# Update St Laurence Wellness Garden/Outdoor Classroom – July 2026

The St Laurence Wellness Garden – a youth-led, outdoor learning and wellbeing space that will benefit students, the local environment, and the wider community for years to come.

The proposed St Laurence Wellness Garden is designed as a youth-led, elder-guided project. It is being developed by the students with support from volunteers, staff and community members who share a vision of transforming an underused area of the school grounds into a vibrant, outdoor learning space and sustainable garden that promotes student wellbeing, ecological restoration, and community connection.

This project is anticipated to:
- Improve student wellbeing and emotional resilience
- Increase engagement with environmental action
- Enhance biodiversity across school grounds
- Provide a flexible, cross-curricular learning environment
- Strengthen relationships between students, staff, and the wider community.

Through hands-on gardening and reflective practice, students are expected to develop practical skills, leadership experience, and a stronger sense of agency in response to climate challenges. The idea is that teachers can take classes outside in fair-weather.
Over time, the garden is intended to become a self-sustaining school resource, maintained by successive student cohorts and embedded within the school's educational and wellbeing

The proposed design includes raised planting beds, pollinator-friendly planting, rainwater harvesting, reclaimed materials, outdoor seating, and a sheltered learning space. The garden could also host community volunteering days, intergenerational activities, wellbeing sessions, and environmental education events.

Update from Becca Cassar – Project Lead:

Since January I've been attending the St Laurence Green Group twice a month to support the development of the school garden. The latest cohort of students are now taking the lead, with my guidance where needed, and are doing a fantastic job driving the project forward.

We've had valuable site visits from Dave Green, local botanist, Dave Robinson (Head Gardener at Woolley), Lizzie Munday (Christchurch School Garden creator), Kate Nottage (Biodiversity lead CFboa) and Bill Gething, (Sustainable architect and consultant). These visits are helping to shape both the vision and practical delivery of the space.

The students have also designed and carried out surveys with both staff and pupils to better understand what people want from the garden. This research is directly informing the design. The garden is now being developed as an outdoor classroom, with seating for up to 30 students, enabling lessons to be taken outside in suitable weather.

It is becoming an exciting community space for both the school and wider community.

As the ambition for the project grows, so do the costs, and I am currently exploring external funding opportunities to help us realise its full potential. There is a real opportunity here to create something amazing.

Next term we plan to begin the main groundworks. Volunteer planting days will follow in the autumn, and I will share further details closer to the time. In the meantime, please see the attached image of students laying tarp over the nettles last week, along with an early design vision to help bring the project to life.

Two students are also developing their own garden designs, which we will combine into a final plan.

We still have a long way to go, but the energy and momentum is very exciting.
Please do get in touch if you have any ideas or want to connect me with people who can help.

Thanks
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