

Wincanton Growing Together

(Wincanton Word, May 2019)

Leaping lambs, blossom-covered orchards and hedgerows, a flurry of school and adult visits; spring has definitely sprung at Stokehill. There are several exciting new projects that are also blossoming, both on and off the farm, and this month's column focuses on one of them - Wincanton Growing Together.

You may have read the Wincanton Window article by Audrey Haywood-Ball, manager of Carrington House, about the planned revamp of the gardens at Carrington House, ahead of opening it up in aid of St Margaret's Hospice on 23rd June. The request for community input presented an unmissable opportunity to coordinate an inter-generational project, where pupils from our local schools would collaborate with Carrington House residents. If you watched the television series 'Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds' you will already know how beneficial this can be for everyone involved. For pupils, one obvious outcome would be an increased understanding of sowing, growing and where their food comes from. The project would provide a great context to enrich other aspects of learning, especially Science but also many other areas of the curriculum. For both young and older participants in this kind of project, there are well documented benefits for wellbeing.

Through the commitment and enthusiasm of all parties, the project is now now well underway, with all three schools and Carrington House residents actively involved. Through Leaf Education, it has been possible to provide resources and guidance to coordinate the schools element of the project. So far, primary teachers have shared ideas for sowing and growing activities and letters have been exchanged between Carrington House residents and pupils. At King Arthur's School, seeds of wildflowers and sunflowers have been sown and plants used as a stimulus to develop literacy skills.

Meanwhile, during 'Green Space from Stokehill' workshops at Carrington House, residents have explored what a garden means to them, sharing memories of gardens past whilst enjoying the brightly coloured flowers of primroses, smelling scented hyacinths, crushing mint leaves in their fingers and stroking the furry leaves of Lamb's Ears. They have sowed seeds and made labels for the seedlings. At the start of the summer term, residents and pupils will begin a series of shared activities, which should see them growing together in more ways than one.

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