

THE KALEIDOSCOPE

The official magazine of The Papillon Project
For schools and their allotments



Autumn 2025



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**Our fantastic
Leadership Team**

Harriet

Emily

Matt



EDITOR'S *Note*



Hello readers!



Welcome to the Autumn 2025 edition of The Kaleidoscope – how times flies!

Autumn is a particularly special time when it comes to allotments. It's when we hopefully get to see all our hard work pay off, with bountiful harvests being produced. As I was collating this issue, I absolutely loved seeing all the harvest photos from across our link schools – truly testament to everyone's effort over the year. I have tried to pack in as many as possible, so do check them out! It's really important that we make the most of this produce, so do have a look at our feature on Autumn Cooking.

Looking forward to the remainder of the year, it is very important that we start preparing our allotments for winter. To help with this, our brilliant Deputy Project Lead, Harriet Watson has compiled some excellent top tips. Additionally, this edition has a feature showcasing fantastic allotment inventions, so prepare to be inspired!

Central to the Papillon Project's mission is to help young people connect with nature. We are so excited, therefore, that three new allotment projects are underway. Do check out our introduction to these new projects, and see how they are progressing. I, for one, was blown away by their progress!

The last couple of months have seen a really varied and exciting selection of events take place, from workshops being delivered to students across Norfolk to our annual celebratory event at Bishop's House Garden, Norwich – all of which are reported on in this edition.

This edition has a focus on promoting opportunities available to our link schools. We really want to help schools achieve as much as possible. In particular, do check out our articles on the Tool Bank and SALT course, which both include opportunities available now/shortly.

A huge thanks also to all our contributors. Producing The Kaleidoscope is most definitely a team effort and I want to express my gratitude to everyone who sent me material. Particular thanks to trustee Thomas Greenwood and Fuchsia Wilkins who both wrote features specially for this edition. Do check them both out – they're very interesting!

Finally, a huge thanks to you, reader for engaging with the Project. The work the charity does is very special, and the more people who encounter it, the better!

Happy reading (and growing)!



Amelia – Editor of The Kaleidoscope



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NEWS



Papillon Project Video

October saw the publication of a short-form video documentary detailing The Papillon Project's work at King's Lynn Academy. The video was produced in conjunction with *Norfolk Cottages*, the sister brand of Holiday Cottages who help fund The Papillon Project.

You can watch the full video [here!](#)

Norfolk Small Charities Showcase
On Saturday 11th October, The Papillon Project took part in the Norfolk Small Charities Showcase. The event which was hosted at The Forum in Norwich celebrates and promotes community organisations. It offers charities the chance to raise local awareness of their projects and attract new volunteers.

The Project was represented at this event by our fantastic Events Lead, Cynthia Guillemin.



Fantastic Fundraisers

We're extremely grateful to George who completed the epic challenge of a triathlon back in the summer. George raised over £302.14 to support the Project's charitable work.

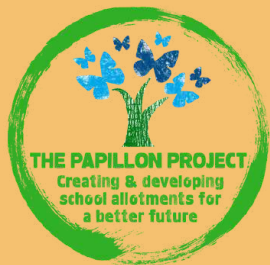
Huge thanks also to Rachel Blunt who held a yoga fundraiser at Houghton Hall, raising almost £1000 to support the charity!

We are always looking to raise money for the charity so if you have any ideas on how you could help us raise funds to support the project, please do get in touch!



Our fantastic school allotment projects across Norfolk have been harvesting their produce! Such harvests would not be possible without all the hard work of the schools, pupils, volunteers and staff that we work with! Thank you to you all for bringing these allotments alive.





Membership Programme for Schools



Thanks to Professor Peter Waldron, Chair of the Trustees for providing this update on the Membership Programme.

This autumn marks the start of Papillon's membership scheme. We are delighted that more than 20 schools across Norfolk have signed up to the programme and that Papillon can work with each of them to:

- provide support from Papillon staff to lead and support sessions at school allotments
- ensure regular support from Papillon staff to maintain and develop allotments
- give support by Papillon staff to promote the allotments - for example, at school assemblies and tours for new students
- recruit and manage community volunteers



Alongside this, we will enrich the allotment experience through:

- whole year group impact days
- SALT (training courses) for teachers and teaching assistants
- providing 'cocoon boxes' and 'butterfly boxes' to help get each growing season underway
- providing access to key resources (manure, straw, wood etc) needed to sustain each allotment
- access to the YES (Young Environmental Stewardship) awards each year to celebrate young people's contribution to the success of each allotment



Two new schools have joined the membership scheme this autumn, while we have a waiting list of schools that would welcome Papillon's support in creating and developing allotments. We're looking forward to working with schools right across Norfolk to develop the educational experience for their students.





Introducing.... NEW SCHOOL PROJECTS



Photos from the
Ormiston Venture
project



Thanks to Emily from our Leadership Team for providing this update on our new projects at Ormiston Venture Academy (Great Yarmouth) and North Walsham High School.

Great progress is being made at our two new projects; Ormiston Venture Academy (Great Yarmouth) and North Walsham High School. Growing beds, compost bays and fences are currently being constructed, using reclaimed materials. OVA sourced some retired scaffold boards for their long, curved beds, which will be coated in linseed oil for protection, with pallets saved by the school for their fence line. Meanwhile, North Walsham is making use of free wooden pallets for both beds and fence, generously donated by North Walsham Garden Centre.



Photos from
the North
Walsham
project



At both projects we've been delighted to have held our first sessions with enthusiastic students, who've been learning to use hand and power tools to do their bit in creating their plots. The growth in confidence from start to end of session has been wonderful to see, and we're looking forward to working with the students to generate ideas to bring to life!





Introducing.... *NEW SCHOOL PROJECTS*



Thanks to Matt from our Leadership Team for providing this update on our new project at Downham Market Academy.

Downham Market Academy's school allotment, which we originally helped to create back in 2021, is on the move to a new and nearby location at the school. This is due to an unforeseen building project happening next academic year. Despite the 'big move', it's a wonderful opportunity for the new intake of the school's 'Green Society' to have an opportunity to create a new school allotment of their very own. The original members of the 'Green Society', who were in Year 7 when Matt started, are now in Year 11 and so it's a renewed opportunity to inspire another cohort of young students who have recently joined DMA. There's huge enthusiasm at the project and the new project, using entirely reclaimed wood, is most certainly taking shape!



Photos from
the new
Downham
Market project.



How to Prepare Allotments for Winter

A huge thank you to Harriet Watson (Deputy Project Lead) for providing these excellent tips on how to get your allotments ready for Winter.



Time to plant garlic - from now until mid November. An easy crop to plant and maintain. Ready for harvest in June.



If you are growing dahlias the tubers can be lifted once the cold weather has killed off the top growth. Store them in a frost free place in sand or dry compost. Alternatively, try leaving them in the ground and mulch with compost,



manure or straw

Have a tool sort out. Tools can be washed and dried and oiled to prevent rust. Wooden handles can be oiled with linseed oil. Now is the time to fix any broken ones too.

Greenhouses, poly tunnels and sheds can have a good clean and tidy too. Compost any plants that have finished producing. Tidy any rubbish & broken pots. Clean and stack the remaining pots ready for Spring.



Putting beds to 'bed'!



Stretch a net over ponds to stop the leaves falling in which can make a pond too rich in nitrogen and full of silt.

Spread manure over any bare soil. It will gradually incorporate into the soil over Winter thanks to worms and weather!



Have a review with the garden team of what grew well and what didn't and why. This reflection can help with how and what might be grown next year. Drawing a plan of what was grown will help with next year's rotation. It is easy to forget when next Spring comes around!



Collect leaves and put them in an enclosure made of chicken wire. They will break down into an excellent soil conditioner.

Bug houses can be made in the Autumn for insects to overwinter in.

Turning the compost heap can be taken on in the dormant season when there isn't so much weeding to do. Mixing it up in this way and aerating it will speed up decomposition.



Allotment Inventions!



All of our school allotments feature fantastic inventions. These perform a variety of functions from ensuring allotments run smoothly to helping schools make the most of their produce. Here are some of our favourites!



One awesome volunteer at Reepham High School & College's allotment had the great idea of creating apple juice using a traditional apple press.

This invention is not only a brilliant idea, but a great way of using up surplus produce.

Since this first session, over 90 young people have been involved in the process of picking apples, before chopping, pulping, pressing and bottling them.

Check out [this video](#) of volunteers and young people using the press.

The apple press in action!!



The Reepham allotment is also home to another great invention - this water pump!



Feeling inspired?

Why not have a go at making your own allotment inventions. If you do make anything, we would love to see it! Send us your pics - comms@thepapillonproject.com

These innovative creations are from Caister Academy. The stock fencing archway is particularly clever, with this being a nice, cheap option for growing plants over an arch.



Remember inventions do not have to be super complex. They can be as 'simple' as re-using a bath as a bed for plants!



Tool Bank

**The
tool
BaNK**
Second-hand tools
for schools

We believe using second-hand tools sets a good example for young people. This is because restoring and repairing tools is an important life skill, an excellent example of sustainability and better for the environment too!

Using second-hand tools also means new tools don't have to be bought and, in our experience, vintage tools often last longer than brand-new modern tools!

Our volunteers meet, when they can, to restore and repair tools donated to us.

Some of these restored tools are then donated to our charity's shop to help us raise funds, but the more suitable and sought-after tools are donated directly to secondary schools. We ask schools to look after these tools and to let us know if they need to come back to the charity for repair.

All our tools that are successfully repaired/restored are given a tag and are catalogued so we know which tool(s) go to which school. Schools can then return them to our 'Tool Bank' if they are in need of further repair.

We are always in need of more second-hand tools to aid our charitable work. If you would like to make a tool donation or if you are interested in volunteering to help us repair tools, please email us at info@thepapillonproject.com

Schools can make requests from our Toolbank via our [online form](#). We are particularly keen for these tools to be used so please do consider making a request!

Our very full Tool Bank just waiting to be used!



A TIMELINE OF SCHOOL GARDENING



Thomas Greenwood

Thomas joined The Papillon Project as a Trustee at the beginning of 2023. Thomas loves spending time at his allotment in Norwich. His wide educational experience aids the strategical planning of the charity's charitable work.



One of the most frequent, and welcome, comments The Papillon Project receives is just what a positive and innovative idea secondary school allotments are. Though such support is greatly welcomed, it seems that secondary school gardening has become one of those things that we have forgotten to remember.

However, if you went to a secondary school anytime before the 1990s there is a good chance you may remember that school gardening, and indeed school farming, was a well-established feature of many schools. In the late 1980s my local comprehensive had a thriving allotment garden, glasshouses, and even pigs! This mini farm was sited at the back of the school, conveniently located behind the Food Technology Department. As a student at the local junior school, we would sometimes visit to see the animals and the school pond. Sadly, by the time I joined the secondary school in 1991 the allotment gardens were on their way out, I remember them only as a space 'out of bounds' for us pupils.

So, how did a thriving school gardening culture develop, why did it decline, and how can it be restored?

School farms, gardens and allotments can be seen operating as early as the eighteenth century. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gardening was a commonplace component of many schools' curriculums. In the years just before the First World War it was estimated that around 2,500 schools in the UK had gardens. School gardens were certainly not just for the privileged. Gardening was considered to be both a practical life skill and a way of getting young people close to nature and away from the more dehumanising aspects of industrial life and poverty.

Fears over the physical state of working class Britons created a movement for 'National Efficiency' in the early 1900s, whilst the First World War created a widespread desire to build back better post war. These combined energies, the political will for wholesome youth and the popular will for better futures, saw the emergence of Rural Studies in the 1920s, with a strongly developed focus on outdoor education. This focus strengthened during the Second World War, with school gardens allowing children to grow food and raise animals for the war effort.



A TIMELINE OF SCHOOL GARDENING

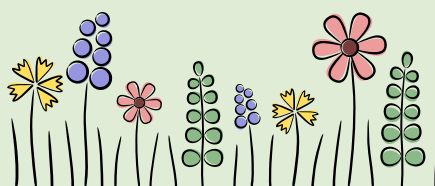


The 1950s through to the 1970s were a golden age for school gardening. Innovative new teaching ideas and societal changes were supported by the educational establishment and politicians. The 1950s saw the establishment of regional networks for teachers of Rural Studies and with Rural Studies now a credible subject, the National Association of Rural Studies (now the National Association for Environmental Education) was founded. By 1963 around 900 schools were teaching Rural Studies (41% of Secondary Moderns and 5% of Grammars). In 1964 the Certificate of Secondary Education was introduced and by 1966 there were over 2,000 entries for 'rural subjects' and courses were offered by 14 out of 15 exam boards. By the late 1970s there were around 13,500 entries nationally, rising to over 18,000 in the 1980s.

It was at this time, as junior school child in 1989, that I first encountered a school allotment. That allotment was part of an ecosystem of community gardening that has been under attack since. As a nine year old that ecosystem included: the vegetable gardens still tended front and back in the council house gardens of many of my (elderly) neighbours; the immaculately managed parish flower gardens, parks and recreation facilities with their teams of gardeners; the three council allotments and the school farm, pigs and all. Visiting the village I grew up in more recently none of this is visibly left. There are parks and recreation spaces, but community growing is less perceptible.

So what happened? The 1990s saw the domination of the National Curriculum and some subjects simply got pushed out. With exam boards no longer backing environmental courses schools saw less interest in supporting the teaching of environmental subjects and gardening. By the 1990s and 2000s the Local Management of Schools (LMS) was introduced and land sell offs ensued. Post 2010 saw 'austerity' and for many schools growing financial black holes that meant redundancies and budget cuts. School gardens and allotments often did not survive. In short the focus for education narrowed to the 'academic' and the 'vocational', whilst the financial pressures public services were and are under, cut much that was deemed non-essential.

But there is much to be optimistic about right now. School gardening grew in the early twentieth century as a reaction to some of the stresses of the industrial age; it found strength when it was accepted as a national good in times of national danger; it became embedded and widespread in times of national optimism. In 2025 those conditions may be with us again. We all, whether we be teachers, students or supporters of gardening in schools just need to find the optimism. For myself, whenever I speak to one of The Papillon Team, or one of the young people who have benefited from the work of the TPP I am immediately imbued with a palpable sense of optimism, an optimism born of seeing just how wonderful, how meaningful and how deliverable a school allotment, and the multiple benefits it brings, can be.



BISHOP'S HOUSE GARDEN Event



The Papillon Project's fantastic Event Lead, Cynthia Guillemin kindly provided us with the following report on the charity's annual celebratory event at Bishop's House Garden. This very successful event took place in June.



Cynthia at the Bishop's House Garden Event



The Bishop's House Garden event was a great success this year, with nearly 100 attendees. It was one of the charity's major highlights, and I was proud to help organise it. Seeing the fruits of our labour come to life for one special evening was truly rewarding.



Guests included teachers, patrons, volunteers, the Mayor of Norwich, and of course, the Bishop, who delivered a speech alongside Matt. We showcased the incredible work of all the schools we partner with, using photo displays mounted on rustic wooden pallets. Guests were also treated to delicious canapés prepared by students from City Academy Norwich.



We were grateful to Notcutts Garden Centre for donating herbs, which we offered to guests as thoughtful parting gifts—a lovely way for them to remember the evening.

It was a beautiful celebration of the outstanding work the charity does with schools across Norfolk.



SALT courses



A big part of The Papillon Project is ensuring that we pass on the knowledge and expertise of our amazing staff to our amazing schools! One way we do this is through SALT courses. SALT stands for School Allotment Leadership Training. These courses are free and are designed to provide teachers, teaching assistants and youth workers with the skills and knowledge to lead a school allotment/garden at a secondary school. These courses are great opportunities for individuals and the charity to share ideas, recommendations and experience, with lots of positive energy too!! Each course takes place after school and usually lasts for about two and a half hours.



We held a SALT (School Allotment Leadership Training) course at Caister Academy back in May which was well attended by school staff and other local teachers too. We were incredibly grateful for the opportunity to share a great example of a school allotment and share our best practice and experience with other like-minded questions. Lots of positive energy was generated and discussions too!



We will be holding two online SALT courses on **Wednesday 21st January** and **Wednesday 11th February**. This will be free of charge for Membership Programme schools, but a small fee will be asked of participants from non-member Norfolk schools and other attendees outside of Norfolk. All funds will go to support future SALT courses. Any adult who is engaged with school gardening is welcome to attend. Please find more information and how to show an interest in our SALT courses via our website (please [click here](#)).



'HOW IS MY FOOD GROWN?'



The Papillon Project's fantastic Leadership Team spent the summer delivering 'How is my food grown?' impact days in secondary schools across Norfolk. In an incredible achievement, the team delivered the session to more than 800 young people, over just three weeks. Our brilliant Deputy Project Lead, Emily Mildren provided this report.



At the end of the Summer Term, we delivered another successful series of 'Impact Days' to over 800 students at schools across Norfolk. The aim of these was to introduce entire year 7 cohorts to their school allotment, and to engage them in the question of 'how is my food grown?'

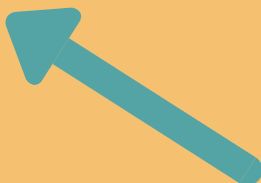
Students arrived as a class, before being split into smaller groups for a guided tour around the project. The days varied from school to school, but often included a mindfulness session, with children being invited to find quiet spots to look and listen closely to nature. Many of their observations read like poetry (see photos), and several commented that they appreciated the chance to take a quiet, calm moment in their school day.

At each of the sites, Deputy Project Lead Harriet led a session on compost. Students were shown three different trays of soil; one heavily depleted of nutrients, one from the forest floor, and another of fresh compost. What was interesting is that the young people were immediately able to recognise that the fresh compost was the best growing medium for vegetables, though most were surprised to learn of the different components that go into making it. At Caister Academy, we had the extra joy of showing the school's active wormery to the students – which they absolutely loved.



Meanwhile, Project Lead Matt talked through the 'design' of plants, and how they turn energy into food. Rhubarb leaves made a brilliant example of clever water collection, as did the extensive, trailing foliage of pumpkin plants. Showing the way that potatoes are planted and dug up was popular, whilst also being met with some disbelief!

Oftentimes, the opportunity to sample some of the things growing proved to be a highlight for students. Redcurrants, raspberries, strawberries, plums, mint, sage and nasturtium leaves were tasted and enjoyed. For us, the highlight was the opportunity to engage with over a hundred students each day, and to be met with their enthusiasm and curiosity. We're looking forward to doing it all over again next year.



photos of some of the fantastic students who took part in our impact days.



The Butterfly Effect



The Butterfly Effect is the name of our school allotment network/support group here in Norfolk. We want to bring schools and colleges together to spread inspiration and enthusiasm.



The name of the network is inspired by the idea that one little change can create a ripple effect and help to create a bigger change. In practice, this is the idea that a butterfly flapping its wings to take off, can create a knock-on effect, and end up creating a typhoon. One butterfly flapping its wings could not cause a typhoon, but lots of little changes can have a big impact.

If a school donates some seeds to another school, this seemingly small action will have a significant and positive impact on the other school.



- We want to encourage schools to connect with each other in multiple ways (via email, visiting each others' projects and sharing ideas and good practice). School gardening is hard work and connecting like-minded teachers together helps to generate positive energy, which makes projects seem more doable and possible. The charity wants to act as a 'telephone exchange', helping to facilitate connections.
- Sharing resources and equipment: some schools sometimes have surplus tools and garden materials (e.g. compost, manure, seeds and plants) whereas some schools have little. We feel showing cooperation between schools gives young people a good example of cooperation.



Autumn Cooking

Recipe Tips

If covered and chilled in the fridge, this butternut squash soup can be made up to 3 days ahead.

If stored in a freezer-proof bag or container, this soup freezes well for up to 3 months.

The soup can be vegan if you leave out the honey or replace with a vegan friendly sweetener.



Butternut Squash Soup

It's very important to make the most of the wonderful produce you grow on your allotments. This recipe is by Mary Berry and is taken from [BBC Food](#) (recipe originally from *Mary Berry's Foolproof Cooking*).

1.5kg/3lb 5oz peeled and deseeded **butternut squash**, cut into 3cm/1¼in cubes (see tip)

1 large **onion**, roughly chopped

2 medium **carrots**, peeled and chopped

1 red **pepper**, deseeded and cut into cubes

4 tbsp **olive oil**

1 tbsp clear **honey** (optional)

5cm/2in piece fresh root **ginger**, peeled and chopped

1.5 litres/2½ pints **vegetable stock**

salt and freshly ground **black pepper**

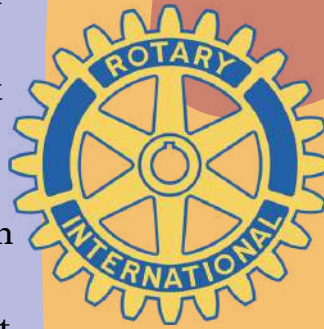
- Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.
- Tip the prepared squash into a large bowl or resealable freezer bag. Add the onion, carrots, red pepper and half the oil. Season with salt and pepper and toss everything together until the vegetables are evenly coated. Tip into a large roasting tin and spread out to form a single layer.
- Roast in the oven for 40–45 minutes, or until tender and tinged brown at the edges. Drizzle over the honey, if using, 5 minutes before the end of cooking.
- Place a large, deep-sided saucepan over a medium heat. Add the remaining oil and, when it is hot, add the ginger and fry for a minute. Pour in the stock and bring to the boil, then stir in the roasted vegetables and add salt and pepper.
- Remove the pan from the heat and, using a hand blender, blend the mixture until smooth. Return to the heat to warm through and serve hot with crusty bread.

Opportunities!

Rotary Young Environmentalist Award.

This competition is open to young people up to the age of 17, whether working as an individual or in a team (up to four people). You are invited to develop a solution, campaign, or practical project in response to this year's theme - "Happiness in Nature." Projects should demonstrate actions taken or aim to inspire others to take action on an environmental issue related to the theme. Contact your local district to find out the relevant deadlines.

More information can be found [here](#) and those interested can also contact local Rotary member Richard High - richardhigh5@btinternet.com.



These opportunities may be of interest to young people involved in school allotments.



East of England Apples and Orchards Project

Every year The Papillon Project works with fellow charity the [East of England Apples and Orchards Project](#) who very kindly donate a very generous number of fruit trees to schools, via us, to help build school orchards of any size. If you and your school are interested in obtaining some fruit trees for your school allotment, please email your relevant member of the charity staff to find out more. We usually collect fruit trees (apples and pears) in January and help schools plant them out before the end of March.



RHS Sandringham Flower Show 2026 - Upcycled Containers Competition

Local groups, schools, and organisations can get creative and connect with the community by showcasing their mini-gardens made from upcycled containers at an RHS Flower Show.

This year's theme is Biodiversity at Heart.

The design should fit inside a 2x2m square and there is an RHS grant of £50 to help towards costs.

Deadline for applications is Monday 1 December 2025. More information including application forms can be found [here](#). The Papillon Project will also be in attendance at this event in July 2026.

ART ON *Allotments*



Thanks to Fuchsia Wilkins for these fantastic tips on how to make your allotment a hub of creativity!

Your school allotment can grow more than just veg - it's a place for all sorts of ideas to take root! From sketching sunflowers to staging a play among the bean poles, your school allotment could be the perfect setting to let your creativity blossom. Think of it as your outdoor studio, stage and muse all rolled into one!

Here are some ways your patch of soil could spark some truly impressive art:

Draw what you grow

Whether you're filling a GCSE portfolio or just having fun, grab a sketchbook and draw the plants, tools...even the bugs that you find on the plot. Let your style develop organically - try quick sketches one week and more detailed botanical-style studies the next.



Make natural dyes

Why not gather petals, leaves and berries and experiment with eco-friendly dyes? Red cabbage produces purple ink, while beetroot gives a shocking pink colour. You could dye fabric for a banner, tie-dye tops or even paint with it. Just remember to look up the plants you're gathering to check they're safe to work with!



Write in nature

Draft poems, short stories or journal entries inspired by your allotment - imagine the dreams of a sprouting seed, or describe the sounds you hear when you relax and tune into nature. You could share them in a school zine or read them out in a writing club.



ART ON *Allotments*



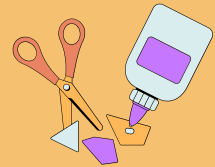
Perform on the plot

Plan a performance - music, dance or drama - among the rows of veg and flowers. Our 'Live at the Allotment' events at Reepham High School have always been hugely popular, and a great way to bring the school community together.



Snap the seasons

Document the way your allotment changes through the year, or photograph some of nature's incredible patterns. You could print the pictures for an exhibition or submit them to this very magazine to be featured in the future!



Create signage with style

Have fun with the infrastructure on your plot and add colour to the palettes and tyres that shape your beds and growing areas. Lots of students at our allotments like to paint signs and murals to make their growing space truly unique.



Not-so fast fashion

Design clothes or a textiles project inspired by the colours and patterns on your school plot. Make leaf prints, collect petals for a colour palette or plan embroidery based on plant forms to link sustainability with style.



Repurpose found materials

Collect twigs, stones...even seed packets...and turn them into collages or eco-art sculptures, to show upcycling in action and celebrate sustainability.



...and there are so many more ways to get creative on the allotment, from recording the sounds around you to working together to make a group mural or an incredible installation from recycled materials.



Just remember: allotments aren't only about producing food - they're the perfect place to grow ideas, too. Artistic inspiration comes from everywhere, so the next time you're out weeding or watering, we challenge you to think about all the amazing things you could make!



Thank you to our incredible
volunteers across Norfolk!

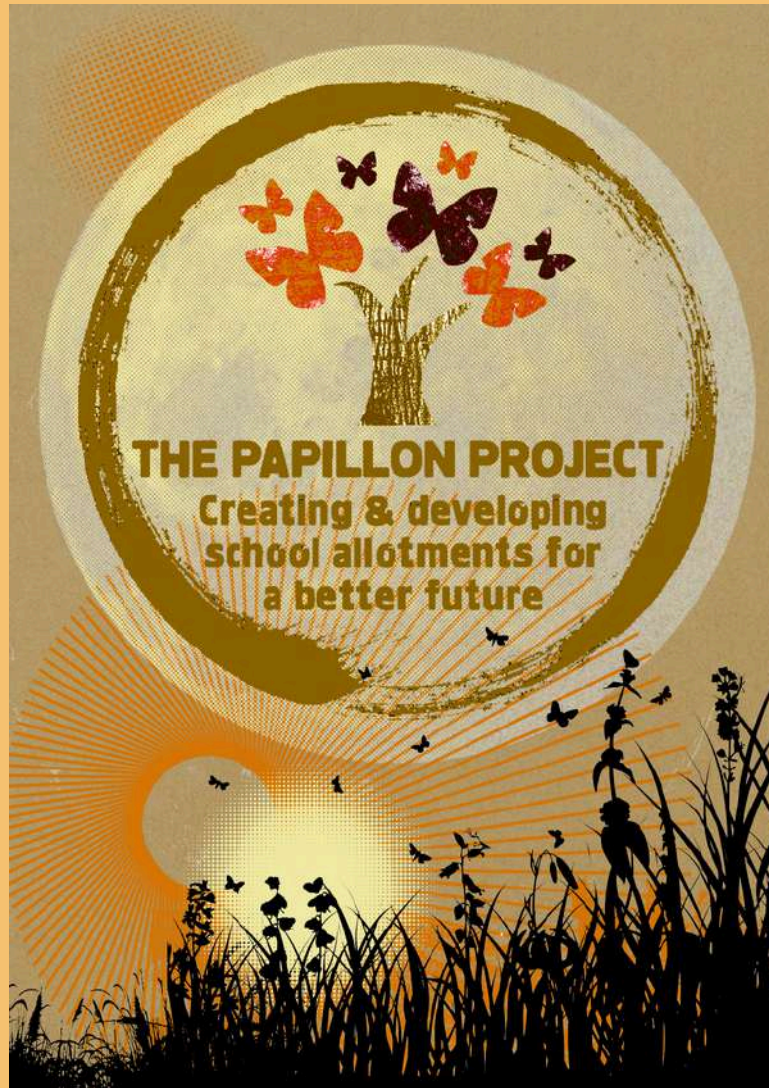
Our school allotments
simply could not exist
without your hard work!



TEAM  UP!



Thank you for reading!!



We want your feedback on
The Kaleidoscope. [Click here](#) to
share your thoughts and opinions.

