



# Community Calm

“Mental Health Recovery Through Nature”

Newsletter 4  
Summer 2025



What good is the warmth of summer without the cold of winter to give it sweetness?

**John Steinbeck**



**Community Calm has turned 1.**



Recently, during a session in Windsor Great Park, we paused beneath a 400-year-old oak. Caroline Everett from The Wildlife Trust in Windsor Great Park shared that this tree has stood through centuries of storms and stillness.

In its presence, time felt different—wider, slower, more forgiving.

Life often moves too fast. Days blur, years pass, and for those living with anxiety or burnout, time can feel like it's slipping away. Research shows our emotional state affects how we experience time: stress makes it speed up, while calm and connection slow it down.

Moments in nature—like standing under an ancient tree—anchor us. They remind us to breathe, to be, and to let time stretch gently around us

We're excited to announce the upcoming launch of our new Community Calm location in Slough—a dedicated wellbeing garden and indoor retreat space designed to support rest, reflection, and connection in Heschel Park. Nestled within a peaceful green setting, this site will offer a safe and welcoming environment where participants can enjoy light gardening, creative activities, and relaxing indoor sessions, all supported by compassionate fully trained professional staff. Whether you're seeking a calm space to recharge or looking for community connection, our Slough site will be a warm, inclusive haven for anyone navigating emotional, social, or mental health challenges. Join us in Heschel Park every Tuesday morning from September.

## **The Healing Power of Nature: Green Social Prescribing & Ecotherapy**

Did you know that something as simple as a walk in the woods or a few moments with a friendly animal can significantly improve your mental wellbeing?

This is the idea behind **Ecotherapy**—a growing movement that uses nature-based activities like gardening, walking, wildlife conservation, and animal care to support emotional and psychological health.

Across the UK, **Green Social Prescribing** is becoming a vital part of public health. More and more healthcare professionals are recommending nature-based therapies as a powerful, non-clinical way to support recovery, reduce stress, and reconnect people with a sense of purpose.

### **Why it works:**

Research shows that time in nature helps lower stress hormones, improve mood, and boost our sense of connection and wellbeing. Simply being outdoors, engaging our senses, and feeling part of something larger can be incredibly grounding.

### **The animal connection:**

Spending time with animals is another beautiful part of ecotherapy. Whether it's stroking a friendly dog, feeding chickens, or just watching nature unfold, animals can ease anxiety, increase the “bonding hormone” oxytocin, and offer companionship that feels safe and soothing—especially for those who find human interaction overwhelming.

At Community Calm, we see the transformation every week: people arriving a little unsure, and leaving with lighter hearts, brighter smiles, and new friends—human and animal alike.

If you're curious to try ecotherapy or want to refer someone who might benefit, get in touch. We'd love to welcome you to our green spaces.

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## **Community Calm: Nature-Based Healing for the Isolated and Overlooked**

In a world where many feel disconnected, Community Calm was created to offer a gentle path back to connection—through nature.

Rooted in the healing power of the outdoors, **Community Calm CIC** runs therapeutic programmes across three peaceful sites in **Maidenhead**, **Windsor Great Park**, and **Slough**. Our mission is to support individuals facing loneliness, mental health challenges, disability, or social exclusion with nature-based, non-clinical wellbeing activities.

### **What we offer:**

Every week, we host calming, inclusive sessions grounded in **green social prescribing** and **ecotherapy**. Our activities include:

-  **Gentle gardening & horticulture**
-  **Relaxation and mindful walking**
-  **Arts and crafts using natural materials**
-  **Peer-led discussions in safe, outdoor spaces**
-  **Animal care and companionship** – with friendly goats, horses, chickens, and small mammals

These sessions are held in **private, enclosed settings**, designed to foster emotional safety, trust, and quiet reflection—especially for those living with anxiety or trauma.

### **Why it matters:**

Time in nature, shared in supportive company, helps people reconnect with themselves and others. Whether it's planting a seed, stroking a gentle animal, or sitting quietly in the woods, these moments help create a new rhythm of life—one rooted in kindness, calm, and community

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## **What the Research Tells Us: A National Concern**

The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) and government reports continue to highlight loneliness as a growing public health concern. Recent findings indicate:

- 7% of adults (around 3.1 million people) report feeling lonely “often or always”
  - Young people aged 16 to 24 are the most affected by chronic loneliness
  - Disabled people and unpaid carers report significantly higher rates of social isolation
- (Source: ONS, *Community Life Survey*, 2024)

Further national research supports the role of community initiatives in addressing this crisis. The **UCL Loneliness and Social Connection in Young People Study (2024)** shows how **social prescribing**, especially involving nature and group activity, is proving effective in supporting adolescents experiencing disconnection and stress.

One of the most influential endorsements of this approach comes from the **Lord Darzi Review of Health and Care (The Lancet, 2018)**. The report recognised that the **greatest opportunities for improving health in the UK lie not only in hospitals or clinics, but in communities themselves**. It called for a system shift toward “**predictive, preventive, personalised and participatory care**”—where **community-based, non-clinical interventions, including nature-based therapies, are central to building long-term resilience and wellbeing**.

This aligns directly with the principles behind **green social prescribing** and organisations like Community Calm: preventative, inclusive, and designed to meet people where they are—emotionally, socially, and physically.

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### **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.

### **Our Mission**

Prevention and early intervention are key to maintaining both mental and physical well-being to avoid a 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 seek further help where possible — whether through their GP, a Community Mental Health Professional, or other relevant services.

**Our mission is 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 which forms strong values and navigating life with an inner moral compass rather than personal opinions or individual differences. It encourages a focus on integrity, doing what is right, rather than being swayed by personal conflicts, status, or emotions.

At Community Calm, this means holding a space where respect, kindness, and inclusivity take precedence over personal disagreements or individual recognition. It ensures that our shared mission—to support mental well-being through nature, connection, and peer support—remains 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.

### Our Supporters

We continue to be grateful to Dawn and Laurie Dingwall for supporting us and providing the community with a safe, peaceful, calm setting in which to hold our activities at Heroes Berkshire in Holyport, Maidenhead.

It provides much respite for those struggling with mental health difficulties.



### 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 Windsor Great Park to provide an additional session in the beautiful grounds in our natural local environment. This site is bigger with full disabled access and toilet facilities. This is also a collaboration with survivors of domestic abuse from the charity, Project Salama.

The site has a meadow, private nature woodland walks, a fire pit and a classroom.



### 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 Impact

Over the last few months we have had a positive impact on the local community by engaging in the following activities. We have improved peoples' wellbeing and mental health through accessing local green sites and increased education and understanding on local biodiversity, sustainability and recycling.

### Wellbeing, Nature & Community

- **National Lottery Grant Awarded**

We are thrilled to announce that we have received funding from the **National Lottery**—a huge milestone that will allow us to grow and continue our vital work. Thank you to everyone who has supported us on this journey.

- **One Slough Fund Grant Secured**

We are also proud to have been awarded a **One Slough Fund** grant. This local support helps strengthen our delivery in the Slough community, enabling us to offer more accessible eco-therapy and wellbeing sessions to those who need it most, especially diverse groups.

- **One Year Anniversary Celebration**

We marked our first anniversary with a beach trip to **Mudford Quay in Dorset**, supported by **People to Places**. A wonderful day of fun, fresh air, and friendship.

- **Pain Management Talk in Nature**

We hosted an outdoor talk with a local **Physiotherapist (NHS experienced)** on pain management—providing valuable information in the calming setting of our farm rather than a clinical environment.

### Arts, Crafts & Green Skills

- **Woodwork with Art Group Slough**

Led by **Marinella**, members created their own beautiful, handmade coasters in a therapeutic and creative workshop.

- **Nature-Inspired Art**

Our talented facilitator **Steph** introduced us to creative techniques like **hapa zome**, **cyanoprint**, and mindful **nature observation**—sparking imagination and connection to the environment.

- **Forest School & Green Skills**

We've expanded our eco-therapy programme to include **pond dipping**, **habitat monitoring**, **scavenger hunts**, and more—supporting members to develop confidence and practical green skills.

- **Evening Bat Walk**

In collaboration with **Caroline from The Wildlife Trust**, we launched our first **evening bat walk**, offering members a unique experience of local biodiversity.

- **Big Butterfly Count.** We took part in the Big Butterfly Count, a National survey, helping to track and protect our local butterflies.

### New Projects & Developments

- **Slough Wellbeing & Horticultural Therapy Garden**

We're proud to be launching our new **therapeutic garden in Slough**—the first of its kind locally to support individuals transitioning from clinical care into purposeful community life.

- **Food to Fork at Windsor Great Park**

Gardening and weeding have begun at our **meadow site** at The Wildlife Trust. This forms part of the wider "**Food to Fork**" initiative, bringing members closer to nature, growing food, and learning sustainable practices.

- **New Ducks Arrive!**

We welcomed new ducks to the farm—adding to our growing animal therapy programme, which continues to bring joy to members.

- **Sustainable Coops & Fresh Eggs**

We are researching **eco-conscious chicken and duck coops** to provide fresh, local eggs in a sustainable way.

- **Signed up to ‘A Good Thing’**

We joined this excellent initiative to reduce waste and increase community recycling through donations from local businesses.

## **Mental Health Support & Partnerships**

- **Talking Therapies Referrals**

We're pleased to announce that **NHS Talking Therapies** have started referring patients to Community Calm. This helps bridge the gap between clinical treatment and community-based healing.

- **Collaboration with Project Salama**

Our partnership with **Project Salama** remains strong. We held a **joint outdoor relaxation session** with both organisations' members in attendance.

- **FGM Awareness Workshop**

In collaboration with Project Salama, we hosted a powerful session led by **Hibo Wardere**, a global expert and FGM survivor. Her talk gave deep insight into the impact of FGM and inspired our members with her message of education and resilience.

### **Collaborations**

Heroes Farm – Holyport. Maidenhead. RBWM,  
Slough CVS  
The Wildlife Trust/Crown Estate. RBWM.  
Project Salama. Slough/RBWM  
People 2 Places  
Art Classes Group





“After a long spell of illness I became practically house bound and had become reclusive. My Doctor asked if I would like to see a Social Prescriber and this was the turning point. The Social Prescriber made a few suggestions but one that has given my sanity and self-esteem back is Community Calm. They meet weekly and have different activities organised in a very respectful and friendly group. This takes place in the open air, with shelter when necessary. I can’t thank them enough.” - **AMC**

**The Social Prescribing Team said on hearing our National Lottery funding ;**

“This is amazing news and the rest of the team is sharing the excitement of your achievement. We are happy we can continue to refer to your service with confidence.”

**Our collaboration with Project Salama, Jacqui said ;**

“Amid the trees and open skies, our Chai and Chats in Windsor Great Park in collaboration with Community Calm have become sacred spaces , where silence speaks, hearts soften, and healing begins. Nature has held our survivors gently, offering peace, strength, and the quiet courage to share their stories. Thank you so much Meena for making this happen. Our survivors have nothing but positive feedback and look forward to continuing with our sessions in nature.”

“I just want to thank you for all you do for the group it gives me a purpose every Monday, I really look forward to Monday mornings, seeing everyone, the animals and the fun activities we do. You really have brought back the sunshine to my cloudy days.” - **E**

“Thank you 🙏 so much for the trip today.  
We really enjoyed the company and the activities.  
It was a chance to get know each other better.  
I really needed it for my well-being.

I loved 😊 the idea of the snack bags it made me feel like a child again.  
” – **M**

## Funding News Our Supporters



#OneSlough



*The Louis Baylis*  
CHARITABLE TRUST



## 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 and admin costs.

## 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.

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 feel free to contact us ;**

**Community Calm CIC**

**Meena Kalsi**

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Take good care of yourself and see you soon.



*A fallen leaf is nothing more than a summer's wave goodbye.  
Unknown Author*

**Pics below...**







News

# Funding 'will open so many avenues'

By Sam Leech  
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@SamLeech\_BM

An organisation using nature to help vulnerable people is celebrating a 'massive' £20,000 donation from the National Lottery Community Fund. Community Calm CIC, which operates mainly from a farm in Holyport, aims to support people living with mental health and mobility problems by helping them get back out into nature.

Since it was created little more than one year ago, scores of people in Windsor and Maidenhead have sought its service and it is hoped the lottery funding can help grow it further.

Founder Meena Kalsi, 49, said the funding had 'opened up so many avenues for us'.

"It's massive, absolutely massive," she said.

"People may not think it's a huge amount, but for small community groups like ours

that have been surviving on donations, it is such a help."

Community Calm members meet once a week at Holyport-based farm Heroes Berkshire, where they spend sessions entirely outdoors alongside farmyard animals.

The organisation also runs sessions at Windsor Great Park in collaboration with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).

The group's members are referred to the service through health professionals including GPs, and have ranged from as young as 18 to 80.

Some are survivors of domestic abuse; some live with autism, while others live with physical disabilities that might otherwise prevent them from getting outside.

"Once people have finished clinical care, there's nowhere for them to go to," Ms Kalsi said.

"So, we can actually bridge

that gap so that people can have a confidential space.

"A safe space, to help with their recovery and get back into the community."

Activities at Community Calm include gardening, mindful animal care, and meditation – activities which its members, Ms Kalsi said, have feedback to be of great help.

Ms Kalsi said she specialises in an Indian alternative medicine practice called Ayurveda. The treatment dates back thousands of years and focuses on balance and natural healing.

There are crossovers with the delicate equilibria found in the natural world.

Ms Kalsi said: "We have this very black and white way of thinking, in our lives and in our society, and when we look at traditional practices, it's more looking at some of the grey areas."

"People who are on the neurodivergent scale, people

coming to us who are autistic or on the spectrum – those grey areas are very important for them."

With the National Lottery funding, Community Calm aims to help support the development of a 'wellbeing garden' in Slough's Herschel Park.

Ms Kalsi said: "Since we've had the funding, it's opened up so many different avenues for us."

"We can hopefully begin more sessions, we've got a

campfire cookout at wildlife trust [BBOWT] at the end of this month – maybe more opportunities like that."

"We've also got the launch of a third site in Slough, I think it's going to be the first wellbeing garden in Slough."

"It [National Lottery funding] opens up so many avenues for our members."

More information about Community Calm can be found on its website at communitycalm.com.

Meena Kalsi.  
Credit: Community Calm

The Advertiser, July 25, 2025

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## Platts of Marlow



