

HITCHIN COMMUNITY GARDENS

England & Wales · Charity number 1145243

Details

Other names	THE TRIANGLE GARDEN; TRIANGLE COMMUNITY GARDEN, Triangle Community Garden
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	07676360
Registered	2012-01-03
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	23 Priory Way Hitchin SG4 9BJ
Phone	07887 725962
Email	info@trianglegarden.org
Website	www.trianglegarden.org

Activities

Objects: TO PROVIDE A COMMUNITY GARDEN FOR THE RECREATION AND EDUCATION OF PEOPLE LIVING IN HITCHIN AND THE SURROUNDING AREA, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES.

Activities: Hitchin Community Gardens is more commonly known as The Triangle Community Garden. Our purpose is to help people of all ages and abilities lead more fulfilling lives, through community gardening and contact with the natural world. We do this through: Supporting physical and mental health via social therapeutic horticulture Volunteering opportunities Community events/workshops Forest School

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, Arts/culture/heritage/science, Environment/conservation/heritage, Recreation
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE, LOCAL.
- Cambridgeshire
- Central Bedfordshire
- Hertfordshire
- Luton

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-08-31	£64,256	£70,796	-	-
2023-08-31	£66,222	£64,196	-	-
2022-08-31	£51,246	£41,796	-	-
2021-08-31	£56,079	£40,988	-	-
2020-08-31	£42,199	£37,088	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
VICTORIA MARY WYER	Chair	2012-01-03
Caroline Borensztajn		2025-06-17
Hilary Jean Oughton		2016-10-05
Holly Louise Butcher		2025-08-19
Isabelle Robinson		2024-01-11
JOHN ANTHONY WYER		2012-01-03
Katherine Maria Hughes		2024-03-14
Stephanie White		2025-08-19

HITCHIN COMMUNITY GARDENS

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Accounts



Triangle Community Garden

Created and cultivated by people of all ages and abilities at Ransom's Rec Hitchin, Herts

Annual Review 2023-24

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2023-24

After the massive changes we underwent in 2022-23, this year has been a year of review, consolidation, and outreach. During her time with us, Project Manager Alice Woodward overhauled our internal processes and helped our new staff team secure an impressive 'Good' in last year's Provider Assessment Market Management Solution (PAMMS) inspection. Business Development / Outreach lead Ed Harkness revamped our New Shoots project, initiated our Branching Out Easter Scheme and built relationships with many referrers and funders. Current Project Manager Julie Zirngast has taken these gains and run with them, moving the charity forward on all fronts, and creating many new opportunities. None of which would be possible without our outstanding staff and volunteer team.



Sunday Garden Club



Our Growing Ability monthly stall

We're active in three areas within Ransom's Rec (near Hitchin station): the allotments, our Community Nature Garden and our riverside Forest Garden. The areas vary in character and each has different challenges and rewards. All three sites continue to thrive under the loving care of our three green-care projects: Garden Club, New Shoots and Growing Ability.

Growing Ability works long-term with adults with additional needs such as learning disabilities, autism, and severe or enduring mental illness. The project focuses on the goals, abilities and support needs of each individual, and using horticulture, food growing and engagement in nature to increase the health, wellbeing, self-esteem and self-confidence of our 'gardeners'.

New Shoots is a 6-week project for people with stress, anxiety or depression. It uses the five ways to wellbeing to bring about improved health and wellbeing in a nature-based setting. Many New Shoots participants join our **Friday Garden Club** to nurture our community spaces and help at our events.

The projects we introduced last year - **Family Forest School**, **Triangle Tribe** and **Sunday Garden Club** – continue to thrive. We have secured ongoing funding for the first two and will run the third from our own funds in 2025, when we're planning several new initiatives as you'll find out on page 10.

Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees

Our vision is for **a community where people feel happier and more fulfilled through a connection with gardening and the natural world.**

Our aim is to help people of all ages and abilities to **'connect, grow enjoy!'**, through gardening and contact with the natural world. We do this through:

- Supporting physical and mental health using social and therapeutic horticulture, arts and crafts, cooking and a focus on healthy living
- Providing volunteering opportunities,
- Running skills workshops and
- Holding community events.

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Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Growing Ability

Growing Ability is our social therapeutic horticulture project for people with additional needs, including learning disabilities, autism, brain injury and severe or enduring mental illness.

Through supported learning and meaningful activities in the community Growing Ability helps people grow in confidence and self-worth, increase their independence, and develop and reinforce key skills.

Those who attend gain valuable training and experience not only in horticulture, gardening and food growing. They also prepare, cook and share the food they've grown among the groups.

Our Growing Ability 'gardeners' also regularly take part in activities such as nature conservation, mindful exercise, making art and crafts, selling produce and taking orders/making refreshments. This year they've used their skills to pot up succulents and make hanging baskets and wooden herb troughs to sell at our monthly stalls within Thursday sessions.

At Growing Ability we welcome new people including those transitioning from school or college.

We provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where sessions are structured in a person-centred way. This allows us to focus on the goals that each individual wants to achieve, while also incorporating key training, reflection and life skills experience.

The project is primarily based at our allotments but also incorporates the Pavilion, Triangle Garden, Forest Garden and Ransom's Recreation Ground. Regular trips to gardens of interest are an important part of the Growing Ability calendar.

Sessions are 2.5 hours long and there is a charge to attend (from £30 per session, depending on support need). Individuals pay via Direct Payments, their PIP or ISF or have the placement commissioned by Herts County Council, while some are self-funded. Sessions run Tuesday-Thursday with a capacity of 6-8 gardeners per session. Each session is run by two experienced care professionals, and at least one trained volunteer.

Running a successful vegetable plot requires planning and organisational skills, decision making, fine-motor skills and the application of literacy and numeracy. Growing food involves our gardeners in shared goals and responsibilities, like watering each other's plots, as well as creativity, experimentation and resilience.

Our staff and volunteers understand the reciprocal benefits of working with nature: planting and nurturing a seed starts a process of growth in a mutually beneficial relationship. The rewards are shared and enjoyed, and the challenges borne and overcome together.

Growing Ability taps into the healing and restorative powers of nature to embed a culture of wellbeing, personal growth and connection.



Pedal-powered smoothies!



Nettle soup made at GA

Growing Ability
welcomes young
people transitioning
from school
or college

Please contact us
for details:
info@trianglergarden.org

Find out more at www.trianglergarden.org

Growing Ability continued

In September 2023 there were 15 individuals attending Growing Ability, down from 20 the previous year. Several gardeners had left to join local free-to-attend horticulture projects. We saw this progression as a testament to the power of Growing Ability in promoting confidence and resilience in all those who attend. But without a steady stream of new gardeners coming on board, this success could be the undoing of us.

We know there is a local need for Growing Ability which deserves to be widely known as a welcoming and transformational place for young adults transitioning from school or college into the wider world. I'm pleased that this is now happening.

Through the combined efforts of my predecessor Alice Woodward, our Business Development / Outreach Lead Ed Harkness myself and our brilliant staff team, we have been able to share the excellent work happening at Growing Ability with the wider professional world of social care, both in Herts and across the border in Bedfordshire.

Our [Growing Ability video](#) has helped enormously, and we have had visits from many local care commissioners and user groups, including Herts Adult Commissioning Service for Learning Disabilities, the local Herts Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Mental Health team, and Herts Viewpoint, as well as Natural England, and local MPs Alistair Strathern and Bim Afolami.

I joined the organisation at a pivotal time. During her tenure as Project

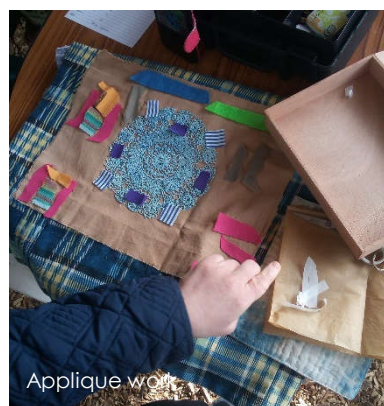
Manager, Alice Woodward reviewed and streamlined our processes in close collaboration with our excellent staff team. In September 2023 we successfully navigated a PAMMS inspection (the equivalent of a CQC inspection for non-residential services) and achieved well-deserved **GOOD**, an overall improvement on 2022.

I'd like to congratulate our staff and volunteers for the professionalism, care and dedication of their work, and thank our gardeners and their parents and carers for their positive feedback, independently given.

This year, our gardeners at Growing Ability have enjoyed many trips including to Buzzworks Bee Garden, Hitchin Garden Centre and Cambridge Botanical Gardens. They've also taken part in a range of activities including mosaic making, yoga, wassailing, willow weaving, fabric dyeing, applique, making soups, salads and desserts, as well as several enterprise projects such as hanging baskets, potted succulents, herb planters, and pedal-powered smoothies on our new smoothie bike!

I'm delighted to say that all our outreach work is paying off and we have had **five new gardeners** join the project since Easter, three during this review period. We're very grateful to Westland and Emmaus for donations in kind, to all the companies, trusts and individuals who have supported the project (see page 9), and to our Platinum Sponsors McCarthy Stone and The Letting Quarter.

Julie Zirngast, Project Manager



196 sessions
17 individuals
490 volunteer hrs
3 joiners, 1 leaver
4 off site trips
6 GA stalls

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Branching Out

3 full-day sessions

11 attendees

Statistically significant improvement in wellbeing

Strong links to partner organisations in Beds



A Branching Out participant



New Shoots at CU Botanic Gdns

New Shoots

6 half-day sessions

6 attendees

Statistically significant improvement in wellbeing

Branching Out - Easter 2024

Thanks to funding from the Bedfordshire Charitable Trust, we were able to run a successful and fully subscribed Easter holiday scheme for Bedfordshire residents. Branching Out took place from 9th-11th April and had 11 attendees in total (6 per day). It included a variety of nature-based activities and each session was run by two members of TCG staff plus volunteers and support workers.

We carried out monitoring using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) to generate paired data to monitor and evaluate the project's effect on participants' mental wellbeing. On average, wellbeing scores increased by a statistically significant 6 point score, indicating the scheme's effectiveness as a mental wellbeing intervention.

In addition to this we had 3 referrals to our Growing Ability project from those who attended.

This suggests that the scheme is replicable in future to feed into our core offer of learning disability and mental health support through social and therapeutic horticulture.

The funding from Bedfordshire Charitable Trust also allowed us to deliver significant outreach to schools, colleges and community organisations in Bedfordshire. We have created strong links with these partner organisations and hope to continue working with them in future to generate referrals to future holiday schemes as well as our core services.

Ed Harkness, Outreach Coordinator

New Shoots - September 2023

New Shoots uses community gardening to reduce social isolation and promote mental wellbeing.

The project was set up to respond to the high levels anxiety, stress and depression brought on by the pandemic and exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. Initially we ran it as a 15 week block, but in September 2023 we experimented with a more structured programme of **six weeks**, each session based around one of the **five ways to wellbeing**:

- Being physical
- Connecting with people
- Giving to others
- Learning new skills
- Experiencing mindfulness

As before, the block culminated in a trip to Cambridge Botanic Gardens with our Friday Garden Club and an offer to continue volunteering with one of our weekly or monthly Garden Clubs.

The WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scores) at the beginning and end of each block, showed a statistically significant improvement in wellbeing taken as a median across the group.

Feedback from the 6 week cohort showed the highest improvement in the following areas:

- **Feeling useful**
- **Feeling relaxed**
- **Feeling closer to other people**
- **Feeling interested in new things**

One September participant now volunteers with Sunday Garden Club.

We have been struggling to get sufficient referrals to run further blocks of New Shoots in 2024 but we are determined to persevere and run it in future years.

Ed Harkness, Outreach Coordinator

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Family Forest School and Triangle Tribe

This is our second year of providing Forest School opportunities at the Triangle Garden, in collaboration with **Tanya Dickson at Culturewood CiC**, and we're delighted to report that all sessions have been pretty much fully booked across the year. Feedback has been excellent.

Our provision covers a range of age groups with Family Forest School activities catering for families with children aged 3-12, and Triangle Tribe tailored to families with older children aged 12-16, with more of a bushcraft focus.

Triangle Tribe:

Over the last year, we've provided a range of engaging activities including:

- Knife Skills: Crafting spoons using basic carving techniques.
- Pewter Work: Designing moulds and smelting pewter over the campfire.
- Survival Skills: Covering basic survival techniques.
- Bat Walk & Talk: Exploring the natural world
- International Campfire Cooking: Preparing and enjoying foods from different cultures over the campfire.
- Crafting with Natural Resources: For example, making blowpipes from elder branches or crafting stick star decorations.
- Ancient Fire-Making Techniques: Exploring traditional methods of creating fire.
- Mindful Moments: Many activities integrate mindfulness and wellbeing, with some sessions including simple breathing exercises and other mindful techniques.

Intended outcomes are to build individual and community resilience, strengthen family bonds, tackle isolation, create new networks, nurture interests outside the digital world, foster environmental awareness, reduce anxiety and encourage safe exploration of risk boundaries. Here's a quote from one of our Triangle Tribe parents:

'I found the sessions of Triangle Tribe very beneficial for my daughter ... She got to learn new skills in a different environment, all within a friendly situation so it felt like fun. I could see that she was less stressed after these sessions and always looked forward to the next ... As well as helping my daughter, I also found these sessions a good relaxing end to the week. Meeting other parents is an added bonus for me, and I love learning some outdoor skills.'

Family Forest School sessions have a slightly different structure, offering a more open-ended approach. Each session provides access to a range of hand tools and natural resources, allowing children to explore and create freely.

Popular activities include:

- Crafting items like wands, swords, blowpipes, pea shooters, bows and arrows, fishing rods, and more, by peeling sticks and using tools.
- Enjoying physical activities such as swinging in hammocks, using tree swings, or trying out the slackline.
- Gathering around the campfire to toast marshmallows, enjoy hot chocolate, and reflect on the session together

This approach allows children to revisit and repeat favourite activities, fostering a sense of familiarity and mastery while encouraging creativity and play.

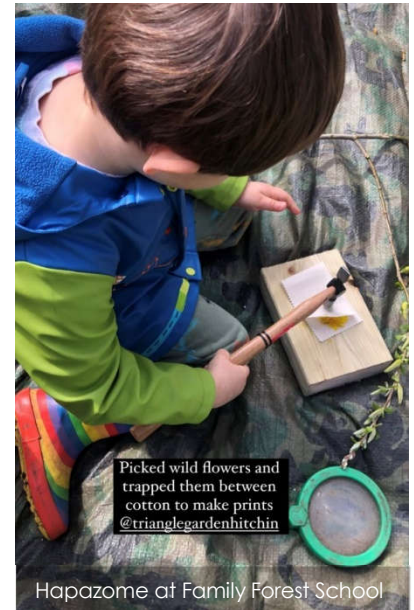
Family Forest School meets monthly, every fourth Sunday morning 11am-12.30 plus half-terms and holidays. **Triangle Tribe** meets every third Friday evening 6.30-8.30pm. Sessions need to be booked in advance as places are limited. Both initiatives are neurodivergent-friendly.

We're very grateful to Hitchin Youth Trust and North Herts Council's Community Fund for part-funding the continuation of Family Forest School and Triangle Tribe, respectively, from July 2024 to July 2025.

Tanya Dickson, Culturewood CiC
Vicky Wyer, Triangle Garden

10 Triangle Tribe sessions
55 attendees including
30 young people

13 Family Forest School
sessions
232 attendees including
127 children



To book your place at Family Forest School or Triangle Tribe please visit trianglegarden.org/events

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Our Garden Clubs

Friday Garden Club meets every Friday morning from 10am for some gentle guided social gardening. It is open to anyone, and its purpose is to maintain and develop the Triangle Garden and Forest Garden for the benefit of people and nature. Members enjoy learning new gardening skills, meeting new friends and being active in the fresh air, while making a positive contribution to the community and biodiversity. There are also regular trips and outings, and a shared allotment.

A very important part of the Garden Club experience is the cuppa, cake and chat at the end of each session! Thanks go to Lesley for her homemade cakes at coffee time, often using produce from our sites.

Friday Garden Club has been running for **ten years** now, since June 2014, when I joined the organisation to coordinate, plan and run what had previously been ad hoc volunteer-run gardening sessions.

This year has seen another increase in volunteers with **an average of 10 attending each session**. Many of our volunteers have been attending for a number of years, and new members are always welcome. Amongst those volunteers is Chris, who was there in the early days and remains an integral part of the group, producing plants to sell and the ever popular jams and chutneys we sell at our community events and at our Hitchin Farmers Market plant stall in May.

Overall Friday Garden Club volunteers have this year put in **788 hours of time** on the gardens, and also provide invaluable help at our Apple Day and Summer Fete.

We have had trips this year, as we often do, to Cambridge Botanic Garden and to Walworth Community Garden in London.

Unfortunately the Triangle Garden suffered some fire damage over the summer, but it was mainly confined to the paved areas and the trees overhanging

the compost bins which need management anyway. Most of the planting is now well established and we added more bulbs and perennials over the year to boost biodiversity. The Forest Garden continues to mature and provides a range of unusual plants to harvest. Our volunteers receive many positive comments about the garden from dog walkers and visitors while we are working there.

Sunday Garden Club has seen **72 volunteers** attending the monthly sessions, of whom **28 were children**. Tasks have included bulb planting, wildflower planting and fruit tree pruning. The gardens also hosted two **Beaver groups** this year who had the chance to learn about and create insect habitats, do bug hunts and take root cuttings.

Groundwork UK ran a **GOGA session** (Go Outside Get Active) at the garden for people living with substance addiction towards the end of last year, and those who attended learnt how to take mint root cuttings and use hedge trimmers to trim the hedge at the front of the community garden. They also planted a large number of Camassia bulbs in the meadow areas in front of the community and forest gardens.

Local building services company **Crane** continue their volunteering visits to us. They have carried out numerous tasks including preparing our new allotment 2B and installing rainwater harvesting on the polytunnel on 2A. We have some regular volunteers from Crane and new faces join us when they can. We were delighted to be invited to attend Crane's anniversary barbecue event in July this year.

In May **Garden Committee** and the trustees held a joint strategy morning, the outcomes of which have formed the basis of our new programme for 2024-25.

Steve Granger, Garden Club Leader



Hedge cutting at Sunday GC



Friday Garden Club's polytunnel

To find out more about joining Friday Garden Club please contact Steve Granger via steve@trianglergarden.org

To book your free place at Sunday Garden Club visit trianglergarden.org/events

Find out more at www.trianglergarden.org

Community Events and Workshops

Each year we put on a number of workshops and community events to engage and connect people with the natural world, spread the word about what we do and raise funds for our work.

In 2023 we held our annual **Summer Fete** in September as a bit of an experiment, having previously held it in high summer. The timing gave us more time to prepare and meant we weren't competing with so many other local events. We also hoped it would protect us from summer heatwave conditions although that year it didn't prove to be the case!

We expanded the event to include more stalls, activities and entertainments, headlined by Garden City Samba and Imajica Theatre. The aim was to raise awareness of the community garden and our work, and showcase our local collaborators like jewellery tutor Tuuli Parker, dyeplant experts Nature's Rainbow, and Tai Chi practitioner Three Treasures Chris. It was a really well-attended day, raised £550 and sealed the September timing for 2024!

In October 2023 we held our 19th **Apple Day** in Hitchin town centre. A celebration of English apples, local food in season and sustainability, the event was a great success with several new stalls including The Wildlife Trusts, Culturewood and Wymondley Community Garden. The event was supported by a £200 grant from Cllr Hoskins' Locality fund to cover the costs of hiring the square.

May 2024 was a busy month for events with an outreach stall at Plastic Free Hitchin's **Eco-Fair** followed by a very successful **plant stall at Hitchin Farmers' Market** run by Friday Garden Club, which made a whopping £530. Lastly the Millstream pub hosted a **Quiz Night** on our behalf, raising £430 and providing a lovely fun social for us all. We're very grateful to the Millstream for their support.

We also held a **Talk on Dickens** and his local connections at the garden - the first of many garden-based events perhaps?

In 2024 we introduced a number of **new workshops** to our calendar, building on the skills of our staff and volunteer team and collaborating with some great external tutors.

Two of our Garden Club volunteers ran a successful **Festive Wreath Workshop** in December 2023 and Steve Granger used his extensive expertise to run two very well-received **Seasonal Photography Workshops** for us, as well as a well-attended **Vegetable Growing Workshop**.

Local artist Yoshie Allen held three nature-based **Fabric Collage Art Workshops** at the Pavilion in collaboration with us, which were a lovely addition to our events calendar and very popular.

We ran an Easter holiday **Mini-beast Safari** but the wet spring and late onset of warm weather meant the insect count was slightly disappointing. Hopefully our pond works will be finished by next spring we'll be able to reinstate pond-dipping at Easter and move the bug hunt to June.

And we invited Hitchin's Dr Bike (aka Mark Nash) to run a couple of **Cycle Repair Workshops** from the Pavilion this summer to help promote sustainable travel.

Our well-established **Seasonal Foraging Walks** around Ransom's Rec and Oughtonhead Common, led by The Hitchin Forager (Jane Simmons), have had a steady flow of bookings as always, and this year Jane introduced a new walk at Purwell Meadows.

As always feedback for our workshops has been excellent, thanks to our fantastic tutors. Thanks to all who helped at our events and of course to our hardworking band of events organisers:

Gemma, Mel, Vicky, Gill, Karenanne & Isabelle



Mini-beast Safari

Fabric Collage Bird Art Workshop



Sunday 30th June 2-4pm

@ Ransom's Pavilion, SG5 1RB £40/Adult £15/Accompanied Child (12+)
Book at <https://bookwhen.com/trianglegarden>



Vicky Gill & Gemma at Apple Day

- 1 Festive Wreath Workshop
- 12 attendees;
- 1 Minibeast Safari
- 15 people (8 children);
- 5 Foraging Walks
- 70 attendees;
- 3 Collage Art Workshops
- 26 attendees;
- 2 Photography Workshops
- 16 attendees;
- 2 Cycle Repair Workshops
- 10 attendees;
- 1 Veg Growing Workshop
- 7 attendees.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Julie (right) at the Crane BBQ

People

This year we've welcomed a number of new people to the Triangle Garden team and said farewell to some familiar faces over the year. Project Manager Alice Woodward left in April as the commute by train from her houseboat on the Grand Union canal was proving too much, and Support Worker Karenanne Hay moved on as her own business has flourished. Our Outreach Coordinator Ed Harkness qualified as a Psychotherapist and left in June to pursue his new career.

Growing Ability volunteers Lesley Brown and Carole Knight stepped back from supporting our sessions since 2023. We owe huge thanks to them and to current volunteers Sue and Yolanda for their hard work and dedication to Growing Ability. We'd also like to thank Lou Green and Clare Chambers for their help with cover at our GA sessions this year.

Several new staff members and trustees joined us over the last year:

We also said farewell to webmaster Robin Clarke who has looked after our website for many many years. We're so grateful for all the time and effort that longstanding volunteers like Robin, Carole and Lesley have given. It is invaluable.



Carole, Liz and Karenanne

- **Julie Zirngast** joined us in April as Project Manager and has been an absolute powerhouse. We'll be gutted when she moves away in January
- **Helen Fitch-Hunter** joined us in September, as GA 1:1 support worker
- **Isabelle Robinson and Kate Hughes** joined as trustees over the winter, with expertise in events and fundraising

As always we say a big thank you to our wonderful Garden Club volunteers who help to keep our sites so biodiverse and beautiful, to our Growing Ability gardeners and their supportive parents and carers, our events team, our trustees, our accounts volunteer, and all our collaborators, supporters and funders.



Susan Dye at our allotment

Pavilion hires and Nature's Rainbow

It's great to see our Pavilion continuing to host creative workshops such as **Tuuli Parker's** glass fusion and silver clay jewellery classes, and **Kim Raymont's** MakeSpace art workshops. This year **Herts Wildlife Trust** also held a creative nature writing workshop from the pavilion run by Guardian Country Diary writer **Nic Wilson**.

fabric dyeing, sewing and applique to our GA sessions and ran a number of special workshops for Friday Garden Club including botanical printing, mordanting and natural dyeing of old sheets to make 25th anniversary bunting for next year. We were all very saddened to learn of her recent death after a short illness, and will cherish our memories of her fathomless patience and generosity.

These hires provide welcome income to help fund our Garden Clubs and make good use of our little community facility.

In addition Chris Nutley of **Three Treasures Tai Chi** now runs a weekly outdoor Tai Chi class at the Rec. every Friday 11.15am-12.15. This class is slowly building a following, bringing grace, power and positivity to the park. Chris is also running evening tai chi classes in the park when the evenings are light, and from our allotment shelter in the winter months. Why not give it a try? Beginners welcome!



Indigo-dyeing at Growing Ability

Nature's Rainbow have also been regular hirers of the pavilion and our outdoor classroom space on the allotment. As well as running their internationally acclaimed natural dye workshops and dye garden tutorials, Susan Dye and Ashley Walker have been generously giving their time to working with our Growing Ability and Garden Club groups. Susan introduced

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Treasurer's Report

For the first time in many years, the financial year to 31 August 2024 saw TCG make a deficit (£6,540) which has therefore reduced the charity's reserves. For a number of reasons, a deficit had been budgeted at the start of the year and so whilst the result is not unexpected, the size of the final deficit is much less than expected. This is in large part due to an increase in donations, fundraising surpluses and grants that we received during the year (some of which are for projects programmed for 2024-25).

We remain very aware of the hard truth that without other sources of income, the charity would certainly have made a larger deficit if it had to solely rely on fees from clients. That said, attendance at Growing Ability has improved during the year such that we are almost at capacity for the existing sessions and hope to begin new sessions if demand continues to grow.

A key reason for the budgeted deficit was the salary for our Business Development Manager, Ed Harkness, who left us this summer after laying the groundwork for a number of future income opportunities. The outreach part of his role has been taken on by our new Project Manager.

In 2024, TCG's Summer Fete was again held in September, meaning it falls outside this financial reporting period so only the 2023 surplus is reflected in these accounts. The Fete continues to be a key event for TCG both in terms of fundraising but also bringing the local community together and showcasing the charity's work. Other events - Apple Day (in October 2023), our Farmers Market plant stall and our Foraging Walks - did very well too and a Pub Quiz at The Millstream, plus several new workshops, contributed to the ever-growing TCG events calendar last year.

We remain very grateful to those who continue to support our work through attending our events, buying our produce, or making donations. In this financial period this includes very kind donations from Crane BSU, New England Biolabs, The Hadley Trust, Hitchin Tilehouse Rotary Club, St Marks Church, various Hitchin cubs and beavers, Hitchin Nature Network members and private individuals via our People's Fundraising website. We're also grateful for the grants awarded to us by Hitchin Youth Trust, North Herts Council (NHC) Community Fund and Cllr Keith Hoskins. This also shows the hard work undertaken by the team in submitting robust and convincing grant applications – their efforts this year have yet again been vital. We would also like to thank McCarthy Stone (2023-24) and The Letting Quarter (September 2024 onwards) for their Platinum Sponsorship.

Along with our other income sources, the pavilion continues to be an important generator of funds – bringing in fees from use by local community groups and tutors, and providing facilities for TCG activities and projects.

Income from client fees has shown a modest increase during the year. However under the fee structure introduced by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) for community social care provision, the level of this income is precarious going forward, as the new rates for commissioned community opportunities services represent a significant reduction on those paid pre-2021.

Abbreviated accounts are included with this report. The full accounts in the format required by the Charities Commission are available on our website.

Andrew Green, Treasurer

Hitchin Community Gardens

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st August 2024

	TCG Funds	Restricted Funds	Specified unrestricted Funds	Total	Last Year 22/23
Income from:					
Charitable Activities	£4,652	£37,754	£0	£42,406	£36,953
Donations and Legacies	£5,400	£2,679	£0	£8,079	£12,992
Grants	£668	£3,484	£0	£4,152	£8,966
Fundraising	£8,977	£642	£0	£9,619	£7,311
Investment Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total	£19,696	£44,560	£0	£64,256	£66,222
Expenditure on:					
Charitable Expenditure	£15,184	£51,792	£519	£67,494	£58,122
Raising Funds	£2,862	£439	£0	£3,302	£6,074
Total	£18,046	£52,231	£519	£70,796	£64,196
Net Income	£1,650	-£7,671	-£519	-£6,540	£2,026
Transfer between Funds	£5,488	£0	-£5,488	£0	£0
Net Movement in Funds	£7,138	-£7,671	-£6,007	-£6,540	£2,026
Total funds Brought Forward	£29,977	£16,538	£5,905	£52,420	£50,394
Total Funds Carried Forward	£37,115	£8,867	-£102	£45,880	£52,420

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Future plans

Next year is our **25th anniversary year** and we want to mark the occasion with some lasting improvements to the Rec, and our community spaces, for the benefit of people and nature.

Last year's goal of bolstering our financial stability and raising our profile locally, has been very successful and we are now looking to realise some of the outcomes of our **May Strategy morning** and initiate collaborations with local organisations that have mutual goals.

Our plans for the Rec will be based around the views of our community and to that end we have **two surveys** running at present, a general park survey and a café-specific one (that emerged out of the park survey). These will feed into our strategy for the Rec and we have recently secured Levelling Up funding through North Herts Council (NHC) for the following improvements:

- A biodiversity boost to the Triangle Garden – tree management to let more light in, repair of our central raised beds and new pollinator-friendly planting. The pond refurbishment work currently being done by North Herts Council will also enhance the garden's biodiversity.
- Resurfacing of the communal spaces at our allotments to facilitate better wheelchair and visually impaired access plus an enclosed timber shelter on plot 2B for small groups work
- Refurbishments to Ransoms Pavilion to enable cookery lessons to take place

Which leads us nicely on to our new project, **Man Made Meals**, which will offer confidence in the kitchen for men, and aims to build a community of men who can support each other through learning to cook together. We have a **Crowdfunder** for the project running until the beginning of December and hope to raise £3000+ for kitchen equipment.

The project will be run by two volunteers, one of whom is trustee, John Wyer.

We have commissioned a feasibility study into the business case for a **Community Café/Coffee Hatch** at the Pavilion, thanks to Herts County Council Locality funding. And we are working with NHC and the Countryside Management Service to draw up proposals for new **tree, and meadow planting for Ransoms Rec** and a **new mosaic** in the Triangle Garden.

Our goals for next year also include:

Growing Ability: Now that our current sessions are at capacity, we want to run more Growing Ability sessions to give us further secure, regular income and benefit more disadvantaged people.

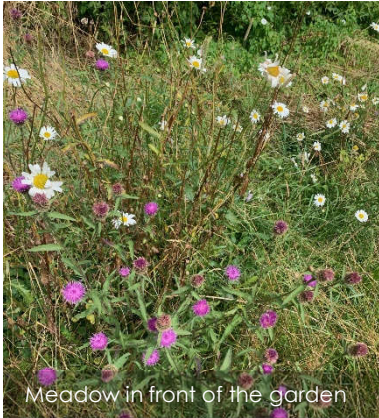
Branching Out: We plan to run a second Easter scheme next year to introduce young people (16-25) to our social and therapeutic horticulture offer. When it comes time for these young people to leave further education and choose a future path, we hope they will feel more confident and comfortable joining our Growing Ability sessions.

New Shoots: We are hoping to attract funding to run new blocks of **New Shoots for Carers** specifically, in collaboration with Carers in Herts.

New Garden Clubs: In 2025 we're starting a fortnightly Garden Club for students aged 12-16 from **The Priory School**. We're also hoping to collaborate with local autism charities to run a fortnightly Garden Club for parents/carers of children with autism, coupled with half-term and holiday nature-based sessions for families with teens with autism.

Project Manager: To help us get all this done we will need a passionate, agile and committed Project Manager in post. If this sounds like your sort of challenge, please [get in touch](#) by 1st December!

Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees



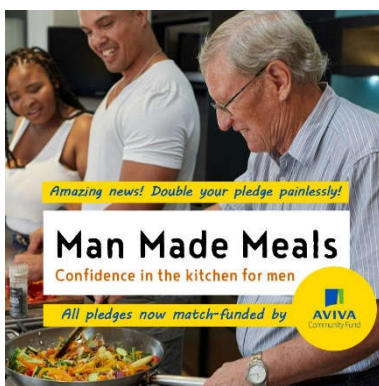
Meadow in front of the garden



Paths to be fully accessible



Planting for people and nature



Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

TRUSTEES

Chair	Victoria Mary Wyer
Vice Chair	Adrian Peter Stones
Treasurer	Andrew Danger Green
	Hilary Jean Oughton
	Gareth Hills
	John Anthony Wyer
	Isabelle Robinson (from 11 January 2024)
	Katherine Maria Hughes (from 14 March 2024)

REGISTERED OFFICE: 23 Priory Way
Hitchin
SG4 9BJ

BANKERS: The Co-operative Bank-Business
PO Box 250
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Charles Osei, BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIE, AFA, ATA, MCIPP
Flat 3, 11 Rochdale Way, Deptford London SE8 4LY

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

Hitchin Community Gardens					
Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2024					
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Fixed Assets	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Current Assets					
Stock (note 2)	£20	£0	£0	£20	£206
Debtors and Prepayments (note 3)	£457	£2,381	£0	£2,838	£2,270
Cash at Bank and in Hand (note 4)	£37,112	£7,135	£0	£44,247	£51,382
Total Current Assets	£37,589	£9,516	£0	£47,105	£53,858
Current Liabilities					
Creditors and Accruals (note 5)	£576	£649	£0	£1,225	£1,438
Deferred Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Current Liabilities	£576	£649	£0	£1,225	£1,438
Net Current Assets	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420
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Deferred Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Net Assets	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420
Funds of the Charity					
Triangle Community Garden Fund	£37,115	£0	£0	£37,115	£27,315
Specified General Funds	-£102	£0	£0	-£102	£8,749
Restricted Funds		£8,867	£0	£8,867	£16,356
Total Funds	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31st August 2024.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- i) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Section 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all trustees:

Signature



Print Name

Vicky Wyer

Date

14.11.2024



Andrew Green

14.11.2024

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

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	TCG Funds	Restricted Funds	Specified unrestricted Funds	Total	Last Year 22/23
Income from:					
Charitable Activities	£4,652	£37,754	£0	£42,406	£36,953
Donations and Legacies	£5,400	£2,679	£0	£8,079	£12,992
Grants	£668	£3,484	£0	£4,152	£8,966
Fundraising	£8,977	£642	£0	£9,619	£7,311
Investment Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total	£19,696	£44,560	£0	£64,256	£66,222
Expenditure on:					
Charitable Expenditure	£15,184	£51,792	£519	£67,494	£58,122
Raising Funds	£2,862	£439	£0	£3,302	£6,074
Total	£18,046	£52,231	£519	£70,796	£64,196
Net Income	£1,650	-£7,671	-£519	-£6,540	£2,026
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Triangle Community Garden					

Note: In September 2023 the Charity changed to a new accounting software which has meant some changes in the way the accounts are presented. The transition led to some minor one off discrepancies in the value of funds brought forward at the time of the changeover.

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2024

1. Basis of Accounting

These accounts have been prepared on an accrual basis and include income and expenditure as they are earned or incurred, rather than as cash received or paid. Reference to the "Charities SORP" refers to the Charities SORP (FRS 102): Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2nd edition effective 1 January 2019, and in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

2. Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

(a) Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

(b) Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary Income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Donated Services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified.

The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Income from Trading and Charitable Activities are accounted for when earned.

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the payment of fees for six of the gardeners. Fees of £15,056 were received from HCC in the year ended 31st August 2024.

(c) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

It includes governance costs which are those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountant's fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

(d) Fixed Assets

Fixed Assets are included at cost less accumulated depreciation. The cost of minor additions, those costing below £1000 and those whose purchase costs are fully covered by a grant are not capitalised. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the asset over its expected useful life, which in all cases is estimated at 5 years. Currently the charity has no fixed assets which have not been written off.

3. Income

(a) Donations

St Mark's Church	£250
Crane Charitable Funds	£2,675
NEB UK	£2,000
Hadley Trust	£1,000
Tilehouse Rotary Club Hitchin	£1,000
Other donations	£1,154

(b) Grants

Herts Community Foundation	£968	Workforce development grants (2No)
Herts County Council	£200	Locality fund (Cllr Keith Hoskins)
Hitchin Youth Trust	£1,372	
North Herts District Council	£1,612	

4. Expenditure

For analysis see attached appendix A

5. Trustee Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

Reimbursements were made to trustees for purchases made directly for Hitchin Community Gardens.

Details of Trustees other transactions with the charity are given in note 14.

6. Salaries and Wages

At 31st August 2024, 5 part time staff were employed.

Total wages including pension contributions paid in the year to 31st August 2024 were £51,892.

9. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Equipment
At Cost	£
At 1 st September 2023	2916
Acquisitions	<u>0</u>
At 31 st August 2024	2916
Depreciation	
At 1 st September 2023	2916
Charge for Year	<u>0</u>
At 31 st August 2024	2916

Net Book Value	Equipment	£
At 31 st August 2022		0
At 31 st August 2023		0
At 31 st August 2024		0

11. Debtors

Prepaid expenses	£ 843
Debtors	£1995
Reclaimable Gift Aid Tax	<u>£ 0</u>
	£2838

12. Creditors and Accruals

Income received in advance	£1337
Creditors	£ 50
Payroll & pension liabilities*	<u>£ (162)</u>
Total	£1767

All deferred income has now been written back.

13. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

Triangle Community Garden and Ransom's Pavilion	£ 31,627
Growing Ability Group and other Restricted Runds	£ 8,867
Specified General Funds	£ 5,386

14. Related Parties

One trustee is a director of Bowles & Wyer who do the photocopying for Hitchin Community Gardens. No charge is made for black and white copies, and colour copies are invoiced at cost. This is considerably cheaper than using another supplier.

*Amount is based on the outstanding refund of £542 from HMRC (change payroll provider halfway through the Tax Financial year (Sept 23) resulted in TCG being overcharged by HMRC. HMRC hope to sort it out within 24 months)

See page 8 for Appendix A (Note 4) and page 10 for Reserves Statement

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

Appendix A

Note 4			
Hitchin Community Gardens			
Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 2024			
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Charity Management and Administration, and running costs			
Advertisement, Recruitment and General Publicity	£619	£239	£858
Office Costs	£1,383	£1,216	£2,599
Staff training	£465	£1,518	£1,983
Subscriptions	£87	£113	£200
Allotment and Pavilion Rent	£0	£3,478	£3,478
Insurance	£359	£359	£719
Material costs, PPE, Tools and equipment	£832	£648	£1,480
Refreshments	£56	£186	£242
Travel and Visits	£23	£158	£181
Workshop Nominal Costs	£1,130	£1,930	£3,060
	£4,955	£9,845	£14,800
Payroll Expenses			
Salary and wages costs (Including payroll costs)	£2,925	£19,532	£22,456
Business devt manager wages (Including payroll costs)	£4,713	£6,708	£11,421
Project manager wages (Including payroll costs)	£2,804	£11,905	£14,708
Staff Cover wages	£5	£943	£948
Support 1:1 wages	£0	£2,358	£2,358
	£10,446	£41,446	£51,892
Governances Costs			
Accountant/Examiner charges	£250	£0	£250
DBS Check	£31	£487	£518
Legal costs	£20	£14	£34
	£302	£500	£802
Expenditure on Raising Funds			
Event costs	£1,138	£261	£1,399
Produce cost	£820	£135	£955
Pavilion cost	£905	£43	£948
Gazebo cost	£0	£0	£0
	£2,862	£439	£3,302
Total Expenditure			£70,796
*Note: All the Employer allowance recovered has been posted to TCG			
Payroll cost allocated to funds and categories appropriately			

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

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Hitchin Community Gardens Reserves Statement 2024

Hitchin Community Gardens needs reserves to:

- Meet any contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close
- Meet unexpected costs like repairs to the pavilion
- To replace equipment as it wears out.
- Ensure the charity can provide a continuing service for its gardeners and to the community
- To provide working capital if funding is paid in arrears, and to enable it to bid for funding which is paid in arrears
- To provide working capital where there is a gap between funding streams. Where funding is not renewed bids for alternative sources can take time to process.
- Enable it to expand the range of services offered
- Provide a contingency fund in the event of a shortfall in one or more of its funding activities

Hitchin Community Garden Reserves at 31st August 2024:

Hitchin Community Garden's reserves policy states that reserves should be between 30% and 40% of turnover.

Reserves at 31st August 2024 are £45880. This is 71% of turnover.

These reserves are earmarked for the continuation of our Community Outreach role which allows us to reach more beneficiaries and provide more wide-ranging services to address the needs of our community.

Part of the purpose of this role, which has become subsumed into the Project Manager role with a proportionate increase in hours, is to seek new markets and new funding to address future known financial shortfalls: cuts to our contract income from the local authority came into play in 2021-22. Any new clients we attract through the Adult Care Services Commissioning Framework since then have and will come in on the new low rates. These rates are well below the per-client cost of running our service. This continues to impact us as we recruit new clients, although as we grow our service to reach more people, we hope to be able to make economies of scale to reduce this per person deficit.

For the moment we need relatively high reserves to address future known challenges and provide a safety net to offset reduced income.

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

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ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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Vice Chair	Adrian Peter Stones
Treasurer	Andrew Danger Green
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BANKERS: The Co-operative Bank-Business
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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Charles Osei, BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIE, AFA, ATA, MCIPP
Flat 3, 11 Rochdale Way, Deptford London SE8 4LY

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
TO THE TRUSTEES OF HITCHIN COMMUNITY GARDENS**

I report on the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024 set out on pages 3 - 9.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and independent examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The Charity Trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1)(d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. 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 as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the reports limited to those matters set out in the statement as follows:

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
 - a) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
 - b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulations 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have 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.



Charles Osei, BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIE, AFA, ATA, MCIPP, MIPA
Flat 3, 11 Rochdale Way Deptford London SE8 4LY

Date: 14/11/2024

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Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

Hitchin Community Gardens						
Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2024						
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Total	
	Funds	Income Funds	Funds	This Year	Last Year	
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Fixed Assets	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Current Assets						
Stock (note 2)	£20	£0	£0	£20	£206	£206
Debtors and Prepayments (note 3)	£457	£2,381	£0	£2,838	£2,270	£2,270
Cash at Bank and in Hand (note 4)	£37,112	£7,135	£0	£44,247	£51,382	£51,382
Total Current Assets	£37,589	£9,516	£0	£47,105	£53,858	£53,858
Current Liabilities						
Creditors and Accruals (note 5)	£576	£649	£0	£1,225	£1,438	£1,438
Deferred Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Current Liabilities	£576	£649	£0	£1,225	£1,438	£1,438
Net Current Assets	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420	£52,420
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420	£52,420
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Deferred Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Net Assets	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420	£52,420
Funds of the Charity						
Triangle Community Garden Fund	£37,115	£0	£0	£37,115	£27,315	£27,315
Specified General Funds	-£102	£0	£0	-£102	£8,749	£8,749
Restricted Funds		£8,867	£0	£8,867	£16,356	£16,356
Total Funds	£37,013	£8,867	£0	£45,880	£52,420	£52,420

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31st August 2024.

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These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all trustees:

Signature



Print Name

Vicky Wyer

Date

14.11.2024



Andrew Green

14.11.2024

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It includes governance costs which are those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountant's fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

(d) Fixed Assets

Fixed Assets are included at cost less accumulated depreciation. The cost of minor additions, those costing below £1000 and those whose purchase costs are fully covered by a grant are not capitalised. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the asset over its expected useful life, which in all cases is estimated at 5 years. Currently the charity has no fixed assets which have not been written off.

3. Income

(a) Donations

St Mark's Church	£250
Crane Charitable Funds	£2,675
NEB UK	£2,000
Hadley Trust	£1,000
Tilehouse Rotary Club Hitchin	£1,000
Other donations	£1,154

(b) Grants

Herts Community Foundation	£968	Workforce development grants (2No)
Herts County Council	£200	Locality fund (Cllr Keith Hoskins)
Hitchin Youth Trust	£1,372	
North Herts District Council	£1,612	

4. Expenditure

For analysis see attached appendix A

5. Trustee Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

Reimbursements were made to trustees for purchases made directly for Hitchin Community Gardens.

Details of Trustees other transactions with the charity are given in note 14.

6. Salaries and Wages

At 31st August 2024, 5 part time staff were employed.

Total wages including pension contributions paid in the year to 31st August 2024 were £51,892.

9. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Equipment
At Cost	£
At 1 st September 2023	2916
Acquisitions	<u>0</u>
At 31 st August 2024	2916
Depreciation	
At 1 st September 2023	2916
Charge for Year	<u>0</u>
At 31 st August 2024	2916

Net Book Value	Equipment	£
At 31 st August 2022		0
At 31 st August 2023		0
At 31 st August 2024		0

11. Debtors

Prepaid expenses	£ 843
Debtors	£1995
Reclaimable Gift Aid Tax	<u>£ 0</u>
	£2838

12. Creditors and Accruals

Income received in advance	£1337
Creditors	£ 50
Payroll & pension liabilities*	<u>£ (162)</u>
Total	£1767

All deferred income has now been written back.

13. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

Triangle Community Garden and Ransom's Pavilion	£ 31,627
Growing Ability Group and other Restricted Runds	£ 8,867
Specified General Funds	£ 5,386

14. Related Parties

One trustee is a director of Bowles & Wyer who do the photocopying for Hitchin Community Gardens. No charge is made for black and white copies, and colour copies are invoiced at cost. This is considerably cheaper than using another supplier.

*Amount is based on the outstanding refund of £542 from HMRC (change payroll provider halfway through the Tax Financial year (Sept 23) resulted in TCG being overcharged by HMRC. HMRC hope to sort it out within 24 months)

See page 9 for Appendix A (Note 4) and page 10 for Reserves Statement

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

Appendix A

Note 4			
Hitchin Community Gardens			
Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 2024			
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Charity Management and Administration, and running costs			
Advertisement, Recruitment and General Publicity	£619	£239	£858
Office Costs	£1,383	£1,216	£2,599
Staff training	£465	£1,518	£1,983
Subscriptions	£87	£113	£200
Allotment and Pavilion Rent	£0	£3,478	£3,478
Insurance	£359	£359	£719
Material costs, PPE, Tools and equipment	£832	£648	£1,480
Refreshments	£56	£186	£242
Travel and Visits	£23	£158	£181
Workshop Nominal Costs	£1,130	£1,930	£3,060
	£4,955	£9,845	£14,800
Payroll Expenses			
Salary and wages costs (Including payroll costs)	£2,925	£19,532	£22,456
Business devt manager wages (Including payroll costs)	£4,713	£6,708	£11,421
Project manager wages (Including payroll costs)	£2,804	£11,905	£14,708
Staff Cover wages	£5	£943	£948
Support 1:1 wages	£0	£2,358	£2,358
	£10,446	£41,446	£51,892
Governances Costs			
Accountant/Examiner charges	£250	£0	£250
DBS Check	£31	£487	£518
Legal costs	£20	£14	£34
	£302	£500	£802
Expenditure on Raising Funds			
Event costs	£1,138	£261	£1,399
Produce cost	£820	£135	£955
Pavilion cost	£905	£43	£948
Gazebo cost	£0	£0	£0
	£2,862	£439	£3,302
Total Expenditure			£70,796
*Note: All the Employer allowance recovered has been posted to TCG			
Payroll cost allocated to funds and categories appropriately			

Hitchin Community Gardens aka Triangle Community Garden

Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

Hitchin Community Gardens Reserves Statement 2024

Hitchin Community Gardens needs reserves to:

- Meet any contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close
- Meet unexpected costs like repairs to the pavilion
- To replace equipment as it wears out.
- Ensure the charity can provide a continuing service for its gardeners and to the community
- To provide working capital if funding is paid in arrears, and to enable it to bid for funding which is paid in arrears
- To provide working capital where there is a gap between funding streams. Where funding is not renewed bids for alternative sources can take time to process.
- Enable it to expand the range of services offered
- Provide a contingency fund in the event of a shortfall in one or more of its funding activities

Hitchin Community Garden Reserves at 31st August 2024:

Hitchin Community Garden's reserves policy states that reserves should be between 30% and 40% of turnover.

Reserves at 31st August 2024 are £45880. This is 71% of turnover.

These reserves are earmarked for the continuation of our Community Outreach role which allows us to reach more beneficiaries and provide more wide-ranging services to address the needs of our community.

Part of the purpose of this role, which has become subsumed into the Project Manager role with a proportionate increase in hours, is to seek new markets and new funding to address future known financial shortfalls: cuts to our contract income from the local authority came into play in 2021-22. Any new clients we attract through the Adult Care Services Commissioning Framework since then have and will come in on the new low rates. These rates are well below the per-client cost of running our service. This continues to impact us as we recruit new clients, although as we grow our service to reach more people, we hope to be able to make economies of scale to reduce this per person deficit.

For the moment we need relatively high reserves to address future known challenges and provide a safety net to offset reduced income.

HITCHIN COMMUNITY GARDENS

England & Wales - Charity number 1145243

Accounts



Triangle Community Garden

Created and cultivated by people of all ages and abilities at Ransom's Rec Hitchin, Herts

Annual Review 2022-23

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2022-23

Our financial year runs from 1st September to 31st August and this review deals with that period.

During this time the Triangle Garden has seen some massive changes – primarily in staff but also in new projects and a renewed determination to reach as many people as possible with our work. We've said goodbye to two longstanding members of staff and welcomed five exceptional new people to our staff team. We've also initiated productive relationships with organisations such as CultureWood forest school practitioners, Ivel Valley School, and NHS Talking Therapies.

For those new to the Triangle Community Garden (TCG) and its work, here's our vision:

'A community where people feel happier and more fulfilled through a connection with the natural world and an understanding of our place in it.'

Our aim is to help people of all ages and abilities to **'connect, grow enjoy!'**, through gardening and contact with the natural world. We do this through:

- Supporting physical and mental health using social and therapeutic horticulture, arts and crafts, cooking and a focus on healthy living
- Providing volunteering opportunities,
- Running skills workshops and
- Holding community events.

We're active in three areas within Ransom's Rec (a small informal park near Hitchin station): the allotments, the Community Garden, and our Forest Garden alongside the River Hiz. The areas vary in character and each has different challenges and rewards. All three sites have thrived under the loving care of Friday Garden Club, New Shoots and Growing Ability, our three green care projects.

Growing Ability works long-term with adults with learning disabilities and chronic mental health concerns, focusing on the goals, abilities and support needs of each individual, and using horticulture and engagement in nature to increase the health, wellbeing, self-esteem and self-confidence of our 'gardeners'.

New Shoots is a 6-week project for people struggling with stress, anxiety and depression. It uses the five ways to wellbeing and the benefits of working in nature to bring about improved physical health and mental wellbeing. Many New Shoots participants go on to join our **Friday Garden Club** (pic left), made up of loyal volunteers who tend and nurture all our sites and help at our events.

New projects we introduced last year include our **Family Forest School** and **Triangle Tribe** activities (pic top left), introducing bushcraft for wellbeing to families with children aged 3-12 and 12-16 respectively, and our new **Sunday Garden Club**. More inside...

Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees



Triangle Tribe smelting pewter



Garden Club at the allotments

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Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Growing Ability

Growing Ability is our social therapeutic horticulture project where people with learning disabilities and other support needs gain training and experience in all aspects of horticulture, gardening and food growing.

Our Growing Ability 'gardeners' regularly take part in activities such as nature conservation, mindful exercise, food preparation/cooking, healthy eating, making art and crafts, selling produce and taking orders/making refreshments.

Through supported learning and meaningful activities in the community Growing Ability helps people build confidence and self-worth, grow in independence, and develop and reinforce important skills.

Growing Ability is a lovely friendly outdoor project and we welcome new people including those transitioning from school or college.

We provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where sessions are structured in a person-centred way. This allows us to focus on the goals that each individual wants to achieve, while also incorporating key training and life skills experience.

The project is primarily based at our allotments but also incorporates the Pavilion, Triangle Garden, Forest Garden and Ransom's Recreation

Ground. Each session taps into the healing and restorative powers of nature to embed a culture of wellbeing, personal growth and connection.

Our staff and volunteers understand the reciprocal benefits of working with nature: you plant and nurture a seed, and it grows into a seedling while you've been away. Give a little, gain a lot. The rewards are shared and enjoyed, and the challenges borne and overcome together.

Running a successful vegetable plot requires planning and organisational skills, decision making and fine-motor skills as well as the application of literacy and numeracy. And that's before you've even harvested anything! Growing food and harvesting it involves our gardeners in shared goals and responsibilities, as well as shared creativity, enterprise and experimentation when that food is cooked and enjoyed together.

At Growing Ability we work with adults with a range of abilities and support needs including learning disabilities, autism, brain injury and chronic or severe mental ill health.

Sessions are 2.5 hours long and are chargeable (from £12.80/hr). They run Tuesday-Thursday with a capacity of 6-8 gardeners per session, depending on the support need of each individual. Each session is run by two experienced care professionals, and at least one trained volunteer.



We currently have spaces at Growing Ability! Please contact Alice for details: alice@trianglegarden.org

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Growing Ability continued

Across 2022-23, 20 individuals attended Growing Ability, five of whom attended two sessions per week. During that period we said goodbye to five gardeners and two key members of staff, Rachel Cottey and Liz McElroy, who moved to full time roles elsewhere. We also said a sad farewell to Judith, one of our longstanding volunteers. We wish them all well. We also welcomed two new gardeners and four new staff members. A massive change!

Alice Woodward took over as Project Manager in July 2023 and Steve Granger took on the new role of Site and Horticulture Manager. Liz Millbank, Karenanne Haye, Gail Halliday (June-Sept 2023) and Dulcie Buckenham joined Steve as care professionals supporting sessions.

Of the five gardeners who left, one moved away and several felt confident enough to move on to become volunteers at local free-to-attend horticulture projects. We see this progression as a testament to the power of Growing Ability in promoting independence, confidence and resilience in all those who attend.

We know the need is out there locally for the sort of empowerment we can provide and we're building stronger relationships with local commissioners and special schools to reach new people. We want Growing Ability to be widely known as a welcoming place for young adults transitioning from school or college into the wider world and we've made a new video* (now on our website) to show this.

Here are some of the things people say about Growing Ability:

'The main thing about being here is you've got people you can talk to. Doesn't matter if you're young or old, you've always got someone you can connect with. I find the staff are really really good, and the volunteers. They make me feel that I belong here ... I really enjoy coming here and look forward to it.'

'I'd definitely recommend Growing Ability because it really helps with mindfulness and friendship...'

'My son was quite worried about the changes and I was quite concerned because he sometimes has difficulty coping with change but I have been very impressed with how smooth the transition has been and how well he has coped. He is very happy with how GA is organised and run following the transition.' parent

'Growing Ability is now an integral part of my son's life. It provides twice weekly support for him, it's a group that he's comfortable with and a place where he can share his ideas and interests and know that he is accepted and listened to. I know that he looks forward to attending each session, and misses those sessions greatly [when] unable to attend. The staff support and encourage him in every possible way and I firmly believe that he gains immeasurably from this, mentally, emotionally and physically.' parent

Alice Woodward, Project Manager

*funded by Cllr Ian Albert's HCC Locality Budget



Another courgette harvest!



A bit of weeding

184 sessions

20 individuals

451 volunteer hours

2 joiners

5 leavers

4 off site trips

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

We currently have spaces at our **Branching Out Easter Scheme!**

Please contact Alice for details:
alice@trianglegarden.org



One of our mulberry harvests



Apple Day kids' activities



Jane, The Hitchin Forager

Branching Out

Branching Out is a new initiative consisting of a series of projects **offering opportunities for young people aged 16-25** with additional needs, to gain horticultural skills and work/life experience in a supported therapeutic environment.

From this year we're running a scheme for young people with a learning disability to come and try out gardening as a group activity, as part of our social therapeutic horticulture programme. This will take the form of a **three day Easter Scheme** open to all young people in Herts and Beds (with funding from Bedfordshire Charitable Trust to subsidise places for Bedfordshire residents).

The scheme runs from 9-11th April 2024, from 9.30am to 3pm at our allotment site.

We also hope to run one in the summer (funding permitting).

As well as creating opportunities for young people to experience what we do, we've been forging links with schools and colleges for young people with additional needs.

Last May we visited Ivel Valley School in Biggleswade and in June some of their students visited us to experience a Growing Ability session. We hope this sort of exchange will become a regular fixture.

Please contact us for more information if you are or know of a young person who may be interested in Branching Out.

Alice Woodward Project Manager

Community events, walks & workshops

Each year we put on a number of workshops and community events to engage and connect people with the natural world, spread the word about what we do and raise funds for our work.

October 2022 saw another successful Apple Day in Hitchin town centre – our 18th since the first in 2003. A celebration of English apples, local food and sustainability, with new stalls including Apple Cottage Cider and Plastic Free Hitchin's very popular Halloween costume swap. The event raised £620 for our work.

In May 2023 members of Garden Club ran a very successful stall at Hitchin farmers' market selling plants they had raised themselves which made around £350. And in July we had an outreach stall at Plastic Free Hitchin's Eco-Fair which was very well-attended despite the rain!

Once again our Seasonal Foraging Walks have proved very popular, led by Jane Simmons, The Hitchin Forager, around Ransom's Rec and at Oughtonhead

Common. Last summer we also ran a 'Fairy Doors' craft workshop, and two Veg Growing workshops run by Steve Granger. Feedback for all our workshops has been excellent, thanks to our fantastic tutors.

We held our Summer Garden Fete in September for the first time last year and although outside this reporting period, it makes sense to mention it now. Building on the previous July's Summer Garden Party we expanded the event to include more stalls, activities and entertainments headlined by Garden City Samba and Imajica Theatre. The aim was to raise awareness of the community garden and our work and showcase local collaborators like jewellery tutor Tuuli Parker, dyeplant experts Nature's Rainbow, and Tai Chi practitioner Three Treasures Chris. A really well-attended day!

Thanks to all who helped at our events and of course to our hardworking band of events organisers:

Gemma, Mel, Vicky, Gill and Karenanne

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Forest School and Triangle Tribe



After a false start scuppered by covid in 2019, we were very excited to host our first family forest school session at the Triangle Garden in October 2022, run by Tanya Dickson of CultureWood CiC. Shortly afterwards we heard we'd been successful in getting funding from Herts Community Foundation to run a year's worth of forest school activities for families with children and young people.

Both initiatives focus on engaging young people in exploration, crafting, learning skills and play, in a natural therapeutic setting. Inspired by nature, young people and their parents/carers collaborate to learn bushcraft, fire skills and traditional green crafting, creating ephemeral nature art together. Outdoor play and discovery builds confidence, allows risk taking and encourages team building skills. Studies show that spending time in nature reduces stress, improves mental well-being, boosts immune functions, increases creativity and leaves people feeling refreshed.

These are the outcomes we set out to achieve:

- An increase in the engagement of young people and families in looking after the local environment - **outcome: over 250 people have engaged with these two projects in 2023**
- Young people are educated about the environment/climate, - **outcome: feedback shows that the projects increased participants' connection with / understanding of nature and natural processes.**

- Improved wellbeing for young people/families through creating new social support networks - **outcome: feedback shows families appreciated the social connection elements of these initiatives, and new friendships and stronger connections have been made through both projects.**

Triangle Tribe participants reported:

'Was very pleased to have this sort of thing offered to teens. There is so much aimed at young children but hardly anything for teens to do. My girls ... are very reluctant to do anything with strangers, but they were surprisingly keen on doing Triangle Tribe and rated the last session 9 out of 10!'

'We persevered and overcame challenges to feel proud' 'We had an excellent time each week' 'Felt peaceful after being outside'

'Family time – it was really fun to try new things' 'It was fun – I felt happy and excited for the next one!'

'We all really enjoyed the first week even though the kids were reluctant to go as it meant missing their normal youth club. However, they loved it so much they were happy to skip this week's. ... I'd definitely recommend this to others!'

Family Forest School meets monthly, every fourth Sunday morning 11am-12.30 and **Triangle Tribe** meets every third Friday evening 6.30-8.30pm. Sessions need to be booked in advance as places are limited. Both initiatives are neurodivergent-friendly.



Forest school fun



Nature search



Learning fire skills at Triangle Tribe

To book your place at Family Forest School or Triangle Tribe please visit trianglegarden.org/events

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



New Shoots

New Shoots is a project that we set up to respond to the high levels anxiety, stress and depression brought on by the pandemic and exacerbated by the cost of living crisis.

New Shoots uses community gardening to reduce social isolation and promote mental wellbeing. Last year thanks to funding from Herts County Council, we were able to run the second of two fully-funded 15-week blocks of weekly half-day New Shoots sessions, based around the **five ways to wellbeing**:

- **Be active**
- **Connect**
- **Give**
- **Learn**
- **Notice**

For both our 15-week New Shoots blocks, weekly feedback showed participants

- **enjoyed** the sessions,
- **learnt something new** in most sessions,
- **engaged with others** in almost all sessions,
- were **physically active** at the majority of sessions,
- felt **less anxious** after sessions
- felt **more engaged** after sessions
- felt **more positive** after sessions.

The WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scores) at the beginning and end of each block, showed participants feeling more confident, more useful and more able to make up their minds about things over the block period.

This is what one participant had to say:

“When I came to the Triangle Garden my mental health was poor, I constantly felt tired and anxious and felt I had no time or

motivation to do anything about it.

“Initially, just meeting the staff and volunteers was reassuring, as they were all friendly and calm with a passion for the project that was contagious.

“Steve spent time showing me around the forest garden and sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm about the different plants, their purpose within the garden, what they produced and how this was used. It was fascinating and inspiring, a magical place to forget the stresses of daily life and feel at one with nature.

“I joined the New Shoots programme and started to look forward to this time every week when I could feel calm and energised. As someone with a sedentary lifestyle these sessions provided a good variety of activity to improve my physical as well as my mental health. I learn something new each week about gardening and nature, which has motivated me to get out walking more in nature and grow my own food this year.”

Several of those who attended New Shoots went on to become members of our Friday Garden Club and help at our community events, extending their positive experience.

From September 2023 we decided to move forward with a 6-week version of New Shoots to align with a standard-length counselling block and allow us to seek referrals from NHS Talking Therapies (previously IAPT) for people on the waiting list for counselling.

We are embarking on our second block in January and **actively seeking funding to continue the programme.**



Picking strawberries



Apple pruning

“Lovely to connect with nature and do something useful with lovely people”

‘I arrived stressed and tired and left relaxed and happy”

To find out more about New Shoots contact alice@trianglegarden.org

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Our Garden Clubs

Friday Garden Club meets every Friday morning from 10am for some gentle guided social gardening. It is open to anyone, and its purpose is to maintain and develop the Triangle Garden and Forest Garden for the benefit of people and nature. Members enjoy learning new gardening skills, meeting new friends and being active in the fresh air, while making a positive contribution to the community and biodiversity. There are also regular trips and outings.

A very important part of the Garden Club experience is the cuppa, cake and chat at the end of each session! Thanks go to Lesley for her homemade cakes at coffee time, often using produce from our sites.

Friday Garden Club has met most weeks throughout the year, excluding holidays and extreme weather. Volunteer numbers have increased this year, with 20 volunteers overall, and an average of 9 people coming each week, giving a total of 728 volunteer hours, up 20% on last year.

Allotment plot 6A continues to be a productive space in both what is grown and produced there, alongside the benefits to those working on it. The polytunnel has given the Garden Club a dedicated space to raise plants for the Farmer's Market plant stall and for the Forest and Community Gardens.

Garden Club continue to make steady progress in their dedicated nurturing of our community spaces for biodiversity and people. The ongoing task of removing the 'weed suppressing' membrane continues slowly but surely, allowing the planting of a new herbaceous layer to the Forest Garden. We have had many positive comments from those using the park about the improved paths through this area. As the Forest Garden plants mature, we are getting larger and larger harvests. This year we harvested our first Mashua tubers.

Time away from the garden plays a valuable role in providing inspiration and a change of scene. Last year we enjoyed a trip to Jordans Mill to admire their planting areas and to Cambridge Botanic Garden. Many Garden Club volunteers staffed our plant stalls at Apple Day and the Farmers Market in town, bringing in valuable income to support our work.

Local building company Crane BSU have continued to attend regularly, as volunteers, carrying out various tasks including building new compost bins and fixing shelves in the lock up.

The pond had a bit of a dredge out early in the season and volunteers cut back some of the encroaching branches around it to let more light in. We are still looking for a contractor willing to carry out a clean out and replacement of the damaged liner. Once that is done and the pond is returned to a better state we can reintroduce pond-dipping and autumn pond maintenance sessions to our calendar of activities.

We collaborated with Groundwork once again this year to run a six-week GOGA (Go Outside, Get Active) block of nature conservation sessions with volunteers from various places including the Living Room. They carried out many tasks including re-planting pollinator plants in the raised beds which are doing well. They also removed the Dogwood from the willow maze area, opening the site up in preparation for improvement.

Garden Committee have been active over the last year, meeting more regularly and making plans for the revitalisation of our monthly volunteer mornings, now known as **Sunday Garden Club** on the second Sunday of every month. Look out for them and book yourself a free place. All ages and abilities welcome!

Steve Granger, Garden Club Leader



To find out more about joining Friday Garden Club please contact Steve Granger via steve@trianglergarden.org

To book your free place at Sunday Garden Club visit trianglergarden.org/events

Find out more at www.trianglergarden.org



Liz (top) and Rachel



Alice Woodward our new PM



Tai Chi in the park

- 3 community events
- 5 local food stalls
- 5 sustainability stalls
- 35 event volunteers
- 6 foraging walks
- 9 dye workshops
- 18 jewellery workshops

People

This year has seen a lot of fond farewells and many more 'welcome aboard's!

A massive thank you goes to staff members **Liz McElroy and Rachel Cotley** (top left) for their dedicated work from 2013-2023 as Project Manager and GA Support Worker. Also to **Margaret Byrne** our longstanding and longsuffering Accounts Assistant and trustee **Fiona Dolman** who both stepped down last year. We're delighted that Margaret continues to assist with Pavilion hires and Fiona continues to co-chair Garden Committee and volunteer at Friday Garden Club. We also said a sad goodbye to GA volunteer **Judith** and several of our GA gardeners who have moved on to pastures new.

A warm welcome goes to the many new staff members and volunteers who have joined us over the last year:

- **Ed Harkness** joined us as Business Development Manager in Dec 2022

- **Funmi Daramola** started in the spring as volunteer Accounts Assistant
- **Liz Millbank, Karenanne Hay and Gail Halliday** joined us as GA horticultural support workers last spring-summer
- **Alice Woodward**, our new Project Manager, joined us in July (pic left)
- **Dulcie Buckenham** joined us in September, replacing Gail who had to leave at the end of the summer
- **Steve Granger** was promoted to the role of Site and Horticulture Manager.

As always we say a big thank you to our wonderful Garden Club volunteers who help to keep our sites so biodiverse and beautiful, to our Growing Ability and New Shoots volunteers and gardeners and their supportive parents and carers, our events team, our trustees, our accounts volunteer, our webmaster, and all our collaborators, supporters and funders. A special thank you also to jam making supremo Chris, ably supported by her creative assistant Gill.

Pavilion hires and Tai Chi in the park

It's great to see our Pavilion continuing to be hired by external arts tutors for creative workshops such as **Tuuli Parker's silver clay and glass fusion jewellery classes**, and **Kim Raymond's art workshops** which last year focused on screen printing.

Nature's Rainbow have also been regular hirers of the pavilion and our outdoor classroom space on the allotment. Last year they hosted several visits to their small but abundant dye plant garden on Ransoms' allotments and ran workshops on 'How to plan and plant a dye garden' to groups from across the country. Their demonstration dye plot at Groundswell Regenerative Agriculture Festival drew lots of attention last year and they continue to run practical workshops teaching people how to dye with natural

plant materials throughout the growing season, including a two day workshop on working with Japanese Indigo and an inspiring day of Botanical Printing.

These hires provide welcome income to help fund our Friday Garden Club and Sunday volunteer mornings, and make good use of our little community facility.

We've also been trying to introduce more community activities to Ransoms Rec, to make better active use of the space and fill it with positivity. Our first foray has been to persuade Chris Nutley of **Three Treasures Tai Chi** to run a weekly outdoor **Tai Chi class** on the Rec (bottom left). This now happens every Friday 11.15am-12.15, whatever the weather and is slowly building a following. Come along and give it a try! Beginners welcome!

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Treasurer's Report

Similar to last year, this financial year to 31 August 2023 saw the charity make a surplus, though more modest than in 2022.

In the absence of an Open Day for this period (2023's event was held in September), our main fundraising events were our annual Apple Day in October 2022 which made a profit of £600, and plant stall run by Garden Club volunteers in May at Hitchin Market which made £350. Along with our other sources of income, the pavilion continues to be an important source of funds – generating fees from use by local community groups and classes, and providing facilities for TCG activities and projects.

We also received a small income from our Forest School and Triangle Tribe activities which we will be using to continue them across the current financial year now that their funding has come to an end.

Whilst we are very pleased to see that TCG's combined activities, have delivered a surplus this year of over £2,000, we remain very aware of the hard truth that without other sources of income, the charity would certainly have made a deficit if it had to solely rely on fees from Growing Ability gardeners.

This serves to highlight how important these other sources are, and how grateful we remain to those that provide them. In this year this includes very kind donations (such as those from Crane, Waitrose, Hitchin Nature Network, St Marks Church and private individuals via our People's Fundraising website, amongst others) or the grants awarded to us (such as those provided by Herts Community Fund and our local Councillors). It also shows the hard work undertaken by the team in submitting robust and convincing

grant applications – their efforts this year have yet again been vital. This year we would also like to thank McCarthy & Stone for becoming Platinum Sponsors.

Income from client fees has again shown a modest increase during the year, but under the new fee structure introduced by Hertfordshire County Council, the level of this income is precarious going forward as new rates represent a reduction on those paid previously.

This uncertainty over future fee levels, and a desire to ensure that TCG runs a full programme of fully-attended sessions led to the decision to create a new role of Business Development Manager this year, and we were very pleased to appoint Ed Harkness (below right) into the role. Currently, this role is being funded from our reserves but the intention is that the additional income that is brought in will make the role self-sustaining.

Finally, from a financial management perspective, we thank our previous volunteer bookkeeper Margaret (bottom right) for her many years of hard work, dedication and commitment, and welcome our new bookkeeper Funmi who has quickly and effectively taken up the reins. We would also like to thank Deniz Brown who has been our Independent Examiner for many years and to welcome our new IE, Charles Osei ACIE.

Abbreviated accounts are shown below. The full accounts in the format required by the Charities Commission are available on our website.

Andrew Green, Treasurer



Ed Harkness



Margaret Byrne

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	2022-23 Total	2021-22 Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	12,401	9,557	-	21,958	12,304
Other Trading Activities	6,239	1,072	-	7,311	6,245
Charitable Activities	3,435	33,518	-	36,953	32,696
Investments	-	-	-	-	-
Total Income	22,075	44,147	-	66,222	51,245
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	2,745	3,331	-	6,076	3,171
Charitable Expenditure	16,900	41,220	-	58,120	38,623
Total Expenditure	19,645	44,551	-	64,196	41,794
Net Income before Other Recognised Gains and Losses	2,430	404	-	2,026	9,451
Other Recognised Gains and Losses	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer between Funds					
Net Movement in Funds	2,430	404	-	2,026	9,451
Total funds Brought Forward	27,412	22,982	-	50,394	40,943
Total Funds Carried Forward	29,842	22,578	-	52,420	50,394

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Future plans

Over the course of the last year, we have been looking at ways to make the Triangle Community Garden more financially sustainable. Our organisation is a valuable community asset and we want to safeguard its future. The first step in doing so has been to identify how to build financial resilience in the face of current and future economic challenges. With our community feeling the effects of the cost of living crisis it is critically important that we can continue to provide access to meaningful nature-based activities. Across the board budgets are tightening and funding is becoming more competitive so ensuring that we have consistent and sustainable revenue streams is critical. We are looking for ways to achieve this across all of our activities:

Growing Ability: We want to run more Growing Ability sessions each week including some full day sessions. This will ensure that we are making the best use of our gardens, allotments and pavilion. It will mean that we can offer social and therapeutic horticulture sessions to more adults with support needs, making our green spaces more accessible. It will also give us further secure, regular income.

Branching Out: Our newest project aims to introduce young people (16-25) to our social and therapeutic horticulture offer.

When it comes time for these young people to leave further education and choose a future path, we hope they will feel more confident and comfortable joining our Growing Ability sessions.

New Shoots: Having run two pilot programmes for our 6-week mental health course we are confident that it can have a significant impact on people living with common mental health issues. We have been working closely with NHS Talking Therapies in Hertfordshire to generate referrals and are looking at ways to start offering this as a funded service.

Workshops and Public Events: Our public events are always immensely popular and allow people to engage with us in more ad hoc ways. They also offer us opportunities for face-to-face fundraising activities through plant and produce sales. We aim to build on the successes of our 2023 activities by continuing to provide an eclectic mix of events and workshops for our community.

Fundraising Activities: Our work this year would not have been possible without the support of our generous funders to whom we are very grateful.

Ed Harkness
Business Development Manager



Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Triangle Community Garden Accounts 2022-23
(aka Hitchin Community Gardens)

Hitchin Community Gardens					
Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August 2023					
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	12401	9557	0	21958	12304
Other Trading Activities	6239	1072	0	7311	6245
Charitable Activities	3435	33518	0	36953	32696
Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	22075	44147	0	66222	51245
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	2745	3331	0	6076	3171
Charitable Expenditure	16900	41220	0	58120	38623
Total Expenditure	19645	44551	0	64196	41794
Net Income before Other Recognised Gains and Losses	2430	-404	0	2,026	9,451
Other Recognised Gains and Losses	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer between Funds					
Net Movement in Funds	2430	-404	0	2,026	9,451
Total funds Brought Forward	27412	22982	0	50394	40943
Total Funds Carried Forward	29842	22578	0	52420	50394
Hitchin Community Gardens					
Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2023					
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0	0
Current Assets					
Stock	206	0	0	206	230
Debtors and Prepayments	415	1855	0	2270	4337
Cash at Bank and in Hand	32688	18694	0	51382	47938
Total Current Assets	33309	20549	0	53858	52505
Current Liabilities					
Creditors and Accruals	639	799	0	1438	2111
Deferred Income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	639	799	0	1438	2111
Net Current Assets	32670	19750	0	52420	50394
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	32670	19750	0	52420	50394
Amounts falling due after more than 1 Year					
Deferred Income	0			0	0
Net Assets	32670	19750	0	52420	50394
Funds of the Charity					
Triangle Community Garden Fund	5652		0	5652	1921
Pavilion Fund	21663		0	21663	17149
Specified General Funds	8749			8749	13191
Restricted Funds		16356	0	16356	18133
Total Funds	36064	16356	0	52420	50394

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2023

1. Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the FRSSE and the 2015 SORP

2. Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

(a) Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

(b) Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary Income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Donated Services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Income from Trading and Charitable Activities are accounted for when earned.

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the payment of fees for six of the clients (gardeners). Fees of £11,378 were received from HCC in the year ended 31st August 2023.

(c) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

It includes governance costs which are those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountant's fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

(d) Fixed Assets

Fixed Assets are included at cost less accumulated depreciation. The cost of minor additions, those costing below £1000 and those whose purchase costs are fully covered by a grant are not capitalised. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the asset over its expected useful life, which in all cases is estimated at 5 years. Currently the charity has no fixed assets which have not been written off.

3. Income

(a) Donations

Triangle Community Garden £411.93

Donation from Waitrose - £1,200

Donation from Crane Charitable Funds (for Growing Ability) - £1,974.79

Neighbourly Trust - £1,000

Donation from St Mark's Church - £250

Donations from Crane Charitable Funds - £5,488

Donations from Crane Charitable Funds - £2,667.37

(b) Grants

Herts Community foundation - £4,930 Forest School and Triangle Tribe activities.

Herts County Council – £650 Locality grant (Video).

North Herts CVS - £750 Sustainability.

Bedfordshire Charitable Trust £2,636 – Growing Ability Taster Scheme (for Bedfordshire residents.)

4. Expenditure

For analysis see attached appendix A

5. Trustee Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

Reimbursements were made to trustees for purchases made directly for Hitchin Community Gardens.

Details of trustees' other transactions with the charity are given in note 14.

6. Salaries and Wages

At 31st August 2023, 6 part time staff were employed.

Total wages including pension contributions paid in the year to 31st August 2023 were £47,308.21.

9. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Equipment
At Cost	£
At 1 st September 2021	2916
Acquisitions	0
At 31 st August 2022	2916
Depreciation	
At 1 st September 2021	2916
Charge for Year	0
At 31 st August 2022	2916
Net Book Value	
At 31 st August 2022	0
At 31 st August 2023	0

11. Debtors

Prepaid expenses	£ 720.10
Debtors	£1550.38
Reclaimable Gift Aid Tax	<u>£ 0.00</u>
	£2270.48

12. Creditors and Accruals

Income received in advance	£ 493.65
Creditors	£ 576.70
Payroll & pension liabilities	<u>£ 368.17</u>
Total	£1438.52

All deferred income has now been written back.

13. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

Triangle Community Garden and Ransom's Pavilion	£27,316
Growing Ability Group	£13,300
Capital Expenditure Fund (balance of grants)	£11,804

14. Related Parties

One trustee is a director of Bowles & Wyer who do the photocopying for Hitchin Community Gardens. No charge is made for black and white copies, and colour copies are invoiced at cost. This is considerably cheaper than using another supplier.

See page 5 for Appendix A (Note 4) and page 6 for Reserves Statement

Appendix A

Note 4

Hitchin Community Gardens

Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Voluntary Income Costs			
General Admin & Publicity	132		132
Website	4	5	9
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	136	5	141
Fundraising Costs			
Event Costs	1620		1620
Workshop Costs	800	130	930
Children's Activities Costs	0	3196	3196
Pavilion Costs	187		187
Gazebo Costs	0		0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2607	3326	5933
Charitable Expenditure			
Insurance	391	261	652
Subscriptions	71	106	177
Gardening Club & Sunday Staff	2718	0	2718
Growing Ability (GA) and New Shoots Tutors	1495	23562	25057
Project Management Salary	10184	9349	19533
Visits	68	577	645
Volunteer Expenses	0	0	0
Training	4	1342	1346
Project Management & GA Overheads	380	3759	4139
Wi-fi	127	190	317
Materials, Tools & PPE	1092	574	1666
Allotment Rent & Shelter	0	93	93
Refreshments	59	524	583
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	16590	40336	56926
Governance Costs			
Accounting	266	645	911
Accountants Fees	40	60	100
DBS Checks	0	172	172
Legal costs	5	8	13
Other Governance Costs			0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	311	885	1196
Total Expenditure	19644	44552	64196

Hitchin Community Gardens Reserves Statement 2023

Hitchin Community Gardens needs reserves to:

- Meet any contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close
- Meet unexpected costs like repairs to the pavilion
- To replace equipment as it wears out.
- Ensure the charity can provide a continuing service for its gardeners and to the community
- To provide working capital if funding is paid in arrears, and to enable it to bid for funding which is paid in arrears
- To provide working capital where there is a gap between funding streams. Where funding is not renewed bids for alternative sources can take time to process.
- Enable it to expand the range of services offered
- Provide a contingency fund in the event of a shortfall in one or more of its funding activities

Hitchin Community Garden Reserves at 31st August 2023

Hitchin Community Garden's reserves policy states that reserves should be between 30% and 40% of turnover.

Reserves at 31st August 2023 are £52420. This is 79% of turnover.

These reserves are earmarked for the continuation of our Business Development/Outreach post which will allow us to reach more beneficiaries and provide more wide-ranging services to address the needs of the post-pandemic community.

Part of the purpose of this role is to seek new markets and new funding to address future known financial shortfalls: cuts to our contract income from the local authority came into play in 2021-22 and are likely to seriously impact us by 2023-24, when our existing clients are passported over to the new rates. The cuts are likely to halve the income we currently receive to deliver commissioned services, with no change to the quality or quantity of service delivery required. Any future clients we attract through the commissioning framework will come in on the new low rates. This is already impacting us as we recruit new clients. Furthermore the cost of living crisis is enticing existing clients away from our chargeable service to local free-to-attend volunteer-run services nearby, threatening to undermine our viability. In 2022-23 we were very lucky to receive several large donations which masked the impact of lost clients and revenue. Next year we may not be so lucky.

We therefore need our reserves to address future known challenges and provide a safety net to offset future reduced income.

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

CONTENTS

Page

1	Legal and Administrative Details
2	Independent Examiner's report
3	Balance Sheet
4	Statement of Financial Activities
5-9	Notes to the Accounts

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

TRUSTEES

Chair

Victoria Mary Wyer
Adrian Peter Stones
Andrew Danger Green
Hilary Jean Oughton
Gareth Hills
John Anthony Wyer

REGISTERED OFFICE:

23 Priory Way
Hitchin
SG4 9BJ

BANKERS:

The Co-operative Bank-Business
PO Box 250
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

INDEPEDNDENT EXAMINER:

Charles Osei, BSc(Hons), MSc, ACIE, AFA, ATA, MCIPP
Flat 3, 11 Rochdale Way, Deptford London SE8 4LY

Hitchin Community Gardens

Registered Charity No. 1145243

Company Registration: 7676360

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE TRUSTEES OF HITCHEN COMMUNITY GARDENS

I report on the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023 set out on pages 3-9

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and independent examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The Charity Trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1)(d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. 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 as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the reports limited to those matters set out in the statement as follows:

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
 - a) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
 - b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulations 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulationshave 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.



Charles Osei, BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIE, AFA, ATA, MCIPP, MIPA
Flat 3, 11 Rochdale Way Deptford London SE8 4LY

07/12/23

Date

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endow ment Funds	2022-23 Total	2021-22 Total
		£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	1k	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets		0	0	0	0	0
Current Assets						
Stock	8	206	-	-	206	230
Debtors and Prepayments	9	415	1,855	-	2,270	4,337
Cash at Bank and in Hand	10	32,688	18,694	-	51,382	47,938
Total Current Assets		33,309	20,549	-	53,858	52,505
Current Liabilities						
Creditors and Accruals	11	639	799	-	1,438	2,111
Deferred Income		-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Liabilities		639	799	-	1,438	2,111
Net Current Assets		32,670	19,750	-	52,420	50,394
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		32,670	19,750	-	52,420	50,394
Amounts falling due after more than 1 Year						
Deferred Income		-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets		32,670	19,750	-	52,420	50,394
Funds of the Charity						
Triangle Community Garden Fund		5,652	-	-	5,652	1,921
Pavilion Fund		21,663	-	-	21,663	17,149
Balance of Grant		8,749	-	-	8,749	13,191
Restricted Funds		-	16,356	-	16,356	18,133
Total Funds		36,064	16,356	-	52,420	50,394

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 st August 2023.

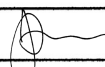
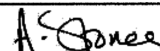
The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2023 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- i) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- ii) preparing finaancial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or defeict for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Section 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all trustees

Print Name	Signature	Date
John Wyer		15 Mar 2024
Adrian Peter Stones		15 Mar 2024

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	2022-23 Total	2021-22 Total
		£	£	£	£	£
Income from:						
Donations and Legacies		12,401	9,557	-	21,958	12,304
Other Trading Activities		6,239	1,072	-	7,311	6,245
Charitable Activities		3,435	33,518	-	36,953	32,696
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Total Income	6	22,075	44,147	-	66,222	51,245
Expenditure on:						
Raising Funds		2,745	3,331	-	6,076	3,171
Charitable Expenditure		16,900	41,220	-	58,120	38,623
Total Expenditure	7	19,645	44,551	-	64,196	41,794
Net Income before Other Recognised Gains and Losses		2,430	404	-	2,026	9,451
Other Recognised Gains and Losses		-	-	-	-	-
Transfer between Funds						
Net Movement in Funds		2,430	404	-	2,026	9,451
Total funds Brought Forward		27,412	22,982	-	50,394	40,943
Total Funds Carried Forward		29,842	22,578	-	52,420	50,394

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation.

These accounts have been prepared on an accrual basis and include income and expenditure as they are earned or incurred, rather than as cash received or paid. Reference to the "Charities SORP" refers to the Charities SORP (FRS 102): Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 2nd edition effective 1 January 2019, and in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

1a. Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Grants are included in the Statement of financial activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

1b. Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is possible that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

1c. Government grants

Government grants are credited to the Statement of financial activities as the related expenditure is incurred.

1d. Fund accounting

Unrestricted Funds are receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Restricted Funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

Designated Funds are unrestricted funds but earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTD) **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

1e. Taxation

The Charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

1f. Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount. Prepayments are valued at amount prepaid.

1g. Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1h. Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of financial activities as a finance cost.

1i. Financial Instruments

The Charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1j. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The Charity does not currently have any significant accounting estimates or areas of judgement.

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

1k Tangible Fixed Assets

Equipment and other tangible fixed assets are capitalised when the cost is £500 or more

	Equipment
At Cost	£
At 1st September 2022	2,916
Acquisition	0
At 31st August 2023	2,916
Depreciation	
At 1st September 2022	2,916
Charge for Year	0
At 31st August 2023	2,916
Net Book Value	
At 31st August 2023	0
At 31st August 2022	0

6 Income for year ended 31st August 2023

	TCG	Pavilion	GA	Capital	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Voluntary Income					
Gifts and donations	8,801		1,991	2,200	12,992
Grants	-	-	2,636	6,330	8,966
	8,801	-	4,627	8,530	21,958
Activities for Generating Funds					
Fundraising	1,068	-	-	-	1,068
Apple Juice Sales	752	-	-	-	752
Jam Sales	140	-	-	-	140
Book Sales	45	-	-	-	45
Card Sales	10	-	-	-	10
Sponsorship	500	-	-	-	500
Workshop Fees	1,682	-	-	-	1,682
School Visits	-	-	-	-	-
Children's Activities	-	-	18	1,041	1,059
Group Visits	15	-	-	-	15
Pavilion Workshop Income	-	310	-	-	310
Pavilion External Lettings	-	1,670	-	-	1,670
Gazebo Lettings	60	-	-	-	60
	4,272	1,980	18	1,041	7,311
Charitable Activities Income					
Fees from Clients	-	-	22,140	-	22,140
HCC Client Fees	-	-	11,378	-	11,378
Income from Sale of Produce	-	-	-	-	-
Pavilion Income from GA/GH	-	3,435	-	-	3,435
	-	3,435	33,518	-	36,953
					-
Total Income	13,073	5,415	38,164	9,571	66,222

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

7 Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022-23 Total £	2021-22 Total £
Voluntary Income Costs				
General Admin & Publicity	132		132	-
Website	4	5	9	9
	<u>136</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>9</u>
Fundraising Costs				
Event Costs	1,620	-	1,620	976
Workshop Costs	800	130	930	880
Children's Activities Costs	-	3,196	3,196	-
Pavilion Costs	187	-	187	1,250
Gazebo Costs	-	-	-	57
	<u>2,607</u>	<u>3,326</u>	<u>5,933</u>	<u>3,163</u>
Charitable Expenditure				
Insurance	391	261	652	648
Subscriptions	71	106	177	189
Gardening Club & Sunday Staff	2,719	-	2,719	3,124
GA and NS Tutors	1,495	23,562	25,057	17,548
Project Management Salary	10,184	9,349	19,533	10,869
Visits	68	577	645	171
Volunteer Expenses	-	-	-	-
Training	4	1,342	1,346	439
Project Management & GA Group Overheads	380	3,759	4,139	2,762
Wi-fi	127	190	317	317
Materials, Tools & PPE	1,092	574	1,666	1,018
Allotment Rent & Shelter	-	93	93	679
Refreshments	59	524	583	171
	<u>16,590</u>	<u>40,336</u>	<u>56,926</u>	<u>37,935</u>
Governance Costs				
Accounting	266	645	911	590
Accountants Fees	40	60	100	85
DBS Checks	-	172	172	-
Legal costs	5	8	13	13
Other Governance Costs	-	-	-	-
	<u>311</u>	<u>885</u>	<u>1,196</u>	<u>688</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>19,644</u>	<u>44,552</u>	<u>64,196</u>	<u>41,795</u>

Hitchin Community Gardens

Company registration number: 7676360

Charity registration number: 1145243

	2022-23	2021-22
8 Stock	£	£
Apple Juice	37	-
Books	123	230
Cards	46	-
Total	206	230
9 Debtors and accrued income	£	£
Insurance	637	-
Web Maintenance	24	-
Permaculture Association	3	-
NCVO	9	-
Hitchin Forum	12	-
HPCA	35	-
HCC -(invoiced)	1,102	-
GA Fees accrued	448	-
Prepaid expenses	-	748
Debtors	-	3,544
Reclaimable Gift Aid Tax	-	45
Total	2,270	4,337
10 Cash at Bank and in Hand	51,382	47,938
11 Creditors and Accruals	£	£
Workshop income received in advance	10	-
Apple Day income received in advance	20	-
Open Day income received in advance	95	-
Pavilion Income in advance	369	-
Virgin Media (wi-fi)	26	-
Elizabeth Millbank	23	-
Steve Granger	18	-
Gemma ward	-	-
Pavilion cleaner	50	-
Vicky Wyr expenses	88	-
Culturewood Expenses	371	-
NEST	-	-
Payroll Liabilities	368	952
Income received in advance	-	390
Creditors	770	-
Total	1,439	1,342

HITCHIN COMMUNITY GARDENS

England & Wales - Charity number 1145243

Accounts



Triangle Community Garden

Created and cultivated by people of all ages and abilities at Ransom's Rec Hitchin, Herts

Annual Review 2021-22

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2021-22

For those new to the Triangle Community Garden (TCG) and its work, here's our vision:

'A community where people feel happier and more fulfilled through a connection with the natural world and an understanding of our place in it.'

Our aim is to help people of all ages and abilities lead more fulfilling lives, through gardening and contact with the natural world. We do this through:

- Supporting physical and mental health through social therapeutic horticulture, healthy living and 'green care' projects,
- Volunteering opportunities and
- Community events.

This has been a great year for all our projects, which have recovered well after the strain and upheaval of the pandemic and its fall out.

We're active in three areas within Ransom's Rec (a small informal park near Hitchin station): the allotments, the Triangle Community Garden in the northeast corner of the park, and our Forest Garden adjacent to it alongside the River Hiz. The areas vary greatly in character and each brings different challenges and rewards. All three sites have thrived under the loving care of our volunteers at Friday Garden Club, New Shoots and Growing Ability, our three current green care projects.

Growing Ability works long-term with adults with learning disabilities, focusing on the goals, abilities and support needs of each individual, and using horticulture to increase the health, wellbeing, self-esteem and self-confidence of our 'gardeners'.

New Shoots began as a response to the rise in social isolation and anxiety brought on by the pandemic, and seeks to use the benefits of working in nature to bring about improved physical health and mental wellbeing. Although attendance is time-limited, some participants go on to join our Garden Club, made up of loyal volunteers who tend and nurture all our sites, enjoying the benefits of biophilia in a virtuous circle.

We also run family-friendly community gardening sessions, open to all, once a month on a Sunday morning. And we manage half of the park Pavilion, not only as a base for our projects, but also as a community resource for local art and craft workshops. You can find out more about all these and the wonderful people who make them happen in the following pages, and by visiting our website or subscribing to our monthly email newsletters.

Lastly I'd like to thank everyone in our wonderful Triangle Garden community – our staff, trustees, volunteers, gardeners, collaborators, participants, stakeholders, funders, carers and supporters. And where would we be without nature itself...?

Food for thought
Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees



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Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Growing Ability

Growing Ability is our social therapeutic horticulture project for adults with learning disabilities. It's primarily based at our allotments and also uses the Pavilion, Triangle Garden, Forest Garden and Ransom's Recreation Ground.



175 sessions
 17 individuals
 365 volunteer hours
 4 new attenders
 this year
 4 off site trips

We currently run four 2.5 hour sessions a week, each led by an experienced Horticulture Therapist. Two members of staff and a volunteer work with up to six Growing Ability Gardeners (as we call our service users). 17 individuals currently attend, some coming to more than one session.

Our sessions incorporate activities such as growing food and flowers, setting up a produce table, cookery, art, going on trips to places of interest, nature walks and observations, flower pressing, coffee mornings and afternoon teas. Our groups came together on the bank holiday to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and we encourage our gardeners to participate in all our community events.

Within our regular review structure, individuals and groups make decisions as to what they want to do within their own groups. Individuals are encouraged to think about what they are good at as well as what they enjoy about the project and what could be 'even better if'.

During extreme weather we have been able to adapt by changing the session day or time, adjusting our activities, working in the shade or by having virtual sessions for those with access. This adaptability also proved useful during January when Liz broke her ankle and needed to work from home whilst Rachel

and Steve lead the sessions.

During August the project had its 3-yearly PAMMS (Provider Assessment) inspection by Herts County Council. Our overall rating was **GOOD**, with nine of the findings rated **Excellent**.

This is a reflection of the care our staff and volunteers deliver, highlighted by an overall **excellent** in the findings on 'Involvement and information, respecting and involving service users.'

Here are some clips from the feedback:

- *'Observed lots of conversations - Observed good and appropriate staff interaction throughout visit. In one observation staff continually and politely prompted service user to unscrew flower press rather than doing it for them.'*
- **'One service user commented - Staff are "fab" and are "always respectful, approachable, [and] understanding".'**
- *'Service user stated that what makes them happy is coming to the service, seeing friends, taking part in the tasks and the allotment, learning new things, crafts, cooking, and trips out'*
- **'Staff ensure that they respect service users views, choices and decisions during any discussions had and when working with the service users. Examples included what the service user would like to do that day and what they would like to grow in the allotment.'**

Liz McElroy, Project Manager

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Growing Ability Profile

How do you feel about Growing Ability?

I love the sense of getting outside of the house and being active.

The camaraderie, everyone helping each other and being friendly ... it's all good. I enjoy the excitement of what's growing each week like the tomatoes, I also love the neurotic chicken and the classical music (played in the background from a neighbour).

What has gone well?

My time keeping has improved immensely, this is down to me walking in with another GA member. Having Carole our volunteer back has been amazing.

What does a good session look like?

When I leave with a smile on my face

How could it be better?

Having a few more mini raised planters for growing salads.

What does the future look like?

It looks calm and relaxing when I am here....

How do we get there?

We learn to breath, we take time to breath and just focus

What one thing would you like to see happen to take us forward?

Breathing exercises at the start of the session.

Anything else?

It's the one day of the week that gets me back to nature. Gives me inner peace. I'm calm inside after I've been here.

By Mark (pictured centre right)



To find out more about
Growing Ability please
contact Liz McElroy
liz@trianglegarden.org

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



New Shoots

New Shoots is a new project that uses gardening together, to reduce social isolation and promote mental wellbeing.

The combination of physical activity, working with others and being present in the natural world has multiple benefits.

In autumn 2021 we ran a 14 week pilot project: 10 individuals attended 2 hrs/wk 'supported volunteering'. Feedback from that helped us to refine and improve the project into its current form, based around the 'five steps to mental wellbeing'.

This spring we successfully bid for an HCC grant seeking innovative projects using physical activity to promote mental wellbeing. This grant is funding two 15 week blocks of New Shoots, the first of which ran from June to September 2022, with the second starting in October.

New Shoots enables individuals to work together or on their own within a group setting, on a range of activities: some physically active like leaf raking, mulch barrowing, and setting up a wormery, and others more focused on mindfulness. These have included botanical pressing and creating a herbarium of weeds with pressed specimens. Art is also a feature of the project with members taking part in cyanotype and leaf monotype printing.

Propagation, including taking cuttings, seed sowing and dividing plants, demonstrates the reciprocity of nature, reinforcing a sense of purpose and potential in simple horticultural tasks. The resulting plants have been sold to raise funds at our community events, which members have taken part in.

Each block culminates in a group trip to

Cambridge Botanical Gardens, also attended by Friday Garden Club members. This represents an opportunity to go somewhere new and inspiring in the company of the established group, and to meet and engage with other Triangle community gardeners. One New Shoots member had never been on a train before. Another reported not having been on a trip for many years. The sunflower became an emblem of our summer visit and was chosen by the group for future New Shoots promotional material.

Outcomes are measured weekly using simple feedback forms, and at the beginning, middle and end of each block using the Warwick & Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing and Mental Attention Awareness Scales (WEMWBS & MAAS).

For the autumn 2021 pilot project, weekly feedback showed participants on average feeling less anxious, more positive and more engaged after each session. The WEMWBS scores showed participants feeling more confident, more useful and more able to make up their minds about things over the block period.

One member of the pilot block went on to become a regular at our Friday Garden Club, one person joined Groundwork's Green Skills programme, another joined their GOGA (Go Outside Get Active) programme and one person self-referred to our Growing Ability project.

New Shoots has been led each week by Steve Granger and supported by Liz, and Gill our regular New Shoots volunteer. Outcomes for blocks 2 and 3 will be published in next year's Annual Report.

26 sessions
 17 individuals
 57 volunteer hours
 1 to Garden Club
 2 to Groundwork
 1 to Growing Ability

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Friday Garden Club

Friday Garden Club meets every Friday morning 10am-12.15 for some gentle guided social gardening. It is open to anyone and its purpose is to maintain and develop the Triangle Garden and Forest Garden for the benefit of people and nature. Members enjoy learning new gardening skills, meeting new friends and being active in the fresh air, while making a positive contribution to the community and biodiversity. There are also regular trips and outings to gardens and shows.

A very important part of the Garden Club experience is the cuppa, cake and chat at the end of each session! Thanks go to Lesley for her cake baking at coffee time, often using produce from our sites.

Garden Club has met most Fridays throughout the year, excluding holidays and extreme weather. Volunteer numbers have remained fairly constant, with 14 volunteers overall, and an average of 6 people coming each week, giving a total of 606 volunteer hours this year.

As there is a restriction on the number of allotment plots that a therapeutic project can occupy in North Herts (one per site), some individual members of the TCG community have made their personal plots available to our projects either in whole or part. The number of people who benefit from this far exceeds the standard one family : one plot benefit.

The addition of plot 6A with its new polytunnel has given a dedicated space to Garden Club for propagation and cultivation, and resulted in a bumper crop of tomatoes and melons for the group to enjoy at coffee time. Plot 6A has also been used as a flower cutting garden and by our New Shoots project.

In their ongoing nurturing of our community spaces for biodiversity and people, Garden Club have created new paths in the Forest Garden, opening it up to encourage people to walk through.

The ongoing task of removing the 'weed suppressing' membrane continues slowly but surely, to allow planting of a new herbaceous layer. New plants added to these areas include Yacon, Mashua and Red Clover.

Garden Club's idea of leaving nettles and brambles in the area under the apple cordons to discourage 'scrumper's', allowed us a first crop of apples from the trees this year. From the Forest Garden we've harvested Mirabelle plums, Almonds, Szechuan Peppercorns, Dwarf Quince, Red, Black & White Currants, Blackberries, Gooseberries and more.

The Forest Garden and Triangle Garden survived the heat of summer pretty well, even without lots of watering, surely a permaculture success! Although new pollinating plants added around the meeting space in July did not do so well.

We enjoyed a trip to Stepney City Farm where we were lucky to get a behind the scenes tour from a member of staff, exploring their polytunnel, composting and growing areas. Many Garden Club volunteers staffed our plant stalls at Apple Day and our Summer Garden Party.

Crane have continued to attend carrying out various tasks including putting in a new noticeboard for the garden, building new leaf mould bins and helping with polytunnel construction on Plot 6A.

Groundwork's GOGA ran two six week sessions this year with volunteers from The Living Room. They carried out many tasks including building compost bins, planting Jerusalem Artichokes in the Forest Garden and learning how to take cuttings.

Thanks to Tom Ayres from NHC for marking out for the park contractor where to not cut the grass, we now have areas in front of the TCG and Forest Garden where wildflowers can set seed and thrive.

Steve Granger, Garden Club Leader



To find out more about
Garden Club or New
Shoots please contact
Steve Granger
steve@trianglegarden.org

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Community events, walks & workshops

Thanks to our collaboration with the wonderful Hitchin Forager we have continued to run well-attended and well-regarded Foraging Walks since restrictions were lifted, but 2021 was our first year back running our big community events.

As well as its usual celebration of English apples, local food and sustainability, Apple Day 2021 also provided the launch of Hitchin Nature Network, a local group dedicated to bringing wildlife back to our town by making space in our gardens and parks for nature. Other first-time stalls included Zuckermas Bakery, Yom vegan and 'What if...? Craftivism'. The event raised over £650 for our work.

Our events group said farewell to Scarlett and Tim on the organising side, and hello to new members Gemma and Karenanne, as well as a more active role for Garden Club's Gill, helping Mel and

Vicky put on our first big summer event since pre-covid times. Rather than recreating our old Open Day and Fun Dog Show, we opted for a smaller, more focussed 'open garden' event with a Summer Garden Party theme. The aim was to create greater awareness of the community garden and its work and showcase the creativity of our artistic collaborators at the Pavilion.

Garden Club ran a very successful plant and produce stall and Growing Ability put on a series of boules games. We ran a popular nature quest for kids among other nature-based activities, and there were several well-attended garden tours led by Liz, Steve and Hitchin Forager Jane. Nature's Rainbow provided an indigo dye demonstration and a host of local musicians contributed to the lovely laid back vibe.

Gemma, Mel, Vicky, Gill and Karenanne

The Pavilion & Nature's Rainbow

Our Pavilion continues to be well used by external arts tutors for creative workshops such as [Tuuli Parker's](#) silver clay and glass fusion jewellery classes, and [Kim Raymont's](#) botanical art courses. These hires provide welcome income to help fund our Friday Garden Club and Sunday volunteer mornings.

[Nature's Rainbow](#) have also been regular hirers of the pavilion this year. Co-founder Susan Dye elaborates here: 'We specialise in workshops on how to plan a dye garden, and extract dye from woad and Japanese indigo plants. Our students come from across the UK and we teach almost exclusively from the TCG pavilion and outdoor classroom which has been very popular with our indigo dyeing students this year. As well as providing the health benefits of excellent ventilation,

people love the setting of the working garden and learning about the Triangle Garden's projects.

We also teach a workshop in collaboration with a botanical printer from west London which has wider appeal. This has helped to raise our profile locally. Botanical printing creates designs directly onto fabric or paper from certain leaves and flowers with the aid of heat and mordant. It works well with leaves from a wide range of trees and we are grateful that TCG has agreed to plant an alder buckthorn in the forest garden. This produces beautiful clear golden leaf prints and is the food plant for brimstone butterflies; nectar from flowers is good for insects and the berries are a good food source for birds. We are keen to collaborate more on the forest garden.'

- 2 community events
- 7 local food stalls
- 8 sustainability stalls
- 40 event volunteers
- 8 arts workshops
- 10 foraging walks
- 15 dye workshop days
- 18 jewellery workshops

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Treasurer's Report

This financial year (1st Sept 2021-22) saw TCG returning to a degree of normality after two years that were dominated by the impacts of COVID-19, but where the effects on fundraising were still being felt.

Open Day returned in 2022, but on smaller scale than in previous years, with a deliberate shift in focus to the community garden and the activities of the charity. Despite this down-sizing, it was great to see that the event still generated a surplus for us.

Along with our other sources of income, the pavilion continues to be an important source of funds – generating fees from use by local community groups and classes, and providing facilities for TCG activities and projects.

Whilst we are very pleased to see that the combined activities of TCG have delivered a surplus this year of over £9,000 we remain very aware of the hard truth that without other sources of income, the charity would have likely made a deficit based solely on fees from clients.

This serves to highlight how important these other sources are, and how grateful we remain to those that provide them; whether that is very kind donations (such as those from Crane, Barratt Homes, St Marks Church and private individuals, amongst others) or the grants awarded to us (such as those provided by HCC and our local Councillors). It also shows the hard work undertaken by the team in submitting robust and convincing grant applications – their efforts this year have certainly been vital.

Income from client fees has shown a modest increase during the year, due in large part by an increase in attendance at the sessions run by TCG. But under the new fee structure introduced by Hertfordshire County Council, the level of this income is precarious going forward as new rates represent a reduction on those paid previously.

This uncertainty over future fee levels, and a desire to ensure that TCG runs a full programme of fully-attended sessions has led to the decision to create a new role of Business Development Manager. Applications are currently being sought for this position; it is hoped that this new team member will be in place before the end of 2022 not only to develop our current sessions but also to generate new sustainable income sources that match the Trust's aims and principles. Initially, this role will be funded from our reserves but the intention is that the additional income that is brought in will make the role self-sustaining.

Looking ahead, we are positive that 2022/23 will see a strengthening in the charity's position as the new role of BDM starts to deliver benefits, working alongside our outstanding team of hard-working and dedicated staff.

Abbreviated accounts are included with this report. The full accounts in the format required by the Charities Commission are available on our website.

Andrew Green, Treasurer

Triangle Community Garden

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August 2022

	TCG and Pavilion	GA Group	Capital Fund	Total	Last Year
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	1011	1873	1000	3884	1393
Grants	0	200	8220	8420	21566
Fundraising	6205	41		6246	2775
Investment Income	0			0	0
Charitable Activities	2509	30187		32696	30345
Other Income					
Total	9725	32301	9220	51246	56079
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	2025	5	1142	3172	2628
Charitable Expenditure	5542	29402	3680	38624	38360
Total	7567	29407	4822	41796	40988
Net Income	2158	2894	4398	9450	15091
Net Movement in Funds	2158	2894	4398	9450	15091
Total funds Brought Forward	16912	7305	16726	40943	25852
Total Funds Carried Forward	19070	10199	21124	50393	40943

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

People

We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who supports us in whatever way – there are too many of you to mention individually but here are a few of our key staff, volunteers and supporters.

Thank you to our fantastic longstanding staff team led by Project Manager Liz McElroy and ably supported by Steve Granger at Garden Club and New Shoots and Rachel Cottey at Growing Ability. And to volunteers Judith, Lesley, Yolanda and Carol who support our GA sessions and Gill who supports New Shoots.

Thanks too to our trustees: Vicky Wyer (Chair), Andrew Green (Treasurer), Fiona Dolman (Garden Committee Chair), Adrian Stones (HR advisor), Gareth Hills, Hilary Aughton and John Wyer.

Massive thanks to our volunteer accounts assistant Margaret Byrne and her apple juice sales supremo husband, Alan. And to our committed events team of Mel Coath, Gemma Ward, Karenanne Haye, and the aforementioned Vicky and Gill.

Future plans

There are plenty of exciting opportunities on the horizon for the Triangle Garden and we hope that whoever fills our new BDM role will enable us to capitalise on those, to allow us to benefit as many people as possible with the great resources and facilities that we have.

We hope the success of New Shoots will enable us to get further funding to roll out the project's benefits to more people.

We'd like to promote Growing Ability to adults with learning disabilities from nearby counties as well as within Hertfordshire to maximise GA's benefit to this wonderful unsung community.

We have plans to provide Forest School sessions for families and young people next year using the Triangle Garden,

Not forgetting Jane the Hitchin Forager for supporting the garden through her foraging walks, and Hitchin Nature Network through their contributions.

Thank you to our wonderful Garden Club volunteers who help to keep our sites so biodiverse and beautiful. And to our Growing Ability and New Shoots gardeners and their supportive parents and carers. Plus HCC for their financial support via the Infection Control Fund.

Thank you also to our monthly Sunday volunteers and events volunteers who bring so much positive energy with them. We'd particularly like to thank those who contributed to Theo's 2nd birthday fund raising over £300 for the garden.

We'd also like to thank local building services company Crane for whom we hold a monthly team volunteering session which helps us move forward hugely with practical elements of our projects. We're also very grateful to Crane for their recent generous donation to Growing Ability.

Ransom's Rec and various other nearby greenspaces, to reconnect people to nature at this time of increasing digital isolation, rising cost of living strain, climate-related upheaval and loss of biodiversity.

And there are so many opportunities and possible collaborations open to land-based organisations like ours that could potentially benefit so many, if we had the headspace, time, energy and funds to take them on.

The key to this in the permaculture world is to 'Use small and slow solutions' to 'Obtain a yield'. 'Apply self-regulation and accept feedback' and 'Creatively use and respond to change'. So expect some changes around here – but slow and steady wins the race!

3 staff members

6 key volunteers

7 trustees

5 events organisers

14 Garden Club
volunteers

606 Garden Club
volunteer hours

32 Crane
volunteer hours

86 Sunday
volunteer hours



Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August 2022

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	2011	10293	0	12304	22959
Other Trading Activities	6204	41	0	6245	2775
Charitable Activities	2509	30187	0	32696	30345
Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	10724	40521	0	51245	56079
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	2024	1147	0	3171	2673
Charitable Expenditure	5979	32644	0	38623	38360
Total Expenditure	8003	33791	0	41794	41033
Net Income before Other Recognised Gains and Losses	2721	6,730	0	9,451	15,046
Other Recognised Gains and Losses	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer between Funds Net Movement in Funds	2721	6730	0	9,451	5,112
Total funds Brought Forward	24691	16252	0	40943	20740
Total Funds Carried Forward	27412	22982	0	50394	25852

Hitchin Community Gardens

Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2022

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0	0
Current Assets					
Stock	230	0	0	230	247
Debtors and Prepayments	793	3544	0	4337	2322
Cash at Bank and in Hand	32054	15884	0	47938	39726
Total Current Assets	33077	19428	0	52505	42295
Current Liabilities					
Creditors and Accruals	986	1125	0	2111	1352
Deferred Income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	986	1125	0	2111	1352
Net Current Assets	32091	18303	0	50394	40943
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	32091	18303	0	50394	40943
Amounts falling due after more than 1 Year					
Deferred Income	0			0	0
Net Assets	32091	18303	0	50394	40943
Funds of the Charity					
Triangle Community Garden Fund	1921		0	1921	4046
Pavilion Fund	17149		0	17149	12867
Balance of Grant to cover lost income	13191			13191	12627
Restricted Funds		18133	0	18133	11403
Total Funds	32261	18133	0	50394	40943

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2022

1. Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the FRSSE and the 2015 SORP

2. Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

(a) Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

(b) Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary Income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Donated Services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Income from Trading and Charitable Activities are accounted for when earned.

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the payment of fees for six of the gardeners. Fees of £10852 were received from HCC in the year ended 31st August 2022.

(c) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. It includes governance costs which are those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountant's fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

(d) Fixed Assets

Fixed Assets are included at cost less accumulated depreciation. The cost of minor additions, those costing below £1000 and those whose purchase costs are fully covered by a grant are not capitalised. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the asset over its expected useful life, which in all cases is estimated at 5 years. Currently the charity has no fixed assets which have not been written off.

3. Income

(a) Donations

Triangle Community Garden £1011

Donation from Crane Widows & Orphans for GA - £1873.36

Donation from Barratt Homes £1000

(b) Grants

Herts CC councillor's grant £1000 – for Laptop & Water Butts

Infection Control Grants £1870– for Covid related expenses.

Herts CC £5350– for mental health related expenses

4. Expenditure

For analysis see attached appendix

5. Trustee Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

Reimbursements were made to trustees for purchases made directly for Hitchin Community Gardens.

Details of trustees other transactions with the charity are given in note 14.

6. Salaries and Wages

At 31st August 2022 3 part time staff were employed.

Total wages including pension contributions paid in the year to 31st August 2022 were £31541

7. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Equipment
At Cost	£
At 1st September 2021	2916
Acquisitions	0
At 31st August 2022	2916
Depreciation	
At 1st September 2021	2916
Charge for Year	0
At 31st August 2022	2916
Net Book Value	
At 31st August 2021	0
At 31st August 2022	0

8. Debtors

Prepaid expenses	<u>£ 748</u>
Debtors	£3544
Reclaimable Gift Aid Tax	<u>£ 45</u>
	£2322

9. Creditors and Accruals

Income received in advance	<u>£ 390</u>
Creditors	<u>£ 770</u>
Payroll & pension liabilities	<u>£ 952</u>
Total	£2112

All deferred income has now been written back.

10. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

Triangle Community Garden	Ransom's Pavilion	Growing Ability Group
£1921	£17149	£10199
Capital Expenditure Fund (balance of grants)	£21124	

11. Related Parties

One trustee is a director of Bowles & Wyer who do the photocopying for Hitchin Community Gardens. No charge is made for black and white copies, and colour copies are invoiced at cost. This is considerably cheaper than using another supplier.

Note 4**Hitchin Community Gardens****Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 2022**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Voluntary Income Costs			
General Admin & Publicity	0		0
Website	4	5	9
	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>
Fundraising Costs			
Event Costs	976		976
Workshop Costs	880		880
Children's Activities Costs	0		0
Pavilion Costs	108	1142	1250
Gazebo Costs	57		57
	<u>2021</u>	<u>1142</u>	<u>3163</u>
Charitable Expenditure			
Insurance	389	259	648
Subscriptions	76	113	189
Gardening Club & Sunday Staff	2062	1062	3124
Growing Ability Group Tutors	265	17283	17548
Project Management Salary	2358	8511	10869
Visits	45	126	171
Volunteer Expenses	0	0	0
Training	30	409	439
Project Management & GA Group Overheads	56	2706	2762
Wi-fi	127	190	317
Materials, Tools & PPE	97	921	1018
Allotment Rent & Shelter	173	506	679
Refreshments & Lunch Club costs	26	145	171
	<u>5704</u>	<u>32231</u>	<u>37935</u>
Governance Costs			
Accounting	236	354	590
Accountants Fees	34	51	85
DBS Checks	0	0	0
Legal costs	5	8	13
Other Governance Costs			0
	<u>275</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>688</u>
Total Expenditure	8004	33791	41795

Hitchin Community Gardens Reserves Statement 2022

Hitchin Community Gardens needs reserves to:

- Meet any contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close
- Meet unexpected costs like repairs to the pavilion
- To replace equipment as it wears out.
- Ensure the charity can provide a continuing service for its gardeners and to the community
- To provide working capital if funding is paid in arrears, and to enable it to bid for funding which is paid in arrears
- To provide working capital where there is a gap between funding streams. Where funding is not renewed bids for alternative sources can take time to process.
- Enable it to expand the range of services offered
- Provide a contingency fund in the event of a shortfall in one or more of its funding activities

Hitchin Community Garden Reserves at 31st August 2022

Hitchin Community Garden's reserves policy states that reserves should be between 30% and 40% of turnover.

Reserves at 31st August 2022 are £50039. This is 100% of turnover.

These reserves are earmarked for the recruitment of a new Business Development post which will allow us to reach more beneficiaries and provide more wide-ranging services to address the needs of the post-pandemic community.

Part of the purpose of this role is to seek new markets and new funding to address future known financial shortfalls: we have been informed of impending cuts to our contract income from the local authority which will come into play in 2022-23. These are likely to halve the income we currently receive on this contract to provide the same level of service for the same number of service users. Any future service users we attract through this contract will come in on the new low rates.

We therefore need our reserves to address future known challenges and provide a safety net to offset future reduced income.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Hitchin Community Garden

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st August 2022.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities

Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. 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 seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of 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 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have 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.

Signed:



Name: Deniz Brown

Relevant Professional qualification: FCCA

Address: 42 Brampton Park Road, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 1XF

Date: 14.10.22.

HITCHIN COMMUNITY GARDENS

England & Wales - Charity number 1145243

Accounts



Triangle Community Garden

Created and cultivated by people of all ages and abilities at Ransom's Rec Hitchin, Herts

Annual Review 2020-21

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2020-21

This has been a year of stress, hope, exhaustion, regeneration and opportunity. A year of contrasts.

Let's start with our vision:

A community where people feel happier and more fulfilled through a connection with the natural world and an understanding of our place in it.

We have certainly seen and felt the beneficial impact of connecting with nature this year. After restrictions started to lift our Growing Ability gardeners gradually returned to on site sessions and were able to get back to growing and nurturing in our all new outdoor set up. Surrounded by nature and back in the company of their friends and our wonderful supportive staff and volunteers they opened up and tensions eased. The site became a haven of succour and anticipation as the new shelter took shape.

It's been wonderful to see the ingenuity of our staff, volunteers and supporters come into play this year – with new initiatives like the foraging supper, farmers market stall and the birth of our New Shoots project to reduce social isolation which we'll be reporting on in next year's review.

Our staff have had a rollercoaster year adapting to constant updates on infection control, testing and risk assessments, in between building the shelter and outdoor kitchen, writing the bid to continue to provide services for the Herts County Council (HCC) and of course running sessions. They've also had to deal with the added concern and responsibility that working with vulnerable people brings to decisions about socialising and seeing family outside work. I know it's

been a real struggle at times and I'm so grateful for their hard work and tireless commitment.

Being successful in our HCC service provision bid came as a great relief after a very long drawn out process. However it also represents a huge concern, as around half our gardeners' places are funded direct from HCC. The new rates, when they kick in for existing service users, will halve our income per person per hour for these individuals. Millions of people need social care across the country and austerity measures have cut every local authority's budget to the bone. Small independent providers like ourselves will feel this keenly in the years ahead.

Of course there is the government's new Health & Social Care Levy which promises to solve the problem of social care once and for all. But over two thirds of that is earmarked for the NHS, leaving just 15% for social care in England. Government targets around levelling up between privately and publicly funded social care, will mean that there is likely to be less money in local authority coffers for setting fair rates for services and paying care workers than there is now.

On a more positive note the funding and support we have received from HCC and their social care training arm HCPA this year has been an absolute lifeline. It has allowed us to avoid a predicted £15k deficit and to navigate the post-covid minefield with expert guidance. It has also put us on a good footing for the uncertain future ahead.

And finally I'd like to pay tribute to all those in our wonderful Triangle Garden community – to our staff, trustees, volunteers, gardeners, carers, participants, stakeholders and supporters. We couldn't do what we do without you. Thank you

Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees



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Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Our Growing Ability Projects

Growing Ability is our social and therapeutic horticulture project for adult with learning disabilities. It's primarily based at our allotments and Ransom's Pavilion, but also at the Triangle Community Garden and Forest Garden and around Ransom's Recreation Ground.

Growing Gang and Growing Health have been temporarily regrouped under the name Growing Ability during the last year as participants and activities have adjusted as a result of the pandemic: at present our work is more focused on social therapeutic horticulture (STH) than providing work experience or support with healthy eating.

We aim to start incorporating elements of Growing Health into our sessions next year when we aim to have our outdoor kitchen up and running.

Over the last six months Growing Ability has gradually built back up to run four sessions a week, which will hopefully now be able to continue throughout the year. In the months of pre-vaccination restrictions we were able to offer virtual contact sessions for individuals unable to attend on site in person.

There are currently 18 places taken within all Growing Ability with 16 members attending once a week and 2 members attending 2 sessions. We continue to be supported by 3 members of staff and 3 volunteers.

Social therapeutic horticulture uses the concept of the garden as a protected and secure place to develop an individual's ability to listen, to notice, to feel able to relax, to feel positive and to connect.

From that feeling of possibility other behaviours and capacities can grow – the ability to engage, to socialise, to plan and to learn any number of practical and life skills that will help individuals become more independent and feel more fulfilled.

Using gardening tasks and the garden itself, our horticultural therapists work with individuals to decide on a set of activities for each individual to improve their particular health needs, to work on certain goals they want to achieve and to enable them to tackle risk in a positive way. Decision making skills and planning are all part of this process and using them in this way promotes independence.

Our year has been a testament to resilience. Our gardeners, volunteers and staff have all demonstrated this throughout the toughest of years. A year of anxiety, loneliness uncertainty and yet as I write and reflect, I look back at the year with pride at the achievements and of the strength of the people around me. The timeline shown overleaf indicates the uncertainty with the second and third lockdowns which caused us to re adapt and think of new ways of reaching our Growing Ability community.

Throughout the year there has been a background of hope, from the development of our new sheltered spaces on the allotment to the gradual return of individuals after long periods away. From our ability to provide encouragement to our gardeners through meaningful tasks and craft opportunities as well as through developing their horticultural skills and rekindling their pleasure in growing flowers and vegetables.

Our new shelter

In September 2020, we applied for and received funding from Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF) to enable us to build a sheltered space, providing protection from the elements throughout the year, storage sheds and an outdoor kitchen. Encouraging everyone's involvement with the whole project, we wanted to develop individuals' resilience and confidence.

The development of the sheltered area has had a direct impact on the growth and stability of Growing Ability and the resilience of the Triangle Community Garden and all its members.

TCG volunteers, GA gardeners, volunteers from Crane and staff have been involved from the beginning, from writing the funding bid, deconstructing, and clearing the old pergola and raised beds, procuring tools and equipment, constructing the shelter, kitchen and sheds whilst continuing with general maintenance and horticultural needs of our projects.

The shelter has provided a space for all our groups to gather. It has changed the way we interact. Socially distanced seating with tables enables people to sit in a safe outdoor environment. Feeling safe brings confidence and so people feel that they can attend sessions and so may become less isolated and anxious.

What our gardeners have said: "This is my most perfect first day ever"
"Today is the furthest I've walked in 9 months"
"I'm very excited about being here!"
"It's lovely being back"

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/growing-ability

The Growing Ability year

August 2020 – we hold our first actual allotment-based session post-lockdown with two Growing Ability gardeners and two staff members. Individuals had not met in person since March.

September 2020 - individuals continue to return with the start of two weekly sessions. Regular phone contact with those who have not yet returned.

October 2020 – autumnal celebrations and traditions of birthdays, pumpkin crafts and eating smores. We remove the soil from three raised beds, and cut the vine down from the pergola on our main allotment in preparation for the new shelter construction.

November 2020 – Staff members Steve and Rachel take the pergola down and dismantle three raised beds. Growing Ability activities include leaf raking and walks to observe the seasonal changes.

December 2020 - we celebrate seasonal traditions and birthdays with socially distanced activities and allotment tasks. We break for Christmas whilst in tier 1, by 4th January we are in tier 4.

January 2021 - we enter our third national lockdown. Growing Ability gardeners do not return to their regular sessions. We develop different modes of communication to keep everyone connected; learning how to use Zoom and What's App for those with access, and weekly phone calls for those without. Holly one of our GA gardeners and Liz start a monthly newsletter which they write together. We email or post it, or staff deliver it by hand giving the opportunity for a socially distanced hello. We make plans for the growing season on the allotment for when we can return. HCC Community Opportunities tendering process reopens after being put on hold during the pandemic.

February 2021 - Staff and volunteers receive their first vaccinations and also start weekly PCR testing. Virtual sessions and contact continue.

March 2021 - our first GA in person post-lockdown session starts at the allotment. Virtual sessions continue, for those unable to return. The timber Shelter kit arrives. Crane assemble our three flat-packed storage sheds. We work with our gardeners to co-produce our the part of our HCC

tender return which asks us to demonstrate how we will build effective relationships with our gardeners and their representatives, how we will help them to build on their strengths and make informed choices about risks they wish to take, and how we will show that we clearly understand communicating in an accessible way. This part will be assessed by a panel including someone with a learning disability

April 2021 – Thursday afternoon GA sessions resume, our first since November 2020. Steve and Rachel dig the foundations for the Shelter. Staff and volunteers have their second Covid vaccinations. Seed potatoes planted for our potato growing competition. Vegetable and flower seeds sown; seedlings pricked out. Rhubarb harvested. We upload our HCC tender bid and cross our fingers.

May 2021 - The roof of the Shelter goes up. Activities are held under the shelter including painting and flower pressing. Staff and volunteers start weekly LFT testing.

June 2021 – Our Tuesday group visits the Hitchin Physic Garden, our first organised trip since December 2019.

July 2021 – Our three weekly sessions continue with nature walks, and allotment maintenance. Susan plants up her flower containers. Kitchen foundations built. We hear back from HCC that we've been successful in our bid to provide services under the HCC Contract Framework with a score of 83.75%, scoring maximum possible marks on the two co-production questions concerning involvement and communication with gardeners, and the same for carers/parents.

August 2021 - NHDC re-install electrics onto the allotment. Potatoes harvested. Sean is our overall winner of the Potato Growing Competition - well done Sean!

Our goal for the year: to reintegrate all our gardeners into 'normal' life, both at our projects and in the wider community. Having spent a year mainly stuck indoors, our gardeners were anxious, stressed and lacking in stamina, so we worked with them each week on improving their fitness and reducing their anxiety. This work culminated in a successful group trip on the train to Cambridge Botanical Gardens.



“... I appreciate all you have tried to do to maintain contact with my daughter and the other members of Growing Ability this past year... I know that she really values your calls and Zooming with other members of the Growing Gang (as indeed do I) ... she is keen to return to the Triangle Garden asap.” wrote one of our gardeners' parents

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/growing-ability



Growing Ability continued

A personal account from Holly:

Holly returned in April 2021 after the third lockdown. She had not attended sessions at the allotment since November 2020. From January 2021, Holly co-wrote a monthly newsletter with Liz.

These are Holly's words:

"Coming to the project means that I am not at home on my own. I can come to GA and see my friends.

"I feel safe when I come down because I can sit with a gap between me and my friends and I have my own table under the shelter that I can work at.

"I like to do my planning, artwork and I like to have a cup of tea. I can do gardening under the gazebo when the

weather is wet or too hot.

"I made a card for Margaret for her birthday and then we had a cream tea to celebrate. I have planted lettuce in my planter which I will take home."

When Holly saw the new allotment shelter, she just stood and said "WOW". Holly wants to make a planter for her herbs using the woodwork area after her holiday.

With very few of her usual activities running this year Holly, who is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, has been able to continue attending sessions with the confidence that she is in an outside space, socially distanced and able to continue with the activities she once enjoyed doing inside.



Finally I'd like to thank the following people:

Vicky for her continued support both personally and at the helm of our project and to all our Trustees.

Rachel and Steve have both worked above and beyond this year with planning, preparing, and building the shelter and kitchen area. Steve has done a brilliant job running our New Shoots project and along with myself they have both undertaken the Care Certificate training, Rachel being the first to complete it. Both have adapted to the ever-changing events of the last year and we have all benefit from their amazing work.

David, one of our Friday Garden Club volunteers helped with the shelter and built three compost bins, recycling the timber from the pergola, and raised beds. Emma and [Crane](#) for their continued support and building, gardening, and painting expertise.

Volunteers from Garden Club have helped to maintain the GA allotments as well the Community Garden and Forest Garden. (I know that Fiona will also thank everyone for their continued support)

Herts County Council (HCC) for their support both financially and from individual members. For setting up vaccinations and testing provision.

North Herts District Council (NHDC) for their continued support with the Pavilion, and for providing us with the electrics on the allotment.

Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA) for their training and continued essential information regarding Covid.

Tuuli, Kim, Susan and Ashley who all support the project through their regular workshops.

Yolanda for her support with the Shelter Funding application. Margaret for her support over the year, organising pavilion hires, consulting regularly with HCC and with the additional financial work created by the past year.

Lesley, Yolanda, and Judith three of our GA session volunteers, for their continued commitment and support each week especially over this enduring time. We look forward to Carol's return in the New Year.

And finally, to our amazing Growing Ability Gardeners. Inspiring, resilient, brilliant gardeners – you are an inspiration to us all.

We say farewell this year to Sarah and Babs and to Jason. We miss you all very much.

Liz McElroy
Project Manager

"Please accept a huge thank you for all that you do with my son - his gardening activities are a real life-line for him, and especially so at the moment" wrote one of our gardener's parents

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/growing-ability

Garden Club and its outcomes

Covid-19 has had an impact on every aspect of our work at Triangle Garden, including the Garden Club. This section reflects on the year more broadly and also talks about the impact of covid on our activities during 2020/21.

Garden Club normally meets every Friday morning 10am-12.15 for some gentle social gardening. It is open to anyone and its purpose is to maintain and develop the Triangle Garden and Forest Garden. Members benefit from learning new gardening skills, meeting new friends and being active in the fresh air, while making a positive contribution to the community.

There are also regular trips and outings to gardens and shows. A very important part of the Garden Club experience is the cuppa, cake and chat at the Pavilion at the end of each session and we have been very pleased that we have been able to reinstate this tradition over the last few months.

Following the easing of restrictions, and with a rigorous risk assessment in place, Garden Club is very much back up and running and meets most Fridays throughout the year, excluding holidays and for bad weather. Volunteer numbers have remained fairly constant through the year, with 14 volunteers and an average of 8 people attending each week. We have built and used our cold frames, that were bought with a grant secured pre-lockdown from charity Bite Sized Pieces. We have also been working with Groundwork Hertfordshire, providing a six week programme for their 'Get Outdoors Get Active' sessions, this year aimed to provide gardening experience for participants of the Living Room project in Stevenage.

Due to the impact of covid-19 in 2020 we left the Forest Garden to evolve naturally for much of the summer, with little intervention from our group. Since lockdown lifted we have been able to get back out there and have found that the habitat has evolved and we are rediscovering areas that got a little swamped last year! Garden Club members have a keen interest and in depth involvement in the planning and management of the Community and Forest Gardens and some of our allotment space. A number of volunteers have been working hard to remove the weed-block membrane that was laid when the forest

garden was first planted, as it is now hampering herbaceous growth. This change has been really successful.

Garden Club members are keen to support Triangle Garden in fundraising activities and this year we ran our first market stall at the regular Hitchin Farmers Market. This was a great success and I'm grateful for the team of volunteers who prepared plants for sale, who made greetings cards with designs built around flowers we collected from the garden and pressed in 2019 and 2020, who organised the event and ran the stall on market day.

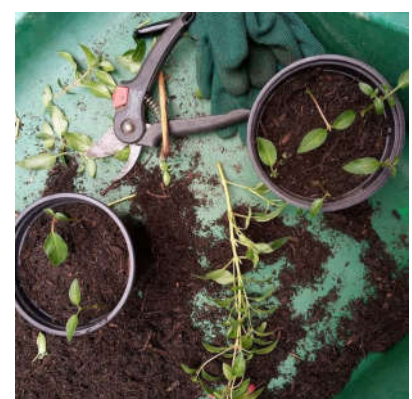
It was a great opportunity to raise awareness locally about the work that we deliver at Triangle Garden. Garden Club also cultivated the plants for our plant stall at Apple Day in September, this was a great success and it was lovely to see customers who had bought plants at the Farmers Market return for more, having been so pleased with the quality of the plants they had bought from us previously.

Our group outings this year included a summer trip to Jordan's Mill, and our regular visit to the Cambridge Botanical Garden in September. We were really pleased to be joined by New Shoots members on this trip. New Shoots is a new 10-week social therapeutic gardening project funding by a grant from Herts County Council to combat social isolation exacerbated by the pandemic.

Since March 2018 Garden Club members have been joined once a month by volunteers from Crane Building Services & Utilities. This has continued throughout 2021. Groups of four Crane employees have helped carry out a range of tasks including mulching the 'commuter path' through the Triangle Garden and digging the trench for the electricity supply to our new allotment shelter. It has been wonderful to have this help and we are very grateful to the Crane team for their ongoing commitment and support.

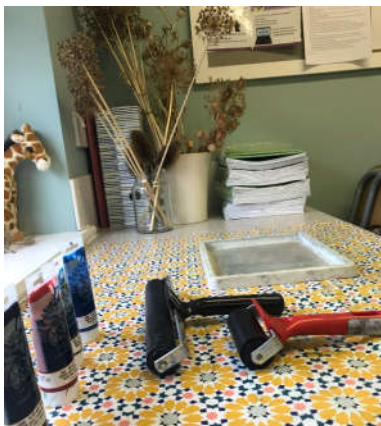
I would like to thank Steve Granger, who skilfully leads Garden Club every week, imparting his knowledge and humour, Liz McElroy for her constant support and endless tea, and of course the volunteers who show up, rain, shine or storm, on a Friday and who make the Garden Club the wonderful place that it is.

Fiona Dolman, Garden Committee Chair



**To find out more
about Garden Club
please contact
Steve Granger on
steve@trianglegarden.org**

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/community-gardening



Events and workshops

This year's events programme has been one of hope and opportunity, though sadly not always fulfilled.

With restrictions on gatherings in place we couldn't run any events for the first half of the year. But being optimistic sorts we decided to plan for a summer open day and hope for the best. A June date became a September one and we felt confident that we could surmount covid concerns and pull off a suitably adapted Summer Festival – a new name for a new event reflecting the growing music and performance content of our annual community fete. Forever Hounds were keen to run the dog show again, Berry House Vets agreed to sponsor, and many wonderful stallholders and food concessions signed up including Green Dragon Bowmen archery – a first for them and us. Tilehouse Rotary offered to help provide extra volunteers and we had artists booked including Garden City Samba, Zumba Robert, Jacob Murphy, Andrea Wilde, Hitchin All Star Choir and the Scallywags. Sadly it was not to be. One week before the event our two key event coordinators Tim and Scarlett

caught covid and we had to take the really tough decision to cancel.

Still, this experience has been very useful preparation for future events and preceded a very successful Apple Day in the town centre this October.

This year too we've been very lucky to have had a fantastic programme of foraging walks led by the [Hitchin Forager](#) Jane Simmons, providing 50 fully booked places with 2 concessionary slots available on each walk. We also benefited from the amazing Foraging Supper laid on by Jane and food stylist Penny Stephens as a fundraiser for the Triangle Garden. Thank you to Jane, Penny and crew and to all who came. Thanks also to new events committee member Gemma Ward who joined Vicky in providing table service for the guests.

Feeling inspired? Please join our little band of plucky friendly volunteers – we'd love to welcome you to our busy world!

Scarlett, Vicky, Mel, Tim and Gemma
Events & workshops committee

Ransom's Pavilion

Ransom's Pavilion has had a bit of a lonely life this past year. Too small to fit our Growing Ability groups in with 2m social distancing, it has been relegated to toilet provision for most of our projects until the more recent 1m social distancing ruling came in over the summer.

Despite being not quite big enough for Growing Ability, it has proved just right for [Tuuli Parker's](#) silver clay, ring making and now fused glass jewellery classes, and new hirer [Kim Raymont's](#) botanical linocut workshops, which have run successfully across the summer. [Nature's Rainbow](#) have also made use of the pavilion while holding plant dyeing workshops under our new allotment shelter. The income from these hires has been a wonderful boost when we couldn't open the venue for

children's parties as we would have normally wanted to.

We're very grateful to Margaret and Liz for their hard work in keeping the Pavilion hired, clean and in good order, and to Vicky for navigating the ever changing sea of premises risk assessment. Thanks also go to Tom Ayres and Jack Patel at NHDC for helping to swiftly deal with repairs as needed. We're hopeful that a forthcoming risk assessment from NHDC environmental health will give us the evidence we need to get back into the building now that the colder weather is making outdoor work more challenging for our GA groups.

Vicky, Liz and Margaret, Premises & Safety committee

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/get-involved

Treasurer's report

Similar to the previous financial year, 2020/21 was also dominated by the impact of COVID-19 on our activities. Even as we slowly return to normality, those effects are likely to continue well into the next financial year.

Fundraising was again significantly curtailed this year. This was the second year that we have been unable to run Open Day, our key fundraising event, and other familiar events for the Triangle Garden, such as Halloween were also cancelled. However it was great to see the return of Apple Day in Hitchin's town square this autumn, and even though the income that generated will fall into 2021/22's financial year, it was a boost to everyone's morale to see the public's positive response to its return.

We did manage to run a few events across the summer such as Garden Club's plant stall at Hitchin Farmers' Market and the Hitchin Forager's Foraging Supper at our allotment which together raised over £650. We're also very grateful to local bee charity Buzzworks who have helped us sell our apple juice at their monthly stall.

Our pavilion has been an important source of income in previous years – generating fees from use by local community groups and classes, hosting TCG workshops and providing indoor space for our own projects. With the venue closed for many months, followed by Government restrictions on indoor gatherings, this source of income was greatly reduced this year, although jewellery workshops did restart in the spring followed by botanical print workshops – a new income source.

Against a backdrop of a second year with minimal fundraising opportunities, our survival was helped in large part due to extended block funding from Herts County Council Adult Care Services, which ensured we could afford to run our Growing Ability service irrespective of how many gardeners felt able to return to on site sessions. We were also very fortunate to receive a discretionary grant of £12,500 also from Herts County Council to cover the cost of our work with the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. We are using part of this grant to set up our New Shoots gardening project which aims to help those who have struggled with anxiety and isolation through the last two years.

Our thanks go to HCC for their invaluable support this year. Without these financial inputs, and other smaller but no less welcome donations and grants (such as from St Mark's Church), we would have undoubtedly ended the year with a significant deficit and would have been questioning our ability to continue. As it is, we have finished the year with a surplus of just over £15k which has bolstered our reserves and put us in a much better position to weather the difficulties ahead.

As well as restarting our sessions under extremely challenging circumstances, our staff have been busy building our outdoor shelter and kitchen on the allotment, funded by Herts Community Foundation with contributions from Cllr Ashley's locality budget. This structure has transformed how we work now that we are outdoors so much more and we're also very grateful to NHDC for reinstalling an electricity supply to the allotment so we can get back to including cooking at our sessions.

Restarting sessions and building confidence in our gardeners to return has been a long and gradual process. Our thanks therefore go, once again, to all of the staff who have worked so hard, through various lockdowns, and in the large amount of work that was needed as we gradually re-opened – from undertaking risk assessments to developing and implementing covid-secure practices in order to keep gardeners, staff and visitors as safe as possible.

Despite the obvious boost to our reserves from grants, we are not out of the woods yet. The year ahead is full of uncertainty as we recover, not only due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, but also due to the outcome of Hertfordshire County Council's new Framework Contract for community opportunities providers. Whilst we dedicated long hours to making a successful bid to provide services under the new scheme, we simultaneously stressed that the new hourly rates HCC had set were insufficient to cover the costs associated with running our sessions. With the new fee structure coming into effect this October for new clients and over the next two years for clients already with us, this may mean a restructuring of how we run our sessions plus a focus on identifying potential new client groups that we have not previously catered for.

It is with this in mind that we have been seeking a new part-time Business Development Manager to develop and extend our current sessions but also to generate new sustainable income sources that match our aims and principles. Initially, this role will be funded from reserves but the intention is that the additional income that is brought in will make the role self-sustaining.

Looking ahead, we envisage that 2021/22 is likely to result in a deficit unless sessions can expand, and our fundraising activities can begin again safely. However we are optimistic that if we can find the right person to fill the role of BDM and join the fantastic team of staff that we already have, our funds will be put back on a path to sustainable surplus.

Abbreviated accounts are included with this report. The full accounts in the format required by the Charities Commission are available on our website. Many thanks to Margaret for her invaluable voluntary work keeping our accounts.

Andrew Green – Trustee & Treasurer



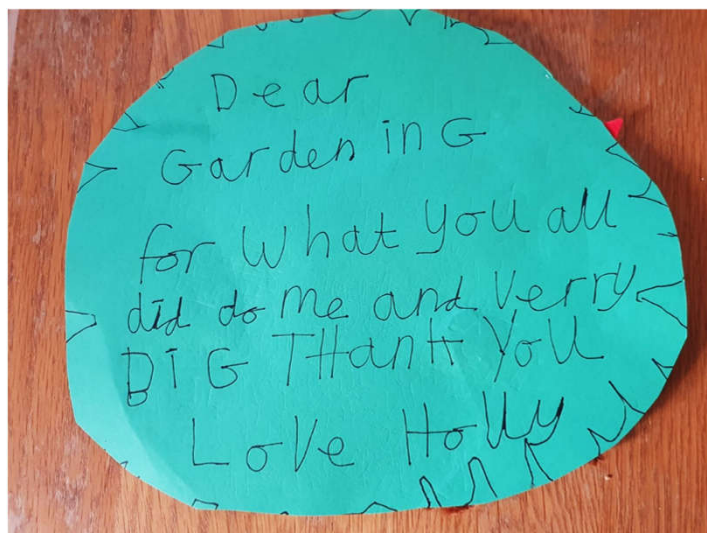
Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/get-involved-friend

Financial Report

Triangle Community Garden

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August 2021

	TCG and Pavilion	GA Group	Capital Fund	Total	Last Year
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	1393			1393	688
Grants	2072	233	19261	21566	10300
Fundraising	2775			2775	3932
Investment Income	0			0	0
Charitable Activities	977	29368		30345	27279
Other Income					
Total	7217	29601	19261	56079	42199
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	1138		1490	2628	1869
Charitable Expenditure	5283	25352	7725	38360	35218
Total	6421	25352	9215	40988	37087
Net Income	796	4249	10046	15091	5112
Net Movement in Funds					
Funds Transfer	158	634	-792	0	
Total funds Brought Forward	15957	2422	7473	25852	20740
Total Funds Carried Forward	16911	7305	16727	40943	25852



Some things our Growing Ability gardeners say:

"I enjoy working with the plants and flowers"

"I like to be with my friends"

"I enjoyed the sessions, like the gardening and I like going to
Cambridge Botanical Gardens and the Physic Garden"

"I enjoy my tea under the shelter with my friends, especially in bad weather."

"I enjoyed writing the newsletter with Liz during lockdown"

Above: Holly's card when she returned. You can find more photos on our [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens
Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August
2021

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	11393	11566	0	22959	10988
Other Trading Activities	2775		0	2775	3932
Charitable Activities	977	29368	0	30345	27279
Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	15145	40934	0	56079	42199
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	1138	1490	0	2628	1869
Charitable Expenditure	5431	32929	0	38360	35219
Total Expenditure	6569	34419	0	40988	37088
Net Income before Other Recognised Gains and Losses	8576	6,515	0	15,091	5,112
Other Recognised Gains and Losses	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer between Funds	158	-158			
Net Movement in Funds	8734	6357	0	15,091	5,112
Total funds Brought Forward	15957	9895	0	25852	20740
Total Funds Carried Forward	24691	16252	0	40943	25852

Hitchin Community Gardens
Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2021

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0	0
Current Assets					
Stock	247	0	0	247	298
Debtors and Prepayments	881	1441	0	2322	1749
Cash at Bank and in Hand	28870	10856	0	39726	24810
Total Current Assets	29998	12297	0	42295	26857
Current Liabilities					
Creditors and Accruals	616	736	0	1352	1005
Deferred Income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	616	736	0	1352	1005
Net Current Assets	29382	11561	0	40943	25852
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	29382	11561	0	40943	25852
Amounts falling due after more than 1 Year					
Deferred Income	0			0	0
Net Assets	29382	11561	0	40943	25852
Funds of the Charity					
Triangle Community Garden Fund	4046		0	4046	3907
Pavilion Fund	12867		0	12867	12051
Balance of Grant to cover lost income	12627			12627	4812
Restricted Funds		11403	0	11403	5082
Total Funds	29540	11403	0	40943	25852

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2021

1. Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the FRSSE and the 2015 SORP

2. Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

(a) Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

(b) Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary Income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Donated Services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Income from Trading and Charitable Activities are accounted for when earned.

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the payment of fees for six of the gardeners. Fees of £14958 were received from HCC in the year ended 31st August 2021.

(c) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. It includes governance costs which are those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountant's fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

(d) Fixed Assets

Fixed Assets are included at cost less accumulated depreciation. The cost of minor additions, those costing below £1000 and those whose purchase costs are fully covered by a grant are not capitalised. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the asset over its expected useful life, which in all cases is estimated at 5 years. Currently the charity has no fixed assets which have not been written off.

3. Income

(a) Donations

Triangle Community Garden

£1394

(b) Grants

Bite Size Pieces £370 Herts CC Grant £10000

HCF Grant £4946 – to build outdoor shelter

Herts CC councillor's grant £1000 – for kitchen equipment

Infection Control Grants £2750– for Covid related expenses.

Herts CC ADS top up £2500 – for mental health related expenses

4. Expenditure

For analysis see attached appendix

5. Trustee Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

Reimbursements were made to trustees for purchases made directly for Hitchin Community Gardens.

Details of trustees other transactions with the charity are given in note 14.

6. Salaries and Wages

At 31st August 2021 3 part time staff were employed.

Total wages including pension contributions paid in the year to 31st August 2021 were £29190. £41 furlough income was received from HMRC.

7. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Equipment
At Cost	£
At 1st September 2013	2916
Acquisitions	0
At 31st August 2014	2916
Depreciation	
At 1st September 2013	2645
Charge for Year	271
At 31st August 2014	2916
Net Book Value	
At 31st August 2019	0
At 31st August 2018	0

8. Debtors

Prepaid expenses	<u>£ 801</u>
Debtors	£1491
Reclaimable Gift Aid Tax	<u>£ 30</u>
	£2322

9. Creditors and Accruals

Income received in advance	<u>£ 363</u>
Creditors	£ 89
Payroll & pension liabilities	<u>£ 900</u>
Total	£1352

All deferred income has now been written back.

10. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

Triangle Community Garden	Ransom's Pavilion	Growing Ability Group
£2009	£12867	£7304
Capital Expenditure Fund (balance of grants)	£18763	

11. Related Parties

One trustee is a director of Bowles & Wyer who do the photocopying for Hitchin Community Gardens. No charge is made for black and white copies, and colour copies are invoiced at cost. This is considerably cheaper than using another supplier.

Note 4**Hitchin Community Gardens****Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 2021**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Voluntary Income Costs			
General Admin & Publicity	0		0
Website	4	5	9
	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>
Fundraising Costs			
Event Costs	467	0	467
Workshop Costs	446		446
Children's Activities Costs	0		0
Pavilion Costs	225	660	885
Gazebo Costs	0	830	830
	<u>1138</u>	<u>1490</u>	<u>2628</u>
Charitable Expenditure			
Insurance	389	259	648
Subscriptions	72	108	180
Gardening Club & Sunday Staff	1929	1460	3389
Growing Ability Group Tutors		14794	14794
Project Management Salary	2340	8437	10777
Visits	0		0
Volunteer Expenses	0	0	0
Training	0	528	528
Project Management & GA Group Overheads	42	940	982
Wi-fi	127	190	317
Materials, Tools & PPE	101	757	858
Allotment Rent & Shelter		5139	5139
Refreshments & Lunch Club costs	7	27	34
	<u>5007</u>	<u>32639</u>	<u>37646</u>
Governance Costs			
Accounting	236	340	576
Accountants Fees	32	48	80
DBS Checks	0	36	36
Legal costs	5	8	13
Other Governance Costs			0
	<u>273</u>	<u>432</u>	<u>705</u>
Total Expenditure	6422	34566	40988

Hitchin Community Gardens Reserves Statement 2021

Hitchin Community Gardens needs reserves to:

- Meet any contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close
- Meet unexpected costs like repairs to the pavilion
- To replace equipment as it wears out.
- Ensure the charity can provide a continuing service for its gardeners and to the community
- To provide working capital if funding is paid in arrears, and to enable it to bid for funding which is paid in arrears
- To provide working capital where there is a gap between funding streams. Where funding is not renewed bids for alternative sources can take time to process.
- Enable it to expand the range of services offered
- Provide a contingency fund in the event of a shortfall in one or more of its funding activities

Hitchin Community Garden Reserves at 31st August 2021

Hitchin Community Garden's reserves policy states that reserves should be between 30% and 40% of turnover.

Reserves at 31st August 2020 are £40093. This is 100% of turnover.

These reserves are earmarked for the recruitment of a new Business Development post which will allow us to reach more beneficiaries and provide more wide-ranging services to address the needs of the post-pandemic community.

Part of the purpose of this role is to seek new markets and new funding to address future known financial shortfalls: we have been informed of impending cuts to our contract income from the local authority which will come into play in 2022-23. These are likely to halve the income we currently receive on this contract to provide the same level of service for the same number of service users. Any future service users we attract through this contract will come in on the new low rates.

We therefore need our reserves to address future known challenges and provide a safety net to offset future reduced income.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Hitchin Community Garden

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st August 2021.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities

Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. 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 seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of 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 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have 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.

Signed: 

Name: Deniz Brown

Relevant Professional qualification: FCCA

Address: 42 Brampton Park Road, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 1XF

Date: 11.10.21

HITCHIN COMMUNITY GARDENS

England & Wales - Charity number 1145243

Accounts



Triangle Community Garden

Created and cultivated by people of all ages and abilities at Ransom's Rec Hitchin, Herts

Annual Review 2019-20

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2019-20



This is the year the Triangle Garden should have been celebrating its 20th anniversary and the Pavilion its 10th. However it's never good to dwell on what might have been, and a missed anniversary is a very small problem to have had. Let's focus on the positives:

So, what have we gained from this year of loss and trauma? What are the silver linings to Covid-19? For me there are two things that stand out: the massive public awakening around the importance of nature in our lives, and the significant re-evaluation of the contribution made by those who work in care.

We were all no doubt made quite emotional by the 'clap for carers' initiative in streets across the country during lock-down. But how will that sentiment manifest itself in terms of carers' pay in the months to come; most carers only receive the national minimum wage, even in a wealthy, expensive county like Hertfordshire. We are incredibly lucky to have a highly skilled and experienced team of people running our sessions, and we pay them well over the living wage, but I do wonder whether it's right that a cleaner can earn more than a trained horticultural therapist. These strange times bring our values into sharp focus.

Which brings us back to the value of nature in our lives. Since the enforced curtailment of normal life we have become much more aware of the seasons and natural activity around us. People have rediscovered walking, cycling, gardening, foraging and just the therapeutic benefits of being outside. And nature has reacted too - to the lack of traffic, the reduced air

pollution and the hiatus in human interference - by proliferating in unprecedented ways across the world.

So if we're wise we'll view this as a wake up call to put a value on nature beyond economics, and to work hard to prevent the collapse of the ecosystems that support us.

But what has this got to do with the Triangle Garden I hear you ask? Well it's what we're all about:

Our vision: A community where people feel happier and more fulfilled through a connection with the natural world and an understanding of our place in it.

Our values:

Connect – bringing people together through gardening and nature

Grow – helping people to develop and learn by sowing the seeds of interest in a healthier and more sustainable world

Enjoy – making lives better – with a smile!

Respect – caring for our planet and valuing people for who they are and what they do.

Before I sign off I'd like to say goodbye and thank you to longstanding staff member Avril Frost and recent trustee Lexi Turner for their greatly valued contributions to our work and to welcome new trustee David De Smet.

And finally I'd like to pay tribute to all those in our wonderful Triangle Garden community – to our staff, trustees, volunteers, gardeners, participants and supporters. Without your dedication, care, determination and resilience, the Triangle Garden and its projects would be a very different place. Thank you

Vicky Wyer, Chair of Trustees

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Thanks to Illustrator [Polly Wyer](#) for her pro bono work on our new-look logo.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org



Growing Ability Projects

Never before has our project been of such benefit and importance to so many people in our community. With the life changing effects we have all been immersed in throughout the pandemic, individuals have come together to form stronger bonds of solidarity and register their appreciation towards the continued support and development of our projects.

From small beginnings in 2009, our service for adults with learning disabilities has branched out into three projects under the Growing Ability Programme (GAP) umbrella: Growing Ability, Growing Gang and Growing Health.

All our GAP projects use the principles of social therapeutic horticulture to improve the well being, self esteem, resilience and life skills of participants. The benefits are many and varied and never more apparent than in this last year:

- Better physical health through exercise, healthy eating and sharing insights
- Improved mental health through a sense of purpose and achievement, mutual support and positive reinforcement
- The opportunity to connect with others – reducing feelings of isolation or exclusion
- Acquiring new skills to improve confidence, resilience, and the chance of finding volunteering or employment opportunities
- Just feeling better for being outside and in touch with nature.

Growing Ability is the cornerstone of our social therapeutic horticulture work. Using gardening tasks and the outdoor environment, our horticultural therapists build a set of activities for each participant to improve their particular health and wellbeing needs, and to work on certain goals they want to achieve.

Growing Gang is a progression opportunity for those who are ready for more practical work-experience such as helping to grow produce on our allotment and maintain community spaces including the Triangle Garden.

Growing Health aims to promote active, healthy living. Sessions include physical exercise, food growing and shared support around healthy eating, fitness, mental health and weight management. One of the key activities of this session has been the group preparation of a healthy meal using fresh ingredients grown on our

allotment, and eaten together at the Pavilion.

Our weekly half-day sessions run at a minimum staff to participant ratio of 1:3, with volunteers providing additional support.

2019 was the tenth anniversary of Growing Ability. We marked this auspicious occasion in a respectful and inclusive way, with a special open air Harvest Lunch outside the Pavilion. Blessed by beautiful weather, we were able to share our harvest from the allotment and celebrate the achievements and friendships we have made over the years. Staff, volunteers, family members, trustees, participants and supporters gathered together, creating happy memories to keep us going in the months to come.

In October, our annual tradition of celebrating Hallowe'en (and Holly's birthday) was marked by carving pumpkins grown by Katherine, Marc and Holly and making the pulp into pumpkin soup. November saw us gathering our precious leaf mulch for composting and coming together around the brazier at the allotment for hot chocolate and marshmallows between biscuits – a wickedly sugary one-off in our healthy eating calendar! In December arts and crafts sessions were interjected with festive culinary delights including a meal out at the Millstream Pub (These sessions were all led by Avril, Rachel and Steve as I was on Jury service for the month.)

In early 2020 we had a PAMMS inspection (one of the requirements of being an accredited provider of adult social care). I'm delighted to say that we were awarded a Good, with Excellence in safety and safeguarding. The only element requiring improvement was staff support/suitability of staff qualifications. Although our staff have years of experience in working with adults with learning disabilities, some had had no formal social care training. As a result we have arranged for all our staff to complete the Care Certificate.

All the while in the background last year we were working hard to plan out how we could run our service under the terms of the new Herts County Council social care contract, more specifically under the financial restrictions imposed by the proposed hourly rates which only cover half our costs. This is an ongoing concern.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/growing-ability

Growing Ability continued

At the beginning of this year we were running two Growing Ability sessions, one Growing Gang and one Growing Health session and had four staff members. With attendance slowly building at all our projects we had hopes of starting a fifth session in the summer and were offered a third allotment at the Ransoms site (on loan from a supporter).

Then Covid-19 emerged, and as fast as we risk assessed and adapted to new regimes of frequent cleaning and 'catch it, kill it, bin it', the virus with all its unknowns at that time, overtook the country. Work from home was imposed, schools closed, and the vast majority of our participants went home to their parents or began shielding in their residential settings.

Our last session pre-lockdown was 11th March 2020 and in April all staff began their furlough leave. Although unable to see each other, volunteers, staff and participants were able to stay connected in lockdown via phonecalls, group messaging and video calls. Volunteers gave their time to sow seeds, write poetry and take photos for those that couldn't get out and see the allotment and Triangle Garden on their daily exercise.

When we returned in July, as restrictions lifted, we were able to see the results of all of the dedication and commitment put in by our volunteers during lockdown. We also felt a new connection of belonging; coming back together, becoming stronger through the adversity even though we had not been together physically for so long. This paved a way for an easier transition for our Growing Ability gardeners to return. Fruit and vegetables growing and the sites looking cared for. Members feeling a connection.

Individuals who were isolated and not able to see friends and family have said how important being back has been and how much they value reconnecting with their friends.

One of our service users said 'It is different [being back] as we work outside all the time. I feel safe and I am enjoying having things to do, like when in lockdown I thought that was it, I was so concerned about going out - I didn't do much or go out. It's really nice to see everyone. The first week I was quiet - I hadn't seen anyone else. It feels nice.' He added that it was 'emotional [being back] - in a good way'.

The impact of our project has never felt so important. The connection and support that has been established over the last 10 years has resulted in the ability to go forward to support each other to manage social anxiety as life moves into a new stage.

Since July, thanks to block funding from HCC, we have been able to restart our sessions incrementally, reducing their duration to allow for the extra cleaning time required and merging the projects to capture the best elements of all three in each new session. Some activities like cooking and sharing food are obviously restricted at present. As we are only a small staff team, having 'bubbled' sessions has not been possible but we are taking every recommended precaution to avoid transmission. Volunteers are returning now that we are all able to navigate social distancing on the allotment in a safe and confident way.

Wet weather sessions were previously held inside the Pavilion but due to the ever-changing Covid restrictions, we want to limit time spent inside and have applied for a grant from Herts Community Foundation (HCF) to build sheltered spaces on the allotment in areas not used for growing.

The shelters will provide protection from the elements and give our projects a secure future. We are encouraging all our participants and volunteers to be involved in the preparation and construction, which will develop individuals' resilience and confidence. We're looking forward to being able to provide a safe and secure environment for everyone, a place to heal and recover. Further outcomes we aim to achieve through this project are:

- **Physical and mental wellbeing** – year round outdoor sessions will allow us to continue our vital work to improve physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Reduction in social disconnection and loneliness** by providing areas for our community to meet and connect through activities, thus reducing social isolation.
- **Sustainability of our projects** – The provision of the shelters will enable us to continue and expand the capacity to run more sessions
- **Safe spaces for community activities by others** eg Nature's Rainbow with their dye-plant workshops



Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/growing-ability

Growing Ability continued

After over ten years of dedication, and a driving force behind the success of our Growing Ability Project, Avril Frost has retired. Avril has been greatly missed as individuals have come back gradually to hear the news. We are very grateful for all of her support and friendship over the years and wish her the very best for her future.

We have also had to say goodbye to one of our service users, Helen, who has moved away but has kept in touch with us online.

After nearly 9 years of keeping the Pavilion clean each week, Sean decided to step down from his cleaning job last year. Since the cleaning requirements have increased so dramatically in recent months we have had to change our practices and Jeremy has also stepped down. It has been a pleasure working with both of them.

Our thanks and appreciation:

My overwhelming feelings of gratitude towards those that have supported us throughout lockdown and beyond, extends to the families, support workers, volunteers, our trustees and staff, without whom this whole experience would have been so very different. We were able to step back to our project in confidence and to look forward to a future of transition and hope.

I would like to start by thanking Vicky Wyer our Chair of Trustees who co-founded the Triangle Garden back in 2000. Vicky has worked tirelessly on the HCC tender bid, alongside Fiona Dolman, Andrew Green our Treasurer and the other trustees. She has overseen a smooth transition for staff in and out of furlough and has been a huge support throughout this year, keeping our projects ticking over during lockdown and beyond.

My thanks also go to Yolanda, Fiona, Vicky, Avril, Rachel and Steve for their support with our PAMMS inspection in February. And to Margaret for her invaluable support with monthly payroll, financial administration for all of our service users and so much more.

Thanks to Fiona, Gill and all the volunteers who kept the allotments tended through the lockdown period and beyond. I would also like to thank everyone who contributed to the Thursday and Friday Garden Club. Their work and dedication

meant that our return was less traumatic as we were not faced with an overgrown 'lost garden'.

Our groups have benefitted this year from the continued support and volunteering by staff at Crane BSU Ltd, based in Hitchin. Crane volunteers completed the rebuilding of the allotment raised beds in 2019 and the outdoor sink unit they built for pot-washing has been invaluable as a handwashing facility.

To our session volunteers, Carol, Jane, Judith, Yolanda and Lesley for their ongoing support throughout the year, without whom our sessions would be quite different. Their enthusiasm, commitment and support make such a difference and is very much appreciated by staff and our gardeners throughout the sessions.

To Yolanda for her support with funding bid writing, especially recently for our most recent HCF bid towards new shelters.

To Steve and Rachel who have both been a tremendous support throughout lockdown along with Avril; connecting and supporting with each other and keeping in contact with our GA gardeners and Garden Club members. Their enthusiasm, energy and commitment has so far lead to a smoother transition back into the running of our sessions. I thank them so very much.

Thanks also for the support from families and support workers who have helped with staying in contact through lockdown and have helped secure a safe return for our Growing Ability members.

Our gratitude extends also to Herts County Council and HCPA (Hertfordshire Care Providers Association) who have kept us up to date with current issues and provided us with extensive training opportunities and support.

And finally...

As our service shrinks once again with the enforcement of 'new national measures' this month, we look forward to welcoming back as many service users as are able to return in December and the New Year. For those that are not able to join us yet we look forward to staying in touch and sharing our news from the allotment.

Liz McElroy, Project Manager



**To find out more
about Growing
Ability please
contact
Liz McElroy on
liz@trianglegarden.org**

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/growing-ability

Garden Club

COVID -19 has had an impact on every aspect of our work at Triangle Garden, including the Garden Club. This section reflects on the year more broadly and also talks about the impact of COVID on our activities during 2020.

Garden Club normally meets every Friday morning 10am-12.15 for some gentle social gardening. It is open to anyone and its purpose is to maintain and develop the Triangle Garden and Forest Garden. Members benefit from learning new gardening skills, meeting new friends and being active in the fresh air, while making a positive contribution to the community. There are also regular trips and outings to gardens and shows. A very important part of the Garden Club experience is the cuppa, cake and chat at the Pavilion at the end of each session!

Garden Club has met most Fridays throughout the year, excluding holidays and for bad weather. During lockdown, members made individual visits to tend the allotment as part of their daily exercise. Volunteer numbers have remained fairly constant through the year, with 14 volunteers and an average of 8 people attending each week.

After a difficult end to last year with a spate of drug-related antisocial behaviour at the Garden, we sought the help of the community police and the problems seem to have abated.

This year we've spent time focusing on new projects and have started to build a herbarium, which has involved pressing plants in the garden at different stages of the year to build a full record.

We've also taken on a new allotment plot and a number of volunteers have focused on developing it. Our allotments have produced a lot of vegetables and provided a great deal of respite for the volunteers through the year.

Once lockdown ended, we began to welcome volunteer groups back, initially running 2 sessions with a maximum of 5 volunteers on Thursday and Friday afternoons to enable us to provide a COVID secure environment.

When restrictions eased the groups were keen to get back to the normal Friday morning sessions, with an average of 7/8 people attending each week, generally

split into two groups across our sites. We are also looking forward to finally building our cold frames with a grant secured pre-lockdown from charity Bite Sized Pieces.

We have also been working with Groundwork Hertfordshire, providing a 6 week programme for their '[Get Outdoors Get Active](#)' sessions, aimed to provide work experience for Syrian refugees and local unemployed people.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 we left the Forest Garden to evolve naturally for much of the summer, with little intervention from our group. It seems to have worked and the garden has fared well, with a good harvest of almonds, quince, mulberries, medlars, primarily due to a long summer with a fair amount of sunshine and rain.

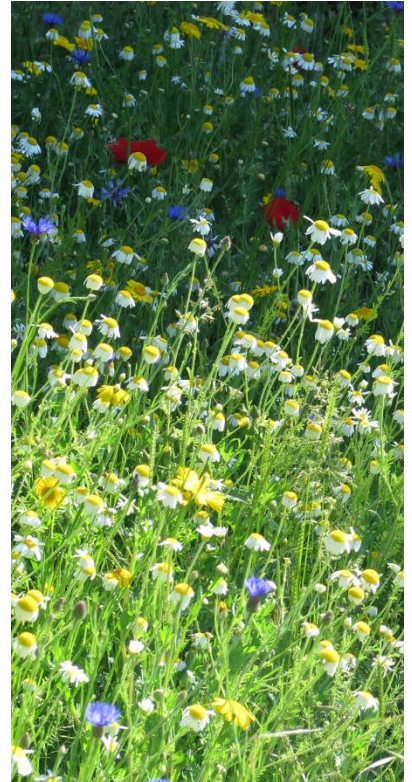
A number of volunteers have been working to remove the weed-block membrane that was laid when the forest garden was first planted, as it is now hampering herbaceous growth.

Our group outings this year included a pre Christmas trip to London, visiting the Crossrail Garden at Canary Wharf, St Dunstan's church garden and finally the Sky Garden to see London lit up at night. We also visited the Cambridge Botanical Winter Garden in February.

Since March 2018 Garden Club members have been joined once a month by volunteers from Crane Building Services & Utilities. This has continued throughout 2019 and 2020 (excluding lockdown). Groups of four Crane employees have helped carry out a range of tasks including repairing the willow maze and building a bug hotel in the garden. It has been wonderful to have this help and we are very grateful to the Crane team for their ongoing commitment and support. I'm really pleased to report that Crane volunteer days have restarted and the first day was spent building an impressive stag beetle habitat.

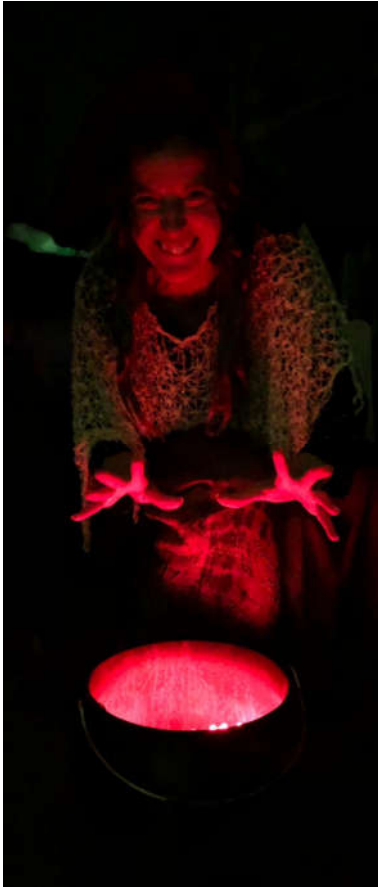
I would like to thank Steve Granger, who skilfully leads Garden Club every week, imparting his knowledge and humour, Rachel who supported us through the summer, the volunteers who kept the allotments going during lockdown and of course the volunteers who are able once more to show up, rain, shine or storm, on a Friday and who make the Garden Club the wonderful place that it is.

Fiona Dolman, Garden Committee Chair



**To find out more
about Garden Club
please contact
Steve Granger on
steve@trianglegarden.org**

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/community-gardening



Events and workshops

As you can imagine this year's piece on events and workshops is going to be quite short! 2019's successful Apple Day and Halloween activities boded well for 2020 and we were delighted to welcome Tim Star to the events committee to step into the gap left by Karen Shields. A well-attended series of autumn activities including our ever-popular bat walk and Christmas wreath workshops were due to be followed by March's quiz night but we pulled the plug on the event as the effects of the pandemic in Italy heralded what lay ahead for the UK. We're very grateful to all those who donated the cost of their quiz tickets to helping us stay afloat.

Since then despite our 20th anniversary, the only events we have been able to hold have been our [Foraging Walks](#) which, with reduced numbers, complied with the Rule of Six. Despite having to increase the standard rate to cover our costs we kept the concessions rate at £10 to maximise participation.

We were very grateful for the opportunity to share a virtual version of Benslow Open Gardens on social media – fingers crossed

the real thing will be possible next year. And thanks to our long standing links with local bee charity [Buzzworks](#) we were able to take advantage of their monthly farmers' market stall in Hitchin to sell our apple juice, sales of which usually rely heavily on our community events. This year's apple crop was a good one and although group picking sessions were not possible, many of our usual 'apple donors' did us proud with their contributions.

Our small events committee has been far from idle this year with plenty of preparation work going into events that sadly couldn't happen. Regular zoom meetings have kept us going amid the added joys of home-schooling and ramped up 'proper jobs' for many of us.

Even with no events to run, we know that we need more members for when restrictions allow us to get something up and running. So if you're interested in joining us please get in touch via events.trianglegarden@gmail.com

Scarlett, Vicky, Mel and Tim,
Events & workshops committee

Ransom's Pavilion

After 2018's injection of funding and TLC to our wonderful little Pavilion, we were able to really capitalise on its community value last year with a full calendar of workshops planned by [Tuuli Parker Jewellery](#) and dye-plant experts [Nature's Rainbow](#), not to mention the children's parties that usually book out weekend afternoons.

However, standing empty from March to July, although only 4 months, seemed like forever. But the good news is that the Pavilion is a well-designed well-ventilated little building, with windows and air-source heat pumps in every room, bringing outdoor air inside whether on heat, air-condition or just fan.

As Tuuli Parker found when she restarted her jewellery workshops over the summer, using both the main room and the kitchen can accommodate up to seven people at 2m physical distance, and of course masks can be worn for short bursts of closer demonstration work when necessary.

To be financially viable, our Growing Ability sessions need to accommodate up to 6 service users, 2 members of staff, 1 volunteer and often at least one service user's personal care worker. At a potential total of 10+ people in a session, the Pavilion is simply too small to be safe for Growing Ability at present, particularly given the capacity of some of our participants for social distancing. This is why we're seeking funding to build new open sided shelters on the allotment.

With Pavilion cleaning work taking place each and every day now (Liz uses the space as her office and the toilets are still used during sessions), the weekly clean became redundant and with it Jeremy's Friday morning job, Sean having moved on last year. We thank them both for their good work over the years, ably supervised by Liz. We look forward to a time when the Pavilion can fulfil its full potential once more.

Vicky Wyer, Premises & Safety committee

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/get-involved

Treasurer's report

The year was dominated by the impact of COVID-19 on our activities, and those effects are likely to continue well into the next financial year.

Fundraising was significantly curtailed. Whilst Apple Day and Halloween in 2019 were successful, we have been unable to run any of our other usual fundraising events, notably the Open Day. Options for alternative fundraising activities were considered but with TCG staff on furlough, volunteers unable to meet, and uncertainty around every corner, there have been no new initiatives for filling the sizeable hole in TCG's income.

Our pavilion has also been an important source of income in previous years – generating fees from use by local community groups and classes, and hosting TCG workshops. With the pavilion closed for many months, and with ongoing Government restrictions on the number of people that are allowed to meet, this source of income was also drastically reduced this year.

Fees from clients were also vastly reduced due to the suspension of sessions during lockdown. Even since the pavilion could be re-opened, fee income has continued to be limited by the need to ensure safeguards were in place which have restricted the ability to run sessions as normal.

Our survival was helped in large part due to both the Government's furlough scheme and also a discretionary grant of £10,000 that we received from North Herts District Council in June. Our thanks to the Council for their approval of the grant and speedy distribution of funds.

Without these financial supports, we would have undoubtedly ended the year with a significant deficit and would have been questioning our ability to continue. As it is, we have finished the year with a surplus of just over £5k which has bolstered our reserves and put us in a much better position to weather the difficulties ahead.

As noted, we relied heavily on the furlough scheme to ensure that our dedicated and expert staff could be retained during the lockdown. This was essential if we were to have any chance to re-opening and starting our activities again. Our thanks therefore goes to all of the staff who have worked so hard, in the lead-up to

lockdown and in the large amount of work that was needed once we re-opened – from undertaking risk assessments to developing and implementing COVID-secure practices in order to keep clients, staff and visitors as safe as possible.

However, we are not out of the woods yet. The year ahead is full of uncertainty, not only due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and the threat of further restrictions, but also due to the outcome of Herts County Council's new tendering process.

HCC were in the process of changing the tendering framework and the fees it would pay for residents to attend a broad range of adult social care services, when the pandemic struck. The process was paused for a number of months but has been re-started and is expected to conclude within the next few months.

Having made strong representations to HCC highlighting how their proposed standard rates did not properly take account of the nature of TCG's services and its costs, we are disappointed that they continue to push ahead with a rate structure that would not cover the costs necessary to run our sessions. At the very least, this may mean a restructuring of how we run our sessions plus a focus on identifying potential new client groups (and areas outside the county) that we have not previously catered for.

Looking ahead, we envisage that 2020/21 is likely to result in a substantial deficit unless sessions can return to previous levels and expand, and our fundraising activities can begin again safely. In the year ahead we are likely to be heavily reliant upon charitable grants and donations if we are to avoid drawing upon a large portion of our reserves.

Abbreviated accounts are included with this report. The full accounts in the format required by the Charities Commission are available on our website.

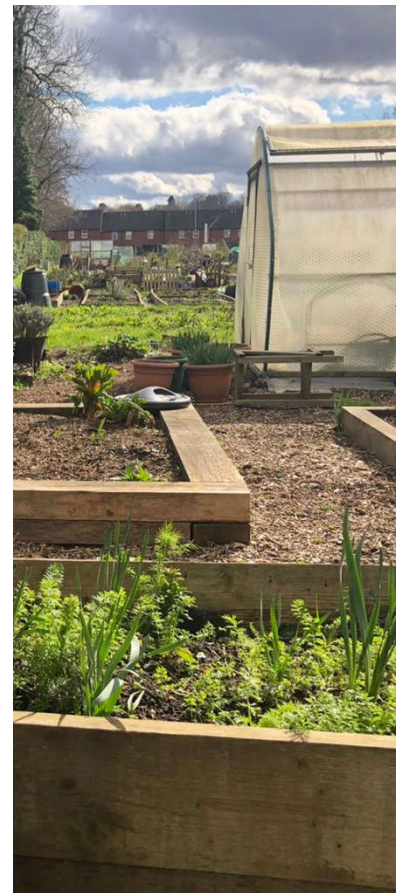
I'd like to thank Margaret Byrne for her sterling work keeping our accounts and navigating the furlough system, and to all those who have made donations this year particularly St Mark's Church, and all the Friends of the Triangle Garden whose donations totalled over £360 this year.

Andrew Green – Trustee & Treasurer

If you'd like to help the Triangle Garden get through the next year why not become a Friend?

Please visit our [Virgin Money Giving site](#) and sign up for a monthly donation of your choice. Even £2 a month makes a huge difference to us!

[Become a Friend](#)



Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org/get-involved-friend

Financial Report

Triangle Community Garden

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August 2020

	TCG and Pavilion	GA Group	Capital Fund	Total	Last Year
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	362	326		688	3911
Grants	1127	4061	5112	10300	1000
Fundraising	3932	0		3932	10334
Investment Income	0			0	1
Charitable Activities	2825	24454		27279	29123
Other Income					
Total	8246	28841	5112	42199	44369
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	1869			1869	4096
Charitable Expenditure	6377	28841		35218	35833
Total	8246	28841	0	37087	39929
Net Income	0	0	5112	5112	4440
Net Movement in Funds	0	0	5112	5112	4440
Total funds Brought Forward	15957	2422	2361	20740	16300
Total Funds Carried Forward	15957	2422	7473	25852	20740



Our Growing Ability tenth anniversary Harvest Lunch group photo: with Liz (3rd from left), Rachel (4th from left), Vicky (6th from left), Avril (far right), Carol (next to Avril) and Yolanda (4th from right)

You can find more photos on our [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

Find out more at www.trianglegarden.org

Hitchin Community Gardens
Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st August 2020

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Income from:					
Donations and Legacies	6301	4687	0	10988	4912
Other Trading Activities	3932		0	3932	10333
Charitable Activities	2825	24454	0	27279	29123
Investments	0	0	0	0	1
Total Income	13058	29141	0	42199	44369
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	1869		0	1869	4097
Charitable Expenditure	6377	28842	0	35219	35832
Total Expenditure	8246	28842	0	37088	39929
Net Income before Other Recognised Gains and Losses	4812	299	0	5,111	4,440
Other Recognised Gains and Losses	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer between Funds	0	0			
Net Movement in Funds	4813	299	0	5,112	4,440
Total funds Brought Forward	15957	4783	0	20740	14774
Total Funds Carried Forward	20770	5082	0	25852	19214

Hitchin Community Gardens
Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2020

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total This Year	Total Last Year
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Fixed Assets - Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0	0
Current Assets					
Stock	298	0	0	298	444
Debtors and Prepayments	849	900	0	1749	3737
Cash at Bank and in Hand	20008	4802	0	24810	17773
Total Current Assets	21155	5702	0	26857	21954
Current Liabilities					
Creditors and Accruals	385	620	0	1005	1214
Deferred Income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	385	620	0	1005	1214
Net Current Assets	20770	5082	0	25852	20740
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	20770	5082	0	25852	20740
Amounts falling due after more than 1 Year					
Deferred Income	0			0	0
Net Assets	20770	5082	0	25852	20740
Funds of the Charity					
Triangle Community Garden Fund	3907		0	3907	5546
Pavilion Fund	12051		0	12051	10410
Balance of Grant to cover lost income 2020/2021	4812			4812	
Restricted Funds		5082	0	5082	4784
Total Funds	20770	5082	0	25852	20740

1. Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the FRSSE and the 2015 SORP

2. Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

(a) Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

(b) Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary Income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Donated Services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Income from Trading and Charitable Activities are accounted for when earned.

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the payment of fees for six of the gardeners. Fees of £10844 were received from HCC in the year ended 31st August 2012.

(c) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. It includes governance costs which are those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountant's fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

(d) Fixed Assets

Fixed Assets are included at cost less accumulated depreciation. The cost of minor additions, those costing below £1000 and those whose purchase costs are fully covered by a grant are not capitalised. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the asset over its expected useful life, which in all cases is estimated at 5 years. Currently the charity has no fixed assets which have not been written off.

3. Income

(a) Donations

Triangle Community Garden
£362

Growing Ability Group
£326

(b) Grants

Bite Size Pieces £300 Local Authority Small business Grant £10000

4. Expenditure

For analysis see attached appendix

5. Trustee Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

Reimbursements were made to trustees for purchases made directly for Hitchin Community Gardens.

Details of trustees other transactions with the charity are given in note 14.

6. Salaries and Wages

At 31st August 2020 5 part time staff were employed including 1 Growing Ability Gardener who cleans the Pavilion for 1 hour a week who was on furlough at that date.

Total wages including pension contributions paid in the year to 31st August 2020 were £31518. £7513 furlough income was received from HMRC.

7. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Equipment
At Cost	£
At 1st September 2013	2916
Acquisitions	0
At 31st August 2014	2916
Depreciation	
At 1st September 2013	2645
Charge for Year	271
At 31st August 2014	2916
Net Book Value	
At 31st August 2019	0
At 31st August 2018	0

8. Debtors

Prepaid expenses	<u>£ 714</u>
Debtors	£1020
Reclaimable Gift Aid Tax	<u>£ 15</u>
	£1749

9. Creditors and Accruals

Income received in advance	<u>£ 226</u>
Creditors	£ 26
Payroll & pension liabilities	<u>£ 753</u>
Total	£1005

All deferred income has now been written back.

10. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

Triangle Community Garden	Ransom's Pavilion	Growing Ability Group
£3907	£12051	£2421
Capital Expenditure Fund (balance of grants)	£7473	

11. Related Parties

One trustee is a director of Bowles & Wyer who do the photocopying for Hitchin Community Gardens. No charge is made for black and white copies, and colour copies are invoiced at cost. This is considerably cheaper than using another supplier.

Note 4**Hitchin Community Gardens****Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 2020**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Voluntary Income Costs			
General Admin & Publicity	32		32
Website	4	5	9
	<u>36</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>41</u>
Fundraising Costs			
Event Costs	740	0	740
Workshop Costs	565		565
Children's Activities Costs	0		0
Pavilion Costs	564	0	564
Gazebo Costs	0	0	0
	<u>1869</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1869</u>
Charitable Expenditure			
Insurance	383	256	639
Subscriptions	55	83	138
Gardening Club & Sunday Staff	2354		2354
Growing Ability Group Tutors		18500	18500
Project Management Salary	2915	7185	10100
Visits	18		18
Volunteer Expenses	0	9	9
Training	0	168	168
Project Management & GA Group Overheads	66	1788	1854
Wi-fi	115	175	290
Materials, Tools & PPE	181	161	342
Refreshments & Lunch Club costs	49	187	236
	<u>6136</u>	<u>28512</u>	<u>34648</u>
Governance Costs			
Accounting	120	180	300
Accountants Fees	28	42	70
DBS Checks	0	96	96
Legal costs	5	8	13
Other Governance Costs	50		50
	<u>203</u>	<u>326</u>	<u>529</u>
Total Expenditure	8244	28843	37087

Hitchin Community Gardens Reserves Statement 2020

Hitchin Community Gardens needs reserves to:

- Meet any contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close
- Meet unexpected costs like repairs to the pavilion
- To replace equipment as it wears out.
- Ensure the charity can provide a continuing service for its gardeners and to the community
- To provide working capital if funding is paid in arrears, and to enable it to bid for funding which is paid in arrears
- To provide working capital where there is a gap between funding streams. Where funding is not renewed bids for alternative sources can take time to process.
- Enable it to expand the range of services offered
- Provide a contingency fund in the event of a shortfall in one or more of its funding activities

Hitchin Community Garden Reserves at 31st August 2020

Hitchin Community Garden's reserves policy states that reserves should be between 30% and 40% of turnover.

Reserves at 31st August 2019 are £25852. This is 61% of turnover.

However this needs to be considered in the light of the effect of Covid 19.

Two of our major fundraising events and some of our workshops had to be cancelled, there were no bookings for the pavilion in May, June, July and August and our Growing Ability and Growing Health sessions had to be shut down from mid-March to the end of July. We received the furlough grant from HMRC to partly cover our salary costs. In addition we have received a small business grant from NHDC. £4812 of this grant has been carried forward into 2020/2021 to cover cancelled events in the coming year and also GA/GH running at below capacity.

Also other grants brought forward from 2018/2019 and received in 2019/2020 have not yet been used due to the Covid 19 outbreak – e.g. £1000 received from Hitchin horticultural society was earmarked for our 20th anniversary celebrations in 2020 which did not go ahead and £300 received in 2020 from Bite size Pieces for equipment and perennial herbs has yet to be spent.

In these uncertain times we do not consider our reserves level to be excessive and expect it to diminish considerably in the coming year.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Hitchin Community Garden

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Hitchin Community Garden for the year ended 31st August 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Hitchin Community Garden you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of Hitchin Community Garden accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Hitchin Community Garden as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Deniz Brown (FCCA)

Fellow of Chartered Certified Accountants

Address: 42 Brampton Park Road, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 1XF

Date: 14th November 2020