



THE ABILITY COOPERATIVE

What did you do?

With this grant, Ability Cooperative supported 24 service users with learning difficulties and/or autism to create a 'Cottage Garden' at the entrance of Prince's Park Garden Centre.

The planting reflected the historical links and wildlife of the area, which was a great learning to the services users. This included cross-leaved heath – a type of heather found on neighbouring Little Woollen Moss that is important for the conservation of the Large Heath Butterfly.

The service users also helped to create posters to put up on the site to educate visitors about the plants in the new garden.

Tom, PPGC horticulture specialist, said:

“The groups enjoyed working outside the boundaries of the usual garden centre, also looking at animal habitats and a range of wildlife.”

Funding received

GRANT OF £4,000

“I liked being outside of the centre and planting the plants.”
Mark



What difference did it make?

Participants developed their communication, horticulture, woodwork, and communication skills. Their confidence and general wellbeing also developed over the course of the project through spending time in nature, seeing the results of their hard work and hearing the feedback from visitors to the garden centre.

New plants, bird boxes and hedgehog boxes also helped create a more diverse habitat for wildlife at the garden centre.

What advice would you give to another group delivering a similar project?

Ability Cooperative feel it is important for their projects to be user-led and prioritise listening to the ideas and needs of their service users.

Regular breaks were important for this group of service users and the weather wasn't always on their side, so there were times when the work started and then the project had to be put on hold for a short while. This meant that initially it was hard to see the transformation however having a few motivated people in the group helped them rally the others and keep the momentum up.

“I enjoyed painting the pergola and the woodworking. I liked talking to the people passing about our work in the garden.”
Kris

