



EATCARY

Registered Charity No. 1154857

2024 Annual Report and Financial Statements for 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024



EAT CARY

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Annual Report 2024

Introduction

The scope of our work has increased again this year. Significant points have been the inclusion of the Repair Café as part of the EatCary charity, with two new Trustees included in our number to represent this interest. Discussions continue about how exactly this amalgamation should work and how be reflected in the nature and scope of our Trustees' meetings. A report of the work of the Repair Café is included below.

What with discussions about the lease of the EatCary site, urgent need for repair of the polytunnel, the development of the patio, the inclusion of the Repair Café, a growing relationship with the school, and (by no means least) the strange vagaries of the weather it has not been an easy year, but we have come through it with continued enthusiasm and look forward to an exciting future. These developments are reported upon below, and include work done both in the financial year 2023-24 and the period following it up to our AGM in October.

The Repair Café – Marcus Tim Gilbert

Several of the stalwarts of EatCary suggested in early 2023 that it would be very beneficial to the people of Castle Cary to have access to the repair of well-used, but now broken, domestic items. They were aware of an international organisation based in Amsterdam in the Netherlands, The Repair Café, and began researching more local organisations in the South West for a model that might be suitable for our area. In addition to recruiting a group of enthusiastic volunteers with skills in a wide area of activity, ranging from bicycle maintenance, carpentry, computers & mobiles, electrics, mowers and sewing & fabric, locating a suitable place to meet people and carry out the repairs, and exploring the more boring but essential bureaucratic matters such as publicity, organisation, record keeping and legal matters including public liability. The first Castle Cary Repair Café (CC RC) opened in the town on the fourth Saturday of July 2023. Monthly meetings have been held subsequently, including an outdoor one at 'Fun in the Field'. After experimenting with different venues, it was finally decided to regularly use the basement (school room) of the Methodist Church because of its size, ease of working and potential room for storing essential equipment, necessary for carrying out repairs. The group is now firmly settled into the Methodist Schoolroom as its regular meeting place, and negotiations are in progress with the Methodist Council about possible storage space..



We believe that the new Repair Café has been a success during its first year of operation and has become a valuable asset to the people of Castle Cary and Ansford. We are particularly proud of the fact that we have helped people understand the importance of maintenance, something that they may well be able to do themselves, and saved many broken but repairable items being sent to landfill. Our group of volunteers has grown quickly, and we now have a supporter group of 38 people, of whom 17 are Repairers, 8 looking after Catering and 5 in the Welcome/Farewell team.

Careful records are kept of the repairs undertaken, and at the time of writing this report there have been 166 items received, 89 repaired in session, 12 partial repairs, 7 advice given, 22 taken away for later repair, only 22 unrepairable. 425 kg has been saved from landfill, 66 kg scrapped. Not all equipment is suitable for repairing at the RC, for example 2-stroke machinery. We intend to keep a list of local repairers and refer clients to them.

As was explained at the last AGM, the team that initially set up the Repair Café felt it would be advantageous to everyone to bring it under the aegis of the EatCary charity (CIO). The EatCary Trustees looked at their stated objectives and agreed that this was possible. Two Trustees were nominated and elected to represent the Repair Café interests in particular.



Repair Café finances are managed by the EatCary Treasurer through a separate restricted section within the EatCary accounts – see financial statements appended to this report.

A small grant enabled us to purchase Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) equipment, and three people have been trained on how to use it, so far. The equipment will be a useful community facility.

EatCary site improvement and maintenance – David Holmes

Renewing the lease on the EatCary site has been a major topic of concern over the last 12 months. Thanks to Rosie and husband Nigel's efforts with the free legal service offered by 'Proskauers' we now have an arrangement that we feel is a good one, originally a rolling one-year lease, but now, subject to final approval, a 5 year one. Well done to Rosie for this.

Replacing the skin on the Polytunnel (PT) is now our top priority which is underway as we write this report. We've had a generous donation from the Newt to help with this and it gives us the chance to make improvements to the doors at the ends of the tunnel, the guttering, and creation of some air-holes, possibly with fans, above the doors at both ends to assist with reducing the temperature when it gets hot. (The air holes have already been tried in the existing tunnel and we think they are having some effect.) With the help of the original supplier, Mr. Hall from Martock, we hope to have the new skin put on by mid-November at the latest. Both the Newt and Higher Farm have offered personnel to help with this.

A recent review of our machinery concluded that we have things in the lock-up shed which we no longer use, and which we are now in the process of selling.

A big thank you to Stephen Rymer for all his efforts both in selling some of the surplus machinery and his management of the PT replacement project. His help has been invaluable; and not forgetting Rosemary's provision of food and drink for our work sessions !

Our policy of reduced mowing in the lower part of the garden seems to have created an environment which which we are happy, namely two areas left unmown all season but occasionally scythed, plus paths cut around them and also



through the main area of the beds. The narrower paths between the beds are covered with chippings for which we need a continuing supply.

The raised beds constructed last year have not been a great success so far, due largely to slug and other pest damage.

The three beds nearest the main road, 'reclaimed' over the last couple of years, have now become fully productive, and the division of the raspberries into another reclaimed area near the willow arch has also gone well.

The patio area continues to be developed and has been a welcome area for tea-breaks. It is created largely from old pallets and other recycled items! Tulips in pots on the patio, and the old cattle trough full of nasturtiums have produced spectacular displays.

We managed to 'strike' some vine cuttings last winter, and now have several grape vines growing around the site. Hopefully they will start producing grapes next year.

The site is now becoming a more inclusive growing area: we always refer to it as the 'garden', but the flowering and fruiting aspect is being further developed. More flowering plants have been added and some hard work done by Anne with the flower bed in the main part of the garden gave a great show this summer. And the hollyhocks also looked spectacular. Our fruit trees continue to mature, and are producing a small crop this year. There is scope for more of these. Currants, gooseberries, and raspberries have also done well.

Water collection is something we've worked on with some new butts acquired from various sources, enabling us to store more for the dry periods. Still work to be done here.

We continue to work on compost production, though there never seems to be enough and we need to give further thought to this. We've tried different sources of bought-in products including horse manure and shredded prunings. We continue to maintain our no-dig philosophy.

Growing regime – Rosie Rayner

Every year brings different challenges, this year more than most. The cold wet spring and early summer led to the twin problems of slow growth and the explosion in the slug population. Parsnips and carrots were wiped out and beans and lettuces needed multiple sowings until the slugs were brought under control. Pumpkins were also affected and really struggled to get going. Every known organic slug deterrent was tried - homemade garlic sprays, crushed eggshells, coffee grounds, oatbran, mineralised straw mulch and even hair from the barber! Using a combination of these methods together with a rigorous search and destroy regime (to catch a slug you have to think like a slug!) we were able to get the numbers down, finally giving plants a chance of survival.



We increased our range of companion planting - marigolds, calendula and nasturtium to deter pests or as sacrificial plants. Pumpkins on the Hugel humps were given a guard of red chicory and French marigolds - raised from seed by Hazel - and the courgette bed with moon red lettuces, sunflowers, and nasturtiums. Courgettes got off to a promising start but they suffered during a prolonged dry spell from mid summer onwards and powdery mildew (more prevalent in dry conditions) and poor pollination rates reduced the harvest.

The overgrown 'Bonfire bed', reclaimed by Nuri, Oscar and Noah (weeded then covered with cardboard and a thick layer of manure and compost) was planted with a variety of pumpkins (sown by Oscar and Noah) lettuce and Yacon introduced to us this year by Siripon. Unfortunately the slugs found the pumpkins particularly tasty so the yield was disappointing.

We raised extra plants for the plant sale and offered the full range of garden ready veg plants as well as bedding plants and perennials (raised by Hazel) and houseplants which gave our sale wonderful kerb appeal.

The purple sprouting broccoli which was sown in spring last year repaid our patience almost a full year later, cropping for six weeks or more. David's brassica cages, higher than last year's kept away pigeons and early cabbage whites.

Despite the slugs we managed three successive broad bean sowings with the autumn sowing was by far the most productive. We pinched out growing tips and used soapy sprays to keep blackfly at bay, and interplanted with nasturtiums. An early legion of ladybirds helped. Unfortunately the entire crop was later overtaken by a heavy rust infection.

We again grew three wigwams of runner, climbing French and borlotti beans planted over trenches of compost and old sprout stalks. The dwarf beans were rather overwhelmed by French marigolds - so spectacular that no-one had the heart to thin them out. Lesson learned - give everything enough room and/or be prepared to be ruthless!!



Leeks and onions again produced a bountiful (and prizewinning!) harvest and a late sowing of red baron sets in a tyre planter produced a late harvest of small (but perfectly formed) onions. We should continue to be mindful of where we sow and plant alliums this coming year to avoid the chance of endemic rot.

Red spider mite has been a problem in the polytunnel unfortunately. We kept it in check with a biological control - predatory mites which run faster than the red spider mite! It's The opportunity to deep clean the polytunnel when we recover it in October will be helpful.

The tomatoes were largely unaffected so again we had a colourful choice of cherry tomatoes from yellow through to almost black as well as red, purple and stripy larger varieties. The sweet peppers and chillies also seemed more resistant. Cucumbers (Merlin, Marketmore and Thai) melons (Alvaro, Mangomel) as well as watermelons were grown in the old grapevine bed in the polytunnel and really did not fare so well. This was probably due to RSM but the soil also seemed poor, something that can hopefully be improved next year.

Lots of potatoes were grown this year both in pots and in the beds. The pot grown potatoes were perfect whereas most - though not all - the potatoes from the beds had some scab. Common scab is a bacterial infection which can be encouraged by insufficient water and an alkaline soil, things to bear in mind for next year as well as researching resistant varieties. Laura's early summer sowings of beetroot, spinach beet and chard have done brilliantly and her later summer lettuce, rocket and winter greens sown in the cold frames have thrived. Florence fennel was also sown late to avoid bolting, a lesson learnt from last year. The wheat was disappointing due to pigeons and adverse weather conditions which meant the kernels were not suitable for milling. We have decided to draw a line under our home grown loaf experiment doubting whether our success last year could ever be repeated.

One of our principal aims for 2025 is to supply the food larder in town with a more regular supply of produce, to which end we need to give careful thought to when and how much of anything we sow, plant, and grow. Plenty of forward planning needed here.



Activities and links – Nuri Fontanals

This year we have held several plant sales either at the Market House as part of one of the Saturday coffee mornings or part of the Repair Café mornings. Our 8th June Market House plant sale was the most successful with our plants were flying off the stalls, in particular demand were courgette plants and basil. In total we raised just over £500 from plant sales and our tea and cake stall.

In August 2024 we entered our vegetables, flowers and homemade produce into as many of the categories as possible at the annual flower and vegetable show in the Caryford hall. We were delighted by our success, winning a multitude of prizes though no cup this year!

Unfortunately, Castle Cary's event "Fun on Field" didn't take place this year (2024) and so we were unable to create a stall of our produce alongside the Repair Café contribution, however, we hope to continue with this next year.



In September 2024, we held our annual EatCary Feast which was well attended by our members, friends and their families. This is a time when we can harvest and create dishes using our produce. There was an amazing plethora of dishes including a range of hand picked salads using borlotti beans and our salad leaves, a Thai soup using pumpkin leaves-(a clever way to use a large part of the plant not usually thought of) and many fabulous baked goods, of particular note was the raspberry jelly which was created for the scones. This year we have made links with the local secondary school, Ansford Academy and have worked with many different year groups, discussing the benefits of locally grown vegetables. Several of our members have enjoyed explaining our key processes including the

value of "no dig" soil, composting and recycling and reuse of plastics. Students have had a go at growing their own tomatoes and chillis in the hope of turning them into pasta sauces within their food tech lessons later in the term. We are delighted with the growing link with the school. We have had many other visitors to the site; notable was a visit from Zambian friends over for the 30th Anniversary of the Cary-Mufulira Trust. Goodson Mbeve composed extempore an anti-slug song but we have no evidence that it worked!

Unfortunately, the weather has been so unpredictable and unpleasant that the local cubs only visited the site twice and the Toybox Preschool only once, but we hope this will be remedied next year. We also hope that we may have further Duke of Edinburgh Award participants opting to do their community service with us.

The future

We continue with many of the aspirations given in last year's AGM. They are:

- To further increase our work force, including people of diverse ages and background
- Consolidate the link with the new Cary Repair Café and apply its principles to our

own equipment and tools and ensure that all of us work towards achieving the objects of our charity.

- To renew our lease – hopefully almost achieved by our AGM!
- To continue our link with the community larder
- Develop recipes and promote cooking skills appropriate to our crops

We add to these:

- To relate our gardening approaches and Repair Café aims to climate resilience, biodiversity and environmental sustainability

Lessons learned from last year have been taken on board but mother nature has plenty more she wants to teach us. Hopefully we've been taking notes!

All in all, it's been a demanding year: issues with the lease resolved, atrocious weather and all the problems that brings, machinery evaluation and disposal, and much discussion about renewing the skin of the polytunnel, now underway. The Repair Café has had a very successful start, and its integration into the charity is well underway, in particular through practical help given by members of each "branch" of the charity to the other. The charity, its activities and its objectives continue to evolve. Let's hope we can all rise to its challenges and ensure a flourishing future.

Legal and administrative information

Charity Registration Number: 1154857;

Date of registration: 4 December 2013

Financial Year: 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

Trustees at 1 April 2023:

Bernie Logan	Nuri Fontanals
Laura Tilling	David Holmes
Rosemary Rayner	Marcus Tim Gilbert
Christopher Fone	



Tim Earle-Marsh and Rosemary Rymer stood down at the 2023 AGM having completed their third term of office

Objects:

- To advance in life and help local people through providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.
- To advance the education of the public, including the pupils at Ansford Academy, in the subjects of horticulture, gardening, cooking, healthy eating and related topics.
- To advance the education of the local community in the sustainable use, protection and improvement of the natural environment.

Correspondence address: Marshland, Station Road, Castle Cary, BA7 7BX

Primary Bankers: The Co-operative Bank Community Direct Plus account

EAT CARY
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Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31st March 2024

	2023/24	2022/23
EatCary Garden Income analysis		
Donation		£50.00
Produce donations	£145.05	
Fairfield Event donations	£200.00	
Newt sponsorship	£70.00	
Total income	£415.05	£50.00
EatCary Garden Expenditure		
Infracstructure:		
Raised beds		£260.00
Accessories for beds		£112.68
Mushroom compost	£270.00	£125.00
Scythe		£203.50
Water timers		£27.95
sundries	£11.00	£206.69
Waterbutt	£44.99	
Insurance	£100.80	£100.80
Total expenditure	£426.79	£1,136.62
Repair Café Income analysis(from July 2023)		
Cary Cares grant	£582.08	-
Repair donations	£824.39	-
Refreshments	£335.61	-
Fairfield Event donations	£60.00	-
CAGS Grant(PAT Tester)	£300.00	-
Total Income	£2,102.08	-
Repair Café Expenditure analysis(from July 2023)		
Repair costs	£149.96	-
Refreshments costs	£19.00	-
Venue costs	£272.50	-
Banners	£362.19	-
Infrastructure	£460.80	-
PAT Tester	£57.10	-
Meeting refreshments	£57.10	-
Insurance	£262.08	-
Total Expenditure	£1,759.56	-
Opening Balance at 01/04/2023(as per bank)		
EatCary Garden	£892.01	
Changes:		
EatCary Garden	(£11.74)	
EatCary Repair Café	£376.60	
Closing Balance 31/03/2024	£1,256.87	
Of which EatCary Garden = £880.27, EatCary Repair Café = £376.60		

Independent Examiner's Report on the Receipts and Payments Accounts

Report to the Trustees of Eat Cary (Registered Charity Number 1854857) on the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparations of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of sections 43(2) Charities Act 1993 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state on the basis of procedures specified in the General Direction given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 trustees concerning any 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 connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

- which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act, and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act 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:



Date: 01/08/2024

Name: George Lawson

Address: Underwood, Weston Bampfylde