



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
	1	SEPT	2019		31	AUG	2020

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

Olden Community Garden

Other names charity is known by

formerly known as the Olden Garden Development Project

Registered charity number (if any)

1158105

Charity's principal address

Whistler Street,

Highbury

LONDON

Postcode

N5 1NH

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Terry Stacy MBE	Chair		
2	Anna Sullivan	Deputy Chair		
3	Jill McKeown	Membership Secretary		
4	Vicky Church	Trustee	Resigned 29/09/2019	
5	Susie Burrows	Trustee		
6	Jeremy Urquhart	Trustee	Resigned 21/06/2020	
9	Tom Hitchman	Treasurer	Resigned 19/09/2019	

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year
Same as above	

Type of adviser

Name

Address

Gardener	Laura Arison	107 Arlington Road, London, NW1 7ET
Gardener	Andrew Smith	24 Peckett Square, Highbury, London, N5 2PB

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

N/A

Section B

Structure, governance, and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Olden Community Garden is governed by the Constitution which was agreed on 6 April 2014. It gained charitable status in August 2014.
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Olden Community Garden is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It currently has 7 (seven) Trustees, and the maximum permissible under its constitution of 9 (nine) Trustees. It has two adviser gardeners.
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Trustees are elected by the Membership at the Annual General Meeting for a period of 3 years and may be co-opted.

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees.
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works.
- relationship with any related parties.
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

The charity has a simple **organisational structure**, with no sub-committee, though individual Trustees take lead responsibility for different aspects of running the garden.

We are supported in **risk management** by the **London Borough of Islington** which retains responsibility for aspects of the structural integrity of the site and has an advisory role.

Trustees regularly review risks associated with the management of the garden and develop policies and action plans to deal with them. The nature of the diverse two-acre (0.8 hectare) garden site means that some risks are on-going and dealt with through policies (such as the policy of having no unaccompanied children in the garden) while others are one-off and are dealt with through an action plan.

Olden Community Garden holds full public liability insurance. We have also done a full risk assessment of our operation which is reviewed regularly. Both a copy of our public liability insurance and safeguarding policy is on public display in the garden house on site.

Section C

Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The objects of the CIO are to promote for the benefit of those people living or working in the London Borough of Islington a community garden and associated facilities to advance education and for the purposes of recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving their condition of life.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

The Trustees were satisfied that the activities of Olden Garden met the **objectives** as set out in the constitution, and the requirement of public benefit. We continue to be guided by the requirement of **public benefit** as we plan our future programme of work and activities in the garden.

The Olden Garden was created in 1986 when a group of residents successfully campaigned to rescue a derelict railway embankment and turn it into a community garden. Over the years, the site has been turned into a haven for residents and wildlife alike. The garden is a significant asset to the community. Islington has less green space than any other London Borough, and the garden forms an important wildlife habitat. The Garden contains the largest area of woodland in the Borough and is one of the largest community managed open spaces in north London. The Borough recognises the garden's importance to the area and has

designated it Grade 1 SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation).

The garden is normally open to the **public** at least 55 times a year, and to Members from dawn to dusk every day. Towards the end of 2019/2020 we had to suspend our workdays and general openings to the public due to government Covid19 social distancing guidelines and advice from LB Islington. During the Covid pandemic the Garden saw a massive increase in usage amongst the members.

During 2019/2020 our fundraising activity centred on our, eventually unsuccessful, application to the Mayor of London's 'Grow Back Greener' fund for £21,500 to shore up the failing terrace with gabions.

The garden is largely maintained by **volunteers** (including both Members and Non-Members) with the support of two part-time **gardeners** who are advisers to the committee. Key-holding Members can drop in at any time to garden, or just to enjoy the surroundings. The gardeners are present one day per week, and this tends to be when regular volunteers come in to get support and encouragement from the gardeners. In addition, there is a regular monthly volunteer work day (except in December and January) at which up to 12 volunteers (including both individuals and families) come along to work and to enjoy a social lunch.

Over the year 2019/2020 the **garden and garden house facilities** were booked on a total of 18 occasions between September and mid-March when Covid restrictions began. This has had a major effect on our fundraising.

Private parties and social enterprises booked the garden and garden house. Events included a Diwali in September, awaydays for Quakers House staff, an Islington Gardeners plant sale and a Halloween Party. The Covid restrictions have resulted in a significant reduction in the number of events and in the income from bookings.

As with previous years, the Olden Community Garden provides both a regular programme of activities and opportunities for volunteers to drop in.

Our regular programme of activities in 2019/2020, pre-Covid were:

- Weekly volunteering sessions that are aimed particularly at those assisting with regular garden maintenance, and who receive support and advice from our sessional gardeners.
- Monthly volunteering sessions (3rd Saturday of every month, except December and January) regularly attended by up to 10 adults, and several children. The sessional gardeners and senior Members provide gardening advice and support.
- Hosting regular sessions for community groups,
- Hosting a steady stream of visitors. The garden is particularly enjoyed by families whose young children love the space and variety the garden offers.
- Host networking events for friends of opens spaces groups and other community gardens in partnership with Social Farms and Gardens
- Growing a range of fruit and vegetables which are enjoyed by local people, and some are sold to raise funds. The produce made from our fruit and vegetables raises awareness of using local food, and inspire our volunteers.

Maintenance and development of the garden:

- We have two part-time paid gardeners who are present one day a

week, but much of the work to maintain the garden is carried out by volunteers – on weekly, monthly, and *ad hoc* work days.

- The total number of hours worked on-site by the volunteers reduced significantly in the second part of 2019/20 due to Covid.

This year, **repairs and improvements** have included:

- After many years of trying to improve the performance of the herbaceous long border it was decided to raise the front edge and insert a great deal of good quality compost. Sadly, this is becoming an annual thing due to historical site issues and the poor ground/London clay issue across Highbury
- Our attempts to camouflage the “new” Highbury Roundhouse community centre wall has continued to have mixed success. The builders of the new “Highbury Roundhouse” obligingly put up a thick mesh fence to stop their various materials coming onto our territory but several of our climbers have suffered because of the scaffolding that had to go up on our side. However up there you will see a thriving cercis, a thriving quince tree and an exuberant rosa filipe Kiftsgate.
- Three new compost bays which we erected have been a great success in turning all our waste into productive compost or mulch
- Drawing up plans for works to the patio and for a new pond in the garden

Our Events Programme

We have an annual programme of events, aimed at both our members and the wider public. However, due to Covid restrictions in the second half of our year, events ceased or were cancelled, following advice received from Islington Council. Events planned for the spring and summer seasons could not take place. Whilst the Garden was available to members all the time, we were unable to permit access to general public.

Developing the charity:

- We continue to discuss with LB Islington the details of our lease.
- Our financial accounts were examined by an independent external examiner.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- Policy on grantmaking.
- Policy programme related investment.
- contribution made by volunteers.

N/A

Section D

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Our Highbury oasis came into its own during the Covid lockdown.

2019/2020 has obviously been dominated by the pandemic: but things didn't stop growing, except of course our lawn which seems to have been on a lockdown of its own for months.

We are extremely proud that we managed to keep the garden open for members throughout the pandemic, other community gardens in the borough were forced to close. We were not able to keep it open for the general public due to social distancing

We would not have been able to do this without the active support of members and trustees, and our thanks go to them.

In consultation with the Council, we halted new membership for a while so that garden user numbers could be managed, and gradually reintroduced new memberships over several months, with the consequent boom in interest and numbers of new members.

The most obvious physical change in the garden since the last AGM happened in December is our new covered potting area.

The Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Association gave us a grant for part of the cost of constructing a covered potting area; and through the good offices of Jez (one of our trustees) we found a carpenter who could do the work between lockdowns. It has opened our potential for propagation and we're now in the process of reorganising the work area around it. Many thanks to Jess for his help in sorting this and getting this done.

The other innovation is that this is the first summer we have had access to the harvested water from the Roundhouse and it has been tremendous. When the building was being designed and in seeking planning permission, we made the case for this to be included in the scheme. We are delighted for our neighbours at the Highbury Roundhouse that they finally have a new building.

All the planting along the woodland wall and all the propagation in the work area is now done without taking water from the mains. We can even water the compost heaps in hot weather.

The other issue solved by water can be seen in the long border. The new irrigation system, albeit run with mains water, has made a huge difference to the health and strength of the plants.

After a month of lockdown, the gardeners returned to their Tuesday

routine at the start of May ably supported by a growing group of volunteers who are learning the garden's routines and whose contribution to helping us keep on top of things has been invaluable. There are many who should be thanked for giving their time and, in one case, their money to enhance the place. But again, with new restrictions being introduced, we had to review this.

In the early days of the pandemic while some used the garden with enthusiasm others were nervous of the risks, they ran in coming to the garden.

In the interests of retaining the garden's role as a quiet haven for socially-distant small groups, we discouraged families from using the garden as a playground, but continue to welcome them in an inclusive and wider sense

In addition, there was a major incident with damage to cars in Whistler Street from bricks thrown over the wall by unsupervised children in the garden. This reinforced the need for the strong messages given out in our garden notices and in newsletters. Fortunately, we facilitated a resolution between the car owners and the parents of the children concerned.

The pandemic has meant a halt to garden house bookings but has seen an increase in wear and tear of the lawn and other bits of the garden. Lockdown coincided with the time when we would have tried once more to re-seed the lawn; and was followed by a period of very hot weather and very heavy use. The lawn stood very little chance of recovery.

One plan that will help this situation is the proposal to redesign the bottom end of the garden to enlarge the social area and thus reduce the lawn at the point where it is most vulnerable.

It has been an excellent year in the orchard. There were no greengages – a little puzzling: theft maybe – but a good crop of plums for jam making and an excellent crop on all the apple trees. Since there was no Gillespie Park Apple Day this year we have indulged in a frenzy of juicing on Tuesdays and 20 bottles of apple juice have been produced so far. There are three late-cropping trees to go.

One problem we are facing is the issue of what to do with the elderly trees in the woodland. Can we let them decay as advised by some tree-watchers or are they an unsightly hazard? There's no risk of them not being replaced: we have dozens of young trees, mostly ash, sprouting up in their midst, but one fell recently and has rendered one of our paths out of bounds, so a programme of husbandry is being put together and we have had our first consultation with the Borough tree officer.

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The Trustees' policy is to hold in reserve a minimum of 3 months running costs. These are defined as: gardening services; gardening supplies and equipment; garden house and toilet facilities; and general administration.

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The charity's financial picture has been stable. We have mixed sources of income and depend both on our own income (membership subscriptions, donations, and earned income from lettings and special fundraising events) and external grants (Cripplegate Foundation; and Waitrose).

We are particularly grateful to the **London Borough of Islington** (LBI) for their long-standing support and practical assistance, as well as support from local people generally, and the good will and in-kind support of our trustees and members.

The restricted grant for gardening services from the Cripplegate Foundation & Islington Council's Community Chest enabled us to continue to employ two sessional gardeners who form the backbone of the gardening activities undertaken at Olden Community Garden by members and other volunteers.

We would normally say here that we look forward to expanding our funding base over the next year as we do every year, with applications to other external funding bodies but with the Covid pandemic we do not know what the future holds.

We would also hope to grow our membership and income earned from lettings as unrestricted funds are invaluable in maintaining and developing the garden and the activities we can offer. Again, this is dependent on what the Covid pandemic holds for us

As ever, a big thank you to our members, supporters and neighbours who continue to support us with their time and energy

Section F Other optional information

Trustees continue to look at the development of a longer-term plan for the garden and update our vision for the future. This will need to address the following

- Improving access to all parts of the garden, including steep woodland paths, for the elderly, disabled and general public.
- Extending the hours of opening to the wider community
- Identifying new groups of people who might benefit from use of the garden, and garden house facilities, including those in need and those who have less access to open space
- Developing particular areas of the garden such as the lawn and herbaceous borders on the top terrace; the raised terrace on the middle level, the orchard, and wildflower meadow
- Preparation of an Annual Garden Plan of priority activities to be undertaken each month, this is a “organic” document and is being developed

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees

Signature(s)	Approved by email due to Covid restrictions and Trustees isolating	Approved by email due to Covid restrictions and Trustees isolating
Full name(s)	Terry STACY MBE	Anna SULLIVAN
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	Vice Chair

Date

2nd September 2020



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
OLDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN

No (if any)
1158105

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period
from

Period start date
1st Sept 2019

To

Period end date
31st Aug 2020

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Islington Council's Community Chest	-	3,000	-	3,000	5,000
Islington Council grant	-	748	-	748	-
Corporate donations	-	-	-	-	1,300
Individual donations	407	-	-	407	375
Members subscriptions	4,424	-	-	4,424	3,855
Lettings	1,015	-	-	1,015	3,965
Events and fundraising	-	-	-	-	2,750
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	5,846	3,748	-	9,594	17,245
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	5,846	3,748	-	9,594	17,245
A3 Payments					
Gardeners services	4,959	3,000	-	7,959	9,574
Plants, compost, etc	846	-	-	846	1,325
Tools	-	-	-	-	332
Repairs, Improvements, & maintenance	2,565	748	-	3,313	3,371
Volunteer work days	-	-	-	-	97
Events and fundraising	-	-	-	-	1,361
Office supplies, postage	50	-	-	50	221
Insurance	320	-	-	320	320
Electricity	315	-	-	315	317
Miscellaneous expenses	73	-	-	73	53
Sub total	9,128	3,748	-	12,876	16,971
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	9,128	3,748	-	12,876	16,971
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 3,282	-	-	- 3,282	274
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	12,889	-	-	12,889	12,615
Cash funds this year end	9,607	-	-	9,607	12,889

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		9,607	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	9,607	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Date of approval

Approved by email due to Covid restrictions and Trustees isolating

Approved by email due to Covid restrictions and Trustees isolating

Terry Stacy

John Croxen

4th Oct 2020

4th Oct 2020
26/09/2021