



Annual Report 2021

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (BGNRT) was formally recognised as a registered charity (1166648) on April 20th 2016. The charity has grown out of an informal Friends of Bethnal Green Nature Reserve that had been in existence since 2014, based on a collaboration between Nomad Projects and Teesdale and Hollybush Tenants and Residents Association; around the core project Phytology and the goal of delivering quality access to the Nature Reserve via integrating arts, ecology & education within our work.

Governance

Trustees: Neil Davidson (Chair), Amina Haque, Kenneth Greenway, Glenda Trew, Ingrid Chen, Sajida Malik, Ellie Doney, Saif Osmani.

Site Team: Shumaisa Khan (Community Gardener & Outreach Facilitator), Dimuthu Meehitiya (Ecologist & Outdoor Educator), Adelaide Bannerman (Curator & Research Programmer), CJ Jude (Compost Toilet Caretaker), Ingrid Chen (Forest School Lead), Shilpi Choudhury (Forest School Teacher), Michael Smythe (Site & Volunteer Coordinator).

COVID-19 & Volunteering

Bethnal Green Nature Reserve (BGNR) is committed to ensuring the safety of all our staff and volunteers during the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with government guidance, we managed to continue our weekly site care and medicine garden work once the spring lockdown measures eased. As seen in 2020, there was a noticeable increase in people looking to volunteer and connect with the Nature Reserve.

Managed access was provided to existing site key-holders, including local residents, school groups, volunteers, resident artists, community herbalists and gardeners throughout the week via a basic booking system. This system helped to minimising risk of virus transmission, ensuring the site stayed open to our stakeholders at a time when it was most useful for both physical and mental health.

Our weekly volunteer sessions took place each Saturday 11am – 1pm, May till December. These sessions provide a supportive environment for people to learn about the Nature Reserve, its history, the various ecological features and ongoing research opportunities taking place across the year. After participating in a few volunteer sessions, volunteers can nominate to become a site key holder. This enables people to access the Nature Reserve 24/7 in exchange for small day-to-day site care tasks, such as litter picking, watering the medicine garden, monitoring bird and bat populations.

Education/Learning

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust look to nurture and build long lasting partnerships with local schools and education providers across the Borough. We believe having access to quality outdoor learning facilities is essential for the wellbeing of each and every person regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or socioeconomic status.

Our 2021 partners include;

9am – 1pm Monday & Tuesday, Rangers Kindergarten: Rangers is a local kindergarten specialising in outdoor education for children aged 2 – 8 years. Their weekly sessions instil a deep connection and confidence with the natural world.

1pm – 3pm Wednesday, Oaklands Secondary School: Oaklands secondary school has recently moved into the neighboring site (formally Raines Foundation). Oaklands caters for young people aged 13 – 18 years from the local area. Our collaboration commenced at the end of 2021 and will continue throughout 2022. Geography & Biology departments are visiting the Reserve, but we hope to connect with other departments in 2022.

9am – 1pm Thursday, Stephen Hawking School: Stephen Hawking School is dedicated to raising the standard of educational achievement for children between the ages of 2 and 11 years with profound, multiple, and severe learning, health and care needs. In 2021 the school commenced their weekly residency within the Nature Reserve. In 2021 their curriculum focused on trees and urban woodland ecologies and 2022 they will explore weather and seasonal change.

4pm – 6pm Friday, Forest Friday: Forest Fridays is a free, weekly after school club run by the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust. Forest Fridays is for local children aged 4 – 11 years, encouraging them to explore and connect with the wonders of nature on their very own doorstep.



Forest Friday

Forest Friday afterschool club is led by Ingrid Chen (local resident, outdoor educator, Trustee) and Shilpi Choudhury (local resident, forest school teacher). The club is focused on nurturing enjoyment and knowledge of Bethnal Green Nature Reserve for local families with school age children, through year-round access to forest school and ecology focused learning. Activities include arts and crafts, foraging and bushcraft, with trained regular staff and outdoor learning specialists.

Forest Friday aims

- Connect neighbours and build community relations
- Support wellbeing by spending time in nature and being physically active, learning and volunteering
- Foster care for the environment in young people
- Learn about natural history and take part in citizen science
- Provide volunteering opportunities and work experience for children and adults

"I am a home educating parent to 2 children. Forest Friday sessions have been amazing for us as they provide the children opportunities to take part in structured activities as well as free play, and also a safe space to connect with others."

"Studying and being in nature is an integral part of our home education. We have attended forest school sessions led by different providers in the past but the fact that Forest Fridays is a local resource and one that is also free of charge is amazing. These sessions are an important part of our week."



Among the 2021 highlights was the opportunity to join in with the pond refurbishment project. Our group spent many weeks shovelling and transporting sand that helped build the pond banks. The group were awestruck to see the pond works completed and filled with water. We look forward to developing new learning opportunities connected to this ecosystem in 2022. Children also had the opportunity to complete the Royal Forestry Society's *Young Forester Award*. This was popular amongst our regulars, with many receiving their certificate at an awards ceremony this past Autumn.

"We go to the forest club every Friday and we also attended the holiday club. I would never be able to afford to pay for my both daughters to attend the forest school club if

there would be not free of charge. We are very grateful to have this opportunity- a little oasis in the Urban East London where the new generation of nature lovers are growing."

Over 140 sessions were delivered (children x no. of sessions) by Ingrid and Shilpi in 2021.

We had many repeat visits: 1 child attended all 12, 10 children attended 4 or more sessions. In all 31 families attended over the 12 weeks, averaging 12 children per week.

Due to Covid-19 & the colder temperatures, we have paused the regular after-school club in the winter months (December + January). We plan to resume Forest Fridays from mid-February 2022, all being well.

We would specially like to thank Clare Chatelet for her tireless work volunteering and as a paid member of staff when our core team were required to isolate due to Covid-19.

Phytology Medicine Garden



In 2021 a group of dedicated residents formed the 'hydration collective'. The group tended the Phytology medicine garden daily, ensuring it remained well hydrated and healthy for weekly harvesting. The collectives' activities ensured we could continue harvesting medicine herbs throughout the entire summer & deliver our core activities of horticultural/herbalism learning and medicine making for the Mobile Apothecary.

In 2021, Shumaisa [Community Gardener] started a weekly sensory herbal workshop for people to learn about herbs grown on site. Usually this was through 'blind' tea tasting (not knowing what was in the tea until after drinking it), but on two occasions, through an herbal foot bath. These were well-received and an engaging and fun way for people to experience herbs of the garden and across the Nature Reserve.



As the garden serves as a place of research, e.g. improving soils for climate resilience, further reflection is needed to achieve a balance between meaningful tasks and supporting a resilient garden, whose soil and biodiversity obviates daily watering. To this end, we commissioned some soil testing by Hari Byles, which provided some useful information that will inform 2022 garden planning and local engagement opportunities.

As part of the focus on soil health, we invited [Kernow Black](#) to run biochar workshops at the Nature Reserve. Biochar is created by burning biomass under low oxygen conditions and has many benefits including carbon sequestration and high porosity, which can help with soil microbial life and water and nutrient transport. We look to hold more biochar work in 2022 and perhaps apply to test areas to assess changes in microbial life.



To build a more climate resilient garden we installed a micro-swale (basically a gully full of woodchip to hold moisture and encourage microbial growth). We planted comfrey and marshmallow along the swale, holding ground with its deep roots. As a result, the 2021 yielded was abundant and we were able to harvest weekly with volunteer support. This yield was greatly useful for community medicine-making via the Mobile Apothecary & Good Botanics.

Other abundant herbs that were harvested included Violet leaf, Nettle leaf/seed, and St John's Wort flower, and Mugwort. For personal use, local residents were mostly harvesting Comfrey, Plantain, Yarrow, Mugwort, Nettle, Lemon Balm, and Dandelion leaf.

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust have resourced Shumaisa to redesign the garden in 2022. As part of this, Tomas Remiarz, a permaculture tutor and forest gardening expert, visited the site in October 2021 and will mentor Shumaisa in developing a permaculture design for the garden throughout the winter and spring of 2022. One of the possibilities they are exploring is expanding a portion of the garden toward the recently refurbished pond, planting with medicine plants that prefer damper soil while increasing the pond planting diversity.

Local Relationship-building



Building upon endeavors begun during the pandemic, Shumaisa Khan dedicated a substantial amount of time cultivating relationships with Bangladeshi and other minority ethnic groups living locally, who had comparatively lower engagement with the site. Conversations with people in the neighborhood reinforced the sense that there was a need to install culturally appropriate, weatherproof signage as a priority. Bilingual (Sylheti & English) street signage was installed in Summer 2021, making a palpable difference to the experience of passers-by, particularly those who have long passed or lived in the surrounding estates and did not know how to access the Nature Reserve, get involved, or understand what getting involved meant.



Other focused engagement opportunities in 2021 included:

- A local young man engaged with the site, becoming a paid ecology intern, and then successfully gaining a job with Trust for Conservation Volunteers foundation.
- Spearheaded by local residents; a local group of Muslim women began self organising cultural gatherings within the Nature Reserve in the Autumn of 2021. We hope to see this group build capacity into 2022.
- Shumaisa formed 'The Herb Circle', a regular meeting space for local refugee and Muslim families to gain confidence connecting with the Nature Reserve and using herbs from the Phytology medicine garden. This included regular gardening and medicine making, via x4 2-hour herbal medicine-centered workshops from late July till mid-September. The group learnt to make herbal vinegars, infused oils, medicinal balms, and to identify herbs in the medicine garden.

Ecology

In the spring of 2021, we appointed Dimuthu Meehitiya as our site Ecologist and outdoor educator. Dimuthu started his year-long appointment with a series of workshops aimed at engaging hyper-local residents of all ages. These sessions included:



- Wetland Ecology Survey Workshop - developing an ecological survey specifically for wetlands, included pond dipping, collecting a range of insects, amphibians, animals, and plants. Identification keys, magnify glasses and microscopes were used to help us better understand the current health of our pond life.
- Bug Hunt Workshop – celebrating the many fascinating invertebrates living in the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve using equipment, such as microscopes, magnifiers, and identification keys to explore interesting facts on invertebrate's life cycle and their importance for maintaining ecosystem health and balance.
- Tree & Urban Forestry Workshop – exploring our urban woodland, identifying the many different species living within the Reserve. The workshop highlighted trees

value as the planet's great food, shelter, carbon regulators, habitat, and oxygen providers.

Dimuthu's work looked to connect our neighbours with the Nature Reserve on a deeper level, exploring the micro and macro ecologies that inhabit our small but mighty urban Nature Reserve.

Pond Refurbishment

In the summer of 2020, our large pond was no longer holding water. The structure, installed by Teri Lyle back in the 80's, was becoming gradually inhospitable for aquatic life in the last few years. The wetland area had also become overshadowed by a rapidly growing plum tree. The tree blocked all sunlight from the ponds, preventing aquatic plants from filtering and oxygenating the water. After much consultation we decided to remove the tree and extend the footprint of the wetland. We agreed this intervention would ensure the wetland remained a central feature of the Nature Reserve for decades ahead.



The project was led by our resident Ecologist, Dimuthu Meehitiya and six brilliant Urban Ecology Trainees - Tyra, Zoe, Sahil, Charlie, Mila & Lauren. The Ecology internship was available to young people aged 18 – 25 years from underrepresented groups within the conservation sector, i.e. BIPOC, ethnic minorities, people from working class backgrounds & LGBTQ+ communities. The internship is a paid role offering first-hand work experience in urban wetland development and ecosystem management.



Over the course of 8 weeks, we managed to dig a 9m x 9m hole, lift over 54 ton of (wet) sand, fill roughly 400 sandbags and build up the internal pond bank with the aim of maximising a diverse range of aquatic plants, insects, and amphibious life.

The pond refurbishment could only take place within the autumn period, when our toad and newt populations are more terrestrial, before hibernation commences. This mega effort was only achieved thanks to so many dedicated volunteers and neighbours who showed up each and every week to help move the project forwards. A special thanks to Margaret Cox & Good Gym for weeks of night-time digging!



Parallel to the pond refurbishment we held an urban ecology enrichment program for our trainees, exploring the macro & micro of urban habitats. We visited a range of urban wetland habitats including Camley St Natural Park, Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park and the Natural History Museum. We also received master classes from urban ecologists, foragers, nature writers, climate activists, bird experts, artists, climate policy makers, landscape architects and career development advisers.



A brilliant report has been written by the ecology trainees, soon to be published on the Phytology / Bethnal Green Nature Reserve website. The report outlines the various process of building an urban ecology pond, aiming to capture and share our collective learnings and resources from this period.

“ The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Ecology Internship was a dream opportunity. I was honoured to have been entrusted with such an ecologically promising process at a transformational time in the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve wetlands’ history. To have created a new pond with this wonderful community of artists, ecologists and educators, met so many local nature experts, and been introduced to so many life-affirming skills – from foraging to environmental writing and habitat formation – was one of the greatest privileges of my life.

There are many young people like me who dream of working in nature conservation and want to give back to their city, but haven’t enough experience or a foot in the door for an environmental career. Before I began the internship, I was homeless and hadn’t managed to graduate because of my disabilities; I didn’t believe I would find my way in the world, let alone in conservation. The internship restored my confidence in myself and helped open a huge network of role models advocating for me to flourish. I feel more empowered than ever to dedicate myself towards building local resilience against the ecological and climate crises, and I now better understand the steps I’ll take to make this work my life”.



A special thanks to Teri Lyle & Neil Davidson.

Their generosity, guidance and creativity were invaluable!

Throughout the year we collaborated with many remarkable urban ecologists.

These included:

Isabella (Izzy) Johnston

Izzy is a rising star in the world of urban foraging. In 2021 she collaborated on several walks within the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve and the Hackney Marshes.

The walks celebrated wild sessional food and medicinal plants that can be harvested throughout the summer and autumn. Izzy is a knowledgeable and captivating storyteller, and we very much look forward nurturing our collaboration into 2022 and beyond.



Jane Laurie

Jane Laurie is a local artist and bird expert who hosted a number of birdwatching walks within and around the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve this year. Throughout the walks Jane would share her extensive birdsong archive, collected on various field trips around the UK. These workshops were free open to all ages and abilities.

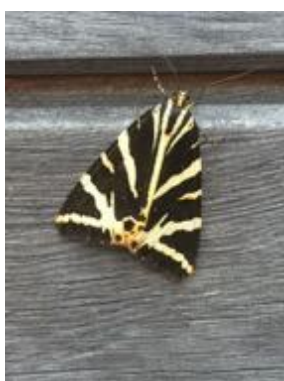


In support of our 2021 Ecology internship, Jane produced a 'Bethnal Green Bird Guide' booklet. This document has been incredibly useful for our forest school groups and as a citizen science tool for local residents to survey the bird populations that live and pass through the Nature Reserve each year.

Katherine Pogson

In late spring Katherine Pogson held a moth survey workshop at the Nature Reserve.

An opportunity for local residents to meet some of the surprising hidden creatures that live in the local area, learn their names, habits, origin stories... discovering the Hawks, Tigers, and even Elephants that inhabit in the oases that is the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve.



The study of moths and butterflies goes back centuries, giving us very important data about how human activity may be benefiting some species, and challenging others.

Katherine activated our inner 'citizen scientist' and looked at how collecting environmental data can influence our relationships with 'nature', and rethink what 'creativity' might address for future generations. This event was part of 'Places to Intervene in a System', an art-research exhibition taking place at Lumen gallery Bethnal Green in August 2021.

The 2021 ecology programme has been supported by Mayor of London, Ground Works & The City Bridge Trust.

Arts

Adelaide Bannerman



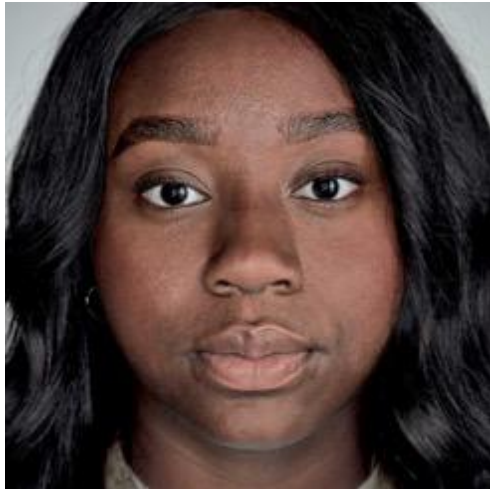
Adelaide Bannerman has been developing the curatorial direction of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve throughout 2021. Bannerman has lived in the neighbourhood for over two decades and has strived to devise a cultural programme that speaks to the Nature Reserve, surrounding neighbourhood and times we live. Not being afraid of a challenge, Adelaide developed 'We Speak In Tongues About The Thing[s] We Love'.

Our 2022 cultural programme facilitates dialogue with artists in the areas of radical/environmental justice, especially urgent in a period of times shaped by COVID-19 & the climate breakdown. Our researcher in residence include:

Daze Aghaji

Aghaji's research will be focused on youth political engagement, social inclusion and intersectionality within environmental movements and society. Aghaji will facilitate a Regenerative Cultures Retreat within the Nature Reserve - workshops based on

permaculture principles, field guiding and conversational techniques.



In September 2021 Daze brought 'Letters to the Earth' and 'Listen to The Land' events to the Nature Reserve. This event publicly launched Dazes' residency and the beginning of a 500-mile pilgrimage on foot from London to COP 26 held in Glasgow.

In the winter of 2020/21 Adelaide & Daze commenced a twelve-month billboard installation series called 'wecomewithourquestions'. An evolving collection of hand-painted texts reflecting on the Nature Reserve, the environment and representation. These questions have come from recent conversations between Bannerman and local stakeholders, reflecting on and questioning the Nature Reserves' current meaning and future role for surrounding local communities.

Eduardo Padilha

Eduardo Padilha looks to create a series of sculptural works within the Nature Reserve, working with clays, pigments and armatures found from within the site.



'The nature reserve will operate as an open studio that brings people together. I'm especially interested in the medicinal garden and want to learn as much as possible. I want to connect the programme at Balin House Projects and host talks about nature and wellbeing with professionals from the health and mental health sectors, writers and philosophers.'

In the summer of 2021 Eduardo brought members of the Tabard Growers group (Southwark) to the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. The group worked alongside soil scientists and residents, discussing the history of urban soils, soil pollution, community health, creative strategies in caring for urban land. This initial site visit will lay the foundation for Padilha's 2022 research.

Farzana Khan + Healing Justice

Farzana Khan will develop and present new visual / writing responses to land justice, care of the environment and land stewardship principles based on faith, culturally specific and indigenous practices.



In the summer of 2021 Farzana Khan facilitated a day-long conversation in collaboration with Raju Rage & Queer Masala. The event was titled '*Migration and Un/Belonging*'. This event laid foundations for Farzana to continue working within the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve across the coming year.

George Chakravarthi

Chakravarthi is a multidisciplinary artist who works with visual and live art using his body and image to explore the politics of identity. He also employs religious and spiritual iconography referencing his multi-faith upbringing, predominantly Hinduism and Catholicism.

'I am looking forward to this residency and to discover the various organisms on this precious piece of Earth. My imagination has already been lit by my brief visit and I can't wait to immerse myself in this project!'



For his research residency George will develop a series of digital works reflecting his engagement with arboriculture and tree rituals within the Reserve. These works will be published online and exhibited within the Nature Reserve.

'We Speak In Tongues About The Thing(s) We Love' has been generously supported by Arts Council England. The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust would like to thank Adelaide Bannerman for her dedication and great care developing this extensive research programme.

In 2021 the following contemporary artists and collectives resided within the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve.

F*Choir



F*Choir a London-based, all-genders choir led by performance artist and drummer Jenny Moore. Over the last 4 years it has grown as a place to gather in body and in voice, to vibrate and move and learn together. F*Choir sing songs about gender, sexuality, freedom, and rage. They don't use traditional sheet music and gendered voice parts or auditions, but instead devise other ways to notate and perform Moore's high energy arrangements of everything from Meredith Monk to Tirzah and Micachu.

In 2021 F*Choir gathered at the Nature Reserve on a monthly basis. The site provided a Covid safe space for the group to continue developing their vocal work, at a time when singing indoors was near impossible for a group this size. F*Choir aim is to provide space for all voices to be heard without assuming anyone's gender, origin or sexuality – to use the choir as a form of feminist practice and communal singing as a type of magic.

Hayley Harrison

In 2021 artist Hayley Harrison commenced a year-long research project based within the Nature Reserve. Her research explored the limitations of the human experience, language, and the struggle to avoid being human-centric when experiencing and discussing the world.



Harrison residency has involved close observation of the Nature Reserve across the seasons. She hosted walks with local residents, artists and scientists, walking the Reserve and discussing ways of seeing and speaking about the natural world. Harrison also experimented with light projections and carefully placed hand-woven sculptures within the Nature Reserve, observing how the work is interpreted and degrades over time.

Campfire Club

The Campfire Club returned in 2021 for one night only, when Covid-19 infections were at its lowest point in London.

The event featured The Rheingans Sisters who make bold, playful, and innovative contemporary music that is anchored in folk traditions. Winners of the BBC Radio 2 Folk Award for 'Best Original Track', The Rheingans Sisters performed their recent work in front of a warming fire and captive audience.



Due to Covid-19, audience capacity was limited to 30. This meant it was not financially viable for further Campfire Club events at the Nature Reserve in 2021. Ticket sales for these events cover artist fees, making it unsustainable for the artists to make a decent wage. We will revisit the feasibility of the Campfire Club returning in 2022.

Primordial Sky



Primordial Sky was an experimental performance of live music and movement-based performance that took place across the entire Nature Reserve in July 2021. The evening featured new work by Àssia, FAUCI, Jawara Alleyne, Koichi Yamanoha, Naima Karlsson, Nissa Nishikawa, YaYa Bones.

The performance was free, but booking was required to ensure capacity of 80 was maintained. The event was fully booked well in advance of the event, with a substantial waiting list for returns.

Laughter & Nature Comedy Night



Laughter & Nature was an experiMENTAL open mic comedy event, offering performers and audience a friendly place to enjoy doing something they love – whether it's laughing, or making other people laugh. This event was hosted by CJ Jude and Felix from the Lion's Den, in support of World Mental Health Day 2021.

Recipes For Resistance



Healing Justice Ldn teamed up with Recipes for Resistance to offer three workshops exploring Memory, Grief, and Un/belonging in relationship to the politics of food and identity. The third session was hosted at Phytology, offering a physical space to gather and close the series which had previously been online due to the pandemic.

Raju Rage facilitated a conversation which explored our heritages and linages with all their ruptures and failures: our own unique stories that dis/connect us to this and other lands. They also brought a collection of books and zines exploring the politics of food. Special guest Rajiv Bera from Queer Masala prepared an incredible meal for us using foraged

plants from Phytology's medicinal garden, including ribwort plantain, burdock stem, mallow leaf, mugwort and more.

ELASTIC FICTION



Becky Lyon of ELASTIC FICTION has been developing a series of nature connection workshops throughout 2021. These workshops focus on seasonal rhythms, patterns of place and earth-centric chronology. Each event explores ways we can connect with the seasonal changes across the year (spring, summer, autumn, winter).

Participants are invited to discuss the specifics of each season from both ecological to cultural perspectives. ELASTIC FICTION celebrates the macro and the micro, the contemporary and the historic understandings of the seasons and often overlooked ecologies. Important work, especially in a hyper-urban location such as Bethnal Green.

Social Justice

Mobile Apothecary

Since April 2019, the Mobile Apothecary has been bringing people together to collectively learn about medicinal plants and create herbal medicine for distribution to fellow community members facing barriers to health, food, and shelter. The Mobile Apothecary supports communities in the locality with good-quality, homegrown and communally made herbal remedies.



In 2021 we continued delivering our pandemic response service in Dalston, Hackney & Bethnal Green on a weekly basis until the summer of 2021. After which the Mobile Apothecary team decided to take a much needed 3-month break to rest and reflect on our work.

In the Autumn of 2021, we resumed street service outside Hackney Town Hall once a month. This location is calm and enables higher levels of focused conversation and engagement. This location enabled us to carry out a focused period of consultation with people who regularly visit our service. We collected useful anecdotal feedback on the medicines, the overall service, and ways to improve our work.



Parallel to this we commissioned Muzammal Hussain [social permaculture designer] to develop a reflection piece on the Mobile Apothecary's journey - from its early beginnings to the pandemic emergency response. This piece of research will provide a moment of reflection for the Mobile Apothecary, recording the journey of a front-line project over a very memorable three-year period.

The Forum provides a space for local residents, volunteers, visitors, staff and trustees, to meet, share what they are working on, gather feedback, work on proposals and generally give input on decisions about the Nature Reserve day-to-day programming and management.



During Covid-19 lockdown we had been meeting online (Zoom), but we have now resumed meeting outdoors at the Nature Reserve from July 2021.

We would like to thank Ellie Doney, along with everyone who gives their time to attend (especially across the winter months!).

Urban Mind

Over the past few 5 years we have been collaborating on a research project called Urban Mind, examining how the surrounding environments affects our mental health. In December 2021 we published our second academic paper in 'Scientific Reports' specifically exploring how contact with nature, especially in cities, can help reduce loneliness.

Contact with nature in cities reduces loneliness, study shows

Loneliness is significant mental health concern and can raise risk of death by 45%, say scientists



A woman and child surrounded by cherry blossoms. The study is the first to assess how aspects of the surrounding environment can affect loneliness. Photograph: Andrew Chin/Getty

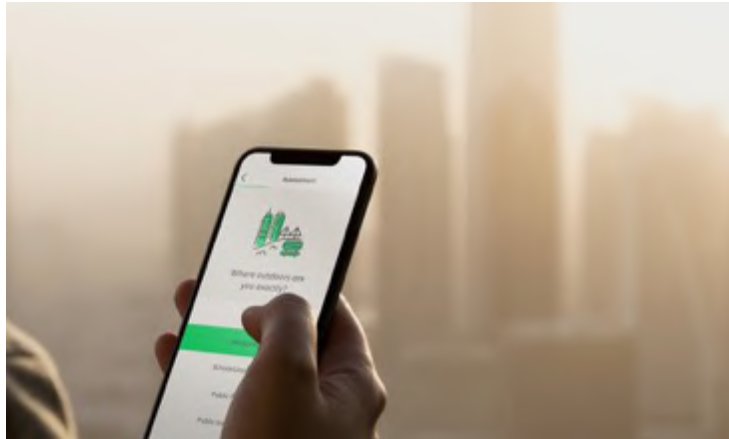
Loneliness - the feeling of distress resulting from a discrepancy between one's desired and actual social relationships, is a universal experience, found irrespective of age, gender, socioeconomic status and culture.

Prospective studies suggest that the degree of loneliness predicts subsequent mental health symptoms, including depression, alcoholism, suicidal behaviour and cognitive decline leading to Alzheimer's disease, and physical health issues, including immune and cardiovascular disease. To put things into perspective, while air pollution, obesity, and excessive alcohol use have been found to increase a person's mortality risk by 6%, 23%, and 37% respectively, loneliness increases the risk of death by 45%.

Our research found that feelings of overcrowding increased loneliness by an average of 39%. But when people were able to see trees or hear birds, feelings of loneliness fell by 28%. This is especially important data when trying to protect and advocate for places such as the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. Our research was published in Scientific Reports and The Guardian on 20th December 2021.

"Loneliness is a significant mental health concern, and can raise risk of death by 45%, say scientists." The Guardian, Damian Carrington. You can read the full article here - <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/dec/20/contact-with-nature-cities-reduces-loneliness-study-mental-health>

Urban Mind is a collaboration between King's College London, J&L Gibbons Landscape Architecture & Design, Phytology and hundreds of Citizen Scientists who contributed to this research.



Disability Confidence & Access Research

Goss Consultancy was commissioned in the autumn of 2021 to deliver a tailored disability confidence training for Staff, Trustees and partner organisations. In addition, Goss Consultancy carried out a full site access review of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve and associated website (inc. social media platforms).

Their recommendations and guidance will be published in spring of 2022, informing our decision-making processes over the coming years. The Nature Reserve access audit will take into account the challenges we face in keeping the space wild, while equally reducing physical and intellectual access barriers.

Finance & Admin

Our audited end of year accounts and annual report will be submitted to the Charity Commission on 26th January 2022.

The Trust would like to acknowledge the tireless work of Hakim Oreagba for preparing the financial records for the Trust.

A special thank you to Sajida Malik for their generous donations in 2021. This funding enabled us to invest into site access improvements and permaculture guidance for Shumaisa Khan and the medicine garden care takers.

We would also like to thank our funders who have enabled us to carry out our work throughout a turbulent time. Our gratitude goes to Necessity (Julie, you're a rare gem), Mayor of London, City Bridge Trust, Arts Council England, Postcode Neighbourhood Trust, Awards For All and Ground Works.

Aims & Aspirations

The BGNR Trust aims to address the following areas over the next 12 months;

- Continue to keep the site accessible without compromising the wildness of the Nature Reserve biodiversity.
- Dedicate focus to increasing access and engagement with local Bengali communities. Ensure this aim is prioritised in every aspect of our core work.
- Solicit funding that covers core overheads over multiple years (2 or 3 real cycles).
- Continue developing our relationships with local organisations working in complementary areas such as refugee support, community health, climate resilience, habitat protection.
- Continue dialogue with the various landowners regarding a 30-year lease agreement.
- Continue exploring feasibility of establishing the food growing hub within the neighbouring school grounds in partnership with Praxis, Mission GP Practice, Oaklands School and Stephen Hawking School.
- Build more entry points / pathways for local engagement around ecological care of the Nature Reserve.

Trustees report for the year ending 30 April 2021.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 25th January 2022 and signed by:



Mr Neil Davidson
Chair, Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust
Charity No. 1166648

Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are set out on pages [x to x].

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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 the Trust's 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 examiners statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust

Hakim Oreagba

H Oreagba

25 Avenue Gardens
London SE25 4EB

24.01.2022

Charity Name: Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust		Charity No	1166648	
		Company No		
Annual accounts for the period				
Period start date	01/04/2020	To	31/03/2021	

Section A Statement of financial activities (including summary income and expenditure account)

Recommended categories by activity	Guidance Note	Unrestricted funds £ F01	Restricted income funds £ F02	Total funds £ F04	Prior year funds £ F05
Income (Note 3)					
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	S01	26,483	-	26,483	12,287
Charitable activities	S02	-	11,088	11,088	-
Total	S07	26,483	11,088	37,571	12,287
Expenditure (Notes 6)					
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	S09	4,761	3,150	7,911	14,946
Other	S11	1,021	-	1,021	60
Total	S12	5,782	3,150	8,932	15,006
Net income/(expenditure) before tax for the reporting period					
Tax payable	S13	20,701	7,938	28,639	(2,719)
tax before investment gains/(losses)	S14	-	-	-	-
Net gains/(losses) on investments	S15	20,701	7,938	28,639	(2,719)
	S16	-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)	S17	20,701	7,938	28,639	(2,719)
Net movement in funds	S22	20,701	7,938	28,639	(2,719)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	S23	5	-	5	2,724
Total funds carried forward	S24	20,706	7,938	28,644	5

Section B Balance sheet

	Guidance Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total this year £	Total last year £
Current assets					
Debtors (Note 19)	B07	-	-	-	300
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 24)	B09	21,006	17,715	38,721	3,568
Total current assets	B10	21,006	17,715	38,721	3,868
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 20)	B11	300	9,777	10,077	3,863
Net current assets/(liabilities)	B12	20,706	7,938	28,644	5
Total assets less current liabilities	B13	20,706	7,938	28,644	5
Total net assets or liabilities	B16	20,706	7,938	28,644	5
Funds of the Charity					
Endowment funds (Note 27)	B17	-	-	-	-
Restricted income funds (Note 27)	B18	-	7,938	7,938	-
Unrestricted funds	B19	20,706	-	20,706	5
Revaluation reserve	B20	-	-	-	-
Fair value reserve	B21	-	-	-	-
Total funds	B22	20,706	7,938	28,644	5

The company was entitled to exemption from audit under s477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval dd/mm/yy yy

Note 1 Basis of preparation

This section should be completed by all charities.

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with:

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| • and with* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 |
| • and with* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) |
- and with the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.*

* -Tick as appropriate

1.2 Going concern

If there are material uncertainties related to events or conditions that cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, please provide the following details or state "Not applicable", if appropriate:

An explanation as to those factors that support the conclusion that the charity is a going concern;

The trustees are of the view that unrestricted reserves to fund charitable activities are adequate to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and is therefore a going concern

1.3 Change of accounting policy

The accounts present a true and fair view and no changes have been made to the accounting policies adopted in note { }.

Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* -Tick as appropriate
No*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

1.4 Changes to accounting estimates

No changes to accounting estimates have occurred in the reporting period (3.46 FRS102 SORP).

Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* -Tick as appropriate
No*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

1.5 Material prior year errors

No material prior year error have been identified in the reporting period (3.47 FRS102 SORP).

Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* -Tick as appropriate
No*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Note 2

Accounting policies

2.2 INCOME

Recognition of income

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources;
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Grants and donations

Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met (5.10 to 5.12 FRS102 SORP).

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

In the case of performance related grants, income must only be recognised to the extent that the charity has provided the specified goods or services as entitlement to the grant only occurs when the performance related conditions are met (5.16 FRS 102 SORP).

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Government grants

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Support costs

The charity has incurred expenditure on support costs.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

2.3 EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liability recognition

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Governance and support costs

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, eg allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Grants with performance conditions

Where the charity gives a grant with conditions for its payment being a specific level of service or output to be provided, such grants are only recognised in the SoFA once the recipient of the grant has provided the specified service or output.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Grants payable without performance conditions

Where there are no conditions attaching to the grant that enables the donor charity to realistically avoid the commitment, a liability for the full funding obligation must be recognised.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Deferred income

No material item of deferred income has been included in the accounts.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Creditors

The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Provisions for liabilities

A liability is measured on recognition at its historical cost and then subsequently measured at the best estimate of the amount required to settle the obligation at the reporting date

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

2.4 ASSETS

Debtors

Debtors (including trade debtors and loans receivable) are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount after any trade discounts or amount advanced by the charity. Subsequently, they are measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be received.

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	✓	✓

Section C

Notes to the accounts

(cont)

Note 3

Income

Analysis of income		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds £	Prior year £
Donations and legacies:	Donations and gifts	-	-	-	12,287
	Gift Aid	-	-	-	-
	Legacies	-	-	-	-
	General grants provided by government/other charities	26,483	11,088	37,571	-
	Membership subscriptions and sponsorships which are in substance donations	-	-	-	-
	Donated goods, facilities and services	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-
	Total	26,483	11,088	37,571	12,287
Total		-	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME		26,483	11,088	37,571	12,287

Note 6

Expenditure

Analysis	This year			Last year		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds
Expenditure on charitable activities:						
Freelance Fees	4,033	2,198	6,231	1,860	9,117	10,977
Professional fees	300	-	300	992	2,860	3,852
Project Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Materials	1,380	-	1,380	117	-	117
Total expenditure on charitable	5,713	2,198	7,911	2,969	11,977	14,946
Other						
Insurance	952	-	952	-	-	-
Bank Charges	69	-	69	60	-	60
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total other expenditure	1,021	-	1,021	60	-	60
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,734	2,198	8,932	3,029	11,977	15,006

Note 19 Debtors and prepayments

19.1 Analysis of debtors

	This year £	Last year £
Trade debtors	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	-	300.0
Other debtors	-	-
Total	-	300.0

Note 20 Creditors and accruals

20.1 Analysis of creditors

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	This year £	Last year £	This year £	Last year £
Accruals and deferred income	10,077	3,863	-	-
Total	10,077	3,863	-	-

20.2 Deferred income

Please complete this note if the charity has deferred

	This year	Last year
<i>Please explain the reasons why income is deferred.</i>	£9,777 received from Neighbourhood Trust is deferred for charitable activities starting in 2021/22.	

Movement in deferred income account

	This year £	Last year £
Balance at the start of the reporting period	3,863	9,500
Amounts added in current period	9,777	300
Amounts released to income from previous periods	(3,863)	(5,937)
Balance at the end of the reporting period	9,777	3,863

Section C**Notes to the accounts****(cont)****Note 24 Cash at bank and in hand****Cash at bank and on hand****Total**

This year	Last year
£	£
38,721	3,568
38,721	3,568

Note 27 Charity funds**27.1 Details of material funds held and movements during the CURRENT reporting period**

Fund names	Type PE, EE R or UR *	Purpose and Restrictions	Fund balances brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
Awards for All	R		-	3,563	(2,871)	-	692
Groundwork UK	R		-	7,525	(279)	-	7,246
City of London	U		-	26,483	(5,777)	-	20,706
Nomad Projects / ACE	U		5	-	(5)	-	-
Total Funds as per balance sheet			5	37,571	(8,932)	-	28,644

27.2 Details of material funds held and movements during the PREVIOUS reporting period

Fund names	Type PE, EE R or UR *	Purpose and Restrictions	Fund balances brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	Fund balances carried forward £
Awards for All	R		-	5,937	(5,937)	-	-	-
Groundwork UK	R		-	3,465	(3,465)	-	-	-
Human Soil Eco Brit Ecology Society	R		-	1,546	(1,546)	-	-	-
The Veolia Environment Trust	R		-	564	(564)	-	-	-
Groundwork UK	R		-	385	(385)	-	-	-
Marion Richardson	U		-	90	(90)	-	-	-
Nomad Projects / ACE	U		2,724	300	(3,019)	-	-	5
Total Funds as per balance sheet			2,724	12,287	(15,006)	-	-	5