

Pass on Plants
A project from Win on Waste
Final Report

During this project we:

- Collected plants that were destined to be thrown away and gave them to interested plant carers to bring back to life (where possible).
- Provided support to plant carers in looking after their plants, and any equipment they needed.
- Provided contact via email, Zoom and by phone as required by individuals to support them, answer questions and provide a listening ear.

Participants in the project reported general good feelings in having been involved and mentioned specific benefits to their mental health in being involved in a community activity and making a difference.

The project was a valuable learning tool for Win on Waste. We found that, while we spoke to interested plant carers, there was much more interest from people wishing to donate plants. This clearly shows that there is more work that could be done around the rehoming of ailing houseplants, to keep them out of the local waste system. There may be the opportunity for another, reframed project in this area in future.

A Pass on Plants Case Study

One participant 1 came into the project with an interest in making a difference to the amount of waste being created from discarded house plants, and with some prior knowledge of the reported mental health benefits of caring for houseplants.

Having been involved in our other projects in the past, they were keen to try to get into horticulture using a previously owned plant, rather than relying on buying new, as they keep an eye on what they are buying and consuming in their own home, and the waste that they are producing.

Although this participant had family at home, they were working alone for much of the day and only interacting with colleagues via virtual meeting tools, and not really interacting with others out of work time. In addition to this, the participant was, while not classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, taking care during the pandemic and after restrictions were eased in not going out too widely and exposing themselves to covid risk. This was limiting in many ways.

The participant's involvement in the project was, on the whole, a positive experience. Although they were initially disappointed that there were few participants in the project, and daunted by the plant they received as it was in poor shape, they felt that they grew in confidence with their plant care over the course of the project, and felt welcome to contact Win on Waste for support at any time.

Supported by Win on Waste, in contact with the organisation and guided by initial recommendations made on resources to use when caring for plants, the participant felt more positive about their ability to care for the plant as the project progressed and felt that, even if the plant did not survive, they would still feel encouraged to take on similar activities in the future.

The participant was pleased with the interaction they had with Win on Waste and, while we were not able to provide the group meetings that we had planned due to the low number of participants,

we were able to check in with the participants via email on a regular basis and were available on the phone for any queries or need for supplies.

Overall, the participant was pleased with their participation in the project, and would feel encouraged in future to take part in additional work of this nature, with Win on Waste or with an alternative organisation. The participant was pleased to have begun to build their own knowledge of plant care and expressed in interest in taking this hobby further in future with both indoor and outdoor plants.

Next Steps

After this initial pilot project we are still concerned about the amount of plants being thrown away, when they can be a high value item that should be reused and regifted where possible.

We would like to take our learning from this pilot project and develop a stream of work around the issue of plant waste, but we are not yet in a position to estimate when this may be or apply for additional funding.

We are looking at, potentially, working with local supermarkets to run a project around collecting their unsold plants, but we will need to look carefully at where we are aiming to pass these on, and our capacity to carry out a piece of work such as this which would require a larger number of volunteers. One possibility is forwarding these to local community groups for them to use in landscaping projects.