Update St Laurence Wellness Garden/Outdoor Classroom – October 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.



Update from Becca Cassar – Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon Project Lead:

St Laurence Green Group: Growing Our School Garden

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

Since returning this term, the students have been busy developing their garden designs (see above), reimagining the Green Group logo and sharing updates to raise awareness of the project. They have even delivered an assembly about the garden in an effort to encourage more students to get involved and join the Green Group.

We have also had interest from **Dr Alexander Goodwin, the High Sheriff of Wiltshire**, whom we hope to welcome next term or in the spring to hear more about the project. The Woodland Trust has kindly donated saplings for a native hedge, along with trees that students and volunteers will be planting in November. We also have a visit booked with **Caitlin Wosika, Woodland Officer at Wiltshire Council**, who will be sharing her expertise on tree planting and care with the Green Group. In addition, the students are planning to screen *The Lorax*, an educational animated film that they hope will inspire more students to join the group and engage with environmental issues.

I have been actively applying for funding to support the project. In particular, we are keen to secure support from Wessex Water to develop large-scale rainwater harvesting solutions, helping us manage water sustainably and make the garden more resilient. See Plan below:

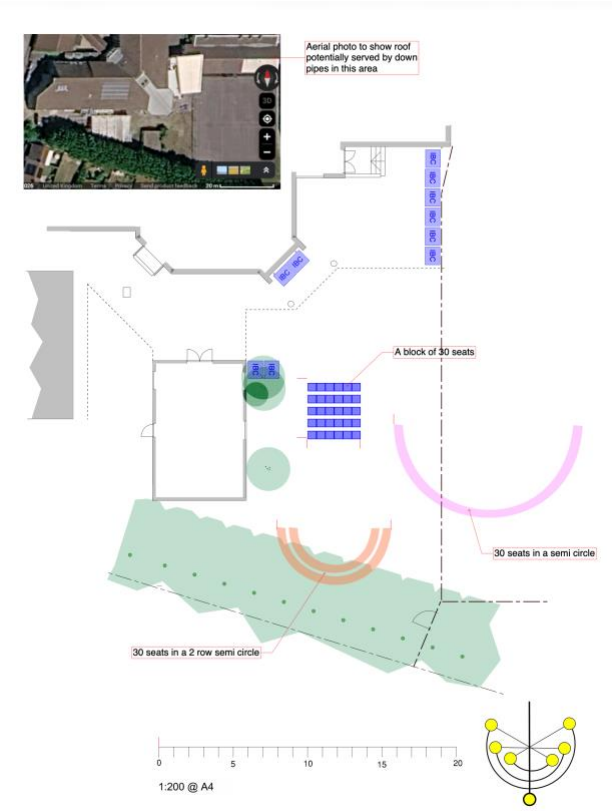
We have already benefited from some invaluable site visits and expert advice from Dave Green, local botanist; Dave Robinson, Head Gardener at Woolley; Lizzie Munday, creator of the Christchurch School Garden; Kate Nottage, Biodiversity Lead at CFBOA; and Bill Gething, sustainable architect and consultant. Their insights are helping to shape both the overall vision for the garden and the practical steps needed to bring it to life.

The students have also designed and carried out surveys with staff and pupils to better understand how the space could be used and what people would like to see. The findings are directly informing the garden's design, ensuring it reflects the needs and ideas of the wider school community.

The garden is now being developed as an **outdoor classroom, with seating for up to 30 students**, creating an inspiring space for outdoor learning whenever the weather allows.

There is lots more to come as the project continues to grow, with students leading the way in creating a greener, more sustainable and engaging school environment.

Watch this space!



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.

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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