work that has been done and the involvement of the community.

Meetings

There were 4 meetings over the course of the year to coincide with the school term times. These meetings were in fact held in the school building or shared via electronic Platform.

The development of sales have been helped by the use of a Sum Up app.

Persons involved:

The Trustees are listed as follows as individual Trustees

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