

September 2024

Dear Friends,

You may have heard of the quote 'A picture is worth a thousand words.' However, words are sometimes also necessary to explain the story behind a picture to understand the full meaning of it. Such is the case here. The picture on the right is a picture of three simple raised beds now located on the perimeter of the former bowls green at our Victoria Park premises in Salisbury. The first now has lettuces growing in it, the second has beetroot, and the third has raspberry canes. These tell a little of our story over the last three months and some essence of what we are trying to do as a charity.



The story goes like this. Back in May this year we had an email from Godolphin School in Salisbury. In it, they asked if they could send a group of young adults and two teachers to help us with our work as part of a school's volunteering day. This seemed like a great idea and a way of involving a few of our local young people in work that would support some of those facing extreme difficulties in their lives. We also considered it part of our core educational work which often takes place through talks we deliver to community organisations and churches. Therefore, we agreed to this, and for safeguarding reasons we hosted the small group of student volunteers with their teachers on a Monday – a day we are normally closed to the public. Their tasks were to help build some raised beds and create decorations for the future Christmas tree – our entry to the Christmas Tree festival that takes place each year at St Thomas' church. These are typical of the therapeutic activity in which we involve our client community.

Leading up to this volunteering Monday, we had prepared two raised beds 'kits' to make this activity possible for young people and pulled together the materials for the Christmas Tree craft activity. Aligned with our core values, these too tell a story of involvement, collaboration, kindness and generosity as follows. The wood is recycled – one of our core values which seeks to protect and preserve our environment. The first kit used pallets donated by Salisbury Food Bank. The second kit uses wood donated by a supporter from a Facebook appeal, and the brackets and screws were bought from Morning Star funds kindly given by some of you. The third kit was from a recycled table. The first and second raised beds were assembled by students and teachers who gave over their day to work with us. The third by our own community here at the Victoria Park Centre who also made lids for the first two with non-plastic biodegradable insect nets made from vegetable starch, to protect young seedlings, and a frame for growing raspberries.



In the last few weeks, our community has sown seeds, pinched out seedlings, and watered the beds each day. As we have worked together on these, amongst other tasks around the Victoria Park Centre, we have also lived life. We have chatted, listened, explored, cried, lamented, and explored new ideas, new ways of being and fresh opportunities together. This moves towards fulfilling the vision for what we had hoped this community would be.

We at Morning Star know we cannot solve problems for people, and we are not the solution either. However, we can be with others who are facing difficulty as we navigate our lives, sometimes (and often for some) through stormy seas. As we spend time together, we reflect on our situations and explore ways forward, introducing some fresh ways of thinking sometimes. As

we journey with people, we also help to empower, advocate for and connect people with others that can help too. As we do this, we are reminded from the Matthew, Mark and Luke gospel accounts in the Bible, of how Jesus journeyed with his disciples in a boat in a storm. During this, we read how the disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" We then read about Jesus' response. How he then got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. Perhaps as we journey with people through this therapeutic activity, we too can follow his example as we seek to bring a level of calmness and peace to those experiencing stormy seas.

Finally, as always, we give thanks for each of you and the support you have provided to Morning Star this far on our journey whatever that support is. For some it is financial, others donating goods or offering help. For yet others it may be prayer or simply spreading the word about our work. As this then generates interest and enquiry we hope it inspires others to take action against the poverty trap; isolation, and deprivation that many experience, often unseen in our community. We also invite you to keep an eye on our Facebook Page for any items that you may be able to donate to support struggling individuals at <https://www.facebook.com/MorningStarSalisbury/>. For information about the next Life Recovery Course starting Weds 25th September and also our opening times we invite you to go to our web page where you can find this information [www.morningstarsalisbury.co.uk](http://www.morningstarsalisbury.co.uk).

If you would like to sponsor us on our forthcoming run with the Clarendon Marathon on Homelessness Sunday, 6th October we invite you to do so via <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/16834>. The proceeds will be used to help create a vegetable garden in our Victoria Park Centre as a therapeutic, life-giving activity for those using the centre, as well as other running costs. Please label your donation 'Clarendon.'

With grace and peace  
Kerry and Mike Badger

[www.morningstarsalisbury.co.uk](http://www.morningstarsalisbury.co.uk)

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