



NATUREWORKS
Training CIC



Social Impact Report 2023



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Introduction from Jo & Wendy

2023 was quite a year!

For the two of us personally, becoming co-chairs of Flowers From The Farm (FFTF) made 2023 a memorable year to say the least! At the FFTF conference early in the year, Jo gave a soil talk to more than 300 fellow flower farmers and at Organic Blooms we are delivering ongoing training, funded by the RHS, to a cohort of five students as part of the FFTF scholarship to improve diversity in flower farming.

Co-ordinating, with our fellow co-chair Debbie, the gift of flowers for the Kings Coronation, was an experience we certainly hadn't anticipated when the three of us took over the reins. Our trainees took all the excitement and additional activity in their stride, picked up the slack and remained focused on getting seed sown, seedlings potted up and planted out, beds weeded and mulched, paths woodchipped and preparing top quality plants and flowers for Abel & Cole and all our other customers. Every day they prove just how capable, flexible and reliable they are.

City and Guilds remains central to our programme and it was wonderful to see our trainees determined to succeed in their qualifications.

Our new training room really came into its own in 2023, its first full year of use. It has given us so many more options for training and group work and has also provided a much more accessible, safe and welcoming space for break times, encouraging more and better social interaction.

In 2023 we put new business ideas into practice, including edible flowers for Abel & Cole; our trainees will be helping to develop these further in 2024. Thank you for your support.

Jo Wright and Wendy Paul

Directors, Natureworks Training CIC and Organic Blooms Ltd



Two organisations, one aim

Organic Blooms is the name most people know us by. In reality, however, we are two organisations: **Organic Blooms Ltd** (a social enterprise); and **Natureworks Training CIC** (a community interest company) working together to achieve a shared aim.

Organic Blooms is our certified organic flower farm and floristry business. When you buy our flowers, plants, workshops or Christmas products, you are buying them from Organic Blooms.

Organic Blooms exists to provide training opportunities, work experience and paid employment for our Natureworks trainees, as well as valuable income to support these opportunities. By providing a commercial focus, Organic Blooms provides the opportunity for trainees to work with larger volumes of plants and with some exposure to commercial challenges and pressures.

Natureworks provides training in practical horticulture and transferable workplace skills for people with learning disabilities and/or long-term mental health conditions. Our horticultural trainer/supervisors are employed by Natureworks to support our trainees, train and assess them in City & Guilds practical horticulture skills, coach them in workplace skills and supervise their Organic Blooms work.

Trainees are referred to Natureworks by health and social care professionals including social workers and mental health professionals. Their placements are funded by the local authority, by direct payments or are self-funded, and are subsidised by Organic Blooms.

Organic Blooms and Natureworks work together, using the power of Nature to benefit people and the environment.

Stakeholder stories

Flora's story*

"I've been severely affected by mental health issues since my teens. In my late twenties I became very unwell again, but something was different this time, my mental health team referred me to Organic Blooms. I had been a keen gardener for years and this was all I was interested in. Starting at Organic Blooms I definitely started out on the therapeutic end. Learning to concentrate and achieve things despite what was going on in my head. Being gently coached to arrive on time, and gradually increase the length of day I could manage.

"As my health improved I was able to try my hand at every job and find out what suited my interests and skills. I achieved my City and Guilds qualification in horticulture and I found my niche in administration and really enjoyed doing organisational tasks. I achieved qualifications in administration and IT, passing with flying colours, and my growing confidence saw me develop positive supportive networks outside of work.

"Four years ago I reached a place where I was ready to take my next steps. I had learned what I need to do to manage my

wellbeing and Organic Blooms supported me to find a job that enabled me to balance personal wellbeing with work. Later I felt ready to return to my roots in professional childcare, working as a private nanny for a lovely family. At the same time I kept my hand in with horticulture by assisting the gardener at the apartments where I lived.

"Now I'm truly myself and have found my tribe, a group of inspiring women who share my passion for living by the cycle of nature. I'm doing paid work with groups of women and I'm also loving my main work supporting people with learning difficulties – some of our clients train as advocates, trainers and advisors to local organisations looking to become more learning disability aware, which is amazing. My experiences at Organic Blooms were part of my journey developing the confidence to follow my passions and to make this life for myself."

*Name changed for privacy



Our mission

Our mission is to

- provide people disadvantaged by learning difficulties and/or mental health conditions with skills that enable them to achieve paid employment, further study or rewarding voluntary work
- support and nurture our local biodiversity
- create an evidence base for a realistic recovery model that can be replicated by other agencies and social enterprises

We do this by

- using nature and certified organic horticulture as a therapeutic medium
- using certified organic production horticulture & floristry as a context for learning, training & developing workplace skills
- nurturing our soil and biodiversity through certified organic, nature friendly land management practices

Our vision

Our vision is for

- people with learning difficulties and mental health conditions to be included in mainstream employment and for their strengths and skills to be widely recognised and valued
- consumers to understand the ethical issues of imported flowers and instead choose to buy British flowers grown locally using methods that support people and the environment
- healthy soil and biodiversity to be the central consideration of UK floricultural, horticultural & agricultural practices and for organic certification to become the norm

Our ethics

As a social enterprise and a community interest company, solid ethics are at the heart of, and the reason for the existence of, Natureworks and Organic Blooms. Every member of our combined team has chosen to work with us because the wellbeing & success of our trainees and the health of our environment is of key importance to them. We strive to grow and sell our flowers and plants without harming people or the environment; instead we actively seek to have a positive impact on both.

People: our trainees

We use our business income to improve facilities and opportunities for our trainees and team, to support paid roles for employees who are marginalised in the wider labour market and to subsidise our trainee programme. Seeing our trainees thrive is incredibly rewarding; supporting them using practices that benefit our local environment and wildlife is a significant added bonus. We take the time to consider the specific needs, strengths and aspirations of each trainee and to tailor our training programme accordingly.

People: human rights

Behind the scenes we do our best to ensure that we source and sell through supply chains that are free from modern slavery and other human rights abuses. Increasingly we seek to source supplies from other small ethical businesses and social enterprises who have shorter, more transparent supply chains, people- and environment-focused ethics and relatively small carbon footprints.

We sourced our lovely certified organic canvas tote bags from a Social Enterprise that works in South India supporting disadvantaged women in enterprise.

Re-wrap, a B Corp, and their Indian partner Sanmaan Exports, have high standards of employment practices and pay these skilled women fairly for their work. Organic cotton uses far less water and is significantly less polluting than conventionally farmed and processed cotton.

www.re-wrap.com



Our ethics continued

Environment: soil health & biodiversity

We consider our organic certification as a minimum environmental standard and seek to build on that with practices that support and enable soil health and biodiversity on and around our site. We use minimum tillage growing methods, never use synthetic chemical inputs and all our propagation material is approved by the Soil Association.

Environment: plastics

Our floristry work is foam- and plastic-free and where we cannot avoid using plastic in our horticulture work, we use high quality products that we can reuse over many years. We sow seed in module trays that will last for at least 15 years and we use each one multiple times per year and that will last for at least 15 years. To ensure quality, we grow plants on in plastic pots but send them to the customer in biodegradable pots; we reuse each plastic pot many times, minimising the amount of plastic we have to buy in.

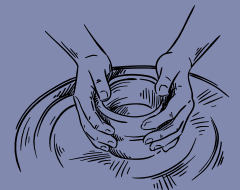
Environment: carbon footprint

To reduce our carbon footprint we are striving to develop our local click-and-collect market and minimise our use of couriers. We are working with our local floristry wholesaler to introduce ethically grown British flowers into the mainstream floristry market and reduce the predominance of imported flowers which have a very high embodied carbon footprint and a negative environmental impact.

Each year we commission Willow Pottery, located just 11 miles away, to make a range of terracotta vessels using English clay. Each hand-thrown pot and planter is unique and ages beautifully with repeated use.

Keeping supply chains short helps us reduce carbon footprint, minimise risk of human rights abuses and support small local businesses & heritage crafts.

www.willowpottery.com



Steve's story



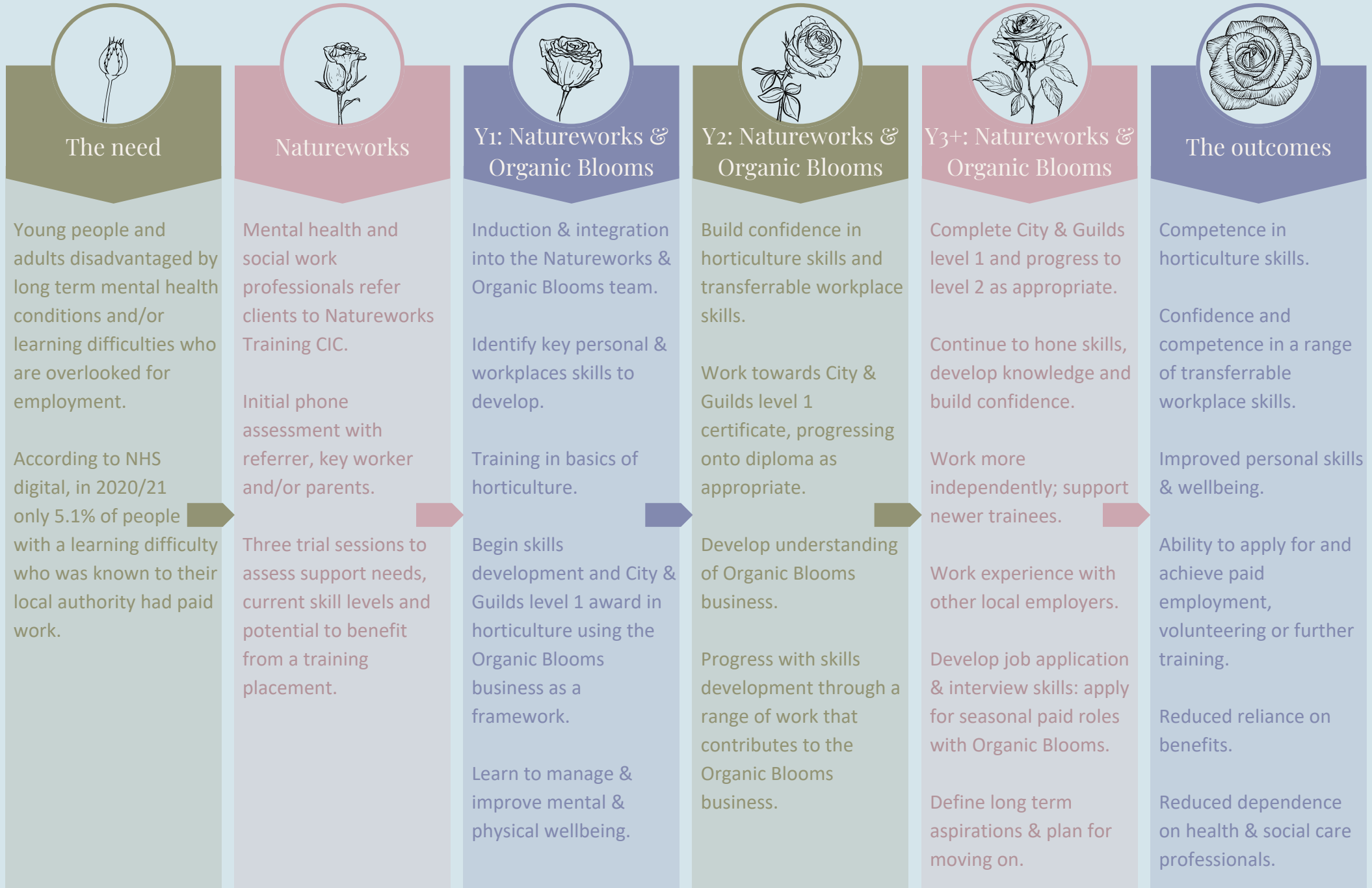
"I've been a trainee at Organic Blooms for several years but I've known Jo for even longer because I did one of her gardening projects when I was younger. I like be useful and I help with the site and working out in the field. Over the years I've helped build our wooden pergola out in the field, the patio around our flower studio and also the patio outside our new training room – it looks really good and it was a big achievement for me. The best thing I've done here is everything! Digging, planting, being a hard worker. My supervisor is pleased with the effort I've been putting in and the work I've been doing.

"I got a part time paid job here cleaning and tidying the training room, emptying the bins and sweeping the patio and potting area. It means a lot to me to know that my work is good and that Jo and Wendy think well of me. It also means I have more money to spend on my hobby, fishing, and to put towards my holidays. My concentration has improved here.

"My favourite thing about Organic Blooms is making new friends and showing people around. I look forward to working with people and helping them out. I've made good friends here who I get on well with – there's no arguing, we just get on with our work. We try to get to know each other, communicate, give everyone here the space they need to deal with things. Because of my illness I get really stressed out, I can't help it, I have voices in my head. Being here it helps when I work with other people and talk to them. Working on my own would stress me out. We respect each other here and we work hard as a team. We all look out for each other."



Theory of Change



Stakeholder stories

James's story



“Since I started at Organic Blooms I still have anxiety but not as bad as generally. My favourite job is dead heading and mowing grass. The best thing I’ve done is making flower arrangements and Christmas decorations to take home.

“I felt horrible during lockdown. I felt sad when I found out I couldn’t come to Organic Blooms. The worst thing was not being able to see all my friends. I felt happy about coming back, I was less bored, I felt I had more to do.

“In future I’d like to work in a kitchen as a porter. I enjoy washing up, tidying up and serving customers. Serving is one of my favourites, seeing how happy the customers are. I would like to work in a café or a restaurant kitchen, restaurants are quieter than pubs, I’m less likely to bump into a drunk person.

“The best thing about Organic Blooms is being with my friends here. I don’t like being out in the cold and wet in winter time, it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable. But I like being in the polytunnel when it’s wet.

“The difference Organic Blooms has made is that I’m more sociable, I feel more confident with other people. I’ve learned skills, I feel like I could achieve something in the future. My favourite thing about Organic Blooms is having friends – everyone’s my friend.”



Our achievements

Our people

During 2023 Organic Blooms and Natureworks was made up of 26 trainees, two directors, eight part time administrative,

supervisory, support & floristry staff and three volunteers. Together we achieved a lot!

2023: our year in people

This year we worked with 26 trainees who between them attended for almost 2400 days. That's a LOT of horticulture!



We had 7 paid roles for trainees. 53% of our paid workforce was made up of trainees and former trainees this year.

This year our trainees achieved an impressive number of City & Guilds units between them. Next year we're aiming for even more!



Jo & Wendy became Flowers From The Farm co-chairs and coordinated the flowers used at the King's coronation.

3 trainees and 2 staff members moved on. We received referrals for 3 new trainees to join us early in the new year!



Our achievements

City & Guilds

Our trainees work towards City & Guilds qualifications in practical horticulture skills, starting with the level 1 award and progressing onto the level 1 certificate and then the level 1 diploma. Trainees with a keen interest or who are aiming to

progress into paid employment in the horticulture sector, are then able to work towards their level 2 qualifications. This year our trainees completed XX individual City & Guilds units between them.

2023: our year in numbers

Approximately...



231,052 seeds sown



7000 herb stems cut



8667 bulbs, corms & claws planted



50,000 edible flowers cut & processed



14,200 plug plants packed



60 tonnes of green waste barrowed



6,200 plants potted into compostable pots



1 flower festival at Acton Court



800 decorative planters planted



1 Countryfile feature



80,000 flower & foliage stems cut



1 coronation!



1 House of Lords select committee



Our achievements

Abel & Cole

Throughout 2023 we continued working with online organic grocery retailer Abel & Cole. Three days each week through most of the year we supplied them with cut flowers plus a range of decorative planters; plug plant packs; potted herbs,

perennials & biennials in compostable pots; Christmas wreaths and wreath kits. During 2023 we also launched our new edible flowers and cut herbs lines for Abel & Cole.

Our 2023 achievements: Abel & Cole



82 traditional Christmas wreaths

230 bags of cut herbs



699 decorative planters

969 punnets of edible flowers



1710 packs of plug plants. (That's 13,680 individual plugs!)

5,841 plants in compostable pots



34,811 flower stems!!



Anne Rees

Fresh Produce Lead Buyer, Abel & Cole

“Organic Blooms and the work they do is incredibly important to Abel & Cole both in terms of the products they offer for our range and their practice that supports our sustainability targets.

“Our relationship with Organic Blooms is one that is valued across the business as a whole. This is because we can always work with them in the confidence that every effort will be made to ensure everything they produce is done with sustainable practice at it’s heart. For Organic Blooms sustainable practice doesn’t just mean considering their impact on the environment but on their local community and society as a whole.

“When we develop a product with Organic Blooms they always consider how the production could be approached by their trainees and how best to make that process as inclusive as possible.”



Our achievements

E-commerce

In recent years we have improved our website and its e-commerce functionality. In order to reduce our carbon footprint and reduce our reliance on couriers, over the last year we have begun focusing in particular on

developing our local 'click-and-collect' market. During 2023 we offered 24 different products on our website and sold 351 individual items, ranging from bouquets and buckets of flowers to open day tickets and workshops.

Our 2023 achievements: website sales



190 places on workshops & courses



130 open day tickets

35 buckets of flowers



34 wreaths & wreath kits

21 plug plant packs



20 bouquets & flower subscriptions

7 sponsored beds



3 gift vouchers



Our achievements continued

Wedding, sympathy and event flowers

In addition to cutting flowers for Abel & Cole and for our local click-and-collect clients, we provide floristry for a number of private events each year. During 2023 we created arrangements for weddings, funerals, corporate & private celebrations as well as teaming up with our trainees, members of our flower club and fellow ethical florists to stage a flower festival at Acton Court.

Other sales channels

We sold flowers, plants, seasonal decorations and gifts at our workshops, our open day, stalls at Algars Manor, Acton Court and South Gloucestershire Council, and to customers placing orders by phone. Towards the end of our growing season we trialled supplying flowers to regional floristry wholesaler Flower Vision and herbs and flowers to an ingredients supplier in the wellbeing sector. Around 250 people attended private talks and tours for groups given by Jo through the year.

Conferences

This year Jo addressed more than 300 flower farmers at the national Flowers From The Farm conference and we were thrilled to host and take part in a conference on improving sustainability in the cut flower industry. We also began horticulture training with the Flowers From The Farm diversity scholarship students, funded by the RHS.

The Coronation!

Members of Flowers From The Farm, of which Jo and Wendy are co-chairs, gifted the flowers used to decorate Westminster Abbey for the King's coronation in May. Flowers from all over the country arrived at Organic Blooms for sorting, before onward delivery to royal florist Shane Connolly and his team at the Abbey. We've never seen our store room so packed with gorgeous blooms! The afternoon before the coronation Jo, Wendy, fellow co-chair Debbie and FFTF founder Gill Hodgson all attended the Abbey to meet the King & Queen and to view the flowers.

Our customers said...

Thank you for the sorting the flowers this weekend, they were absolutely fabulous.

We wanted to write to send our heartfelt thanks to you all for providing us with such beautiful flower displays for our wedding day. The flowers were truly stunning and got many comments throughout the day. The flower arch really stole the show and we're so pleased that guests used it for photos.

Just wanted to say thank you again for a great afternoon last Friday. It was really enjoyable and both our guests and my fellow hosts had a great time.

Thank you for the most perfect flowers, everyone commented how beautiful they looked.

I just wanted to thank you for the most beautiful flowers, they were perfect.

Stakeholder stories

Mish's story

"I joined Organic Blooms in autumn 2019. I was recovering from a very serious riding accident that left me in a coma for two weeks, and experiences in my previous job had knocked my confidence. Since joining I have completed my City & Guilds level 1 certificate in horticulture skills and I'm looking forward to finishing off my level 1 diploma and doing my level 2 diploma. I do a lot of work on our products for Abel & Cole, in particular the plug plant packs and planters.

"My favourite product is our edible flowers punnets, which we introduced this year for Abel & Cole. I have worked on the edible flowers all year; I passed my level 2 food production hygiene, helped prepare our new processing kitchen, and have done all the picking, sorting and packing the flowers for orders, sometimes on my own.

"One of my favourite things that I've done here so far is making a Christmas wreath. I really enjoy the work here, especially the floristry work. My confidence has really improved and now I feel much more comfortable making suggestions, asking questions and asking for help if I need it.

"I've also made friends here. We all have a good laugh together while still doing the work. After lockdown I was really happy when I could come back to Organic Blooms, see my friends and do things for myself rather than just being at home. The biggest difference for me has been working in a different environment, it's nice to have a change of scenery.

"I'm an outdoors girl – I live on a farm and my passion is riding. I love being with my horse, Ninja, and walking my dog, Pebbles. In the future I'd love to carry on working outside. Two years ago I sowed extra seeds at Organic Blooms, grew the plants on in my own cutting patch at home and sold the flowers at our farm gate using an honesty box to raise money for Great Western Air Ambulance who saved my life when I had my riding accident.

"My favourite thing about Organic Blooms is being outside, working with everyone and seeing all the flowers grow."



Our trainees said...

"The difference Organic Blooms has made is that I'm more sociable, I feel more confident with other people."

"I'm looking forward to seeing the flowers growing."

"Working with the other trainees – people with mental health and learning difficulties – has been a real positive. They are nice people."

"I moved into my own house and started at Buddies – Organic Blooms helped me achieve both as I have more confidence."

"I'm looking forward to working with people and helping them out."

"I'm looking forward to more work on the floristry side... more in-depth horticulture knowledge, what makes plants how they are. For example, why are helichrysum petals crunchy?"

"My favourite thing is potting on."

"Last week I did all the edible flowers on my own."

"The best thing I have done is cutting grass."

"I've learned skills, I feel like I could achieve something in the future."

"My favourite thing about Organic Blooms is the people."

"I've had really good support here. It's built my confidence and brought structure to my life."

"We respect each other here – we work hard as a team."

Our trainees said...

One of the best things I've done at Organic Blooms is appearing on Countryfile.

I just love coming here.

My favourite thing is making nice friends and working with them.

Now I can go around town shopping, to the dentist, with a bit of confidence. I know no one here will harass me.

I'm looking forward to getting more skills and qualifications.

I like barrowing the compost down to the big polytunnel – I like the exercise.

My favourite thing about Organic Blooms is having the t-shirts and I have loads of friends here.

My favourite thing about Organic Blooms is the adventure.

There's nothing I don't like here and nothing I would change.

My best achievement is just doing my job.

My favourite job is seed sowing and seed collecting.

My favourite flower that we grow is sunflowers as it's food for the finches.

My favourite jobs are digging, manuring, cutting comfrey and putting the bins out.

Outcomes

76%
say their ability
to work alone
has improved

75%
feel more
positive about
their future

71%
say their lives
would be worse if
they didn't come
to Organic Blooms

95%
say their
confidence has
improved

71%
feel their social
skills have
improved

71%
report an
improvement in
their mental
health

71%
say their ability
to work as part
of a team has
improved

90%
feel their
horticulture skills
have improved

76%
say their
communication
skills have
improved

81%
feel they are
more able to act
on their own
initiative

68%
feel better about
their day to day
life

Our staff said...

My job is amazing!

My favourite job is supervising a group of trainees all working together as a team to complete a multi-faceted job - so satisfying to see them feeling proud of their work together.

My best achievement is helping trainees be as productive as possible.

My favourite thing about Natureworks & Organic Blooms is the general feeling of kindness, all-inclusivity, happiness & supportiveness that exists there. But also the flowers - if we only grew herbs & bulbs in pots it wouldn't be the same.

My favourite things are the people, the environment, sustainability, British grown, being part of a team.

Katy's story



"I was referred to Natureworks & Organic Blooms through mental health services at a time when I was finding bipolar disorder difficult to manage. Horticulture is very mindful because you're in the moment; being out in all weathers makes you feel alive and makes you appreciate life a bit more. There's something about it that keeps you in the present.

"Everyone's here for their own reasons but we all get on. It's a really nice bunch of people here who were supportive of me. They believed in me, when I didn't believe in myself. This place is quite inspirational really.

"I've been employed here as a horticultural supervisor for several years now and I really love working with our trainees. They are very special and it's rewarding to see them discovering and developing skills and talents and growing in confidence. I find working in horticulture beneficial because I love the fact that I work outside, I love the fact that I see all the seasons. I've always wanted to work outside, even as a little girl. I'm lucky that I do – it's my dream job really."



Carers and keyworkers said...

He has a sense of achievement and is so proud of the certificate he has gained.

She talks about passing qualifications and developing floristry skills.

Since joining Organic Blooms my daughter is less anxious, more confident and is gardening more at home.

He's now more aware of how his contribution can help a team and a business. He is therefore more receptive to being with others to achieve a task or goal.

He still wants to save the planet but can now see that he can do this by contributing to... Organic Blooms

She has changed so much, she will talk to people outside of home, she will go out more and is so much happier in herself. You've changed her world. You are amazing. She'd be lost without you - thank you for all you do for her.

Stakeholder stories

A carer's story



“Before joining Organic Blooms, my son was very down. He doesn’t have the social skills to talk about his feelings but it was obvious that he needed to have a purpose and wanted to feel useful and productive in his life, preferably using his hands, outdoors and learning new skills.

“He very much enjoys his days at Organic Blooms. He has a feeling of achievement and is so proud of the certificate he has gained. He has a feeling of worth and will share the skills and knowledge he has gained on occasion and it is easy to see how proud he is of himself.

“He has more to learn and he still doesn’t have the confidence or the communication skills to project into the future, but he has a better understanding of moving on to a work placement and what is expected of him. In time he feels he can hopefully move on to employment in the future. Organic Blooms has given him that.”



2023: our year in pictures



2023: our year in pictures



2023: our year in pictures



2023: our year in pictures



Environmental impact

Certified organic status

Organic certification is a starting point for us, not an end in itself. We have been certified organic since February 2017 and the Soil Association's organic standards provide us with a great foundation on which to build our positive impact on the environment. We continually strive to nurture our soil, to support habitat and food for wildlife and to enhance biodiversity across our site.

Nurturing our soil

Our soil is heavy clay on red pennant sandstone. The soil over much of the site had been compacted by heavy machinery and conventional agricultural practices. During wet periods we are liable to standing water and during extended dry spells the soil hardens and cracks.

To improve the soil structure, reduce the tendency for standing water and cracking and provide additional nutrients, we operate a minimum tillage system and add large amounts

of organic matter each year in the form of green waste compost, our own composted cuttings and occasionally some farmyard manure. We add woodchip to our paths which, once it is well-rotted after several years, we rake into our beds to add structure and nutrients.

We have established comfrey patches across the site to draw up nutrients from deep in the ground. We harvest, compress and rot the leaves to produce comfrey liquid to feed the soil, making those deep nutrients accessible to shallower-rooted plants.



Environmental impact continued

Habitat

Our certified organic, poly-cultural, soil-focused growing methods help to enhance wildlife habitat across our site. By nurturing the soil we aim to support diverse bacteria, fungi and invertebrates to thrive in our soil.

We select flower species that are rich in nectar, open in form and are closely related to native species, which are beneficial to insects.

Our two wildflower meadows are mostly made up of native species and we leave them largely uncut over the winter, allowing the dead stems to host overwintering insects.

The meadows, orchard and wide native hedgerows also provide habitat, shelter and food for small mammals and birds.

We regularly spot deer, a profusion of songbird species and birds of prey including buzzards, kestrels, sparrow hawks & owls in our fields. We have, on occasion, spotted grass snakes nesting and raising young in the warmth of our compost bins.

Ethical Floristry

Wendy and our florists are leaders when it comes to ethical floristry. As well as using certified organic flowers grown here on site, we do not use floristry foam or plastic in our arrangements or in our packaging. We use wire for the mechanics in larger arrangements and our bouquets are wrapped in paper. Our string is jute and our ribbons are mainly jute or silk. We do not use any additives - just clean containers and water - to keep our flowers fresh.



Biodiversity

We try to be part of a healthy, balanced local ecosystem by encouraging soil life, insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and plants.

- We grow diverse, non-invasive flowering plants that suit our soil and local climate.
- We grow an increasing proportion of perennials to minimise soil disturbance.
- We regularly mulch our beds, adding organic matter to feed diverse soil life.
- We grow comfrey to use as a fertiliser.
- We compost all our waste to add back to the soil.
- We sow green manures in empty beds.
- We allow native plant species to establish in our heritage orchard.
- We have two wild flower meadows filled with diverse species.
- We leave our hedgerows as wild as we can.



Chris's story

"I enjoy working outside where I can see all the birds and insect life so I spend most of my time working on our cut flower beds out in the fields. I've been with Organic Blooms for almost 10 years now so I'm able to get on with work independently. I do a lot of weeding, mulching and planting our young plants out into the beds. In the autumn and winter I clear our annual cutting beds, cut back our perennials and do a lot of work maintaining our paths with woodchip. My motor skills have improved through doing horticulture work.

"I'm passionate about wildlife and know a lot about birds and insects and I'm often asked to identify things at Organic Blooms. I'm a very keen wildlife photographer. I have [my own website](#) and have published a booklet, with my dad, about the butterflies of South Gloucestershire which includes many photos that I've taken here at Organic Blooms. I often bring my camera with me so that I can walk around the fields and take photos during break and lunchtimes."



Looking forward to 2024

Plans for our trainees

We will be carrying out our reviews with trainees to plan for their ongoing City & Guilds qualifications, specific horticultural and workplace skills to develop or improve and aims and ambitions for the future. For some people this may mean a transition to new activities or roles beyond Natureworks and Organic Blooms.

We will focus on continuing to integrate our trainees more with the business by:

- Ensuring that trainees can fulfil as many aspects of our horticultural, floristry and packing processes as possible
- Helping trainees to better understand the Organic Blooms business and how each task or piece of work they do contributes to the business
- Regularly seeking and considering the views and ideas of trainees as part of our business review and planning processes
- Inviting trainees to apply for paid seasonal roles as part of a competitive recruitment process

Looking forward to 2024

Plans for our business

During 2024 we plan to:

- Accept up to six new trainee referrals
- Continue working with Abel & Cole to supply them with high quality flowers and plants
- Continue with edible flowers, launched in 2023
- Develop our wholesale business
- Focus on ethical sympathy flowers
- Continue to develop our local 'click-and-collect' market
- Hold a series of informative and inspiring workshops and courses for public and professionals
- Plan for developing our foliage stock

Looking forward to 2024

Plans for improving biodiversity and environmental impact

During 2024 we plan to:

- Continue to increase the proportion of perennial plants compared to annuals and biennials, in order to reduce soil disturbance and therefore minimise damage and disruption to structure, water flow, nutrient availability and the activities of invertebrates, bacteria, mycorrhizal networks and other microbes.
- Improve our composting practices.
- Explore new ways to improve our soil.
- Improve our rainwater harvesting from our large polytunnel.



Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who supported Natureworks Training CIC, Organic Blooms Ltd and our incredible trainees during 2023. We look forward to seeing you and continuing to work with you during 2024.