

To: Noelle Gilbert
Volunteering England

From: Richard Clare
41 b Burns Road
Sheffield S6 3GL

I am writing as per your instructions on the phone on 20th February 2005, to put a formal request in writing, under the Freedom of Information Act (if need be). I believe that as an employee at the time, I have a right to request this information.

Please could you provide for me the project report which Lynn Gillette compiled after her visit in April 2004. Namely for the Organic Gardening for Health Project which was funded by Opportunities for Volunteering from April 2001 to March 2004.

I was shocked when you told me you thought that I had not worked on the project, since I was actually instrumental in developing the gardens for six years before the funded project began and was the mainstay of actual provision and the delivery of the project throughout the 3 years of Opp.s for Vol.s funding. It was me who took all the lovely pictures and kept the diary which provided you with sufficient evidence of activity that you did not need to check up on us for the 3 funded years.

I was and still am proud of my contribution and would very much like evidence of this achievement for my Curriculum Vitae. I recall that I was told that this project was judged to be in the top 5 % of national O 4 V – funded projects. I would like to be able to show potential future employers evidence that we did so well in the first 2 years that we secured a third year's funding.

You explained that your expectation of good practice was that everyone involved in the project and the assessment visit should be shown the report. I can confirm that this was not the case. I repeatedly requested sight of the document from management who did not comply. To my knowledge participating volunteers, co-workers and the charity's trustees were not shown this information either.

I was very pleased and re-assured by how thorough Lynn's exploration of the project was and by the fact that she was prepared to criticise and make recommendations for the management of the project. To me this could explain why the report was not made available.

This enquiry is motivated by my need for evidence of my work experience and achievements for the benefit of my current and future career. I am currently studying for a PGCE and successfully delivering Organics courses on a freelance basis.

I do not wish to make a retrospective complaint to you about the quality of management on this project, but I am willing to provide further information and hard evidence if you were interested as an organisation in reviewing and improving your monitoring processes to guarantee better practices in future.