



HMP Kirkham

At HMP Kirkham, prisoners have benefitted from GOOP's focus on the connection between horticulture and mental wellbeing; through the programme's environmental initiatives, it is hoped that a prisoner's quality of life improves and health inequalities are reduced.

Since 2021, prisoners involved with GOOP have managed to boost habitats for wildlife by planting a new hedge, using the site of a former greenhouse and continuing the hedge line along the adjacent field margin. For the hedge, native species of hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, guelder-rose and hazel were planted - as well as beech, oak, ash and birch trees alongside them.

All bees were lost during the winter of 2020, so the prison contacted Blackpool Bee Society and one of their volunteers donated a swarm of bees which are now in a newly built enclosure. The prison's Horticulture Enterprise has continued, with greenhouses filled with produce ready to harvest for the kitchens, farm shop and wholesale market.



The men on the new temporary accommodation have also made their own garden area outside their building, planting flowers in a flower bed and painting old planters to put around the doors.



Other highlights include:

- Raised flower/plant beds installed outside the Healthcare department, featuring different plants throughout the year and on specific occasions (e.g. purple flowers were plants on 28th July 2022 for World Hepatitis Day, spelling out 'Hep C' once they bloom next spring).
- Recycling of plastic waste in Healthcare department, and attendance from the team at prison environmental meetings.
- The Drug & Alcohol Team (DART) facilitating conservation walks around our conservation area, and our Counsellor using the same area for 'walk-and-talk' counselling appointments (linking in with nature).
- Allotments on site thriving, historically looked after by the service users from the Drug & Alcohol Service; this was paused during the pandemic.

The prison also had a successful lambing season during April 2021, with 79 lambs in total and also 17 new longhorn calves to add to the herd. Diane Clare, Land Based Activities & Farm Manager at HMP Kirkham, said, "We have had prisoners with complex health issues and anxieties, working with livestock. These prisoners tend to thrive during their time with us, learning about caring for the livestock, and putting the animals before their own needs, seven days a week. They gain hands-on experience during lambing season, bottle-feeding rejected lambs or helping with a difficult birth during calving. Most prisoners say that working on the farm is not like being in a prison; it feels like they could be anywhere, and Keith and Peter (our Livestock Instructors) are brilliant. This is why GOOP in prisons is important for health and mental wellbeing. Nurturing plants and animals connects us to the earth and puts everything into perspective in the process."

