



Dunton Community Garden Group

Charity No. 1113186
www.duntongarden.org

Annual Report to 31st January 2025

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1. Summary by Acting Chair

2024/25 has been a tremendous year for the Dunton Community Garden Group. We have been extremely successful both financially and increasing the involvement of the community. I would like to offer massive congratulations and heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and supporters who helped to make this outstanding year.

Our excellent end-of-year financial result shows receipts of £32,069 a significant increase against the last year (£5,363 double the previous year). This huge increase is due to the award of major grants from Central Bedford Council and the National Grid to refurbish parts of the Garden and replace much needed equipment and tables. These grants are restricted to specific projects, which means the entire amount of the Grants (£23,438) had to be spent as designated and not used for general or other expenses.

It is remarkable that our usual fund-raising activity also achieved record amounts through community events, such as regular coffee mornings, special events and sale of produce and preserves which together contributed greatly to our core (unrestricted) income. We'd like to extend an enormous thank you Thelma, and Fay, the cake makers of Dunton and of course to Joy for her wonderful jams and preserves. We are sad to see Joy step back from the Garden, her support and legendary cooking skills have been so popular with members for many years and instrumental in the success of the Garden.

Having achieved our aim of making the Garden more accessible to those less mobile and with young families we have attracted more visitors than ever and created greater awareness of the Garden's work. We are pleased that everyone who visits the Garden, regardless of their age, ability and skill level can enjoy a safe, stimulating and welcoming environment.

We continue to develop strong links within the Village Community and wider partnerships, for example, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Council have used the Garden for Wellbeing and woodwork classes. The Memorial Hall and Recreation Association were involved in the highly successful Summer Garden Party, as were a local scout group, small businesses, and Eyeworth Village Hall. More detail can be found concerning this, other events and Partnerships can be found later in this report.

The School and Church have used the Garden for outdoor lessons and Services, with the magical Church Nativity on Christmas Eve attracting over 200 people. In January we had the highest sales ever for drinks, soups and hot dogs served at the Wassil.

The Garden looks beautiful due mainly to the very hard work of Barry, Bob, Fay, Roy, Sharon and latterly George. Ground Works and the Community Payback Team continue to help with providing additional manpower and specific projects. Without such help we would really struggle, and are keen to encourage more people from the community to be involved in whatever way they can.

It is amazing that Garden has achieved so much with so few people. Our wonderful team worked tirelessly to keep the Garden open during COVID, have managed to consolidate resources enabling survival during the difficult times that followed and have now greatly improve the infrastructure.

Looking forward, using this sound foundation, we plan to build on the improved environment to enable greater use still. We will encourage the community to help us with specific small projects, provide practical learning opportunities and focus on developing organic gardening principles and heritage crafts to enable us to nurture and contribute to a thriving community garden.

Ann Moulder

Acting Chair of DCGG

1. **Membership**

The Dunton Community Garden Group is a membership organisation with the members providing support for the garden through subscription fees, attendance at events and sometimes help out by providing funds or equipment. In return we keep members in touch with the work of the garden and encourage them to get involved to the extent that they choose. We currently have 25 members and therefore encourage everybody who enjoys our beautiful to become members of the DCGG.

2. **Volunteers**

The work of our volunteers is vital to the continued existence and success of the Garden. We currently have about 10 volunteers who generally work as part of three different groups: gardening, admin support and fund-raising. We depend on this small group who give their time regularly or on an ad-hoc basis for particular tasks, e.g. watering plants and harvesting, cake making, mundane but necessary jobs like cleaning the loo and kitchen, and making sure that there is milk, tea and coffee available. We are sincerely grateful for this support, without which the Garden could not function.

An added pressure on our volunteers' time is to ensure that the Garden is available and accessible to the other organisations who are now using the garden. It is estimated that over 60 hours are worked each week to keep the garden going. Much of this work being carried out at times to suit volunteers. Additionally, other volunteers add to this number significantly by carrying out a great deal of work from home such as cooking and baking, administrative tasks, research, providing social media, preparing accounts and bid writing.

3. **Committee**

Throughout 2024/5 we have had five trustees: Ann Moulder (Acting Chair) Chris Bugg (Treasurer), Jayne Watkins (Secretary), Hazel House and Liz Lavelle. The trustees have also been supported by Celia in an advisory administrative role. In addition, we benefit from a dedicated small group of people who are not trustees but regularly attend Core Group meetings to provide input and expertise that underpin the Garden plans and running of the charity.

We would urge all current members and those interested in the Garden to consider whether they could further support our work by also becoming trustees or supporting the committee. We hold friendly and regular informal meetings for the core group and trustees. We would welcome more people with a variety of skills, to join the group.

4. **Funding**

This year our total receipts for 2024/5 were £32,069 and our expenditure was £29,778.

Income has been bolstered by significant Grants of £13,157 from Central Bedfordshire Council, to which we had to provide additional match funding of 20%. The National Grid awarded a grant of £10,281.19. These capital grants were to finance specific projects to improve the Garden. Work included laying matting to extend the accessible areas for those with limited mobility and young families, the purchase of a new mower and to buy new picnic tables with wheelchair access. The Co-op has also awarded a minimum grant of £500 to be used to buy equipment/materials for children.

Income from produce, donations, membership and fund-raising was significantly higher than projections totalling £8,631. As with all voluntary organisations we have several unavoidable but costly out-goings such as insurance, maintenance of mowers and IT, but this year considerable effort has been used to reduce these core costs. We are planning to invest in a new soft fruit frame and trees, together with new plants that will be grown according to organic principles.

5. Produce Sales

Sales of chutneys and preserves has been very good this year, spreading our income over a longer period than fresh produce can provide. As well as our own produce, we held plant sales at the Garden Party and Coffee mornings with products being supplied by Bootsies on a sale or return basis. This made for a delightful and diverse display.

6. Working with and support from other organisations and events

The Garden Party. We provided refreshments with delicious homemade cakes, cream teas beverages etc. and ran various competitions, such as lucky dip arranged by Lorraine, and mindful walk led by Boo. The event brought together a number of village organisations who had stalls or ran workshops. These included; a talk about Bee Keeping from Wallie Thrale; The Memorial Hall had a Pimms and Prosecco Stall; and DRA a plate smash. Saxon Gate Flowers sold organic flower arrangements, Maynards ice-cream was also sold. Sue Lobban helped plan the day, organising a very successful raffle and supporting various activities. The fundraising amount she achieved was matched by Barclays Bank.

The attendance of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue caused great excitement for the children (and a few adults) as did the Land Train provided by Pete's Activities.

Throughout the event Da Capo Brass Quintet played beautiful music and Simon Bailes, our wonderful MC kept everyone informed and everything on track.

Overall the event took over £4,400, with the Garden raising £2,390 (including Barclays match) with a final profit of £2,173.

Coffee mornings continue to be held on a regular basis with the numbers consistently growing. The primary aim of the coffee mornings is to offer a social event that brings more people into the garden from the surrounding area. We hope this increases interest in the Garden and are grateful for the fund raising opportunity.

Our Landlord: we are most grateful to our Landlords, Adam and Catherine Lee, from whom we lease the Garden at a peppercorn rent, they continue to support our development and provide very practical help, such as crafting the manger for our Nativity, offering additional parking at the Garden Party and moving heavy materials.

Our links with **Simon Bailes, the Morris Men and the Wassail** remain strong. Simon was MC at our Garden Party and we supported the Wassail by providing hot dogs and soup.

Greater links with the **Church** flourish, Garden Members attend the coffee mornings and sell produce at the Church Christmas Fair. A number of outdoor services and joint craft events were held at, or supported by the Garden. The Christmas Nativity was outstanding, with over 200 people watching the truly magical children's performance.

Use by the **Village School** has increased, and the open barn is used as a classroom to support learning.

We link with **Eyeworth** by attending each other's events and sharing social media.

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Council (BRCC) we have been fortunate in gaining much support and advice from BRCC. The well-being groups have been beneficial to those that attend. These and the woodcraft workshops have generated rental income.

Strong working relationships with the following organisations has had a huge impact:

Community Payback Team: we have benefited hugely from the input of the community payback teams who visit the Garden bi-weekly to carry out repairs and maintenance and support preparations for our larger events.

Milestones: We have had great assistance from Milestones who have provided both practical help to improve the Garden and expertise with specific projects.

With our limited time and manpower their input has enabled larger maintenance projects to be completed, which otherwise would not have got done.

7. Visitors

We are pleased to see that more families, individuals, dog walkers and groups are enjoying the Garden. The work carried out to make the Garden more accessible is attracting those who are less mobile and young families in increasing numbers who previously were not able to easily join in our social events.

The Garden Party and Nativity attracted record numbers and introduced it to people who were not previously aware of its existence, and having found our 'hidden treasure' are coming back in their own time to enjoy its peace and quiet.

This and the regular use by organisations such as the school, church, and various groups means that we have had a huge increase numbers and a diverse range of visitors in Garden, which we are keen to grow further in the coming year.

8. Training

A number of courses/training for volunteers and the committee have been made available.

9. The Future

Our aim of increasing reach into the local community by communicating with residents, the school, church and other organisations to make as many people as possible aware of our wonderful free resource has been successful. We will build on this in the coming year by:

- Establishing if the current membership offer is still meaningful, or is a different type of 'community' more suitable? for example, having Friends of the Garden, rather than members.
- Conducting a survey to establish satisfaction levels and ascertain how we might better meet the needs of the community and establish the benefits that members would like to see from their involvement.
- Providing workshops to increase the knowledge of organic gardening, heritage crafts and wellbeing.
- Continuing to hold regular social events so the Garden becomes a welcoming and accessible focal point within the community.
- Building links with other organisations to extend the use of the Garden by diverse groups who will benefit from the tranquil environment.
- Promoting the different ways to support the work of the garden to increase the number of helpers we can call upon, especially for specific tasks and events.

We have been awarded a prestigious Grant by the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation to create Dunton Community Garden Arts and Heritage Hub. Working with Simon Bailes and BRCC, this project aligns to the aims of our constitution (see below). We will protect, promote and share traditional skills, practices and activities to pass these skills on, thus securing their future, as well as provide an inspirational environment to develop new and exciting techniques. For example, we will encompass our exceptional natural environment and utilise available produce, such as cultivating apples and then making juice and/or cider, or growing/coppicing /weaving willow.

We will also stage traditional performances such as Morris and Maypole Dancing and hold workshops to develop art and crafts skills linked to the Garden and Nature.

Dunton Community Garden Group – notes from the Constitution:

The objects for which the organisation is established are the charitable purposes of the advancement of education and of social welfare.....the Group shall:

- a) advance education for the benefit of the public, in particular in organic gardening;*
- b) promote the preservation of the environment in particular by running a garden with organic gardening methods which include horticulture and recycling;*
- c) promote for the benefits of the inhabitants of Dunton and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.*

DUNTON COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP
Receipts and Payments Account for year ended 31st January 2025

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
	£	£	Totals	Totals
			£	£
RECEIPTS				
Donations	1,837	-	1,837	926
McMillan Donations	-	-	-	-
Grants	575	23,438	575	1297
Members' Subscriptions	259	-	259	309
Sales	<u>5,960</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,960</u>	<u>2,831</u>
Total Receipts	8,631	23,438	32,069	5,363
PAYMENTS				
Equipment	940	2,390	3,330	868
Insurance	168	-	168	953
Repairs/Maintenance	506	-	506	1,157
Subscriptions	-	-	-	-
Supplies	3,031	-	3,031	816
Staff / Teaching	-	-	-	-
Training	-	-	-	-
Volunteers' expenses	-	-	-	-
Premises	2,508	20,097	22,605	694
Newsletter, Website, Publicity	28	-	28	28
Office Costs	119	-	119	-
McMillan donation	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Payments	<u>7,301</u>	<u>22,487</u>	<u>29,788</u>	<u>4,516</u>
Surplus / (Deficit)	1330	951	2,281	847

DUNTON COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP
Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st January 2025

	2025	2024
RESERVES	£	£
General funds b/f 1/02/2024	7,313	6,466
Restricted funds b/f 1/02/2024	181	181
Surplus/(Deficit) year ended 31/01/2025	<u>2,281</u>	<u>847</u>
Total Reserves c/f 31/01/2025	<u>9,776</u>	<u>7,494</u>
Of which, restricted funds c/f 31/01/2025	1,133	181
REPRESENTED BY	£	
Balance at Bank 31/01/2025	9,676	
Less: Unpresented cheques	<u>0</u>	
	<u>9,676</u>	
Add: Cash Float	<u>100</u>	
As above, Total Reserves	<u>9,776</u>	

FIXED ASSETS	£
Converted Shipping Containers*	25,088
Compost Toilet*	9,892
Polytunnel*	5,150
Three sided shed**	5,689
Misc. Equipment***	<u>3,330</u>
	<u>49,149</u>

* Valued at cost, 2009
** Valued at cost, 2010
*** Valued at cost 2024

Other Assets		
Debtors	0	0
Liabilities		
G.S Lee, electricity & rent	307	307

CERTIFICATE

In my opinion the above account represents all the transactions relating to the Dunton Community Garden Group for the year ended 31st January 2025.

Signed:

Treasurer

Date:

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF DUNTON COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st January 2025, which are set out on pages 1 to 2.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act: and
- whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Dated

John Langsdale
Beech Croft
Bigglewade Road
Dunton
Beds.
SG18 8RL

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Dated

John Langsdale
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