

IN FOCUS Trees are planted as Market Field Grows continues to do just that



■ Employment - the Market Field Grows project gives students the chance to earn a living



■ Discussions - the team work together as they plant trees in Wrabness



■ Ecology - Denis Metaj helps plant a tree

AN initiative designed to give special needs students a taste of employment is continuing to grow – much like the trees being planted as part of the scheme.

Market Field Grows is a charity project launched by the Market Field School and College in Elmstead Market, which started life last November.

It is funded by The Essex Community Foundation, The Suffolk Community Foundation, Sanctuary Homes and The Tudwick Foundation.

The enterprise is running in partnership with Michael Wooden, of the Clacton-based Big Green Internet, who aims to plant one million trees in Essex in the next ten years.

As part of the project seven youngsters from Market Field College have been employed as gardeners and having been blossoming in their new paid roles.

They have helped plant a staggering 800 trees a day in Wrabness in between their studying hours all while earning above the living wage.

Sanctuary supported the project by handing over £14,000 in funding for tools and a vehicle for the team.

Naomi Andrews, project manager and trustee of Market Field Farm Charity, which runs Market Field

PICTURES: Steve Brading

Grows, said: “We needed to do something so I put the feelers out.

“We have an amazing group of young people who will not have work when they finish college unless we step in to do something.

“They are just flourishing and are so happy and a few of their mums have told us their whole week revolves around the work and that they really look forward to it.

“We are just so proud of them because they are so supportive of each other and they have a sense of camaraderie and community pride.

“This project is a legacy for them and in ten years’ time they will be able to look back and see woodland and that is really bringing them all together.”

Following the success of the project so far, Naomi and headteacher Gary Smith are already looking towards the future and how the scheme can continue and expand.

Michael from the Big Green Internet, now wants to double the work force and employ more of the college’s students.

Gary added: “Mike has found them to be more employable than others because of their willingness to learn and get on with things.

“He has said to me if he can get the right things in place he is ready to employ at least three of them after they leave college.”



■ Driven - the young Market Field students waste no time



■ Support - the project leaders get their hands dirty as work gets underway with the planting



■ Team - the team with the hardworking youngsters



■ Employee - Kai Blagden hard at work



■ Driven - Liam Boardman leads the way