



HMP Haverigg

Prisoners at HMP Haverigg have been kept extremely busy over the past few years, thanks to GOOP. With many prisoners' behaviours and health needs relating back to past traumatic experiences, research has shown that mindfulness exercises, such as gardening, can focus one's attention on the 'here and now' - an important therapeutic tool that improves mental health.

Since December 2019, Parkfield (a 12 acre field within the outer fence of the prison) has seen the following work and developments implemented by the men involved with GOOP;

- Sunflower walk - a nature trail, lined with sunflower plants, taking you through the area of the field designated as a nature reserve.
- A pond - dug out by hand and using funding from the 'Pond in Every Prison' project.
- An orchard using local apple, pear and Meddler varieties, which also includes native trees to produce a hedge surround.
- Bird Watchers Hide (Twitchers Retreat) - halfway through the nature trail is a bird hide made from a recycled cattle carriage, adapted and fitted with seating and fixed binocular points. The trailer has numerous books and posters relevant to bird watching.
- Trees - As well as the established and newly planted wild flowers, saplings of the endangered Aspen tree have been planted.
- Feeding tables - to encourage more variety of birds, numerous tall-roofed bird tables (plus a large concrete planter which has been converted into a bird bath) have been erected. There are also smaller bird baths located across the area to enable ground dwellers access to water.
- Wild flowers - throughout the field we have planted thousands of seeds to create the wild meadow.
- Bee hives - so far two sets of bee hives have been constructed in the field; these are thriving thanks to the plethora of flowers nearby.
- Fruit cage - a 50m² area was dug out for a fruit cage covered in mesh, which is home to red/white gooseberries, plus blackcurrants.
- Allotments – these feature potatoes, broccoli, cabbage, peas, runner beans, beetroot, carrots, onions, radish and lettuce. Some of this produce is used on the residential units, with the rest supplementing the prison kitchen. There is also a polytunnel that has been erected next to this area, to develop the soil and start other vegetables.
- Bandstand - An area has been dug out to create a 70m² band stand. This area is also used for worship, mediation and group work out in the open air.
- Memorial Garden - plans are in place to create a memorial garden to remember staff, residents and mark significant events at the prison.



The Parkfield area is used by 90% of the prisoners from all wings for exercise to supporting healthy living and mental health. Haverigg also works with the Back On Our Map (BOOM) initiative; a lottery-funded project to reintroduce and boost the numbers of endangered trees, plants and wildlife in the UK. The work so far has involved planting aspen trees, kidney vetch and cowslip. More than 4,600 rare aspen are being planted within the prison grounds, where fences prevent deer from eating the saplings. Deer like to nibble on aspen, which has contributed to its serious decline. But aspen are crucial, because no other British tree supports more biodiversity; their extensive root systems also bind soil together, slowing water and reducing flooding.

John McNally, Prison Community Outreach Manager, said "prisoners have been able to make an invaluable contribution to native tree cultivation and improving wildlife across the area". Haverigg also links with a number of local agricultural farmers to gain expertise on managing the land.



Aspen seedlings are cultivated in a nursery and then transplanted by the prisoners.
©Ruth Essex