

Good Soil

Growing lives. Releasing potential



Green shoots of recovery...

That's a phrase we usually hear from a politician trying to put a positive spin on the latest economic crisis, but looking around the farm at this time of year it seems like a good description of what is happening at Good Soil.

Volunteers and residents have begun to sow seeds and get ready for planting and our propagation tunnel is full of trays where seeds have begun to show green shoots of life. Nurturing those little seedlings into healthy plants takes time and careful consideration of the best conditions each different type needs in order to grow. Plant them out too early and they'll struggle. Leave them in a seed tray for too long and they won't have the space to strengthen and grow. You can probably see where this analogy is leading...

Growing lives in order to release potential means that we have to work with each of our residents in a different way. Each of them is a uniquely created human being with a set of circumstances and a history that is unlike anyone else. Some become hardy more quickly than others, but it's our role to try to discern how best to support each one to grow and thrive. And just like any gardener knows, sometimes things just don't go and grow the way we had hoped. But at other times, the growth and harvest are far beyond expectations.

As ever there have been some comings and goings at the Good Soil houses over the last few months.

One of our residents left at the end of January. Having secured full-time employment and rebuilt his relationship with his family, he is now working around the country on construction sites during the week and able to spend weekends at home with his parents catching up with family - and laundry!

Another resident has also moved back into employment and we are working with him to help him as he finds his feet and somewhere to live. We would like to be able to have a 'move-on' house or flat(s) for those who reach this stage. If you know of any sympathetic landlords or suitable properties, please do let us know.

Yet another long-standing resident has moved on into independent shared housing, reflecting the progress she has made in confidence and living skills.

Sadly, we have also had another resident leave because he isn't yet ready to move away from alcohol abuse. He made the choice to return to the streets and we are continuing to try to provide support to him along with other agencies.

One of the distinctive features of Good Soil is that we don't have a rigid policy on eviction following lapses. We take each case as it comes and we find that some people will have several lapses before they begin to build trust with us. It was exciting to be able to visit a residential rehab programme [Walk Ministries](#) with one of our residents recently and we are now waiting for a space to open up for him there. There have been a few bumps on his journey with us but we are hopeful that the next step for him will be a positive one.



We have had another good lambing season with four healthy little lambs: two male and two female. At our open afternoons towards the end of March we welcomed a number of visitors to enjoy a quick lamb cuddle and a tasty coffee from our refurbished horsebox, now 99.9% complete and ready for business. The horsebox looks wonderful thanks to the skills of our residents and volunteers, and coffee and paninis were made possible thanks to one of our residents who put his previous restaurant experience to good use with Dave as his sous-chef.

After a major egg shortage over the winter, we have suddenly found ourselves in the position where we have a surplus of eggs. We currently deliver weekly orders via Hope Church, St Peter's Baptist, City Church and Woodgreen. If you are able to collect a regular order from one of those churches and would like a summer egg supply, please [let us know](#). Alternatively, feel free to drop by the farm to buy a box (or six) at £2 per half dozen anytime between 11 and 2 on a Monday or Thursday.

We will also be restarting our produce boxes later in the year. This year we are exploring other methods of distribution as delivering them all ourselves was time consuming. If you think you might be interested, [email](#) to register an interest and we will get back to you nearer the time.

As ever, we are thankful for your support and interest in what we do. We couldn't do any of it without the army of supporters and volunteers who stand with us - Thank You!

Nev, Dave, Vince and Beth
and all at Good Soil



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