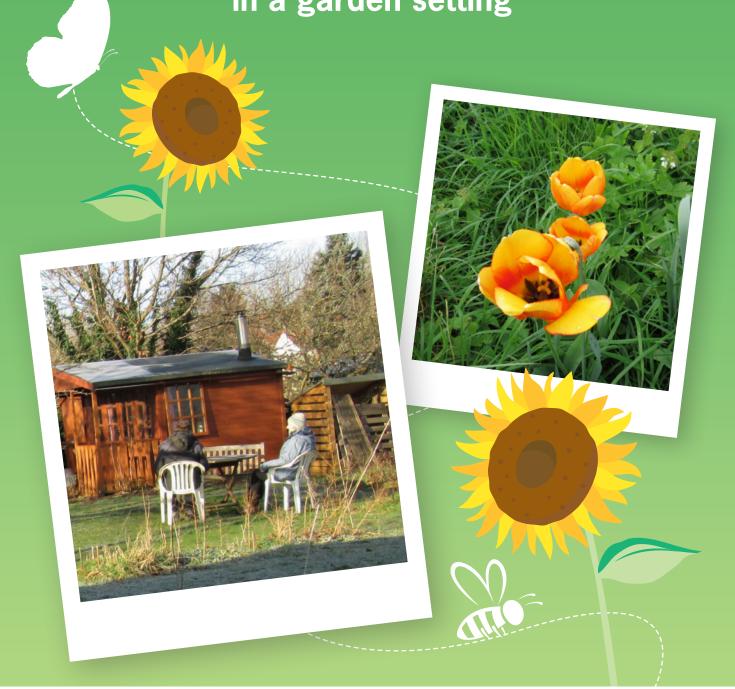


# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Psychological therapy in a garden setting



# Background

Strong Roots offers psychological therapy in a garden setting. It is based on a quadruple allotment plot on the Bluebell Allotment site in Norwich. The site has garden borders which all participants are able to help develop. All aspects of the project promote personal development. It is pleasing how well established Strong Roots is and how it continues to provide a stable service.

Facilities include a composting toilet, a summerhouse, a shelter, for volunteers to sit and/or work in during inclement weather, a sheltered seat with a wooden bench, which provides a welcoming and a much appreciated seating area in the garden, two fruit cages, a wood store and a wooden frame for training climbers to create a screen. There are also two ponds which attract diverse wildlife.

Strong Roots evolved following a successful pilot project that worked with young people recovering from mental illness and with asylum seekers. Evaluation of the pilot demonstrated the potential psychological and physical health benefits of the project, which appeared to also play a role in reducing social isolation.

Lucy Scurfield, the Strong Roots Co-ordinator, has a BSc [Hons] in Integrative Therapy and counselling.

She has extensive experience of working in this setting with vulnerable groups of people, including boys excluded from mainstream education, ex-offenders, adults with learning difficulties, those experiencing mental illness and asylum seekers and refugees.

Strong Roots adopted a constitution in March 2006 as an Unincorporated Association and became a registered charity in July 2008.

We received ten months' funding from Acorn Grant in July 2006, and were awarded three years Well Being [Big Lottery] funding in January 2008. This funding ran out at the end of February 2011. In 2012 £5,000 came from the AB Charitable Trust, and £1,000 from the Mrs H R Greene Charitable Settlement. At the end of May 2013 Strong Roots was able to announce that funding for 21 months, starting in July 2013, would come from Well-Being in the East [Big Lottery Fund] (www.enableeast.org.uk). Since April 2015 Strong Roots has not had any major grants.

We have also received donations from a range of other organisations and individuals [see page 14 for details].

From March 2012 Strong Roots has been charging for attendance. We are a registered charity and depend on payments and donations to help cover our services and running costs. The amount paid is flexible and decided on an individual basis – we ask our clients to contribute as generously as possible.

# A participant:

"I feel coming to Strong Roots helps me to centre myself because it's in a very calm environment surrounded by nature. I appreciate the outdoors. I feel I am really starting to work myself out more with how situations have affected me especially my childhood. It's helping me to understand my children's feelings too, and connect deeper to them. I am noticing myself taking more responsibility in my own behaviours."



Strong Roots combines psychological therapy with being in a garden setting. It provides a safe and supportive environment that encourages participants' personal development through:

- making connections with nature, themselves and others through individual sessions and/or group work
- learning through experience, including making 'mistakes'
- reducing social isolation and enhancing social interaction
- breaking down prejudices and fears and tackling stigma
- promoting good physical and mental health

A secondary aim is personal development for volunteers.

# A participant:

"Coming to the allotments helps me to see how nature changes and how I change similarly each time I am here. New experiences change me the way weather changes the scenery at the allotment. It never stays the same, neither do I. I keep changing and evolving after each session."

## How referrals are made

Referral agencies and self-referring individuals make contact with the Co-ordinator to arrange an exploratory session. This provides an opportunity for potential participants to decide whether Strong Roots is for them. It is explained that individual and/or group sessions are on offer in order to meet individual needs.

In the second session the individual signs an agreement to confirm that they have read and accepted the Code of Conduct [see appendix 1].



# **Participants**

Potential participants self-refer or are referred by both statutory and non-statutory agencies within Norwich and the surrounding area. Typically they are experiencing social exclusion for a variety of reasons. There is no upper or lower age limit.

### To date referring organisations include:

Adult Education Age Concern [Norwich] Base Line [Future Projects, Norwich] Better Together Norfolk

Blackhorse Centre **Broadland Meridian** 

Citizens Advice [part of Living Well Team, Norwich]

Eaton Hall School

Families Unit (Norwich City Council)

Genesis Housing Association, Norwich Hellesdon Hospital, Norwich

Julian Support [Norwich]

Learning Employment Accommodation Project [LEAP, Norwich]

Long Stratton High School

Mancroft Advice Project [MAP] Norfolk and Norwich Scope Association [NANSA]

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

Norwich and Broadland Living Well Team

Norwich City College

Norwich Community Learning Difficulties Team

Norwich Social Services

Shelter [part of Living Well Team, Norwich]

Special Advisory Team, Job Centre, Norwich

Specialist Support Team, Norwich City Council

Sue Lambert Trust

Sure Start [Bowthorpe and West Earlham, Norwich] Treatment of Drug and Alcohol Services [TADS]

WONDER Project, Norfolk

Youth Mental Health Team, Norwich Central Norfolk MIND.



### The sessions

An individual session lasts an hour. A group session will last according to numbers and need.

The Co-ordinator welcomes clients and invites them to say whether they want to talk and/or do some gardening or other activity. Some people just want to talk whilst others might switch from one mode to another according to how they feel at the time. If the individual/s wish to do something, the Co-ordinator and volunteers work alongside participants, if appropriate, and interact with everyone in a respectful, non-directive manner.

The acceptance of every participant is fundamental.

There is a summer house providing shelter, and a wealth of materials to research all aspects of horticulture and wildlife.

People are asked to bring their own refreshments to safeguard their own and others' safety and minimise cross-infection, post-Covid.

### Volunteers

During the accounting period [1/7/22-30/6/23] one volunteer has worked on the project.

During the accounting period [1/7/23-30/6/24] two volunteers have worked on the project. One left during this time.

Volunteers are vital in ensuring the independent, innovative nature of Strong Roots. Volunteers support the Co-ordinator in the delivery of all aspects of the project. The nature of the tasks undertaken by each volunteer will depend on their skills and interests.

# A participant:

"The project constructively made me feel more at one with myself. It also gives me a sense of purpose by being able to engage with tasks on the allotment. It has made me feel more a part of the universe. By being made aware of how the allotment is cared



# **Evaluation and** monitoring

### **Evaluation methodology**

Evaluation of the project is vital to the continuing development and success of Strong Roots. It includes feedback from the referral agencies and on site volunteers. However the most important feedback is from participants who, having decided they want to attend, are given an initial evaluation form which serves as a baseline assessment and asks what participants hope to gain from their involvement.

Participants are subsequently given an evaluation form on a quarterly basis. Evaluation is to assess whether attendance at the project is beneficial to the participant, with particular focus on confidence, teamwork, assertiveness and social interaction skills.

It is important that the participants understand that the evaluation is of Strong Roots and not of themselves but may reflect their development. Participants are encouraged to feed back fully on their experience of the project.

Evaluation forms can be found in Appendix 2.

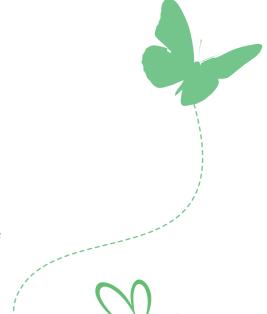
Trustees meet regularly to ensure that Strong Roots remains true to its governing document/constitution.

# A participant:

"The project has helped me to engage and improve my confidence to be with people being able to talk and get self aware of how to get a sense of belonging and place in the environment everyone is in."

# A volunteer former Allotments Officer:

"When we met on site I felt an affiliation for the plot but also [Lucy the Strong Roots Co-ordinator]. With some time for gardening and an interest in learning, I registered as a volunteer shortly afterwards, only being able to commit to every other week, but I thoroughly enjoyed these afternoons in your and Anne's company, working to help maintain the plots whilst getting to know you better. Thank you for your chats and gardening know-how. They have been a wonderful part of my fortnights."





# The benefits

### **Numbers engaged**

The project has been evaluated on a continuous basis since 1st January 2008. The results of this are given below.

In the period 1/7/2022-30/6/2023 ten people attended, five of whom carried over from the previous year. Strong Roots took two referrals - one from the adult mental health services and the other from Pedders Centre, Hellesdon Hospital. Three selfreferred based on word of mouth. One person was funded by Norfolk County Council Direct Payments.

In the period 1/7/2023-30/6/2024 ten people attended, six of whom carried over from the previous year. Strong Roots took three referrals - one from a social worker in adult social services, and two self-referrals based on word of mouth; one person returned. One person was funded by Norfolk County Council Direct Payments.

### **Outcomes**

Everyone who has attended the allotment, even if only once, will have benefitted from the project in terms of getting fresh air, having space and walking. Therefore there may have been positive effects which are not possible to record.

People often comment on how calm they feel whilst at the allotment. This is an example of a benefit to mental well-being which might arise from just one visit but is not measurable.

# A participant:

"Strong Roots is peaceful which lets me really shed my defences and open up. There are always birds and watching the seasons change helps keep me in my body and the worlds. I dissociate less and feel more alive."

Since Strong Roots started in 2008, 345 participants have attended for 7335 hours.

In the accounting period 2022-2023 10 participants have attended. 70% have completed evaluation forms. All of these have reported some benefits.

### **Details of demographics of people** who attended during this time:

Postcode NR2	Participants 1
NR3	1
NR4	1
NR5	
NR6	
NR7	
NR8	
NR10	
NR12	
Unknown	
Age	Participants
0-16	0
17-24	
25-40	4
41-55	
56-65	
Unknown	1

In the accounting period 2023-2024 10 participants have attended. 90% have completed evaluation forms. All of these have reported some benefits.

**Participants** 

### **Details of demographics of people** who attended during this time:

Postcode

NIDO

J
1
2
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1
ipants
ipants 0
0
0 1
0 1 5
0 1



# Accounts – 30 June 2023

### Receipts and Payments Account For the year ended 30 June 2023

		2022-23		2021-22
	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	TOTAL (£)	TOTAL (£)
Receipts				
Receipts from generated funds:				
Voluntary income donations	1,524.00	_	1,524.00	_
Activities for generating funds – fund raising	_	_	_	_
Gift Aid on donations	_	_	_	_
Receipts from charitable activities:	5 220 00		E 220 00	7 921 00
Session fees including direct payment	5,330.00	_	5,330.00	7,821.00
Total receipts	£6,854.00	_	£6,854.00	£7,821.00
Payments				
Payments for generating funds:				
Marketing and publicity	285.00	_	285.00	_
Payments for charitable activities:				
Staff salary costs	5,700.00	_	5,700.00	7,720.00
Staff costs – supervision	480.00	-	480.00	480.00
Travel costs	_	_	_	_
Garden materials and tools	49.00	_	49.00	336.00
Capital expenditure	25.00	_	25.00	_
Payments for administration and governance:				
Office stationery, postage, phone & computer	683.00	-	683.00	850.00
Insurance	131.00	-	131.00	131.00
Rent & membership fees	286.00	_	286.00	270.00
Criminal records check	_	_	_	_
Total payments	£7,639.00	-	£7,638.00	£9,787.00
Surplus of receipts over payments	-784.00	_	-784.00	-1,966.00
Surplus brought forward	9,059.00	-	9,059.00	11,025.00
Surplus carried forward	£8,275.00	_	£8,275.00	£9,059.00

The receipts and payments accounts were approved by the Trustees on 19th November 2024 and were signed on their behalf by:

P A	A Goodhew	T Belton

### Statement of Assets and Liabilities - as at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022	
	£	£	
Assets			
Tangible fixed assets at cost:  Unrestricted fund – used for charitable purposes	_	_	
Debtors	_	_	
Cash at bank	8,275.00	9,059.00	
Total assets	£8,275.00	£9,059.00	
Liabilities			
Unrestricted fund – Independent examiners fees	_	_	
Total liabilities	_	_	

The statement of assets and liabilities was approved by the Trustees on 19th November 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

### Notes to the Accounts – for the year ended 30 June 2023

### 1. Funds summary

The charity has no restricted funds. An analysis of the movement in funds is set out below:

Total funds	£8,275.00	£6,854.00	£7,638.00	£9,059.00
Restricted funds Unrestricted funds	- 8,275.00	- 6,854.00	- 7,638.00	9,059.00
Funds	1 July 23 (£)	Receipts (£)	Payments (£)	30 June 22 (£)

### 2. Trustees remuneration, benefits and expenses

The Trustees received no remuneration or benefits during the year ended 30 June 2023 or during the year ended 30 June 2022.

# Accounts – 30 June 2024

### Receipts and Payments Account For the year ended 30 June 2024

		2023-24		2022-23
	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	TOTAL (£)	TOTAL (£)
Receipts				
Receipts from generated funds:				
Voluntary income donations	_	_	_	_
Activities for generating funds – fund raising	_	_	_	_
Gift Aid on donations	_	_	_	_
Receipts from charitable activities:				
Session fees including direct payment	5,965.00	-	5,965.00	6,854.00
Total receipts	£5,965.00	-	£5,965.00	£6,854.00
Payments				
Payments for generating funds:				
Marketing and publicity	532.00	-	532.00	285.00
Payments for charitable activities:				
Staff salary costs	3,600.00	_	3.600.00	5,700.00
Staff costs – supervision	480.00	_	480.00	480.00
Travel costs	_	_	-	_
Garden materials and tools	417.00	_	417.00	49.00
Capital expenditure	_	_	_	25.00
Payments for administration and governance:				
Office stationery, postage, phone & computer	537.00	_	537.00	683.00
Insurance	141.0	-	141.00	131.00
Rent & membership fees	307.00	_	307.00	286.00
Criminal records check	_	_	_	_
Total payments	£6,014.00	-	£6,014.00	£7,638.00
Surplus of receipts over payments	-49.00	_	-49.00	-784.00
Surplus brought forward	8,275.00	-	8,275.00	9,059.00
Surplus carried forward	£8,226.00	_	£8,226.00	£8,275.00

The receipts and payments accounts were approved by the Trustees on 19th November 2024 and were signed on their behalf by:

Ρ	A Goodhew	T Belton

### Statement of Assets and Liabilities - as at 30 June 2024

	2024	2023	
	£	£	
Assets			
Tangible fixed assets at cost:  Unrestricted fund – used for charitable purposes	_	_	
Debtors	_	_	
Cash at bank	8,226.00	8,275.00	
Total assets	£8,226.00	£8,275.00	
Liabilities			
Unrestricted fund – Independent examiners fees	_	_	
Total liabilities	-	-	

The statement of assets and liabilities was approved by the Trustees on 19th November 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

### Notes to the Accounts – for the year ended 30 June 2024

### 1. Funds summary

The charity has no restricted funds. An analysis of the movement in funds is set out below:

Funds	1 July 24 (£)	Receipts (£)	Payments (£)	30 June 23 (£)
Restricted funds Unrestricted funds	- 8,226.00	- 5,965.00	- 6,014.00	8,275.00
Total funds	£8,226.00	£5.965.00	£6,014.00	£8,275.00

### 2. Trustees remuneration, benefits and expenses

The Trustees received no remuneration or benefits during the year ended 30 June 2024 or during the year ended 30 June 2023.

# **Appendix 1: Code of Conduct**

It is important that Strong Roots maintains a good relationship with neighbouring allotment holders and the local community.

### Please be aware of the following allotment regulations:

- Take care not to cause any nuisance or annoyance to other allotment holders or anyone living in the area surrounding our allotment.
- All paths must be kept clear, tidy and free of obstructions.
- There must be no rubbish or waste dumped on the
- Fires cannot be made between March 31st and October 1st.
- Nothing must be burnt except for garden waste from the allotment which cannot be composted.
- It is forbidden to use a sprinkler water system or use excessive water when irrigating the plot.
- Do not enter other allotments unless invited to do so by the allotment holder.

### **Ground Rules for the group**

- Please treat other participants with respect.
- There is no one 'right' way of being or doing things.
- What is said in the group remains confidential within the group. Individuals can talk about their own experience in the group but not about other individuals' experiences. Individuals must not name other group members.
  - In exceptional circumstances confidentiality may be breached by the Co-ordinator; this will be explained to you in more detail.
- Please keep voices down.
- Please switch off mobile phones and any other electronic equipment.
- No intoxicating or illegal substances are allowed when working on the allotment.



# **Health and Safety**

- You are responsible for telling the Co-ordinator if you have any allergies that may be relevant to participating in Strong Roots
- You are responsible for telling the Co-ordinator if you have any medical conditions eg diabetes, asthma. This information will be required if Strong Roots needs to call the emergency services.
- A first aid kit is kept on site, in the summer house. Lucy Scurfield is the trained first aider.
- Please wear shoes and clothing that are appropriate for the weather/work to be done. We have a limited amount of protective footwear and rainproof clothing that can be borrowed.
- You are responsible for ensuring that you are vaccinated against tetanus. Tetanus is prevalent in Norfolk so vaccination is strongly recommended.
- You are responsible for taking necessary precautions against insect stings, wounds by plants or other material, exposure to sun and inclement weather.

- Please bring any drink or food that you may require.
- Please be responsible when using tools and handle them with care.
- All tools must be stored away safely after use.
- All hazardous materials eg metal with a sharp edge, glass or nails will be stored safely or removed off site as soon as possible.
- All hazardous materials will be clearly labelled, in their original containers, stored in a locked shed.

Strong Roots reserves the right to terminate the attendance of any individual at any time.

# **Appendix 2: Evaluation Forms**

#### **Initial evaluation:**

Clients were asked what they like to achieve through taking part in the Strong Roots Allotment project:

- I would like to increase my confidence
- I would like to find it easier to get on with other people
- I would like to feel more able to take initiatives
- I would like to feel positive about new challenges
- I would like to feel more able to fit in with other people
- I would like to feel more confident in group situations
- I would like to be better at organising myself
- I would like to be better at getting my views across to other people
- I would like to be able to work more effectively as part of a team
- When I don't understand something I would like to be able to ask
- I would like to be more able to listen to other people and understand what they are saying
- I would like to be more physically active
- I would like to know more about healthy eating and the benefits of fresh produce
- Do you think there is anything else the project might be able to help you with? If so, please say what.

### Three monthly review:

Clients were asked to choose on a scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree':

- Taking part in the project is helping me to increase my confidence
- Taking part in the project is helping me to find it easier to get on with other people
- Taking part in the project is helping me to feel more able to take initiatives
- Taking part in the project is helping me to feel positive about new challenges
- Taking part in the project is helping me to feel more able to fit in with other people
- Taking part in the project is helping me to feel more confident in group situations
- Taking part in the project is helping me to be better at organising myself
- Taking part in the project is helping me to be better at getting my views across to other people
- Taking part in the project is helping me to be able to work more effectively as part of a team
- Taking part in the project is helping me to be able to ask when I don't understand something
- Taking part in the project is helping me to be more able to listen to other people and understand what they are saying
- Taking part in the project has helped me to be more physically active
- Taking part in the project has helped me to know more about healthy eating and the benefits of fresh produce
- Personal Goals: Are there things you would like to achieve before the end of the project?

# A participant:

"Coming to the location has really helped me get out and find a place I feel comfortable. I have always like nature, so this beautiful place lets me just feel safer."





# THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our generous supporters who help Strong Roots to deliver our services. We are enormously grateful for their support.

In the accounting period 1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023, the following donations were made:

The Sir Gerard Newman Charitable Trust donated £500.

John Lewis donated £500 under the theme of nature and the environment.

In the accounting period 1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024, the following donation was made:

The Sir Gerard Newman Charitable Trust donated £500.

Many thanks are also due to the Volunteer It Yourself team, volunteers and partners [Dulux, Toolstation, Travis Perkins and the Norwich City Council Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy] for their respective contributions/donations.

Volunteer it Yourself is a not for profit organisation which supports local young people who are NEET or risk of NEET [Not In Education, Employment or Training] with trade and construction work experience, qualifications and mentoring.

The projects undertaken offer young people bite-sized opportunities to get hands-on, practical work experience at local community venues, from as little as three days commitment. It is a great way for people to try their hand at something new - and discover if the trades are something they may wish to venture into as a job or further training.

Volunteer It Yourself has made several improvements to the site which will help sustain the future of the project. They have installed a new shelter and raised planters, which will enhance the experience of people attending the project in ways that have not been possible in the past. Volunteers are now able to stay and work during inclement weather and have a place from which to enjoy the setting without disturbing a session in progress. It will also allow people, if they so wish, to draw, paint and write about their experience.

Volunteer It Yourself has also refurbished the summer house and composting toilet, created a wood store for the summer house stove, installed fruit cages for organically grown produce, created more privacy with a trellis framework screen and installed a pond close to the new shelter to attract wildlife.

### Our thanks to all those who have given grants and donations to Strong Roots since its inception. They include:

AB Charitable Trust Acorn Grant [European Social Fund] Chris Sellers Community Champions Community Matters Waitrose Norwich East Anglian Rambling Society John Jarrold Trust John Lewis Kettle Foods Ltd Marks and Spencer Mills & Reeve LLP Mrs H R Greene Charitable Settlement Norwich Learning City [Making It Happen] Norwich Ouakers The Sir Gerard Newman Charitable Trust Well Being [Big Lottery] Fund Well-Being in the East ...and various individual donors

Thanks also go to our fellow allotment holder who so generously donates wood for our wood-burner.



#### Thanks are due to all volunteers past and present for their vital contribution to the development of Strong Roots:

Henry Allen Barnaby Andrews Harry Arnott Katie Breakespear Katie Brooks Helen Burgess Jonathan Chamberlain Sam Chapman Alan Corlett Emma Corlett Suse Day **Daniel Edwards** Helen Evans

Lin Garland **Bridget Garrard** 

Amber Gilbert Squires Anne Goodhew

James Goodhew Adam Green Emma Hart

**Bridie Hewitt** Fave Jeffers

Amy Johnson Carla Jones Jonny Jones

Georgia King Jamie Laurence

Gavin Marghitson

Alice Martineau Joanna Newman

Tom O'Sullivan Wendy Premachandra

Anne Reekie Alison Reeve

Charles Seymour James Spacey

Sue Spooner Natalaja Stevenson

Piers Warren Kerry Watts Josh Weatherill Hannah Wells

Dan Wheals Jo Whistlecraft

Bonnie Wood David Wrenn

### Thanks are also due to the following for their support over the years:

Assist Trust **BBC Radio Norfolk** 

Bizz Fizz

Bluebell Allotment Holders Association

Bridge Plus

British Red Cross

The Chronicle [Newsletter of WEETU -

The Women's Employment, **Enterprise and Training Unit**]

City of Norwich Partnership

Clive Evans Eco Echo

Freerange Creations

Future Radio

Growing Places [newsletter of the Federation of

Community Farms and Gardens]

Dave Guttridge [DJ78]

Karen Hill

Lifestyle Family Chiropractic Newsletter

Nick Marsham [Barnard Sampson Accountants LLP]

Norfolk County Council

Norwich Asylum Seekers and Refugees Forum

Norwich City Council Norwich Evening News Norwich Food Web

Norwich Mental Health Providers Forum

Norwich Ouakers

Norwich Third Sector Forum

Raising the Roof [newsletter of Space – East] St Thomas' Church Earlham Road, Norwich The Associates Magazine, Norwich MIND Triangle Norwich magazine University of East Anglia Volunteers

Voluntary Norfolk Workshop Café Bar



Teresa Belton Anne Goodhew Jane Olivier Jane Warren

#### Staff:

Lucy Scurfield, Co-ordinator

### Website design:

Stuart Pigram (Freerange Creations)

### Website updates:

Jan Haley (Online Impact)



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