



# EATCARY

Registered Charity No. 1154857

## 2025 Annual Report and Financial Statements for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31 March 2025



*EatCary plant sale at the Market House*



*BBC Somerset Green Award ceremony.*

The EatCary charity comprises the EatCary community vegetable garden next to Ansford Academy and the Cary Repair Café which meets each month at the Old Schoolroom under the Methodist Church in Castle Cary



# **EAT CARY**

## **Registered Charity No. 1154857**

### **Annual Report 2025**

## **INTRODUCTION**

For the Eat Cary garden branch the final signing of the lease of our site from Ansford Academy took place in April 2024, so that we are no longer “permitted trespassers” on Academy land but legally welcome, and gives us a feeling of security and belonging. It meant that we could renew the polytunnel skin knowing we could stay. We reviewed our risk assessment and put up notices around the site to make visitors aware of potential hazards. David’s superb art work has given gravitas to our entrance, and a wonderful patio on which to enjoy our tea breaks. There is no doubt that climate change is impacting on our growing regime, but through experimentation and careful planning we hope we are fulfilling our objectives of resilience and sustainability. We are pleased too that we have begun active work again with the students at Ansford Academy.

The Repair Café branch has settled into the permanent use of the Methodist Schoolroom as its venue, and this works well, with increasing numbers of volunteers and “clients”. Just as this report is being finalised the wonderful news has come through that the Cary Repair Café has won the 2025 BBC Somerset Green Award.

The two branches of EatCary are still getting used to being one charity. Despite working largely independently they have close connections. Rosemary Rymer works hard as Treasurer of both; Tim Earle-Marsh and Stephen Rymer, both past trustees of EatCary, are now key people in the running of the Repair Café, but never fail to rescue the garden branch when it has technical problems – while Rosie and Dave are learning fast to look after the water system and machinery themselves. In the same way trustees from the garden branch offer support serving refreshments and providing yummy cakes at Repair Café sessions.

In February 2025 the two branches of EatCary took part jointly in an all-town event, ‘Celebrating Volunteering in the Community’, with the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mohammed Saddiq, and made a visual presentation for the public about what we do, as well as discussing it with Mr Saddiq. The event was featured on local radio and TV.



*Rosie Rayner and Tim Gilbert with our display*

This report is divided into separate sections for the two branches, but we would remind readers that we are a joint charity, under the simple name “EatCary”. Reporting is complicated by the fact that it covers not just the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 but the period from then to our AGM in October. For the garden branch this means it covers two growing seasons.

# CARY REPAIR CAFÉ

## Origins.

The Repair Café network began in Amsterdam in 2009 and the Cary Repair Café is now part of Repair Café International (RCI) representing over 2,500 Repair Cafés worldwide. The Cary Repair Café was started in 2023 by Tim Earle-Marsh and Stephen Rymer, both also founding members of EatCary (although now no longer Trustees). They realised there were people in Cary who have the skills and experience to extend the life of household items, keeping them out of landfill, and recycling for longer than otherwise would be the case.

Our first Repair Café open to the local community took place in July 2024 and has now established a permanent home in the Old Schoolroom under the Methodist Church in Castle Cary, with regular meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday morning of each month. Here we are able to store equipment and use the kitchen for refreshments.

## Current activities.

The repairs are carried out by around 20 enthusiastic volunteers with wide-ranging skills who work together to repair bicycles, computers & mobile phones, electrical appliances, furniture, lawn mowers, a broad range of textiles, and toys. Customers are encouraged to watch and help with the repairs, and enjoy refreshments - homemade cakes etc – while they wait. In this way the Repair Café not only eases the planet's burden of resource depletion, but also meets EatCary's charitable objects of community involvement, education and support. Of course, it also saves people money by not having to replace items which can still have a useful life.



*Repairers at work*

We have now had around 500 items brought into our Repair Café by customers and have been able to repair about 85%, and in so doing have saved a tonne of broken or no longer needed items from going into waste recycling or landfill. This level of repair continues. It has been impossible to repair some types of electronics, particularly those containing complex circuit boards and a range of proprietary screws and security fixings, fitted by manufacturers to stop people being able to fix their goods



*Another successful repair*

The Cary Repair Café team encourages new people to be involved, whatever their background or experience, and is particularly aiming in the coming months to encourage young people to be involved by developing a mentoring scheme for young people doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

## Special events.

Our local MP, Sarah Dyke, visited the Repair Cafe in January 2025 to learn more about what we do. She brought with her a broken heated clothes drying rack, which we were able to repair in session. She showed great interest in what we do and we were able to talk to her about the moves in government to give people the right to repair their belongings when they stop working.



## **Funding.**

The Repair Café is funded by voluntary donations from customers whose domestic items we have successfully repaired.

# **EATCARY GARDEN**

## **EatCary site improvement and maintenance**

Another eventful year: we finished re-covering the polytunnel in October/November 2024 working with volunteers from both the EatCary garden branch and Cary Repair Café. A few small details are still to be sorted out but overall, a great success.

We've had to resort to more use of mains water than we would have liked, and with the school authorities coming in to take meter readings, we have become more aware of the need to accumulate our own store of this vital resource. Investigation is under way into getting some large storage vessels and filling them from our water reservoir when it overfills. Water supply problems have also been compounded by the failure of our internal system in the polytunnel; this is now fixed thanks to Tim Earle-Marsh's very helpful support.



*The Repair Cafe's biggest job so far!*

The last piece of machinery - the rotavator - was sold off in Spring 2025 and fetched well in excess of what we expected. There is now room to move in the machinery shed.

The patio area has been expanded and has now become a pleasant sitting-out area; more to come here.....

Some of our original raised beds and cold frames are now collapsing and decisions need to be made about their repair or replacement.

The big Leylandii hedge(forest) has been cut to a manageable height, and shouldn't need anything more than a trim in future. All the cuttings have gone into making a couple of "dead hedges"; – good habitat for the wildlife as well as a useful way to dispose of a large quantity hedge prunings.

No progress on the pond yet, that's something for us to work on in the coming months. The path leading up to our gate also needs some attention.

## **Growing regime**

Spring 2024 was characterised by wet, cool and dull weather leading to weak growth and a plague of slugs necessitating repeat sowings of many things. Later 2024 sowings of parsnips and radish were wiped out by slugs, and carrots and pumpkins struggled for the same reason. The slugs were eventually brought under control and the weather improved, but a prolonged hot, dry spell from mid summer 2024 brought its own challenges.



*Showing visitors around*

Despite this we eventually grew most outside crops successfully:

beans (all kinds), prizewinning peas and onions, purple sprouting broccoli, cabbages, courgettes, chard, spinach, beetroot, leeks, fennel, lettuce, rocket and potatoes.

Black aphid on the beans was kept at bay using water sprays and removal of the growing tips. Learning from this, we had even more success in 2025 by pinching out all the growing tips immediately a single blackfly appeared. In ground potatoes and sweetcorn suffered from lack of water during the later dry spell but we had good potatoes from those in containers.

The weather was incredibly kind during the polytunnel renovation in October 2024 and our wonderful range of tomatoes, peppers and aubergines seemed unfazed by a couple of weeks exposure to the elements.

Over-wintering broad beans, onions and salads were sown in Oct/Nov 2024 largely by Ansford Academy students. The salads in particular did well giving a continuous supply of leaves until early summer 2025 due to the use of some bolt resistant varieties. After that new sowings took over. We successfully supplied the Community Larder with a variety of salad leaves and vegetables throughout this period.



*Chillis to make into chilli jam*

For the 2025 growing season slugs were a distant memory and the main challenge was lack of rain and recurrent heatwaves making conditions very difficult, and not just outside. The heat in the polytunnel meant that wet beds needed almost daily watering to ensure seedlings survived.

We continued the use of predatory mites to control red spider mite in the polytunnel which has proved successful.

Once the water butts were empty, and our water reservoir was low, we reluctantly relied on mains water, but the use of mulching, no dig composting and targeted watering were all helpful. A Hotbin composter bought with a Community Action Group Somerset (CAGS) grant in January 2025 is now producing compost from food waste suitable for use as mulch.

From April 2025 onwards we made direct outdoor sowings of carrots, parsnips, beetroot, turnips, spinach and chard as well as continuing sowings on the wet beds in the polytunnel.



*Tea and pumpkins on the patio*

Germination outdoors was very slow and patchy but eventually produced the sweetest carrots and even the parsnips are finally responding to the recent rain.

The raised beds were put to good use with spring 2025 sowings of carrots, radish and spring onions which all did well. Another raised bed was planted with a grid of sweetcorn which produced wonderfully plump, sweet cobs.

Successful new crops in 2025 have been calabrese and summer purple sprouting broccoli grown under the brassica cages. We also planted a bed of Jerusalem artichoke and asparagus which should produce in 2027.

Currants, gooseberries, melons and tree fruits (particularly plums) all did well and we had our first crop of outdoor grapes this year. In contrast, the raspberries really missed the rain!

We feel we are learning more and more about how to keep a supply of vegetables going

throughout the year, how to use our space (both in the polytunnel and outside) in more effective ways, how to compost efficiently and quickly, and how to keep pests and diseases at bay whilst maintaining our principle of growing organically - and how to enjoy doing it all!

In the coming months we will look at a more targeted choice of seeds, and hope to experiment with new crops and growing methods

### Activities and links –

The EatCary garden branch took part again in the Britain in Bloom competition. Castle Cary Town Council had been so impressed with our previous entry that they entered us into our own category this time around, the results of which will not be released until the end of October, after our AGM. The judges were very impressed by our setup and our involvement with the food larder. To add to the community feel of what we do, we joined many of local community groups by contributing to the Scarecrow Festival, put on to further add awareness of the Britain in Bloom event and enjoyment within our community.



*EatCary's scarecrow*

In January 2025 Rosie Rayner gave a talk at the Market House on behalf of EatCary about composting to help promote and raise money for Cary in Bloom. EatCary also contributed plants for the living wall on the bus shelter and the planters by the town's gateway signs. In March we were asked to share our experience of composting at the CAGS Skillshare event in Bridgwater and Rosie repeated her talk for them. Laura met with the Healthy Lives Club at Millbrook Medical Practice to promote the many benefits of community gardening.

We entered the local Gardening Association Flower and Vegetable show both in 2024 and 2025 and won a plethora of prizes on both occasions. This is a well-supported local show and is the perfect showcase for our garden, to promote our values of sustainability and resilience and provides an excellent networking opportunity for us.

In May 2025 we held another very successful plant sale, which raised more money than our 2024 sale and was generously topped up by the Newt. This year we ensured that we had plenty of vegetables and plants to sell. Again, it demonstrated our ability to work as a team and further promoted our cause within the community.



*Feast day soup and foccacio*

This year we have hosted Year 7 and Year 10 students from Ansford Academy and Year 6 from Castle Cary Primary School, introducing them to the concepts of sustainable, organic growing of foodstuffs. Toybox Preschool has also done gardening with us, and also uses the site for occasional nature walks. We welcome and encourage this involvement by young people.

At the end of August 2025 EatCary invited family, friends and well-wishers to join them in their annual feast. Our visitors enjoyed not only food and snacks made from our produce but also freshly-pressed apple juice.



## FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF THE CHARITY

The EatCary garden branch and the Repair Café still operate largely separately. However, there is a great deal of common ground in our aims and purposes including the overall aim of developing sustainability and resilience in the face of climate change and global resource depletion.

**Specific practical targets for the coming months for the two groups are:**

### FOR CARY REPAIR CAFÉ:

- Enhance the sustainability of our Repair Café
- Build up our communal resources including tools
- Increase public awareness within the local community of what we offer
- Develop our own website with a link to Repair Café International and offering easy internet access for local customers to show how we can help them including a library of items we have repaired
- Recruit younger repairers
- Offer Ansford Academy & other secondary schools volunteering opportunities for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze & Silver awards.



*Juicing apples at EatCary's Feast*

### FOR THE EATCARY COMMUNITY GARDEN:

- Renovation of raised beds and cold frames
- Final completion of polytunnel
- Renovation of the path up to the site
- Recruitment and retention of more volunteers from diverse backgrounds
- More targeted choice of seeds
- More experimentation with new crops and new methods
- Improved care of tools
- Creation of a pond area



# LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Charity Registration Number:** 1154857;

**Date of registration:** 4 December 2013

**Financial Year:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

**Trustees at 1 April 2024:**

Bernadette Logan

Laura Tilling

Rosemary Rayner

Rosemary Rymer

Jean Spearpoint (co-opted)

Nuri Fontanals

David Holmes

Marcus Timothy Gilbert

Christopher Fone

David Holmes and Rosemary Rayner complete their first three-year term of office this year, and therefore require re-election. Both are willing to stand.

Jean Spearpoint was co-opted on to the committee and became a Trustee in March 2025 and now requires formal election.

**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**  
**Registered Charity No. 1154857**

**Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

	2024/25	2023/24
<b>EatCary Garden Income Analysis</b>		
Donation	£500.00	-
Produce donatons	-	£145.05
Coffee morning	£504.44	-
CAGS grant	£283.79	-
Fairfield Event Donations	-	£200.00
Newt Sponsorship	£1,000.00	£70.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£2,288.23</b>	<b>£415.05</b>
<b>EatCary Garden Expenditure</b>		
Mushroom Compost	£88.36	£270.00
Sundries	£338.11	£11.00
Composter	£259.99	-
Water Butt	-	£44.99
Polytunnel Refurb.	£1,790.70	-
Insurance	£100.80	£100.80
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£2,577.96</b>	<b>£426.79</b>
<b>Resrves - funded by sale of equipment</b>	<b>£1,056.83</b>	-
<b>Repair Cafe Income analysis(from July 2023)</b>		
Cary Cares Grant	-	£582.08
Repair Donations	£1,179.06	£824.39
Refreshments	£216.80	£335.61
Fairfield Event Doantions	-	£60.00
CAGS Grant	£120.00	£300.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£1,515.86</b>	<b>£2,102.08</b>
<b>Repair Cafe Expenditure analysis</b>		
Repair Costs	£145.50	£149.96
Refreshments costs	-	£19.00
Venue Costs	£572.00	£272.50
Banners	-	£175.93
Infrastructure	£426.01	£362.19
PAT Tester	-	£460.80
Meeting Refreshments	£99.20	£57.10
Insurance	£295.68	£262.08
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,538.39</b>	<b>£1,759.56</b>
<b>Opening Balance 01/04/2024(as per bank)</b>	<b>£1,256.87</b>	<b>£892.01</b>
of which		
Garden	£880.27	£892.01
Reoair Café	£376.60	£0.00
<b>Closing Balance 31/03025(as per bank)</b>	<b>£2,001.44</b>	<b>£1,256.87</b>
of which		
Garden	£590.54	£880.27
Repair Café	£354.07	£376.60
Reserves	£1,056.83	£0.00

**EAT CARY**  
**Registered Charity No. 1154857**

**Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

**SUMMARY**

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Opening balance	1256.87	892.01
Income	4860.92	2517.13
Expenditure	4116.35	2186.35
Closing Bance	2001.44	1256.87
Profit 	744.57	330.78

## 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

#### 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: 23/09/2025

Name: George Lawson

Address: Underwood, Weston Bampfylde