



Community Calm

“Mental Health Recovery Through Nature”

Newsletter 5 - Autumn 2025



“Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits.”



Change is constant in life, and while it can sometimes feel challenging to navigate, it also brings new opportunities.

Community Calm has recently undergone a number of transitions. Our farm base has now moved to a new site, and we are planning a phased return to spending time with our much-loved animals. In the meantime, we are very grateful to have the use of the Holyport War Memorial Hall, which has allowed us to continue delivering our nature-based wellbeing activities in a welcoming and accessible setting.

We have also relocated our Windsor Great Park site to Woolley Firs in Maidenhead. Unfortunately, Windsor Great Park has now become an exclusion zone under the *Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (SOCPA) 2005*, which means we are no longer able to operate from that location. We are extremely saddened to say goodbye to Caroline Everett in her capacity at this site, who provided invaluable support for our collaborative work with Project Salama and Utulivu Women's Group. We are, however, delighted that Caroline will remain part of our wider team, continuing to share her skills and expertise as a chiropterologist (bat specialist) and wildlife expert.

Our Slough site was officially launched in September by the Mayor of Slough. It was a wonderful day celebrating with our members, supporters, and partners as we marked the opening of our third location. The Slough site will offer the town's first and only Wellbeing Garden, providing a unique, inclusive green space for the local community.

We are also pleased to share that Community Calm has been awarded a grant from The One Slough Fund and nominated for The One Slough Award in recognition of our collaborative work with Project Salama and the Utulivu Women's Group.

Nature as Healing

At **Community Calm**, we believe deeply in the gentle, restorative power of nature.

Each week, we invite people to step away from the noise of everyday life and into our peaceful, private green spaces — in **Holyport, Windsor Great Park, and Slough** — to reconnect with themselves, others, and the natural world.

Our sessions blend calm activity with companionship, offering space to breathe, move, and simply be:

-  **Gentle gardening & horticulture**
-  **Forest skills and eco-therapy**
-  **Relaxation and movement practices**
-  **Non-clinical settings for physiotherapy, reflexology, and restorative sessions**
-  **Mindful walking in nature**
-  **Arts & crafts using natural materials**
-  **Caring for friendly animals and farm life**
-  **Peer-led wellbeing conversations in safe, supportive spaces**

Rooted in kindness and community, these sessions form part of our wider **green social prescribing** approach — helping people find purpose and connection through nature.

We offer a **non-clinical pathway to recovery**, held in peaceful, confidential, and emotionally safe spaces. Our ethos is based on *principles over personalities* — we are not swayed by popular trends or quick fixes that can often feel exhausting. Instead, we focus on what truly matters: compassion, understanding, and steady human connection.

Our small-group approach allows us to offer individual attention and genuine care, ensuring every participant feels heard, supported, and free from judgement or pressure to conform.

At Community Calm, **everyone is welcome — just as they are.**

Our Mission

Prevention and early intervention are key to maintaining both mental and physical wellbeing — and to avoiding crisis.

At **Community Calm**, we provide a supportive, non-clinical pathway and serve as a beacon of hope for those struggling. We offer a safe, understanding space and signpost people to further help where possible — whether through their **GP, Community Mental Health Professional**, or other relevant services.

Our mission is simple yet vital:

To ensure that no one feels alone on their journey to recovery.

Our Ethos

Our ethos is rooted in the 12-step philosophy of “**principles over personalities**”, guiding us to act with a **collective community conscience** and an **inner moral compass** rather than personal opinions or individual differences.

It calls us to focus on **integrity** and **doing what is right**, rather than being swayed by conflict, status, or emotion.

At Community Calm, this means holding a space where **respect, kindness, and inclusivity** take precedence over personal disagreements or recognition. It keeps our shared mission — to support mental wellbeing through **nature, connection, and peer support** — at the heart of everything we do.

By prioritising principles such as **honesty, humility, and compassion**, we create a space where everyone feels **valued, heard, and supported** in their journey.

Why it matters now

- According to official national guidance, green social prescribing means referring people to nature-based interventions like gardening, walking, or conservation work to improve both mental and physical health.[NHS England+2NASP+2](#)
- A government-commissioned study of both public and clinicians found strong support: over two thirds of clinicians thought green nature-based activities can reduce health inequalities and improve wellbeing.[GOV.UK](#)
- In a major pilot programme involving 8,300 participants, people showed measurable improvements: happiness rose from ~5.3/10 to ~7.5/10, life satisfaction from ~4.7/10 to ~6.8/10, and anxiety dropped from ~4.8/10 to ~3.4/10.[NASP](#)
- Academic reviews of UK social prescribing (including nature-based interventions) found positive effects on mental health and wellbeing; these interventions can act as a complementary non-clinical support.[BMJ Open+2PMC+2](#)

Local context & wellbeing needs

- In the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), the population is projected to grow from around 151,422 to about 159,700 by 2041. The borough also has an aging population, with about 18.4% aged 65+ and 23% children/young people aged 0-17.[Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead+2RBWM Together+2](#)
- Although RBWM is in the 10% of least deprived local authority areas in England, there are still pockets of deprivation.[Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead+1](#)
- In schools in RBWM, about **16.6% of pupils have special educational needs** (SEN).[Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead+1](#)
- In the neighbouring Slough, there are increasing mental health needs. The local commissioning strategy notes a rising prevalence of common mental disorders, psychotic disorders, and comorbid conditions.[democracy.slough.gov.uk+1](#)
- Slough is also among areas with more health inequalities — it is ethnically diverse, with lower life expectancy than the England average, and many residents live in low-income households.[NHS England+1](#)

National / NHS / academic data

- According to national statistics from the NHS England, monthly reports track people using NHS-funded mental health, learning disability, and autism services. These show ongoing demand across adult and children/young people's services.[NHS England Digital](#)
- More broadly, about **1 in 6 adults (aged 16+)** in England had experienced common mental health problems (depression, anxiety, etc.) in a recent survey.[House of Commons Library](#)

Strengthening Community Health Initiatives

In September 2024, Lord Darzi published an independent investigation into the NHS in England, revealing several critical findings. In response, there is a growing emphasis on strengthening community health initiatives to alleviate pressure on hospital services and address health inequalities.

Effective community health initiatives often involve:

- **Community Engagement:** Actively involving local residents in the design and delivery of health and wellbeing programmes ensures that services are tailored to meet specific community needs.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborations between healthcare providers, local authorities, and community organisations can lead to more comprehensive and effective health interventions.
- **Asset-Based Approaches:** Building on existing community strengths and resources enhances the effectiveness of health initiatives and promotes sustainability.

Community Calm and Social Media

We are often asked about our presence on social media. While we do use it to some extent, we deliberately keep our members and volunteers away from it. Our priority is to create genuine, face-to-face connections in a safe and supportive environment.

Community Calm believes more regulation is needed to control what content can be accessed online and by whom. We do not support anonymous posting, which can reduce accountability and contribute to the spread of harmful information.

Many of our members have shared that social media can have a detrimental effect on their mental health. Research has shown that heavy use of social media is linked to higher rates of anxiety, depression and loneliness (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017). This highlights the urgent need for better safeguards and guidance for online engagement.

At Community Calm, we believe more must be done to protect mental wellbeing in the digital age. While social media has its benefits, it should not come at the expense of people's mental health.

Our Supporters

We continue to be grateful to Dawn and Laurie Dingwall for supporting us as they transition to their new site. We understand how daunting and difficult this process is for them and they have continued to stay in touch with us during their transition which has provided our members with hope.



Developments

A NEW location has launched in Herschel Park, Slough.

Every Tuesday we meet to take part in Eco Therapy and Green Skills and begin creating our very own Wellbeing garden. This will be the first of its kind for Slough residents. An indoor space in the Bentley Education Centre is also available for those who would like to have a safe indoor space and connect with peer support and others who may understand who they are feeling.



We are collaborating with The Wildlife Trust in Woolley Firs in Maidenhead from November onwards
This is also a collaboration with survivors of domestic abuse from the charity,
Project Salama and Utulivu Women's Group.



Overcoming Barriers

If you are hesitant to join one of our sessions due to anxiety or logistical concerns, please contact us.

We are here to help.

We can explore some strategies that can make your visit less daunting and stressful.

If you are a Healthcare Professional and would like to refer clients into us please get in touch so we can send you further information for your clients. Our referral form can be found on our website.

Community Calm – Activity Timeline

Summer/Autumn Highlights: Growth, Collaboration & Impact

Press & Media

- **Press Release** sent to all local media outlets.
- **Media Coverage:**
 - Maidenhead Advertiser
 - Slough Observer
 - Featured on **BBC Radio Berkshire Breakfast Show**
 - **TV Segment on “That’s TV Thames Valley”** – Founder Meena featured.

Community & Networking Events

- **Out in the Community Event – Slough, Turning Point Networking**
- **Slough Networking Forum – Collaborative work**
- **Slough CVS AGM Meeting – How Slough CVS supports grassroots community groups.**
 - Members and volunteers represented Community Calm at a stalls.
 - Members gained information and support from other local services.

Activities at Heroes Farm, Berkshire

- **Monday Sessions:**
 - Participated in **The Big Butterfly Count**, a nationwide survey during a nature walk.
 - Created model butterflies to take home.
 - Concluded with a meditation on **“How to Rest.”**

- **Art with Stef (National Trust & Wildlife Trust Teacher):**
 - Discussed perspective and individuality through landscape art.
 - **Reflexology Sessions:**
 - Complimentary hands, feet, and face sessions offered.
 - **Food & Mood Exercise:**
 - Mindfulness activity using the five senses with different foods.
 - **Herbal Tea Workshop:**
 - Members created their own herbal tea bags and tried different blends.
 - **Farm Animal Interactions:**
 - Gentle walks with ponies, donkeys, and alpacas; learning about animal behaviour.
 - **Gel Painting with Steph:**
 - First-time experiences for many members; created farm mementos.
 - **Meditation Circles & Open Discussions:**
 - Ended sessions reflecting on feelings and experiences, especially feelings of loneliness even when surrounded by crowds of people.
 - **Bank Holiday Support:**
 - Sessions continued despite public holiday to support members struggling during this time.
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Activities at Windsor Great Park

- Monthly Collaborative work with Project Salama and Utulivu Women's Group.
 - Members shared space in the beautiful grounds of Windsor Great Park and enjoyed Forest Skills, relaxation and meditation in nature, gardening, habitat monitoring
 - **Campfire Cookout & Nature Meditation:**
 - Members shared meals, played games, discussed thought-provoking questions.
 - Nature meditation and circle sharing enhanced reflection and peer support.
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Activities at Slough – Herschel Park

- **Garden Work & Soft Launch:**
 - Progress made on garden in preparation for official launch on 9/11.
 - Volunteers assisted with cleanup and maintenance.
 - **Official Launch:**
 - Mayor of Slough, Councillor Siobhan Dauti, attended.
 - Displayed member artwork and highlighted regular Tuesday morning nature sessions for Slough residents.
 - Over 80 people attended from members, NHS services, Council services, Slough CVS
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Collaborations & Partnerships

- **Lavender Green Flowers:**
 - Donated flowers from Silverstone and Windsor Castle repurposed for community use.
- **The Wildlife Trust / BBOWT Windsor Great Park:**
 - Collaborated with **Project Salama** and **Utulivu Women's Group**.
 - Woodland walks, art with natural inks, circle discussions, and meditations provided trauma-aware respite.

Local Networking

- **AGM Meeting & Networking:**
 - Community Calm presented on the role of Slough CVS in local community development.
- **One Slough Awards:**
 - Project Salama and Utulivu nominated; Community Calm represented collaborative efforts.



Member Feedback Highlights

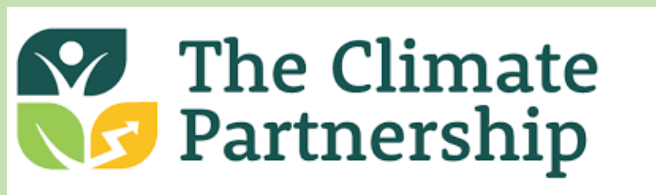
- **LB:** “Struggling when I arrived but left feeling happy.”
 - **LP:** “Lovely and special.”
- **M:** “Felt like being part of a family, very lucky to be at the wildlife centre.”
 - **D:** “Super grateful, feel recharged and mentally in a better place.”



Funding News - Our Supporters



#OneSlough





Donations

We would like to thank all of our members who generously voluntarily donate to Community Calm. All your kind donations will go towards funding refreshments, session materials and admin costs.

Members who wish to support **Community Calm** can do so by making a donation via **bank transfer**, helping us continue our nature-based wellbeing programmes across Maidenhead, Windsor, and Slough. Every contribution—large or small—goes directly toward providing therapeutic activities, materials, and safe, supportive spaces for individuals in need. Your generosity enables us to keep offering free and accessible wellbeing sessions that nurture recovery, connection, and community. Our Community bank details are available upon request.

Training and Recruitment

We are thankful to Slough CVS for helping us with training and further networking opportunities in the community.

Vacancies

We are currently looking for volunteers to help with our sessions. Full training and ongoing support provided. Maybe you would like to become a Befriender? We are particularly interested in those who can help with interpretation at our Slough site.

Please contact us to find out more.

Trustee

We are in the process of appointing Trustee's for our board. Please contact us for an application form.

Help and support for our members :



Mental Health Services

Do not struggle alone. There is help if you need it.

No one is going to think you are a nuisance.

Having good mental health is just as important as having good physical health so please take care of yourself.

NHS

Call 111 and select the mental health option (this is new service by the NHS)

Always Open

Samaritans

116 123

Always Open

MIND

0300 102 1234

9-6pm Mon-Fri

Bucks MIND/ Safe Haven

01494 218098

6pm-Midnight 7 Days

SHOUT

Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the

[Shout Crisis Text Line](#).

This is 24/7 text support for those who may feel more comfortable/convenient texting than speaking

For more information or to make a referral contact us ;

Community Calm CIC

Meena Kalsi

07917 207510

communitycalmberkshire@gmail.com

Take good care of yourself and see you soon.



*"How beautiful the leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days."
– John Burroughs*

Pics below...















