



COMMUNITY CALM CIC

MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY THROUGH NATURE

SPRING NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026



Welcome To Spring.

There's a certain clarity that comes from standing in nature and being completely ignored by a bird. You're there, having what you believe is a meaningful moment, and the bird is busy pretending you don't exist. In a strange way, that indifference is grounding. When the world feels like a confusing place full of mixed messages, contradictory advice, and the occasional existential plot twist, a bird's total lack of interest is almost refreshing.

Recovery outdoors tends to happen in these small, slightly ridiculous moments. A shift of light that feels important for no reason. A gust of wind that seems to be offering commentary. A robin staring straight through you as if to say, "Yes, the universe is chaotic. I'm still looking for worms."

Recovery rarely behaves; it wanders off, circles back, and occasionally lies down in the metaphorical mud. Admitting that you're trying to reconnect with nature while still having no idea what you're doing is oddly stabilising. It's honest, and honesty tends to land better than forced optimism. Nature's one consistent message is that everything grows at its own pace. Nothing blooms constantly.

Even the grand old oak spends most of its life just standing there, doing absolutely nothing remarkable. There's comfort in that — a reminder that showing up, even in a confusing world, is sometimes the whole point.



Our Growing Community

Community Calm is now supporting 150 members.

A pattern we see often is that people sign up when they are struggling, but it can take time — before they feel ready to attend. This is completely normal. Recovery is not linear, and stepping into a new space can feel daunting.

What we notice, time and time again, is that once people do attend for the first time, they almost always return each week. The consistency, safety, and gentle rhythm of our sessions become part of their recovery journey.

Members shared:

“Feeling seen and having a safe space to connect with others who are also struggling but making progress in their recovery.”

“Community Calm has helped me feel able to cope with my health issues and get back into mixing in the community.”

“Knowing I am not alone has made a huge difference.”

This Winter/Spring at Community Calm

Creative Sessions

Across RBWM and Slough we enjoyed:

- Snowdrop-inspired art
- Vase decorating with recycled jars
- Collage trees
- Tree of Life tote bags
- Clay trinket boxes and leaf printing
- Holi-inspired paint splatter canvases
- Journaling with pressed leaves and flowers

These sessions were never about perfection.



“Creative work can help us process emotions, build confidence and reconnect with parts of ourselves that may have felt quiet for a while.”



Walk & Talk and Nature Meditation

Our Walk & Talk with Surita (Physiotherapist), in Upton Park has grown beautifully. Rain always seems to pause just long enough for us to enjoy our time together. We were lucky to be joined with The Mayor of Slough, Cllr. Siobhan Dauti to officially launch this new initiative. Each week we collectively achieve approximately 4,500 steps!

We introduced:

A Nature Meditation Walk. Quiet reflective walks through Cliveden Gardens/The National Trust

Members shared how grounding it felt to “walk slowly through nature, feeling the rain against our skin or gently tending the earth.”



Gardening and Farm Volunteering

Our wellbeing garden in Slough is blooming — literally and figuratively. We planted, tended soil, added bird feeders, and welcomed new faces each week.

Friday afternoons at Heroes Berkshire Farm offered:

Time with animals

Light volunteering

Space to sit quietly with a warm drink

“Spending time with the animals... provides a sense of calm that is hard to find anywhere else.”



Our Commitment to Sustainability & Recycling

A growing part of our work this Winter/Spring has been our commitment to recycling, reusing, and reducing waste. This is not only good for the planet — it is aligned with our values of nature recovery, creativity, and community care.

Recycling in Action

We have been able to run many of our creative sessions using donated and repurposed materials, preventing them from ending up in landfill. This includes:

Lavender Green Flowers donating flowers and natural materials

Recycled bottles and jars turned into vases and lanterns

Donated art supplies given a second life

Pressed leaves and foraged items used for decoupage and clay printing

Reused packaging transformed into textured art pieces

This Winter/Spring alone, over 150 items were reused or repurposed through our sessions.

Members shared:

“Community Calm helps you to be aware of nature and the environment and helps to build my self-esteem and confidence.”



Local Mental Health Context

Across Slough and Berkshire, mental health needs continue to rise.

Members told us:

“Not enough face-to-face people anymore to talk to.”

“Long wait times for neurodiversity assessments are unacceptable.”

“Services are not very joined up — you don’t know which way to turn.”

“GPs don’t read previous notes... you repeat yourself again and again.”

“Just changing meds is not the answer. Maybe referrals to groups or professionals might help more.”

“There is very little consideration for older and less active people to interface on a regular basis.”

These voices highlight the gaps Community Calm is helping to fill.



Our Findings: National and Local Evidence

National mental health pressures are rising.

In Feb 2026, Dr Lade Smith CBE (President, RCPsych) warned of a “silent mental health pandemic” across England, with 4.1 million people in contact with services and 1.2 million young people needing support.

DEFRA and Natural England highlight major barriers to nature access.

National reports (e.g., Outdoors for All, 2015; updated evidence 2023–2025) show that people with mental health conditions, disabilities, low income or minority backgrounds often feel the countryside is inaccessible, unwelcoming or unsafe.

National NEET data shows 839,900 young people (13.3%) were NEET in 2025, with mental ill health now a major driver of long-term inactivity.

Locally, young people attending Community Calm report poor mental health, no access to therapy, and no routes into training or employment.

Community Calm provides a practical, accessible response.

Our nature-based, trauma-aware model offers:

Low-barrier, safe spaces for people who feel excluded from mainstream services
Supported access to green spaces, addressing DEFRA-identified cultural and psychological barriers

Routine, confidence-building activities that help people re-engage with daily life

Peer connection and belonging, reducing isolation and supporting early recovery

A non-clinical stepping stone that complements NHS pathways and prevents escalation to crisis



What Our Members Told Us

From March 2026 feedback:

70% said Community Calm has filled a gap in local mental health services.

65% said they feel more supported since joining.

Members shared:

“Community Calm fills in a gap in wellbeing services.”

“This group is gentle, creative and softly caring... very good indeed.”

“I get more support from this service than anywhere else.”

“A lifeline... I would not be where I am now without it.”

“These services offer kindness and hope... a spark that changes a thought from ‘I don’t want to live anymore’ to ‘I want to be here.’”

“For at least 2 hours a week I will leave my house — something I’ve struggled to do for 5 years.”

“Sometimes these services are the only safe places for people like me to go without feeling ashamed or a burden.”



Community Calm as a Green Social Prescriber

Community Calm is proud to be a Green Social Prescribing provider, offering a complementary pathway that works alongside existing NHS care plans.

Our model supports:

People waiting for therapy

Those experiencing loneliness or isolation

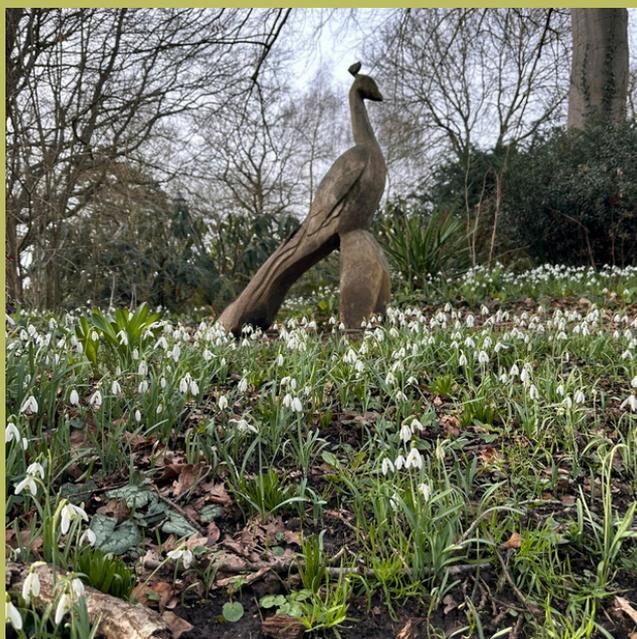
Neurodiverse and disabled individuals

People living with long-term conditions

Those facing cultural or language barriers

Anyone needing a gentle, nature-based space to recover

This aligns directly with the NHS Long Term Plan, Social Prescribing Framework, and national priorities around climate, nature recovery, and community wellbeing.



Visit to Kew's Wakehurst/Millennium Seedbank — May

Community Calm's 2nd Birthday Beach Trip — June

Annual August BBQ



WEEKLY TIMETABLE

Monday

Braywick Nature Reserve, Maidenhead

Tuesday

Bentley Education Centre (NFER), Herschel Park, Slough

Thursday

Walk & Talk with Surita, Upton Park, Slough

Friday

Farm Volunteering Afternoon, Heroes Berkshire



A Gentle Reflection for Spring

One of our February reflections described the starlings returning to a roof each year:
“Build. Wait. Nurture. Release. Rest.”

The rhythm still feels true. Our emotional seasons don't always arrive neatly labelled, but they move through us all the same. Some of us are rebuilding quietly, gathering ourselves piece by piece. Some are resting because life has asked for a pause. Some are stretching into something new, a little unsure but moving anyway. And even on the days when the world feels confusing or a bit too loud, there's a steadiness in knowing we're finding our way through these cycles together.



CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

Our volunteers play a huge part in shaping Community Calm. Everyone involved has lived experience and understands our members.

Surita – Walk & Talk & Team Integration

Surita has become a core part of our team, leading Walk & Talk sessions with warmth, compassion and lived experience. Her presence has helped many members feel safe, supported and understood.

Nicola – British Sign Language (BSL)

Nicola has been teaching us BSL each week, helping us learn new ways to communicate with inclusion, confidence and joy. Her sessions have been empowering and deeply appreciated by everyone.

Sudi – Creative Arts & Inspiration

Sudi has brought new energy and creativity into our art sessions, teaching different techniques and encouraging everyone to express themselves freely. Her ideas — including the Tree of Life tote bags — have inspired the whole group.

Cesca - Will be leading a new pathway for young people in response to the NEET findings (18-25 years). More to Follow.

We are looking for more volunteers

If you would like to help run groups, support sessions or share a skill, please speak to Meena. Even a small amount of time can make a meaningful difference.

Full training and support is given.

Thank you to everyone who makes this work possible. To our funders — the National Lottery Community Fund, One Slough Fund, Climate Partnership Fund RBWM, and the Bayliss Fund — your support keeps our sessions rooted, steady, and growing. And to all our supporters, especially Slough CVS, WAM Get Involved, Dawn and Laurie Dingwall at Heroes Berkshire, the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER), Friends of Herschel Park, The National Trust, and The Wildlife Trust — thank you for standing with us in so many practical and generous ways. A special thank you as well to everyone who donates each week. Your kindness directly funds the materials we use in sessions — the small, tangible things that help people feel safe, creative, and connected.



Take good care, and we'll see you outside — where things don't always make sense, but they do feel a little easier. Love, Meena and all the Team at Community Calm CIC x



“Principles Before Personalities”