**Press Release**

**Strawberry Field to receive European Social Fund grant for Steps to Work programme**

Good news for Strawberry Field and young adults in the local area hoping to benefit from its Steps to Work programme as the European Social Fund awards funding.

The European Social Fund (ESF) Managing Authority has approved in principle an award to The Salvation Army of a grant estimated at £628,152 delivered until 2023. Of the grant, £210,000 will part-fund the Steps to Work programme over a period of 3 years.

This award will enable The Salvation Army to support those furthest from the job market, including those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health issues, to gain the employment-readiness experience, skills and vocational training required to find meaningful and secure paid employment.

The successful application integrates Strawberry Field’s ‘Steps to Work’ programme and The Salvation Army’s ‘Employment Plus’ service and will enable The Salvation Army to reach c.500+ participants over the lifetime of the project. News of the award was greeted with delight by Strawberry Field Mission Director, Major Kathy Versfeld, who said:

“This is absolutely amazing news, at a time when many have little to celebrate and opportunities for work appear to be shrinking.  Now, more than ever, we need this funding to support the vulnerable members of our communities and to give them hope of better days to come.”

And by Employment Plus Director, Rebecca Keating who said:

‘We are delighted with this success. Employment Plus has been working with those furthest from the labour market in Liverpool in recent years with great success. This additional funding will allow us to work alongside our colleagues on the ‘Steps to Work’ Programme and provide the community with much needed integrated support in these challenging times’.

To find out more about the Steps to Work programme and how the team at Strawberry Field are supporting young adults into work, visit <https://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com/steps-work>

To find out more about the Employment Plus team, the work we do, and how to contact us, visit <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/employment-plus>

**-ENDS-**

Media enquiries please contact The Salvation Army Strawberry Field Press Team:

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Location - Beaconsfield Rd, Woolton, Liverpool L25 6EJ

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Salvation Army is an international Christian church and registered charity, which has been transforming lives for more than 150 years. Working in 131 countries worldwide, The Salvation Army offers friendship, practical help and support to people of all ages, backgrounds and needs. In the UK and Republic of Ireland this work includes more than 750 community churches and social centres. Registered Charity Nos. 214779, 215174 and in Scotland SC009359, SC037691. For more information visit the website [www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk)

FACT SHEET

The Salvation Army and Strawberry Field

* Strawberry Field was purchased by The Salvation Army in 1934. The organisation opened the site as a children’s home in 1936 and for nearly 70 years the site supported some of Liverpool’s most vulnerable children until it closed in 2005.
* A young John Lennon lived nearby and played in the grounds. It eventually inspired him to write the song Strawberry Fields Forever.
* In the summer of 2019 The Salvation Army opened a new visitor centre on site. The centre is a welcome addition to Beatles tourism in the city, with responsible tourism at its heart. It is home to a brand-new visitor experience, complete with visitor exhibition, café, shop and gardens, as well as a Steps to Work programme, which aims to help young adults with learning difficulties and other barriers to employment into work.

The grounds and interactive exhibition

* Visitors through the exhibition learn about the site’s history and connection with The Salvation Army, including exclusive insights into the former Salvation Army children’s home, John Lennon's childhood and the writing and recording of the famous song, as told by John’s close friends and family.
* The Imagine More Café offers a tempting menu including breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea, sourced from local producers.
* The shop stocks a wide range of exclusive Strawberry Field memorabilia. An online shop is also available <https://store.strawberryfieldliverpool.com>
* The gardens, where John Lennon used to play as a child, offer a calm space for reflection and a place to explore spirituality.

Responsible Tourism

* Profits from the Visitor Centre help to fund the Steps to Work programme, which supports local young people, aged 18-25 with learning difficulties and other barriers to employment. The programme aims to remove barriers and support trainees into employment. The 12-18month employability programme includes an 8 week ‘work readiness course’ followed by 3, three month work placements with a local employer, which could include the Strawberry Field shop, visitor exhibition, café or garden. These work placements include two days a week at work and two days a week at The City of Liverpool College.

Visiting Strawberry Field

* To ensure safety during this time of Covid 19, tickets to the visitor exhibition must be booked in advance. More details available at [www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com](http://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com)
* Visitor Experience Adult entry is currently £8.95
* Under 16’s go FREE with paying adult
* Free admission with ID for NHS worker and guest – Strawberry Field is participating in Britain Unites – A nationwide initiative to thank our NHS, from the UK travel & tourism industry <https://www.britainunites.co.uk>
* The popular Imagine More Café at Strawberry Field is open but with a difference. Tables must be booked in advance by calling 07407088968.
* The site is a short walk away from John Lennon’s childhood home in Menlove Avenue where he lived with this Aunt Mimi.
* Strawberry Field is open and accessible to everyone, thanks to its Changing Places toilet facilities please see our recent release: <http://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com/news>

Health and Safety

* We’re GOOD TO GO - Strawberry Field has been awarded Visit England & Visit Britain’s industry wide health & safety standard for visitors known as “GoodToGo”
* Visitors must book ahead to enable the team to control capacity across the exhibition, café, garden and shop.
* Social distancing of 2m must be adhered to on site. The site is currently operating limited visitor numbers.
* Temperature checks are being conducted upon entry.
* In line with the current UK government requirements regarding the wearing of masks, all visitors to our centre are required to wear a face covering.
* Media guides are disinfected before each use and touchscreen bags and disposable ear covers are available.
* Sanitising towers are available throughout the building.
* All facilities including toilets undergo strict cleaning throughout the day.
* Full details of health & safety standards can be found on the website <https://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com/visiting-us-during-coronavirus>