



HIGHLIGHTS

- Another successful open day
- New mental health recovery service for Oxfordshire
- Better blacksmith service
- Changing our charitable status.

Open day

We were lucky with the weather for our open day held on the afternoon of Sunday 10 July. It was pleasantly warm and dry but not too hot.

Attendance was excellent and visitors enjoyed themselves trying activities, buying plants, craftwork and brick-a-brack or just relaxing in the garden.

Children were not left out because they could participate in the hunt the duck, connect-

four, face painting and other crafts.

The highlight of the day was the raffle draw with prizes including a wonderful hanging basket, dinner for two at a local hotel-restaurant and a paint ball session.

The day generated around £1800 for which we are very grateful to all those involved. Further special thanks goes to two helpers who raised an additional £1500 in match-funding from their employer, Barclays Bank. So our grand total became £3500.

The garden was looking at its best thanks to the efforts of service users, staff and volunteers, plus the help, as usual, from the Highworth Garden Club that came along to make the final touches.



Poet Bloke dancing with Nicola, our events organizer.

As an innovation this time, we had a "Poet Bloke", Tony Hillier, who worked with visitors to compose poems that he then read out to the assembled crowds. At one stage, he got a little carried away by dancing with one of our volunteers. Go to the back page to see a poem composed on the day along with more pictures of the day.

Our next open day is on Sunday 4 September.

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Oxfordshire recovery service

Root & Branch was pleased to be included in the three-year contract to provide the Oxfordshire Recovery Service. The service is led by Restore with ourselves and Bridewell Organic Gardens as partners in providing the service.

We were then delighted to find Fiona Clarke and recruit her as our new Recovery Coordinator to help us deliver the service.

Here is what Fiona says about herself and her new job.

"Over the past fifteen years I

have worked with people with mental health problems in London. My last job was as an Operations Manager for a large housing association overseeing several services in Southwark and Hackney.

My family and I moved to this area for a better quality of life. When I saw the advert for the Recovery Coordinator, I was amazed to find that it would involve working with service users as well as gardening. We had an allotment in London and

this had really led me to become passionate about gardening. A job that involved both was fantastic to find."



Fiona, our new recovery coordinator

Changes in trustees



Welcome to Paula Tansley

We have been pleased to welcome a new trustee Paula but sad to say good buy to two trustees, Chloe and Trish.

Our new trustee Paula Tansley retired recently after a career mostly in education. In addition to taking up archaeology, she was keen to take up voluntary work and found Root & Branch on the web. She is quickly getting to know us all and joining in some of our activities, in

addition to contributing to the work of the trustees.

Trish Wickstead was involved with Root & Branch since its formation and served as a trustee from 2007 until last November. She brought to the board her experience in nursing, health service management and as a consultant on countryside access.

Chloe Cooke joined us as a trustee in April 2010 but had to resign recently because she

is getting married and moving to Norwich. She works for the National Trust and hence brought a different charity perspective to our meetings.

Good bye to
Chloe Cooke Trish Wickstead



"I was introduced to Root & Branch by my doctor and have been coming here for nearly three months. I find it very relaxing here and enjoy the gardening, it has given me the confidence to go out more and face up to interviews and work."

Service User

"I come here for the company and to feel normal. I get a lot from talking to other gardeners about any problems I have."

Service User

Changing our charitable status

Like most small charities, Root & Branch has, since formation, been an unincorporated charity. In such charities, the trustees carry personal financial liability.

Recently, we entered into a contract to participate in providing the Oxfordshire Recovery Service for mental health. This contract is typical of the new-style of contract for NHS services

and contains some potentially costly penalty clauses. The likelihood of these clauses being invoked is small. Nevertheless, the thought that it could happen, would make it extremely difficult to gain new trustees. Hence we decided to seek charitable company status.

At a Special General Meeting (SGM) on 21 July members unanimously approved that we should change our status

to a charitable company.

We have now registered a company limited by guarantee called Root & Branch Westmill (Co. No 07685042), and this has been registered as charity No. 1143294. We are on 1 September transferring all our activities to the new charitable company. This new charity has the same objects as before and the service to users remains the same.

Zurich cares

Root & Branch can prove that Zurich really does Care!

Zurich has been a long-term supporter of our work, and this summer staff from its Communications Agency took up our *Makeover Challenge*—to brighten up our site before the annual Open Day. The team raised funds to buy materials and equipment, and then spent two days on site cleaning painting and weeding. By the time they'd finished

the site looked fantastic, and was much admired on Open Day.

In addition to this hands-on help we've also received a £3,000 grant from Zurich to help us to give service users the chance to gain qualifications for their skills and knowledge. We're working with ABC Awards to introduce the scheme for horticulture from this September.

So, many thanks to Zurich for supporting us so well.



Some of Zurich's handy-work, our newly painted doors



The Zurich Cares Team

OUR BLACKSMITHS

Re-forging the forge

Evidently, the traditional floor for a forge is made from clay mixed with bulls blood. Well, our old forge floor was not much better but, thanks to the funding from

Adam Twine, our patron, and the work of volunteers and service users, we now have a solid floor.

At the same time, the forge was refurbished with a new front wall and door. We took the opportunity to relocate the furnace to give better access when a number of people were working together. We also

created a separate area for welding activities.

For some time, our forge activities have been led by an experienced blacksmith Roy. We are pleased to say that he has been joined by another experienced blacksmith, Martin so that we can now open the forge to clients every day that they are present.



Roy



Martin



Kevin, one of our service users, at work in the forge

Thank you to our many supporters

In addition to the funding we receive from the Primary Care Trust, we are extremely grateful for the funding and support we receive from many organisations and individuals.

In recent months, we have received funding from the Allen Lane Foundation, Lloyds TSB Foundation, Zurich Community

Trust (see page 2), Faringdon Arts Society, Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, Faringdon and District Rotary Club, Stirling Charity, Michael Shanly Charitable Trust, Sandford Trust, UK Heat Transfer Society, Rowse Family Trust, John Ackroyd Charitable Trust and the Yorkshire Charitable Trust.

In addition to donations of

money, we were pleased to receive a wide selection of plants and shrubs from Sainsburys Homecare (see picture on right) and special trowels from PETA (UK) Ltd.



Comings and goings

We are blessed with having so many great volunteers and staff, and are pleased that new ones keep joining us. Recent volunteers have included Julia, Martin, Rachel and Andrew.

Julia has a background in art and teaching and so is helping with our craft work. Martin is a qualified blacksmith and is working in the forge (see above). Rachel has

many interests including music, art and cooking, and will be going to college to study textiles and design. Andrew says that he comes to Root & Branch to get his hands dirty in the garden. He also volunteers with the National Trust.

Sadly, we have to say good bye to some of our long-standing volunteers including Graham who has been with us for many years expanding our pottery activities

We must also give particular thanks to Cathy Tubinskyj who was our cheerful garden supervisor in recent years as well as having created our distinctive Root & Branch logo.

FOND FAREWELL TO Cathy Graham



It is also sad to say good bye to Nicola Fordham who is moving from the area with her job. She organised great fundraising events including a wine tasting and a night at the dog races. Nicola is pictured on the front page dancing with the "Poet Bloke".

A number of long-standing service users have recently moved on including Ann, James, Becky and John. We wish them all the best.

"At times over the past few years Root & Branch has been a lifeline – the friends and volunteers giving such tremendous support"

Service User

WELCOME TO

Julia Rachel Andrew





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Located on an organic farm in the beautiful Vale of the White Horse, Root & Branch provides the opportunities for people to engage in a range of interesting activities to help them to

- Learn new skills
- Prepare for future employment
- Participate in interesting activities
- Meet new people
- Recover confidence
- Provide structure to the week
- Spend time in the country

Activities include gardening, blacksmithing, woodworking, crafts and cooking for health.

Helping people overcome mental health problems

On 1 September 2011 Root & Branch converts from an unincorporated charity to a charitable company (see p2). We are then a limited company registered in England and Wales which is also registered as a charity. The new charity and company numbers are shown on the left. Our old charity number is 1088493. Use this old number to find historical data about us on the Charity Commission web site.

Open day—poem and more pictures

Tony Hillier entertained us as the “Poet Bloke” at our open day. One of the tasks he undertook was to work with visitors to generate the following poem, which is a collective effort with many contributors.



Pot, pot on
you and me
seed and soil
water and can
root and branch

you and me
fork and flowers
fruit and vetch
trowel and tuber
grow and grow
root and branch

you and me
tea and time
ears and lending
smile and hug
peace and quiet
root and branch

you and me
seed and soil
water and can
root and branch

you and me
rhythm and blues
plant and pot
pot, pot-on
discover recover
root and branch



Poet Bloke composing poems with a visitor (that's not his real hair!).



Despite the crowds, one person found a quiet spot for a cuppa



Neil kept us entertained with his music



A tough match of connect four



The home-made cakes sold very well and were greatly enjoyed—yum yum