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When it came to putting up the shed we encountered problems. Some members of our group and staff facilitators suffer from physical problems and weren't sure they were up to such a hefty job... Help arrived in the form of some 'corporate volunteers', a team of staff from Vodafone who finished of the shed and put a pathway together in one day 😊



We really enjoyed their company too and cooked them lunch which we all shared in the yurt. The volunteers also seemed to enjoy the experience and gave some lovely feedback, that highlights included "Working in a lovely environment with lovely people" and that they had a "Sense of achievement and that what we did was hugely appreciated by Greencare". It also promoted our service in that they said it

"Raised my awareness of the value of the therapeutic community services provided by Growing Better Lives and Groundwork". A good day all round!

We carried on in subsequent sessions working on the area around the shed, laying a groundsheet underneath the path and covering the rest of the area with bark to prevent weeds. Herbs were planted in pots we painted to match the shed, primroses planted around the edges and our bench was placed into the area.



Time to work on our craft project – our scarecrow 😊
We discussed how we wanted him/her to show some of the feelings and experiences we have. We wanted to

express that horrible feeling of 'emptiness' we sometimes get and so made a hole in the body to represent 'empty'. This worked well since we made the body structure from a frame of chickenwire! The face is half-black and half-white: sometimes we feel happy, other times sad. People suffering from mental and emotional disorders often change between moods that are 'black', low, sad to 'white', happy, moods very quickly so we chose to paint the face black and white to represent this.



We named our scarecrow 'Nat' and Nat is neither male or female, so that Nat can represent all of us. Nat has a very large but battered heart, this is because we have also often been hurt by things that have happened in our lives, by what people have said or done. So our hearts have been battered – at times we have felt 'broken-hearted'. But we still have lots of love to share with our big hearts and care about our group and people very much.

We produced some information board to tell people visiting the site about Nat and about us. Then, at Easter, we hosted another group for people with mental and emotional difficulties for a say of fun – Easter egg hunts, egg rolling, shared lunch, and introducing Nat!

