



the 9th year



**Grow
your
career!**



FUTURE GARDENERS
GROW YOUR CAREER



Top Future Gardeners 20
Middle Future Gardeners 21
Bottom Future Gardeners 22



Foreword

Celebrating Nine Years of Growth and New Beginnings with Future Gardeners.

Now in its ninth year, the Future Gardeners programme continues to thrive, with five successful courses delivered across Central London: Future Gardeners 19, 20, and 21, alongside our second cohort at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP) in May 2024, and the exciting launch of our Thamesmead pilot in February 2025.

While 2024 marked the conclusion of Bankside Open Spaces Trust's (BOST) partnership with the Worshipful Company of Gardeners—following their withdrawal of funding in March—we remain deeply grateful for their generous support and commitment since the programme's inception in 2016. Their contributions laid the foundations for what Future Gardeners has become today.

This year, under the dedicated leadership of Louisa and Shereen at BOST, the programme has expanded in both ambition and reach. We proudly returned to QEOP for a second successful cohort and launched a new pilot in Thamesmead in collaboration with Maylim Landscapes—bringing green career opportunities to even more communities.

Having attended every graduation this year, I continue to be inspired by the determination, resilience, and talent of our students. Watching them grow—from their first steps into horticulture to securing meaningful, stable employment—is a powerful reminder of the programme's real and lasting impact.

Future Gardeners is more than a course. It's a journey, a community, and a catalyst for change. Here's to continuing that journey—planting seeds of hope, skill, and opportunity for years to come.

Charlotte Gilsean *CEO, Bankside Open Spaces Trust*

The Future Gardeners programme aims to provide horticultural training to people who have been long-term unemployed or faced challenges in their lives and who would benefit from gaining confidence, skills and the opportunity of training and employment.

What is Future Gardeners?

The course is delivered by Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) and works in partnership with numerous other organisations to ensure its success. This year we have partnered with Walworth Garden, Roots & Shoots and *idverde* to deliver City and Guilds accredited qualifications across all the programmes.

Participants are given the opportunity to gain the skills they need to be work-ready and get an entry level horticultural job or go onto further training in the industry. Although the course is suited to a wide variety of people, it targets those with the most need, such as people not in education or training, the long-term unemployed, those who cannot afford other horticultural courses, and people who have learning needs or disabilities.

The course is practically focused, and includes the following:

- A City and Guilds Qualification in Practical Horticulture.
- Practical experience in BOST community parks and gardens.
- Work experience with horticultural industry leaders including The Royal Parks, Chelsea Physic Garden, Crown Estates Paving Commission, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Frognaal Gardens, Maylim Landscapes, Royal College of Physicians, Victoria Park, Peabody Thamesmead, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Willerby Landscapes.
- Research visits and workdays with organisations in the horticultural sector: Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Garden Wisley, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, National Trust's Morden Hall, Inner Temple Garden, Charterhouse Gardens, Fulham Palace House & Garden, Chelsea Physic Garden, Westminster Abbey, London Stadium, Eltham Palace and Garden and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.
- Horticultural industry expert talks to inspire students about their future careers.
- CV building, help with applying for jobs and interview techniques to ensure students are work-ready once they complete the course.
- One-to-one individually tailored mentoring and support aimed at building confidence.

The ongoing need for Future Gardeners

The shortage of skilled professionals entering the horticultural industry—one of the original drivers behind the creation of the Future Gardeners programme nearly a decade ago—remains a pressing issue today. In fact, the demand for initiatives like Future Gardeners has only grown.

According to the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), 70% of horticultural businesses are struggling to recruit skilled workers. Interest in horticulture among younger generations continues to decline, and this is exacerbated by long-standing underinvestment in training and apprenticeships, particularly within schools and colleges. Combined with an ageing workforce, this has resulted in a serious shortfall of new entrants into the sector.

The HTA warns that this widening skills gap poses a direct threat to the future growth of the industry. With UK horticulture contributing over £24 billion annually to the national economy, addressing this labour shortage is not just an industry priority—it's an economic imperative.

Beyond economic impact, there are important social benefits.

Unemployment, especially among young people, is strongly linked to poor mental health, reduced confidence, low self-esteem, and increased risk of debt and poor physical health. A 2017 BBC study found that unemployed young people are more than twice as likely to experience mental health issues.

At the same time, horticulture presents a powerful opportunity: it is an accessible, barrier-free, and rewarding career path for individuals who may not hold formal qualifications, or who are seeking alternatives to indoor or office-based roles. For many, particularly those who thrive in hands-on, outdoor environments, horticulture offers a fulfilling and health-promoting career.

The industry encompasses a wide range of roles; from garden design, landscaping, floristry, and arboriculture to nursery work, plant propagation, garden centre retail, and the maintenance of parks, sports pitches, and golf courses. The opportunities are vast and varied.

In this context, the Future Gardeners programme continues to play a vital role—not only in preparing individuals for careers in horticulture, but also in addressing broader economic and social challenges.

Success of Future Gardeners

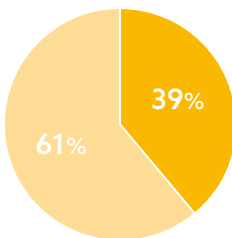
In the 2024-2025 year, 57 students enrolled in five Future Gardeners programmes, with 49 successfully completing them - resulting in a graduation rate of 86%.

86%
completion rate

61% of those who have completed a Future Gardeners course have now gone into employment or further training in the industry. Employers include Royal Parks Apprenticeships, Chelsea Physic Garden Traineeship, idverde, Frogna Gardens, Planet Turf, The Outside Group, Bankside Open Spaces Trust, Clarion Housing, Glendale, Peabody, Spitalfields City Farm, School Food Matters, Wilder and Rozario Gardens.

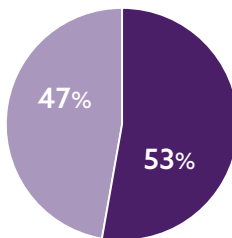
Demographics for the 9th year students

Gender



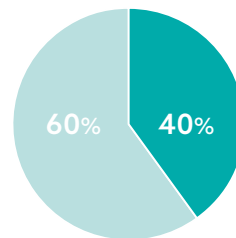
● Male
● Female

Nationality



● White British or other white background
● Global majority background

With/without disability/
health condition



● No disability/health condition
● With disability or long-term health condition

Course outcomes

Outline of Future Gardeners April 2024 – March 2025

14
participants
12
graduated



Future Gardeners 20

May to July 2024

Karin Ringla is now working for Wilder, a local rewilding company.

Leah Cameron is working for Rozario Garden in a garden maintenance role.

Estelle de Zylva obtained an apprenticeship with idverde in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Christopher Sabanal is signed up for temporary work with Fresh Horticultural Careers whilst looking for a full-time role in the industry.

Shana Blackley is currently volunteering in her local area whilst looking for work.

Joshua Adeypong is working at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Matthew Bennett is working part-time at his local housing association and also with Fresh Horticultural Careers.

Tallulah Wallace-Scutter secured an apprenticeship with Glendale.

Catia Silva is working with School Food Matters.

Ella Barnes is working at a garden centre in Battersea.

Sadie Edginton is now an educational assistant at Spitalfields City Farm.

Sophie Johnson is working freelance for Wilder, a local rewilding organisation.

Cian Mitchel didn't complete the course.

Maral Ghazil-Ahmadi didn't complete the course.

12
participants
9
graduated



Future Gardeners 21

September to December 2024

Charlie Anderson moved into part-time work with a local tree surgeon.

Fatuma Abdulahi is currently volunteering and looking for employment.

Laurel Hadleigh is currently volunteering and looking for employment.

Nicole Rogers secured an apprenticeship with Clarion Housing.

Oliver Holliday is currently looking for a full-time position in the industry.

Patrick Amis secured a position working with his allotment association.

Rita Leung found full-time garden maintenance work with the Outside Group.

Sonia Castang is continuing with horticulture studies and caring for a family member.

Tinica Commodore is currently looking for work whilst volunteering at the Natural History Museum.

Alo Raptopoulos didn't complete the course.

Isabella Morales Salis didn't complete the course.

Remi Onalaja didn't complete the course.

Future Gardeners 22

January to March 2025

Hasan Aziz secured a traineeship at Chelsea Physic Garden.

Elena Vesela is working in garden maintenance with Frogna Gardens.

Aaliyah Musgrove-Pons gained an apprenticeship with the Royal Parks at Hyde Park.

Elizabeth Woodroffe is continuing to volunteer.

Rhoda Kamchacha is volunteering at the Sky Garden whilst looking for employment.

Michael Abbott is continuing to volunteer.

Yvonne Ward is continuing to volunteer at Queens Garden in North London whilst looking for work.

Isaac Guard is working as a horticultural apprentice at the Horniman Museum.

Refayat Uddin is continuing to volunteer with BOST.

Elysia Sun is working for a local garden maintenance company.

Ella Leibu is working with Fresh Horticultural Careers and volunteering at Kew Gardens.

Sophie Blakemore-Hirst is working with local rewilding company, Wilder.

James Dolan didn't complete the course.



13
participants
12
graduated

Student feedback from our 9th year

“Thank you so much for the opportunity of being on Future Gardeners. It's been an amazing experience which I'm very grateful for. Thank you for all your support. I hope FG continues for a very long time, it's much needed.”

“I've really enjoyed being on the Future Gardeners programme because of the range of education and experience you get. The training at Roots and Shoots College has greatly increased my gardening knowledge and the garden visits and industry talks have improved my understanding of how the horticulture industry works. I didn't realise the amount of different sectors that falls under horticulture.”

“I absolutely loved to meet all the gardeners. Hampton Court was incredible as lunch time gave me the opportunity to speak with experienced people but also every single person that came on Thursdays.”

“Thank you so much for accepting me onto the Future Gardeners program, it's such a valuable, irreplaceable course and you both work so hard. I definitely wouldn't have been able to get a gardening job this quickly without your help!”

“Thank you once again for all the effort you've put into making this course such a valuable and enjoyable experience. I truly appreciate it! This is a happy goodbye and stay in touch. Cheers!”

“The course was life changing!”

“The practical learning. How very helpful and dedicated Shereen and Louisa have been throughout the course. Meeting and learning with a group of amazing fellow Future Gardeners. The beautiful and inspiring garden visits. And the cool teacher at Roots and Shoots, Liz Ing. I loved every part of this course and grateful for the opportunity to have learnt in such a supportive and encouraging environment.”

“This course really has been amazing! The support and confidence that the team has given me has really helped me with finding a job.”

“I really loved all garden trips but I really like all we went through. I also liked work experience with Frognaal Gardens.”

“My work experience at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew gave me an insight into what it would be like to work in horticulture.”

“I really loved all aspects of gardening and seeing the changes that we made through our hard work. This course has given me the opportunity to discover that I have a genuine passion and a natural aptitude to gardening and I am determined to pursue a career in gardening.”

“I really enjoyed the opportunity to work with a team of experienced gardeners on my work experience placement at the Crown Estate Paving Commission. It was a great opportunity to learn new skills and to experience working as a gardener in a fast-paced environment. It was hard work, but the experience gave me the confidence to believe that I can work in a similar role. It confirmed to me that I definitely want to pursue a career in horticulture!”



Our student journey

The programme

City and Guilds Award in Practical Horticulture

The students gained their qualifications at either Walworth Garden or Roots & Shoots and covered the following topics:

- Plant nomenclature, terminology and identification
- Establishing propagation material
- Maintaining plants outdoors
- Monitoring and maintaining health and safety
- Maintaining and developing personal performance
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with others
- Preparing the ground for seeding and planting
- Establishing plants and seeds in soil
- Maintaining the appearance of decorative amenity areas
- Maintaining equipment and machines



Students at Roots & Shoots College



Students at Roots & Shoots College

Industry expert talks

A variety of speakers from the industry came and spoke to the students about their jobs and journeys into the industry – these included:

- **Lucy Fisher**, Contracts Manager, idverde
- **Noel Brock**, Owner, Froggnal Gardens
- **Marian Fisher**, Owner, Fresh Horticultural Careers
- **Heather Barrett-Mold**, Pollinating London Together
- **Giada Francois**, Garden Designer
- **John Little**, Owner, Grass Roof Company
- **Rachel Hippolyte**, Head of Education at Spitalfields City Farm

John Little with Future Gardeners students



Biodiversity Workshop with Froggnal Gardens

Employment mentoring

As part of the Future Gardeners programme, Programmes Manager Louisa Mansfield played a key role in equipping students with vital employability skills and tailored careers advice. By the end of the course, every student is supported to have an up-to-date gardening CV and the confidence to apply for roles and perform well in interviews.

To support their career journey, students took part in a mix of interactive workshops, practical presentations, and a dedicated weekly Job Club. Held outside of class time, Job Club offers one-to-one guidance tailored to each student's job search—whether that's fine-tuning a CV, preparing for an interview, or exploring different roles in the sector.

The impact of this support was clear: in a post-course survey, 100% of students who attended Job Club said it was helpful in updating their CV.

Students were also introduced to Fresh Horticultural Careers, a specialist recruitment agency serving the UK's garden maintenance, landscaping, and horticulture sectors. With staff support, students were helped to register for both temporary and permanent job opportunities—taking an important step toward long-term employment in the industry.



Fresh Horticultural
Careers

A FRESH APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT

Garden research visits

Garden research visits were made to RHS Garden Wisley, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Chelsea Physic Garden, Inner Temple Gardens, Charterhouse Gardens and Westminster Abbey. Students also attended the Royal Parks Guild Discovery Day at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) Garden Wisley

Future Gardener's Programmes Manager Louisa Mansfield successfully applied for a bursary from the RHS to continue trips with each of the cohorts of students to RHS Garden Wisley. These trips were organised by Lewis George of the RHS's New Shoots team who welcomed each cohort of students to the garden and was our contact for the day.



Students with Lewis George at RHS Wisley

“We were then told about work experience and internships opportunities by Lewis from the engagement team, which I'm really keen to explore further.”

“Enjoyable, the Wisley garden is so beautiful and a lot of different beautiful flowers, plants and trees. And how arranged different gardens are so beautiful. Learning new things like medicinal plants from RHS hilltop live talk was so fascinating.”



Students exploring RHS Wisley

Royal Parks Guild Discovery Day

A Green Legacy—Growing the Future Together

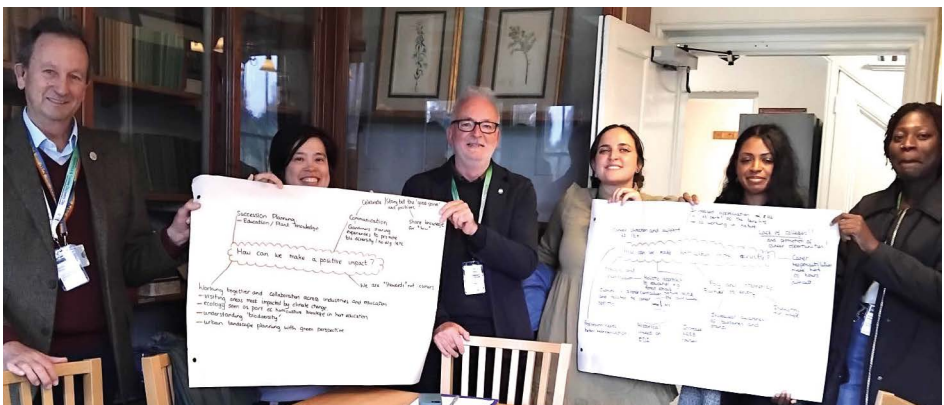
We were pleased that the Future Gardeners 21 students were invited to the Royal Parks Guild Discovery Day for apprentices and trainees in the horticultural industry.

It was hosted by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in partnership with the National Trust and The Tree Council.

Apprentices, trainees and schoolchildren came together with people from across the horticulture industry to learn and talk about innovations in green space and environmental management. A feature of the day were the workshop sessions which explored both current issues and future possibilities.



Royal Parks Guild Discovery Day



Future Gardeners students in a workshop session

Work taster days

The students visited Morden Hall and Fulham Palace House & Garden to work with the garden teams for a day.



Future Gardeners amongst the roses at Morden Hall



Apples at Fulham Palace

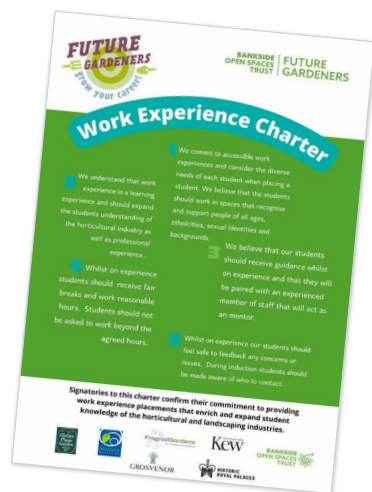


With Jono, past Future Gardener at Fulham Palace House & Garden

Work experience

Meaningful work experience is a key component to the Future Gardeners course and is fundamental in supporting our students into long-term careers in the industry. Understanding this, we have created the Future Gardeners Work Placement Charter that sets a benchmark for purposeful and supportive work experience opportunities in the horticultural industry.

Work experience placements this year included Greenwich Park, Chelsea Physic Garden, Crown Estates Paving Commission, Willerby Landscapes, Frognaal Gardens, Grosvenor Estates, Hampton Court Palace, Maylim Landscapes, Victoria Park, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, The Royal College of Physicians, Peabody and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.



Work Experience in Victoria Park



Work Experience at Kew Gardens



Work Experience at Froggnal Gardens



Work Experience at Hampton Court



Work Experience at Kew Gardens



Work Experience at Fognal Gardens



Work Experience at Chelsea Physic Garden



Work Experience at Crown Estates

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Future Gardeners 2

During the summer of 2024, we ran a second Future Gardeners programme based in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP), run in partnership with the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), Build East Skills Centre, *idverde* and the London Boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets.

This programme comprised of a Level 1 City and Guilds Award Qualification delivered by *idverde* based at their training depot in QEOP. The students also completed a week-long Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) in partnership with Build East Skills Centre. All students completed a two-week work experience placement in QEOP with *idverde*. The students visited the Mobile Garden for a composting workshop, the Olympic Stadium, Exchange Square and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

There were employability workshops and five of the students were interviewed by *idverde* at the end of the course for three available positions in QEOP. All three positions were filled with Future Gardeners graduates who are currently working in the park.

Of the 7 students:

- 43% were male and 57% female
- 43% came from a global majority background
- 57% came from a white British or other white background
- 57% had a disability or long-term health condition

100% of students completed the course and 71% moved into either employment or further training, the other 29% moved back home abroad or needed additional support to get closer to employment.

There is a separate report available for this cohort; please email louisa@bost.org.uk for a copy.

FUTURE GARDENERS
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QEOP Future Gardeners student at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park



QEOP Future Gardeners students at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park



QEOP Future Gardeners students visiting Kew Gardens

Future Gardeners Thamesmead

February 2025

In February 2025 we ran a pilot Future Gardeners programme in Thamesmead funded by Maylim and in partnership with Peabody.

The course consisted of a Level 1 City and Guilds Practical Horticultural Qualification taught by a freelance tutor onsite at the Peabody training centre in Thamesmead. All students completed a two-week work experience placement with either Maylim Landscapes across their sites in central London or with Peabody in Thamesmead. The students also visited sites across Thamesmead, including The Exchange Garden in Erith and Eltham Palace and Garden, for tours with the head gardeners working at these locations.

At the end of the course all students were interviewed by Peabody for a position in their Environmental Services team. One of the students was successful in securing the position and is now working in Thamesmead as part of the team.

Student Statistics:

- **10 students enrolled**
- **9 graduated and achieved a City and Guilds L1 qualification**
- **90% graduation rate**

Out of the 9 that graduated there are:

- **5 in employment across the industry**
- **2 continuing to volunteer whilst looking for employment**
- **2 registering with local employment support agencies to continue their pathway to employment**

Out of the 10 students:

45% were female and 55% male

36% came from a global majority background

64% came from a white British or other white background

73% had a disability or long-term health condition

There is a separate report available for this cohort; please email louisa@bost.org.uk for a copy.



Thamesmead Group photo

Student achievement

A graduation event was held for each group of students at various venues across London with a variety of influential speakers from the industry to welcome and inspire the students.

The graduation event for Future Gardeners 20 took place in Red Cross Garden where Pam Warhurst, founder of Incredible Edible, was the guest speaker. The Future Gardeners 21 and QEOP 2 graduation was held at the Bankside Hotel with guest speakers Adrian Wickham, Head of BALI and John Little, owner of The Grass Roof Company. The Nest Community Building and Library hosted the Future Gardeners 22 and Thamesmead 1 graduation with speakers John Little and Jamie Gault, Chief Executive Officer at Perennial.



Future Gardeners 20 Graduation at Red Cross Garden



Future Gardeners 20
Graduation speaker,
Pam Warhurst



Future Gardeners Thamesmead 1 Graduation

Publicity

The Future Gardeners Programme was promoted at the following events:

- London Wildlife Trust, Green Jobs Fair at Walthamstow Wetlands Centre
- The Passage drop-in session, a homelessness charity based in Westminster
- Green Jobs Fair in Streatham
- RHS Wisley Green Jobs Fair
- Social Farms and Gardens Fundraising Networking event at Phoenix Gardens
- Bexley Job Fair



Future Gardeners at The Passage

Publicity continued



Future Gardeners
at Green Jobs Fair



Future Gardeners at RHS Wisley Green Jobs Fair

The Gardener's Notebook

An innovative scheme is helping Londoners bloom into the gardeners of the future.
George Hudson digs deeper

If you've ever explored the back streets of Borough, you might have stumbled across the Red Cross Garden. Designed by Octavia Hill, a pioneer of green spaces and social reform in England, it is still a place of social empowerment. Today, in the same place, Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) runs the Future Gardeners course. The intensive programme sees students work in some of London's best-known gardens and green spaces, study to complete a City and Guilds qualification in horticulture, and receive support in developing a career in the gardening sector. The programme is open to anyone who lives in London, prioritising people who have been out of education or training, long-term unemployed or who might not otherwise have been able to afford a horticultural course.

The scheme, now in its ninth year, saw its 20th cohort of gardeners graduate last Friday. Since it began in 2016, more than 200 have graduated. Led by Louisa Mansfield and Shereen Chung-Blake, the programme is focused on both practical gardening experience in real-life settings and the resources to find a job at the end of the programme. "When Future Gardeners graduate they leave us equipped with a strong enough gardening CV to get

an interview, the knowledge of where to look for roles and confidence to apply," says Mansfield. "We've partnered with gardens such as Kew, The Royal Parks, Chiswick House and the Chelsea Physic Garden, all who take students for work experience."

"More than 70 per cent of graduates find work three to six months after completing the course," she adds.

Blossoming careers: students on the Future Gardeners scheme. It has 200 graduates

Peggy Jones-Pierpoint, who graduated in 2018, now works full-time in the Decorative Nursery at Kew. In her role she has hosted some Future Gardeners for their work experience.

"Future Gardeners has opened the doors to the world of horticulture for me," she says. "Before I started the course I wasn't sure where to go with my career, but Louisa and the programme set me on a path to working full-time at Kew doing something I love. Future Gardeners will always be a part of my life!"

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“New chapter” for Future Gardeners graduates

by Nina Mason | 27 Nov 24 | News



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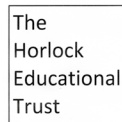
Search

Future Gardeners celebrated as they find 'green heaven'

Environmental and volunteering charity Bankside Open Spaces Trust, and experts from across the horticulture industry, have celebrated the 21st round of Future Gardeners – London's only free gardening course for the unemployed and career changers.



With thanks to our supporters and partners







Can you help?

The project requires ongoing funding for future expansion plans. If you would like to help us raise funds for this deserving initiative, donate or can help in any other way, please contact **Louisa Mansfield** at **louisa@bost.org.uk** or call **020 7403 3393**



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