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Bethnal Green Nature Reserve

Annual Report 2022



Photo; Casey leading a mushroom foraging in Hackney Marshes, Dana leading a conversation circle on economy, immigration and agriculture at Kupala Festival, Volunteers sitting around a campfire at the 2022 end of year supper, Circle of stools in amphitheatre.

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (BGNRT) was formally recognised as registered charity (1166648) in April 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 by integrating ecology, arts, and education engagement opportunities within our work.

Governance

Trustees: Neil Davidson (Chair), Gwen Wright (Treasurer), Ellie Doney (Secretary), Saif Osmani, Glenda Trew, Ingrid Chen, Sajida Malik, Kenneth Greenway.

The 2022 site team included Shumaisa Khan (Community Gardener), Dimuthu Meehitiya (Ecologist & Environmental Educator), Adelaide Bannerman (Curator), CJ Jude (Compost Toilet Caretaker), Ingrid Chen (Forest School Lead), Shilpi Choudhury (Forest School Teacher), Edward Simpson (Co-Site Manager),

Mila Guichard Lawlor (Mobile Apothecary Project Manager), Michael Smythe (Site Manager & Volunteer Coordinator). We also want to acknowledge the incredible dedication of so many people that show up each week to care for the Reserve and one another. Your commitment to the Nature Reserve is fundamental to its existence.

Education/Learning

In 2022 we continued to collaborate with local schools, providing high quality outdoor learning space for children and young people. 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 2022 partners include:



Photos – Forest Friday tree planting workshop, Forest Friday mushroom workshop, Forest Friday mushroom log inoculation workshop. Image by Ingrid Chen.

Rangers Kindergarten - 9am till 2pm Monday & Tuesday: 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.

Oaklands Secondary School - 1pm till 3pm Wednesday: Oaklands secondary school for young people aged 13 – 18 years. Geography & Biology departments engaged with the Reserve, but we hope to connect with other departments within the school across 2023.

Stephen Hawking School - 9am till 1pm Thursday: Stephen Hawking School is dedicated to raising the standard of educational achievement for children between the ages of 2 and 11 years with profound learning, health, and care needs. In 2021 the school commenced their weekly residency within the Nature Reserve. In 2023 they will explore weather and seasonal change.



Photo – Forest Friday mushroom farming workshop, Forest Friday shadow play, Forest Friday's den building. Image by Ingrid Chen.

Forest Friday - 4pm till 6pm 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 confidence, curiosity and connect with the wonders of nature on their very own doorstep.

Forest Friday afterschool club is led by Ingrid Chen (local resident, outdoor educator, Trustee), Shilpi Choudhury (local resident, forest schoolteacher), with additional support from Claire Chatelet & Dim Meehitiya. Forest Friday aims:

- Nurture connections with neighbours and build community relations
- Support wellbeing by spending time in nature
- Encourage curiosity, knowledge sharing / skill building and promote physical activity
- Foster care for the environment in children, young people, and adults
- Learn about natural history and take part in citizen science

In 2022 the team delivered outdoor learning activities to over 90 local children and their families. Forest Friday was generously funded in 2022 by Raines School Foundation.

Volunteering

As seen in 2021, there was a noticeable increase in people looking to volunteer and connect with the Nature Reserve throughout 2022. The site key-holder scheme continued across the year, providing individuals with 24/7 access to the Nature Reserve in exchange for light-touch upkeep and site care. Keyholders include local-residents, school groups, regular volunteers, resident researchers, community herbalists and local health, asylum & wellbeing organisations (Revoke, Praxis, Mission Practice).



Photos- Volunteers sorting logs for the medicine garden re-design, Volunteers learning how to make Fire Cider, Volunteers participating in wetland ecology survey.

Volunteer sessions took place each Saturday 11am – 1pm, May till December. These sessions were led by Shumaisa Khan, Michael Smythe & Edward Simpson, provide a supportive environment for people to learn more about the Nature Reserve, encourage curiosity for the natural world, skills building and increased confidence caring for the Nature Reserve on a day-to-day basis.

In May 2022 we hosted an Eid celebration for local-residents on the official opening of the Nature Reserve following two years of Covid-19 restrictions. The success of the event was testament to Shumaisa Khan leading the planning, supported by many local volunteers delivering invitations across the neighbouring estates.

Phytology Medicine Garden

In 2022 the Phytology Medicine Garden continued providing a range of outreach and learning opportunities for individuals, groups, and local community organisations. Weekly medicine garden volunteering remained a popular way for people to connect with the Nature Reserve, building knowledge, skills and confidence using the herbs for day-to-day food and medicine.

Fatima Ali joined the team as our 2022 medicine garden assistant, providing horticultural support to Shumaisa. The role included researching medicinal properties of particular plants grown within the medicine garden, welcoming visitors to the Reserve during our opening hours, and sharing foraging/harvesting techniques with those who engage with the herb growing area.



Photo of Shumaisa sharing herb knowledge in the medicine garden, Cough syrup making workshop, Borage in flower.

Beginning in February, the garden also underwent a redesign centred on improving physical accessibility and creating more accessible/understandable plantings. The new design also integrated adaptation to the new microclimate of greater sun exposure due to the removal of some trees during the pond rebuild. Layout changes entailed transforming the central mound into two terraces – which could decrease runoff of water down the slope and prevent erosion – with a 90cm wide central path between them. This shifted the biggest path from the bottom of the garden into the middle of the garden, enabling (in theory), wheelchair-users to be able to go into the centre of the garden.

A log wall was made from wood cut during winter tree care, and smaller branches and twigs were buried beneath the main paths to fill in the trenches before topping with other material. Over time, the decay of the buried wood may feed fungal networks in the garden. Holes were made in the log wall to support solitary bees. Plantings directly behind the wall will also enable people who may not be able to bend down to interact with plants that are not so tall.



Medicine garden re-design as a terraced growing space with wider pathways. Photos by Michael Smythe.

The process took place over a few months, beginning in late winter, and was supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, without which the ambition of the redesign would not have been feasible.

The garden also welcomed new plants that add colour, fragrances, textures, attract diverse insects, and which are more drought tolerant.

Daily care of the medicine garden across the summer months was overseen by a dedicated group of local-residents. Each evening saw volunteers measure and record moisture in the soil, ensuring the herb garden remained healthy and abundant across the long dry summer.

The drip irrigation was also re-established later in the summer; it can now be switched on earlier in 2023 to enable conservation of water from the start of the season. Drip irrigation, which waters the soil directly, was allowed during the hose pipe ban.

As part of increasing accessibility and understandability/literacy about the plants, we also started to develop profiles of the plants and some of their benefits and basic information about herbal preparations. These will be made available via the new website in time for the 2023 season.



The medicine garden was also host to several organisations throughout 2022. These include, but not limited to: Mission GP Practice, Orbis Herbalist Group, Revoke, Rabiah Mali (Herbal Blessing Clinic), Healing Justice London, Raju Rage, Shadow Sisterx, Bow Arts.



As part of the redesign, a medicinal bed was created at the pond edge as a transition from pond to medicine garden. Marshmallow was transplanted here, it's more native habitat.



Top - Echinacea & Bee balm. Bottom - California poppy & Lemon verbena. Photos by Shumaisa Khan.

Ecology

Reflections on the Wetland Enhancement project

In 2022 interdisciplinary ecologist Tyra Enchill commenced work on the 'Wetland Enhancement Report', a booklet offering insights into the year-long upgrade of our wetland to increase biodiversity and improving access to our ponds for amphibians, birds, insects, and mammals (including humans).



Photo of wetland Ecology Report, Photo of two mallard ducks in the new ecology pond, Photo of report by Tyra Enchill, photo of ducks by Michael Smythe.

Wetland Enhancement report provides a useful guide to our wetland's history and our long-term research, design, and visions for this critical urban habitat in the long-term. The booklet was published in Autumn 2022 and launched at the Nature Reserve on 26th November 2022. An online version of the report is available on the BGNR website - <https://phytology.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Wetland-Enhancement-Report-Nov-2022.pdf>

Experimental Ecology Survey Project

In 2022 our annual ecology programme was led by a team of regular volunteers and site stakeholders. The project aimed to generate knowledge and share learnings by and for residents and volunteers.

Rather than simply record the biodiversity of the site during a slice of time, the aim was to observe and discover new ways to connect and record the relationships between plants, insects, mammal life that makes up the community of the Bethnal Green Nature.



Ecology of ecology insect workshops by Michael Smythe.

We hope the experimental nature of this project inspired slower and closer connections with this remarkable urban Nature Reserve, generating many new ways of understanding and caring for the land and its living inhabitants. Project leads included Ailo Ribas & Chiara Famengo (Botany), Tyra Enchill & Edward Simpson (Wetland), Gineo Brignoli (Insects) & Jane Laure (Birds).

Botany (Ailo Ribas, Chiara Famengo)

Throughout spring and summer 2022 the botany team organised a series of walks which aimed to build a living archive of botanical knowledge for current and future friends of the reserve, both online and onsite. This included stories, remedies & recipes, observed & learnt from the plants themselves. The research aimed to collectively explore what a community-organised ecology survey could look like. The following workshops took place:

‘What’s your herb culture’ led by community herbalist **Rasheeqa**

Ahmad focused on plant-based medicines and seasonal remedies generated by the abundance of plants and trees found growing within the Phytology Medicine Garden and wider Nature Reserve.

‘A morning with Terry Lyle & Izzy Johnson: Stories and Flora of the BGNR from 1970’s to now’ a walking tour of the Nature Reserve by Terry Lyle (Co-founder of the BGNR) and Izzy Johnston (Botanist / Forager). The session explored the historic ‘roots’ of the Nature Reserve and its past and current flora.



Photos of botany workshops by Ailo Ribas and Chiara Famengo.

‘Learning from herbs: tea tasting and plant observation with Mila’. This workshop investigated the physical and emotional responses plants generate within us. Led by herbalist Mila Guichard Lawlor, the session featured tea tasting, drawing and group discussion around our psych-emotional connection to botany.



Photos of foraging workshops by Ailo Ribas, Chiara Famengo and Michael Smythe.

‘Composting Thoughts/Fermenting Worlds: Food, Writing & Connections to Nature’: Rajiv Bera (Queer Masala) & Jennifer Obidike hosted an afternoon of experimental writing and storytelling for people who identify as LBGT+ / BPoC within the Nature Reserve. Participants explored how we employ language to communicate our connection to the land and each other. Writing from this session will soon be published on the BGNR website.

‘Foraging Walks at the BGNR with Izzy Johnson’ took place across the Spring, Summer and Autumn. Izzy shared knowledge on a plethora of wild plants, trees and shrubs found within the Nature Reserve. A celebration of folklore, foraging

protocols, medicinal and nutritional information was shared amongst the many people in attendance.

Invertebrates (Gino Brignoli)



Photos of wetland insect workshops by Michael Smythe.

Entomologist, Gino Brignoli, hosted a series of community-focused invertebrate workshops across Spring and Summer. The workshops celebrated local invertebrate fauna by providing first-hand knowledge on how to use non-lethal, non-destructive methods to survey insect populations living within the Nature Reserve.



Photos of insects captured at the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve by Gino Brignoli.

The following themes were explored over five sessions:

- Nocturnal insect survey
- How to record data, keep a field notebook, & use identification guides and keys
- Surface, Soil & Leaf litter Invertebrates
- Aquatic Invertebrates

- Invertebrates on Plants & Flying Invertebrates

An incredible number of insects were reported, including several rare species not expected in Bethnal Green.

Wetland (Tyra, Edward)

From Summer 2022 to Spring 2023, Edward Simpson & Tyra Enchill present a series of wetland ecology surveys in collaboration with friends and residents of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. Their project investigates the complex array of lifeforms and relationships that are emerging in the newly installed wetland.



Photo of and by Tyra Enchill and Edward Simpson capturing data at the Bethnal Green wetland.

Workshops included:

‘Herbaria skills workshop’ was led by Mila Guichard Lawlor, seeing participants collect botanical specimens from the pond for drying - arranged by family, genus, and species. The survey also included individual interpretations from each participant. The herbarium will become an important reference in the coming years as the community shifts, and as plants respond to a changing climate.

‘Mindful observation workshop’, held by interdisciplinary ecologist Tyra Enchill and environmental writer, Joanna Pocock. Guided by principles of mindfulness, the session focused on living and non-living entities, relationships and stories which form the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve’s ecosystem. Participants were invited to create writing and share reflections with the group. By prioritising depth and expansiveness of presence, we hope to make space for a slower and deeper awareness of this ecosystem through ‘being’ and the act of writing.



Photo of wetland survey project by Tyra Enchill and Edward Simpson.

Data Recording In addition to hosting workshops, Tyra & Edward oversaw the collection of data for the new pond. These investigations include water temperature readings, bird and botany observations, oxygen and nutrient levels. This data will inform our future care of the pond ecosystem. In 2023 Tyra and Edward will train up other volunteers to continue collecting data over the years ahead.

Birds (Jane Laurie)



Photo of Jane Laurie leading bird survey workshop by Michael Smythe.

The 2022 Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Bird Survey is led by artist, environmentalist, and bird enthusiast Jane Laurie. Workshops and events include: **Plumology workshop** - Plumology is the science associated with the study of feathers, and during this session Jane led an introduction to their purpose, identifying details and structure on both micro and macro scales. The

session was followed by a drawing workshop to heighten observations on feathers.

Story Telling with Deb Newbound and Lisa Knapp - In April 2022 we will host a two-part event of poetry, writing, fireside storytelling, and music, hosted by poet, writer and performer Debs Newbold. This event was postponed due to snow in December 2022. The event will now take place over two parts; an afternoon writing workshop, followed by an evening fireside storytelling and music in April 2023.

Data Recording – Across 2023 Jane will lead a series of bird survey workshops, sharing methods of data collection across the spring, summer, autumn, and winter months. This information is critical to better understand how the various ecosystems found within the Nature Reserve can best serve a diverse community of birds.



Photos courtesy of Pesticide Free London.

Pesticide Free London

In September 2022 we partnered up with advocacy group Pesticide Free London to discuss ways to stop the use of pesticides in our public spaces. This conversation was held in several green spaces across London, providing an opportunity to sharing local knowledge with other local organisations and campaigners, ensuring our neighbourhoods can become pesticide free. Host sites included:

- South London: Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, 30th August
- North London: OmVed Gardens, 6th September
- East London: Phytology, 8th September
- West London: Hammersmith Community Gardens (Phoenix Farm), 13th September

The Ecology program for 2022 was generously supported by Awards for All.

Mycelium Ecologies Project

In the Autumn of 2022 Revoke & the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve co-developed an eleven-week research, design and build project exploring mushroom and mycelium ecologies. The project mirrored “mycorrhizal networks”, connecting young people from Revoke and our stakeholders with an extensive network of mentors, collaborators, educational resources, and economic opportunities linked to nurturing a mycelium growing zone within the BGNR.



Photos of mushroom identification and wood/straw inoculation workshop by Michael Smythe.

Our 2022 Ecology project was managed by Dim & Michael, with our apprentices roles held by Abel & Amir (who undertook the 11-week traineeship). Abel & Amir were supported by a team of mentors with experience in mycelium farming, foraging, nutrition, medicine, and storytelling backgrounds. By the end of the 11 weeks the apprentices and local community had built a remarkable mycelium farm and learnt a multitude of ways to grow, care for and prepare food/medicines from mycelium.



Photos of mushroom growing zone in order by Michael Smythe, Ingrid Chen and Neil Davidson.

For the project we select several species of mushrooms to grow for their ecological benefit/scarcity and medicinal/nutritional properties. These include Lions Main, Jelly Ears, Chicken of the Woods, Turkey Tails, and Birch Polypore. Wilde cultivars of each species was provided (dowels / spores) by Craig from Marvellous Mushrooms.

A long-term aim of the project is to provide food and medicine for our communities while offering learning opportunities amongst residents, school groups and social prescribing networks. The new mushroom habitat will also contribute towards our long-term ambition to develop the Nature Reserve into an alternative centre for learning about social and land-based ecologies.



Photos of mycelium project at RBG Kew Fungarium and Izzy Johnson mushroom lecture at Bethnal Green Nature Reserve by Michael Smythe.

Revoke is a grassroots organisation advocating for the rights and welfare of underserved young people, particularly refugees, asylum seekers, and those in the care system, living without advocates, families, power, or a voice. By recognising the brutality of the political, economic, and bureaucratic systems these young people battle every day, we take a holistic approach to their care,

prioritising compassion, empathy, and respect. Their values are rooted in abolition principles and trauma-informed practices. Revoke is founded by a team with lived experience of migration; racism; learning English as an additional language; and the trauma of displacement. This creates a strong connection to the young people they work with, aiming to give them the tools, education, and confidence to advocate for themselves and restore the rights they've had revoked.

The Mycelium program for 2022 was generously supported by Necessity.

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.



Photos of Mobile Apothecary Street Service by Michael Smythe.

In the winter of 2021, the Mobile Apothecary resumed street service outside Hackney Town Hall after a 3-month hiatus. This particular location is calm and enables higher level of focused conversation and engagement with the communities that engage with the service. During this period the Mobile Apothecary team carried 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 service.



Photo of daisy harvest in Victoria Park & MA vision day. Images by Michael Smythe.

Parallel to this we commissioned permaculture designer Muzammal Hussain to develop a reflection piece on the Mobile Apothecary's journey so far - from its early beginnings, the pandemic emergency response, and future aspirations to build long term sustainable systems. This piece of research provides an essential moment of reflection for the Mobile Apothecary, recording the journey of a front-line project over a very memorable three-year period.

In 2022 we intentionally scaled back our service to pre-pandemic times, focusing on solely on supporting our hyper-local community in Bethnal Green, serving 7pm – 8pm on the last Sunday of each month outside the Bethnal Green Tube Station (alongside our long-term collaborators Refugee Community Kitchen). In 2022 we re-brand our medicine products ensuring greater accessibility, lab tested and certified all our regular products and commenced monthly medicine making workshops with volunteers of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. The medicine making workshops were led by Mila Guichard Lawlor, who shared knowledge of herbs and remedy making processes. In February 2023 will see the publishing of a dedicated Mobile Apothecary website.

The Mobile Apothecary is generously supported by Necessity and all the dedicated volunteers who regularly show up for harvesting, medicine making and street service.



Looking Back billboard by Eduardo Padhila, AUM billboard by George Chakravarthi. Photos by Sol Aizcorbe & Michael Smythe.

Arts

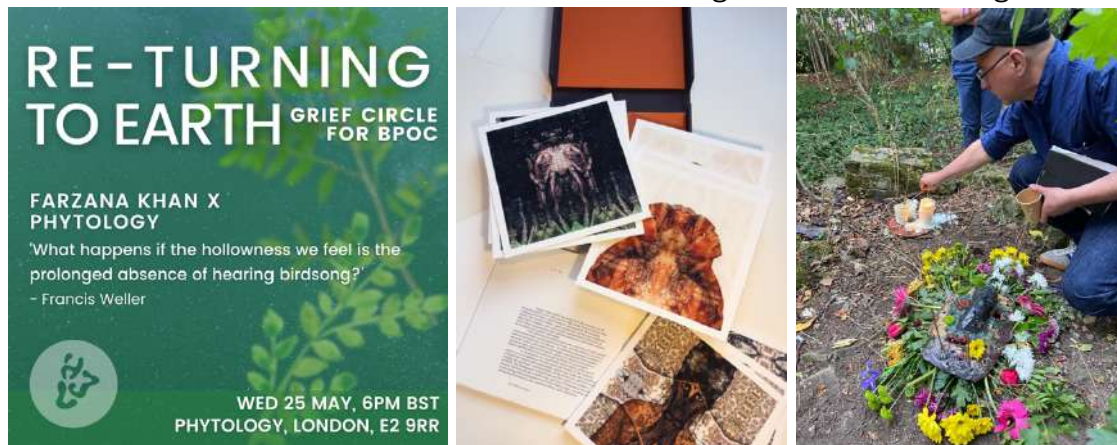
In 2022 Adelaide Bannerman devised, curation and delivered ‘We Speak In Tongues About The Thing(s) We Love’, the formal cultural programme at the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. A programme of overlapping activities from all the participating artists has been delivered during 2022, with various research outputs to be published across 2023. Participating artists include Farzana Khan, Eduardo Padhila, George Chakravarthi, Daze Aghaji and Healing Justice London. Some highlights of the past year include:



Eduardo Padhila & Adelaide Bannerman leading an artist tour of the Nature Reserve installation. Photos by Michael Smythe.

- **August 2021 – March 2022** Adelaide Bannerman & Daze Aghaji present x3 successive billboard artworks at the BGNR.
- **July 2021** Farzana Khan/Healing Justice London facilitated, ‘*Recipes for Resistance: Migration and Un/Belonging*’. The workshop explored memory, grief and un/belonging in relationship to the politics of food, identity and land with Raju Rage & Rajiv Bera.
- **September 2021** Daze Aghaji/‘*Letters to the Earth: A Creative Writing Workshop*’, gathering participant responses to climate change, biodiversity loss, social injustice in advance of COP 26, Glasgow.

- **October 2021** Eduardo Padhila and George Chakravarthi begin research.



Farzana Khan's *Grief Circle* poster, George Chakravarthi's *AUM* publication, Eduardo Padhila installation and artist talk. Photos in order by George Chakravarthi & Michael Smythe.

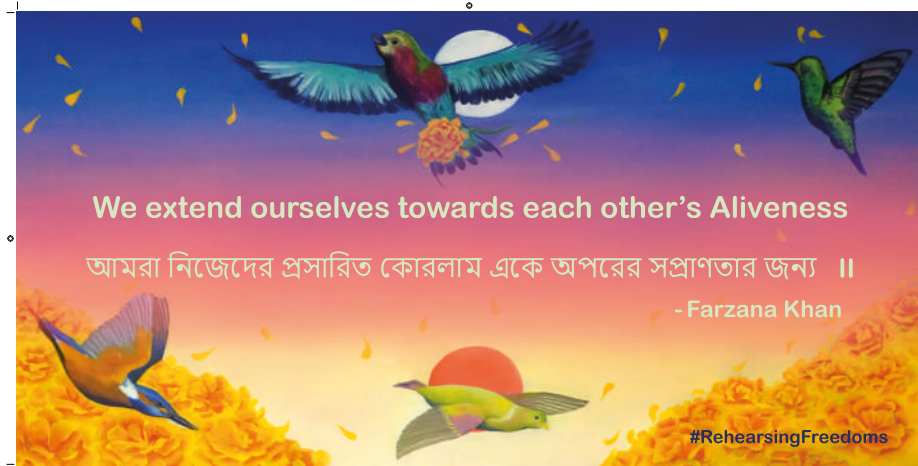
- **March 2022** Farzana Khan/Healing Justice London facilitated the '*Grief Circle: Fire Ceremony*'. The session is a healing and grief space, intended to hold and support multiple forms of loss and mourning.
- **May 2022** Farzana Khan begins research for her summer writing residency at the BGNR. The public programme kicked off with Eduardo Padilha's research, '*The Non-existent Gardener*', featuring: three billboards exhibited May-July, new ceramic sculptures and eco-prints on paper and textiles exhibited throughout the entire BGNR May till October 2022. Launch of Iniva's publication, '*Floating Margins*'. The book was edited by Rose Nordin, Amrita Dhallu and Priya Jay and features a conversation between Michael Smythe & curator Adelaide Bannerman celebrating the legacy of the BGNR co-founder Naseem Khan.



Photo of Architecture Association students learning to make immune support tonic, Healing Justice London leading a poetry writing workshop with Rakaya Esime Fetuga, installation detail of Eduardo Padhila. Photo in order by Michael Smythe, Sol Aizcorbe.

- **June 2022** Eduardo Padilha event, '*Ayahuasca: A Declaration of Love*' with guests Govert Derix and David Luke pursued a conversation exploring personal testimony, philosophical inquiry & scientific study of the psychoactive brew Ayahuasca.

- **July 2022** Eduardo Padilha & Adelaide Bannerman led a tour of, *'The Non-existent Gardener'*. Conversation to be published online, December 2022.
- **September – December 2022** George Chakravarthi's project, AUM is a series of self-portraiture merging with topographic studies from the site in print-media & moving image. A billboard, limited edition box set of prints, free postcards, artist/curator text, will be disseminated online and from BGNR throughout autumn 2022 through to early spring 2023.
- **July, August, September 2022** Farzana Khan/Healing Justice London, x3 sessions of *'Herbal Uprising'*, exploring plant medicine to deepen connection to land and nurture a sense of belonging.
- **September 2022** Farzana Khan/Healing Justice London, *'Re-Turning To Earth: Grief Circle'* for BPOC. Farzana Khan previewed new writing developed during the residency. To be exhibited online after publishing embargo is lifted, Feb-Mar 2023.



Artwork by Farzana Khan and Sarah Al-Sarraj.

- **January – March 2023** Farzana Khan/Healing Justice London exhibits artwork on BGNR billboard – incorporating text from her essay/poetry.

The 2022 residency programme was generously supported by Arts Council England.

Parallel to our formal residency programme, the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve hosted guest researchers testing new ideas and ways of working. Artists and cultural producers included:

Raju Rage

As an artists, healer and chef Raju is adept at creating space for generative, intersectional, and experimental formats of exchange and production. In 2021 Raju hosted 'Recipes for Resistance' at Phytology, exploring memory, grief, and un/belonging in relation to coloniality, gender, adaptability and resistance. A shared meal provided the setting for group discussion exploring the ruptures

and failures of heritages and linages that dis/connect us from the land, ourselves, and one another.



Images courtesy of Raju Rage.

2022 saw Raju undertake an experimental research residency titled ‘Grow Not Build’ within Phytology. ‘Grow Not Build’ speaks to the notions of what it means *to grow verses* building, an antithesis to gentrification, institutionalisation, and the degradation of biodiversity ecosystems. This research took the form of a rolling conversation with site stakeholders, nurturing deep listening and looking processes to better understand the social and ecological landscape. A valuable opportunity for our stakeholders to critically engage with the global ecological crisis through a hyper-local lens of lived experience.



Photos of Hayley Harrison workshops and performances. Images courtesy of Hayley Harrison.

Hayley Harrison

Hayley Harrison is an experimental artist who has been developing new work within the BGNR since 2021. Hayley’s work often explores the possibilities of deeper connection to each other and the non-human world. Recent projects include:

An Evening of Listening - Since the spring of 2021, Hayley Harrison has been collecting questions from different individuals and communities engaging with the BGNR. The questions vary from humorous to poignant – ‘what did you have for breakfast’ or ‘do you feel welcome’. An Evening of Listening event saw these questions projected onto plants and trees and read out collectively. This interspecies event is a chance to stand together and listen to what the answers might be.

‘Projection’ was performed at dusk, followed by bat echolocation, and listening session with bat detectors led by Michael Smythe and fresh nettle pakoras made by Frank Kelly (picked from Phytology Medicine Garden).

Cyanotype type workshop with Melanie King & Hayley Harrison - Cyanotype type printing is an alternative photography process using chemicals that create blue-prints when exposed to sunlight. Melanie & Hayley shared how to make one-off Cyanotype prints from flowers, leaves and objects found in and around the Nature Reserve. Melanie King is an artist and expert in sustainable photographic processes, including non-toxic developing techniques.



Photos of Hayley Harrison workshops and performances. Images courtesy of Hayley Harrison.

Circle of Listening - The ‘Circle of Listening’ is a meditative gathering where participants are invited to sit and walk silently together, listening to what the Nature Reserve has to say. The session was made up of short experimental listening activities, including time to share and reflect on the listening experience. Together the participants record observations of what we have heard. This snapshot of time will be included in the nature reserve’s ongoing ecology survey.

Becky Lyons - Earth Shapes

In 2022 artist and London National Park City Ranger Becky Lyon presented a series of eight community led gatherings marking the seasonal rhythms across the entire year.



Images courtesy of Becky Lyons.

Side-stepping the Gregorian, financial and academic diaries, Becky invite participants to join a series of workshops, readings and performances that offer a punctuation marking significant ecological time-turning points of the British Isles, inspired by the ancient Celtic and Pagan wheels, lunar calendar, and cross-cultural festivities.



Photo of Kupala Festival by Maksym Honcharuk.

Olha Pryymak - Kupala Festival

Kupala Mid-Summer Festival took place within the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve for a fourth year in June 2022. Kupala is a traditional pre-Christian Slavic holiday, originally celebrated on the shortest night of the year. This year the festival featured collaborations with a growing population of displaced Ukrainians artists who have recently made their way to the UK.

The festival saw traditional midsummer floral crown making, Ukrainian food, Bandura playing, alongside games and installations by artists challenging the notions of coloniality and cultural heritage. Collaborators include **Lika Tarkhan-Mouravi**, **Dana Olarescu**, **Maria Petrovska**, **Olha Pryymak**, **Darya Tsymbalyuk**, **Vlad Vazheyevsky**.

Rose Nordin, Amrita Dhallu and Priya Jay - Floating Margins / STUART

In May 2022 we were proud to host the 'Floating Margins' book launch in collaboration with Iniva. 'Floating Margins' is a conduit for intergenerational work and wisdom, an opportunity to create from a place of possibility, celebrating creative lineages, interdependence, and care.



Images courtesy of Rose Nordin, Amrita Dhallu and Priya Jay.

The publication features a community of contributors channelling ancestral voices of seminal individuals such as intellectual Stuart Hall, artist David Medalla, writer/producer Mahmood Jamal and our much beloved and missed Naseem Khan (co-founder of the Phytology project & Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust).

The Gardening Drawing Club

Founded in 2021, The Gardening Drawing Club is a series of unique events with a holistic approach offering free access to arts and horticulture in Britain. With monthly happenings, The Gardening Drawing is hosted in a broad range of locations, from art centres to community gardens and temples; the events range from workshops to talks and experiences.

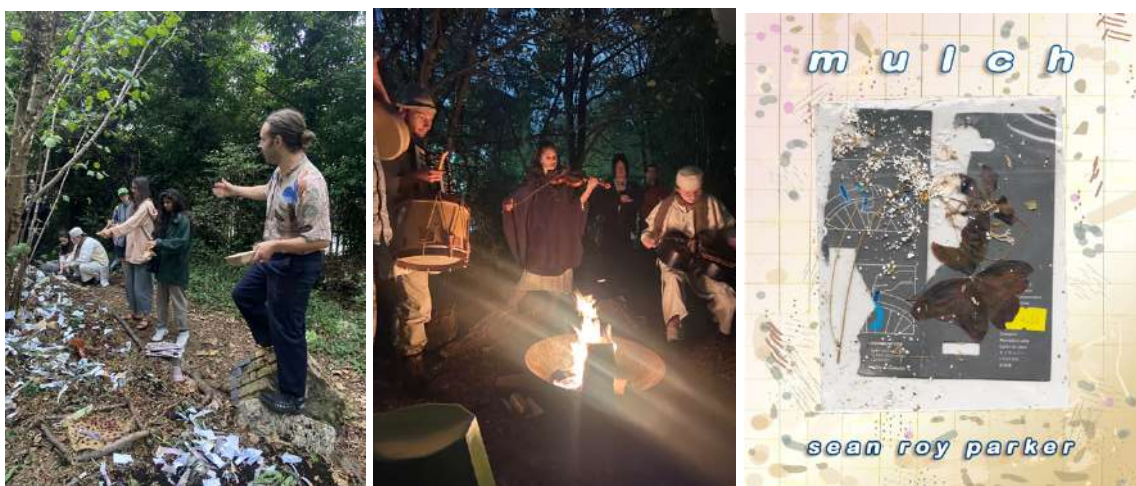


Images courtesy of The Garden Drawing Club.

Veganic gardening methods are employed through The Gardening Drawing Club, advocating for gentleness and compassion while supporting seed sovereignty, racial, climate and land justice and reparation, biodiversity, and animal liberation. The Gardening Drawing Club is a form of Seva and is on a shared mission to integrate the joys of gardening and drawing in others' lives for individual and community well-being.

Sean Roy Parker – Mulch

In the summer of 2022 artist, writer and gardener **Sean Roy Parker** participated in a month-long research project demonstrating ways to build soil quality within the BGNR woodland. This part of the Reserve is made of rubble from pre-WW2 Victorian buildings.



Images courtesy of Sean Roy Parker.

A dry and historically low diversity area, Sean set out to build soil density by a process called 'sheet composting', an indigenous horticulture technique (appropriated by Western permaculture) of building soil health with strata of fresh and dried organic matter that rot down over time and provide habitats for fungi, microbes and insects that aid decomposition, releasing nutrients into the soil and completing a short yet dynamic life cycle and replenishing the ground ready for new life.

The Mulch pile has been decomposing since September and we look to commence planting into the soils in early Spring 2023, part of the woodland floor improvements.

This project is in collaboration with the **Museum of Modern Shopping (MoMS)** led by artist Laura Yuile.

Community Forum

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Community Forum is a regular gathering taking place within the Nature Reserve on a quarterly basis. The Forum provides a space for residents, volunteers, visitors, staff and trustees, to share what they are working on, gather feedback, work on proposals and provide input on decisions about the Nature Reserve day-to-day programming and management.



Images of Community Forum (winter / summer) by Michael Smythe

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

Finance & Admin

Our audited end of year accounts and annual report will be submitted to the Charity Commission on 24th January 2023. The Trust would like to acknowledge the tireless work of Hakim Oreagba for preparing the providing external oversight and audit of our financial records.

We would also like to thank our funders who have enabled us to carry out our work throughout such a turbulent year. Our gratitude goes to *Raines Foundation, Necessity, Mayor of London, Arts Council England, Postcode Neighbourhood Trust, Awards for All* and *Ground Works*.

Aims & Aspirations

- Equality and access research into ensuring the BGNR remains accessible, relevant, and culturally responsive to and for the hyper local demographics and context.
- Development of a public facing collaborator agreement for all research undertaken within and on behalf of the BGNR – inc. events, arts, learning and ecology research. A circle of stakeholders will be drawn together to advise on suitability inc. ecology, learning, local and cultural knowledge.
- Continue negotiating 30-year lease with London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- Continue developing funding bids with a focus on long-term core funding provisions for our research and engagement work.
- Develop Community Cultural Fund – a bursary for cultural production by and for local communities of Tower Hamlets.
- BGNR Rangers scheme – a collaboration with London City National Park and Becky Lyons.



Photo of Bethnal Green Nature Reserve by Sam Kingfisher (2022)

Name: Mr Neil Davidson

Role: Chair of the Trustees of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve, Charity No. 1166648

Signature: 

Date: 23.01.2023

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 2022 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 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

1st December 2022

Charity Name: Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust		Charity No	1166648	
		Company No		
Annual accounts for the period				
Period start date	01/04/2021	To	31/03/2022	

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

Recommended categories by activity	Guidance Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
		£ F01	£ F02	£ F04	£ F05
Income (Note 3)					
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	S01	-	63,484	63,484	26,483
Charitable activities	S02	28,370	-	28,370	11,088
Total	S07	28,370	63,484	91,854	37,571
Expenditure (Notes 6)					
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	S09	24,693	41,497	66,190	7,911
Other	S11	96	-	96	1,021
Total	S12	24,789	41,497	66,286	8,932
Net income/(expenditure) before tax for the reporting period					
Tax payable	S13	3,581	21,987	25,568	28,639
tax before investment gains/(losses)	S14	-	-	-	-
Net gains/(losses) on investments	S15	3,581	21,987	25,568	28,639
	S16	-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)	S17	3,581	21,987	25,568	28,639
Net movement in funds	S22	3,581	21,987	25,568	28,639
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	S23	20,706	7,938	28,644	5
Total funds carried forward	S24	24,287	29,925	54,212	28,644

Section B Balance sheet

	Guidance Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total this year £	Total last year £
Current assets					
Debtors (Note 19)	B07	-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 24)	B09	22,199	62,313	84,512	38,721
Total current assets	B10	22,199	62,313	84,512	38,721
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 20)	B11	300	30,000	30,300	10,077
Net current assets/(liabilities)	B12	21,899	32,313	54,212	28,644
Total assets less current liabilities	B13	21,899	32,313	54,212	28,644
Total net assets or liabilities	B16	21,899	32,313	54,212	28,644
Funds of the Charity					
Endowment funds (Note 27)	B17	-	-	-	-
Restricted income funds (Note 27)	B18	-	29,925	29,925	7,938
Unrestricted funds	B19	24,287	-	24,287	20,706
Revaluation reserve	B20	-	-	-	-
Fair value reserve	B21	-	-	-	-
Total funds	B22	24,287	29,925	54,212	28,644

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

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*

☐

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*

☐

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*

☐

No*

☐

*-Tick as appropriate

1.4 Changes to accounting estimates

No changes to accounting estimates have occurred in the reporting period (3.46 FRS 102 SORP).

Yes*

☐

No*

☐

*-Tick as appropriate

1.5 Material prior year errors

No material prior year error have been identified in the reporting period (3.47 FRS 102 SORP).

Yes*

☐

No*

☐

*-Tick as appropriate

Note 2

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 *
ü	ü	ü

Offsetting

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by the FRS 102 SORP or FRS 102.

Yes *	No *	N/a *
ü	ü	ü

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 FRS 102 SORP).

Yes *	No *	N/a *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

Government grants

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period

Yes *	No *	N/a *
ü	ü	ü

Support costs

The charity has incurred expenditure on support costs.

Yes *	No *	N/a *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

Deferred income

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

Yes *	No *	N/a *
ü	ü	ü

Creditors

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

Yes *	No *	N/a *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

Basic financial instruments

The charity accounts for basic financial instruments on initial recognition as per paragraph 10.7 FRS 102 SORP. Subsequent measurement is as per paragraphs 11.17 to 11.19, FRS 102 SORP.

Yes *	No *	N/a *
ü	ü	ü

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 *
ü	ü	ü

Section C

Notes to the accounts

(cont)

Note 3

Income

Analysis of income		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds £	Prior year £
Donations and legacies:	Donations and gifts	-	-	-	-	-
	General grants provided by government/other charities	-	63,484	-	63,484	37,571
	Total	-	63,484	-	63,484	37,571
Charitable activities:	Charitable activities	25,000	-	-	25,000	-
	Donations	3,370	-	-	3,370	-
	Total	28,370	-	-	28,370	-
Total		-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME		28,370	63,484	-	91,854	37,571

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	13,748	31,435	45,183	4,033	2,198	6,231
Professional fees	300	-	300	300	-	300
Project Costs	5,763	4,865	10,628	-	-	-
Other- Materials	4,882	5,197	10,079	1,380	-	1,380
Total expenditure on charitable	24,693	41,497	66,190	5,713	2,198	7,911
Other						
Insurance	-	-	-	952	-	952
Bank Charges	96	-	96	69	-	69
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total other expenditure	96	-	96	1,021	-	1,021
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	24,789	41,497	66,286	6,734	2,198	8,932

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	30,300	10,077	-	-
Total	30,300	10,077	-	-

20.2 Deferred income

Please complete this note if the charity has deferred

Please explain the reasons why income is deferred.

This year	Last year
<i>£10,000 from Charities Trust</i> <i>£10,000 from Raine's Foundation</i> <i>£10,000 from A4A Ecology</i> <i>All restricted for 2023/24</i>	<i>£9,777 received from Neighbourhood Trust is deferred for charitable activities starting in 2021/22</i>

Movement in deferred income account

	This year £	Last year £
Balance at the start of the reporting period	9,777	3,863
Amounts added in current period	30,000	9,777
Amounts released to income from previous periods	(9,777)	(3,863)
Balance at the end of the reporting period	30,000	9,777

Note 24 Cash at bank and in hand

	This year £	Last year £
Cash at bank and on hand	84,511	38,721
Total	84,511	38,721

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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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		692	10,000	(3,489)	-	7,203
Groundwork UK	R		7246	7,525	(17,457)	2,686	-
Arts Council	R		-	34,182	(11,706)	-	22,476
Postcode Neighbourhood	R		-	9,777	(8,845)	-	932
NINE VE H TRUST	R		-	2,000	(298)	-	1,702
City of London	UR		20706	150	(16,487)	(2,686)	1,683
SHED	UR		-	25,000	(6,898)	-	18,102
Sajida Forest.Scho KANTINE	UR		-	3,000	(1,049)	-	1,951
NATIO NAL MEDICAL	UR		-	150	(56)	-	94
Donation	UR			70			70
Total Funds as per balance sheet			28,644	91,854	(66,286)	-	54,212

Note 27 **Charity funds**

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		-	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)	-	-	-
<i>Other funds (balancing figure)</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funds as per balance sheet			5	37,571	(8,932)	-	-	28,644