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To whom it may concern,

These are certainly extraordinary times, but the government and all of us need to remember that spring leading into summer is a significant time for charities, such as community gardens, social farms and other charities involved in some way with horticulture, animal husbandry, growing food and horticultural therapy, providing services and meaningful work for volunteers, and employment for staff.

City Farms and Community Gardens rely on self-generated income from corporate social responsibility volunteering - as well as Trust funding, contracts and selling produce. Because of Covid-19 these incredible organisations are facing significant and ongoing drops in income. These gardens and social farms are essential for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of all of us and, in particular, vulnerable people, older people, people with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Animals need to be cared for, gardens need to be nurtured, food needs to be grown, which have positive effects on the people living in these communities, but this is only possible if the government provides funding now, as charities do not qualify for Enterprise Relief Grants.

Government needs to step in to ensure our communities continue to thrive and the health of our nation continues.

I know these are difficult times, but in addition to help and support from the government, I urge all of us to consider their local community gardens and social farms and donate what you can. A disease should not be the reason for the demise and collapse of charities.

Regards

Mark

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garden and landscape designer