



## Young Marketeers – Harvest Sale – Dorset

### SUMMARY

When we started this programme Local Food Links had no idea how this pilot scheme would be received by Dorset schools. Our initial thoughts where we would be happy to get 2/3 schools from the target of four. How little did we know the warm reception the project would receive, and we ended up with five schools signing up within days of us contacting them, Prince of Wales Pre-School, Damers First School, St Osmund’s Church of England Middle School, Manor Park Church of England First School & Radipole Primary School.

The Young Marketeers Harvest sale programme consisted of the following elements:

- An e-assembly was sent to the schools as they were still very cautious due to Covid procedures (May)
- A market trader training morning (June) supported by Dorset Food & Drink
- A visit to each school garden by an expert gardener to give practical help and advice (June )
- Sale day at Dorchester Market (22<sup>nd</sup> September)

Despite Covid, over-zealous council workers and staff sickness, four schools made it to market. Damers hosted their market at school due to staff shortages and sickness – this was a credit to a school that ended up having a really tough year.

### WHAT WAS SOLD ON SALE DAY?

Overall the project raised £224 between the schools for their school gardening clubs.

School	Produce
Prince Of Wales Pre-school	Courgettes, tomatoes, green beans, potatoes, apples, rhubarb, leeks, sweetcorn
St Osmund’s Middle school	Apples, tomatoes, herb plants, aloe vera plants, sweet corn, Raspberries, chutneys, green beans, courgettes & Cuco melons
Manor Park First School	Beetroot, potatoes, carrots, runner beans, courgettes, tomatoes, chillis, spinach



### **MOST POPULAR PRODUCE:**

Everything sold out by the end of the day, which was a great achievement given the fact we were next to an established greengrocer. There was a noticeable difference in the pricing techniques by each school which clearly reflected the age of the children. Prince of Wales (pre-school) asked for donations. Manor Park (year 3) was filling a bag for a £1. St Osmund's (Year 8) weighed produce and priced by the kilo, as you would expect from any grocer.

### **HOW MANY CHILDREN TOOK PART IN THE HARVEST PROGRAMME?**

- 14 children took part at Dorchester market. The students attending the market were from pre-school to year 8
- Damers First School has a large gardening club where every child gets the opportunity to grow. On roll there are currently 459 pupils.
- Radipole Primary School has a large gardening club supported by volunteers from the local church. Every child is given the chance to grow but for the YM programme special focus was given to those children with an EHCP.
- Prince of Wales Pre-school gave all the pre-school children the opportunity to garden, with a total of 20 very little people on roll.
- St Osmunds and Manor Park had many children involved behind the scenes in their gardening clubs which spread across all years and are open to all children. Young Markeeters helped the whole of their gardening clubs to get excited about growing and really helped them focus on the end products. Both St Osmund's and Manor Park's gardens had fallen into disrepair over the pandemic and the scheme helped them to re-focus and re-establish their plots.

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### **WHAT DID THE STUDENTS AND THE TEACHERS SAY ABOUT THE HARVEST SALE?**

#### **Comments from the children:**

'We are going to make millions of pounds''

"We really enjoyed getting out of the classroom"

#### **Comments from the teachers:**

'The children took over and were running everything themselves, which is amazing'

*St Osmund's*

"The Market Day was really successful. The pupils really enjoyed being part of it

*St Osmund's*

The budget and money given to us really helped as well, especially buying plants rather than seeds.

*St Osmund's*

This was a great project and enjoyed by all that took part. The children enjoyed planting, watering and picking the produce and then selling at the market.

*Prince Of Wales Pre-School*

"We raised £84 and we are extremely happy with this"

*Manor Park First School*



**MARKET TRADING / GARDENING VISITS TO SCHOOLS**

With Covid restrictions and bubbles still in place during the early part of this programme gaining access to the school was problematic. As time passed school were happy for us to be on the premises outside.

Several our schools had begun planting before we got on-site only to lose young crops to slugs or in one case an over-zestless council workman who ran a commercial lawn mower over the school veg plots! We encouraged the schools to carry on, supplying compost to enrich poor soil that had been neglected and providing young plants to boost their depleted stocks.



Dorset Food and Drink gave a talk and interactive demonstration along side a real life market trader. The children relished this aspect and it showed in their stalls



## **HARVEST SALE AT Dorchester Market**

- The Harvest Sale was visited by the Mayor and Mayoress of Dorchester
- The sale was also of great interest to the members of the Dorchester Market Panel, who have been trying to generate interest in the market after lockdown.
- The sale produced some good local press. Dorset Echo, Greatest Hits Radio (Dorset), BBC South Today, BBC Spotlight, BBC Radio Solent. See links at end of document
- The public completely embraced the event and its concept. People were trying to buy produce before the children had even opened for business
- We will need a larger pitch next year. What seemed a huge area was quickly taken up by the 3 attending schools. If Damers and Radipole had attended, we would not have had enough room.

**Funny stories** – The Mayor spent so much time with the children that he was very late for his next engagement. Local dignitaries who were attending with the Mayor were later reported to say that he spent the entire time telling everyone about the lovely Young Marketeers programme he had just attended. Who needs important meetings when you have children with funny shaped veg!

One child from Manor Park Primary School was totally convinced that they would walk away from the sale day with millions of pounds, so much so that it he went on to tell the BBC and it was caught on camera!

There was no competition between the schools at all. Although one school was heard to say that “Now they knew what to expect the other schools better watch out next year!”

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## **CONCLUSION**

As a pilot scheme in a year still plagued with covid, we feel everyone involved did sensationally. The scheme certainly captured the imagination of the children, public and market community. Schools who attended in 2021 are asking to repeat the experience next year. And we have already had new schools signing up for 2022.

The market owners and the market panel are very keen for us to repeat the event, asking if we could do summer, autumn and Christmas markets. Nice thought but the children do need to spend some time in the classrooms.

We will take lessons away from this year and be able to improve aspects going forward, especially if we continue to gain support from other organisations and individuals. We see this project going from strength to strength in Dorset with schools in other towns outside Dorchester benefitting from the scheme. The Jurassic Coast is known for its beautiful coastline and great outdoors, and maybe it will be known in the future for its magnificent **Young Marketeers**.

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### **Local Food Links**

September 2021

<https://youtu.be/EkRov0Cmrrg>

<https://youtu.be/X0yJ0yVzf0o>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p09tv24r>