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## Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Annual Report 2023

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (BGNRT) was formally recognised as a registered charity (1166648) on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2016. The charity has grown out of an informal Friends of Bethnal Green Nature Reserve that had been in existence since 2014.

### Governance

Trustees overseeing governance for the Nature Reserve include Sajida Malik (Chair), Gwen Wright (Treasurer), Adelaide Bannerman, Glenda Trew, Neil Davidson.

Staffing for 2023 include Edward Simpson, Ingrid Chen, Shilpi Choudhury, CJ Jude, Shumaisa Khan, Judith Stanley, Izzy Johnston, Abel Daniel, Claire Chatelet, Michael Smythe.

### Education & Learning

Our 2023 partners include Rangers Kindergarten, Stephen Hawking's and Oaklands School. We also host our own outdoor learning sessions under the name of Forest Fridays across the year.



### Rangers Kindergarten

By Jo Gilks

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.

In 2023 the Rangers children have been learning about the different trees at the nature reserve as part of the 'forests from seed' project. This has involved focussing on the attributes of different tree each week, learning how to identify leaves, seeds, and bark. Connecting children with folk law, edible and medicinal properties.

Rangers have learnt about the Elder, Hazel, Linden, Horse Chestnut, Hawthorn, Rowan, Sycamore, Butchers Broom, Oak, Ivy, Cherry, Field Maple, Juniper, and Holly. The children have searched for these in the nature reserve, and we have plotted some of them on our map using the Celtic Ogham (tree alphabet). Some of our recent activity highlights have included tie dying with berries, making Linden cordage, shelling, and crushing acorns to make flour, Hawthorn ketchup, Rowan berry tea, and using autumn leaves to make mandalas and winter wreaths.



Photos by Jo Gilks

### **Stephen Hawking School**

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 2023 Stephen Hawking School have held weekly nature connection sessions for the children with observing ponds and wetlands being the favourite activity each week. While sitting next to the ponds the children learnt about the many birds, insects and animals that call the Nature Reserve home.

These observations contribute to our identification and surveying, providing useful data for the nature reserve management plan. Stephen Hawking School will continue their weekly engagement with the Reserve into 2024 and beyond.

Forest  
Fridays

### **Forest Friday**

By Ingrid Chen

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.

We started our 2023 Forest Friday sessions in February half term and ran through to the end of November. Our aim is to enable families to enjoy and care for the woodland, with all the benefits to health and wellbeing that entails. Forest Friday is particularly aimed at welcoming our closest neighbours to the reserve, especially those who may be less confident about woodland activities

and/or have little access to outside space, many of whom still don't know how to get into the reserve or maybe even that it is a nature reserve.

With that in mind, we simplified our program somewhat and ran most Fridays, including the school holidays, making it easier for people to know when they can visit. As much as possible, we aim to join in with care of the site, so this has included pond care & rainwater harvesting, care of the fungi farm, spreading woodchip & weeding amongst other fun and useful activities, lots of observation, some plant ID and a few games too.

We did expand our staff pool & our increase staffing level so that we could continue to operate a drop-in system and welcome all comers, rather than require booking. We continue to update and improve our safeguarding knowledge and procedures. A special congratulations to Shilpi Choudhury who has completed Level 3 FS training in 2023.

We now have 3 Forest School leaders on the team, plus the site manager, who joins us regularly, and other collaborators who have helped us run specific events. Higher staffing levels have been great for keeping the gate open more often and having more conversations with local families. A side benefit we're hoping to develop is that we're providing some insight to visiting parents & carers into employment in outdoor education, and hopefully some encouragement as our various staff has very different backgrounds and routes to co-running our sessions and different 'day jobs'.

In the summer and autumn of 2023 Forest Friday had a regular presence on Saturday, our public opening day, offering accessible and creative family activities.

This year we took part in the local Tenants and Residents Association's fun-days, ran our own fun day and hosted a special Halloween evening campfire, which was new this year and was well received. In 2024 we will look to bring more people into the staff pool and running more fun-day-type-events, all being well with funding and staffing.

Forest Friday is generously supported by **Postcode Neighbourhood Trust**.

### **Oaklands Secondary School**

Oaklands secondary school occupies the old Raines Foundation building neighbouring the Nature Reserve. Oaklands caters for young people aged 13 – 18 years from the local area. Our education collaboration continued into 2023 with the geography department researching the complex biodiversity found across the site. Student research primarily focused on the relationship between the meadow and wetlands, including the meadows and medicine garden. Local volunteers were also asked to participate in a survey, capturing data on local understanding and connection with biodiversity within the Nature Reserve. The research will be shared with the local community in 2024.

In addition to school groups, we also hosted regular field trips with universities across the year. Our academic partners include Central Saint Martins, Royal College of Arts, University of East London, Chelsea School of Art, and Kingston University, all participated in day long workshops exploring the intersection of ecology, climate, and arts research.



### Mobile Apothecary

In 2023 the Mobile Apothecary continued delivering high quality plant-based remedies to the residents of Bethnal Green across the year. Our Street service took place 7pm – 8pm, on the last Sunday. We serve outside the Bethnal Green tube station, alongside Refugee Community Kitchen (RCK). RCK provide hot vegetarian meals each week.

In 2023 the Mobile Apothecary served roughly 30 people each evening, with 70% return attendees accessing our service on any given night. The regularity of the service ensured locals could build meaningful relationships with the street service team and the products we offer. In 2023 the service provided the following remedies: good skin balm, decongestant rub, muscle & joint rub, immune support vinegar, cough syrup, hand sanitiser and epsom-salts deodorant. This year also saw the launch of a dedicated website, providing accessible information including our street service schedule, medicine making events and ingredient lists for each of our available products.

[www.MobileApothecary.org.uk](http://www.MobileApothecary.org.uk)

In addition to the Street Service our team of volunteers delivered monthly medicine making workshops in the neighbouring Community Centre, sourcing most of our fresh herbs from the Phytology medicine garden and/or local shops found on Bethnal Green Road. In 2024 the Mobile Apothecary will continue hosting monthly medicine making and street distribution for our neighbourhood.



# HEALS ON WHEELS

Can free plant medicine transform our healthcare system? Herbologist Maya Thomas heads into the community with Mobile Apothecary, a roaming project sharing herbs with those in need

Photography Isabelle Rose Povey

It's just before 7pm on the last Sunday of July and I'm standing at the corner of Bethnal Green Road in East London. I'm here to observe Mobile Apothecary at work. A cargo bike is being unpacked and transformed into a sturdy table, on top of which sits baskets laden with various herbal

salves, ointments and tonics and a giant flask of nourishing nettle tea. A sandwich board placed a few paces away announces, 'free herbal medicine to support community health'.

Mobile Apothecary's remedies are practical, carefully considered and aimed at meeting the most immediate needs of the people they are providing for. Namely, but by no means exclusively, those with limited access to accommodation and quality healthcare. There is a soothing antibacterial skin

halm for minor injuries, deodorant, hand sanitiser, a salve for achy joints and muscles and an immune system boost tonic.

People start to arrive before setup is complete. The first customer accepts the mineral-rich tea and picks out some muscle and joint balm before heading to the Refugee Community Kitchen, a sister



organisation that provides free meals. From here on, there is a steady stream of people arriving to ask for advice and gratefully take what they need.

Setting up the Mobile Apothecary was an organic process, a response to the growing numbers of unhoused people in the area, Michael Smythe tells me. He is one of a collective of project co-founders, as well as of Phytology, an urban physic garden and nature reserve in Bethnal Green. He says this is a local venture in every sense: the products are made by local volunteers knowledgeable in the art of plant medicine and have been made with plants either grown at Phytology or responsibly foraged in areas such as Victoria Park around the corner or, in the case of some spices, procured from one of the nearby Bangladeshi and Turkish shops. Ingredients such as daisies and comfrey (both important for bruises, aches and skin repair) are such common plants they make the stark point that healthcare could easily be accessible and available to all, if we only had the knowledge.

One man comes over from the refugee kitchen and asks what it's all about. When he's told about



the plant-based remedies, his eyes light up and he starts talking excitedly about a plant that grows everywhere locally and is commonly used in his home country of Morocco for prostate problems - 'it makes the men strong!' But, he says quizzically, no one seems to use it here. After asking for a description of the plant, I tell him it sounds like stinging nettle, and point to the cup of steaming tea he's just been handed. His eyes widen and he insists that we fill up his flask before he leaves. We've found connection (to place and to each other) through a plant that is familiar to us both but culturally and historically has been valued in different ways.

I've often tussled with the nature of my work and the ethics surrounding it. As an educator, I spend my time teaching people about the benefits of plants which for millennia have been our primary medicines. Striking the balance between paid workshops and free community programmes is not always straightforward, especially when bills need to be paid. Ideologically speaking, the knowledge I have should be available to everybody: if we all have a better understanding

Bloom Magazine - featuring Mobile Apothecary

## London National Park City

In 2023 the London National Park City (LNPC) commenced a year-long collaboration aimed at nurturing and recording local knowledge of community led land stewardship. This took the form of multiple knowledge exchange sessions. The research was attended by volunteers from both Bethnal Green Nature Reserve and London National Park City, exploring themes centred around urban ecosystem caretaking. The group explored ways to share knowledge, co-authoring a collection of land care guides based on the participants lived experience.



Some of the themes include 'how to become a caretaker', 'how to care for caretakers', 'a guide on non-intervention vs intervention forestry work', 'how to coppice', 'how to understand the symbiotic relationship between birds and trees', 'how to encourage children's curiosity in nature' and 'a user's guide for icky jobs'. Over the winter months we will test the usability of the various guides, editing

and adjusting the content to ensure they are accessible for future caretakers of the Nature Reserve. A collection of these guides will be published on our website in 2024.

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve would like to extend gratitude to Floree Zama-Neagra, Becky Lyons, the London National Park City team and Timberland. Everyone's generosity with time, ideas and resources have been seminal in realising this work.

This project was generously supported by **Timberland & London National Park City**.



## Misery

In 2023 Misery commenced a year-long residency at Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. Misery is a mental health collective centring healing for queer / trans / non-binary black people and people of colour.



Photos courtesy of Misery

Misery hosted monthly workshops on the first Saturday of each month (May – December). These sessions engaged participants with knowledge sharing centred around ecology, social justice and medicine making. Some of the sessions includes decolonising cyanotype photography, medicinal honey making, herbal remedies for heart health and nervous system medicines.



The workshops ran between 12-3pm, with an optional open hour from 3-4pm for socialising, exploring the Nature Reserve, sharing readings or other offerings, and winding down together.

### **Nourish Yourself**

Poet **Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan** and Visual Artist **Alaa Alsaraji** hosted a series of creative activities rooted in connection to the natural world and thinking about how this impacts our wellbeing. Alongside making, participants learned about the artists' own paths into their creative practices and careers, including how they use creativity to connect with communities and aid them to express themselves for a myriad of outcomes.



Photo courtesy of the V&A

The workshop took place over two weekends in June and was aimed at young people aged 16-24 years. This residency was produced by V&A East as part of the V&A Upstart Creative Careers Festival 2023.

### **Praxis**

Praxis is an award-winning human rights charity fighting for migrant rights since 1983. They give advice, provide support, and campaign so that migrants and refugees in the UK can live with safety, dignity, and respect. In the spring and summer of 2023 Praxis hosted weekly health and wellbeing sessions for women at the Nature Reserve. The Nature Reserve provided a quiet and safe place to exercise, build social connections and weekly access to the medicine garden and wider site ecologies.





### **Mission Practice**

In 2023 our local GP Surgery, Mission Practice, continued weekly site care including watering the medicine garden and mushroom farm. The sessions are facilitated by the Social Prescribing team, encouraging the practice staff to nurture one another, while caring for the Nature Reserve over the hotter months.



Photo courtesy of Hackney Herbal

### **Hackney Herbal Nature Club**

Hackney Herbal Nature Club is a weekly session bringing people and nature together in a welcoming, supportive, social, and safe place. The sessions will focus on spending time with others in nature and takes place at their garden in Hackney Wick as well as exploring local green spaces in and around the East End. The club visited the Nature Reserve in summer, autumn, and winter, focusing on mushroom ecologies and woodland land care in times of climate change.

### **University of East London**

The university of East London commenced yearlong research project exploring how the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve aligns with contemporary sustainable development goals (SDG). The research team specifically researched our weekly volunteering opportunities, the Mobile Apothecary, Forest Friday and the Misery workshops.



At the end of 2023, the researchers present the Trust with areas that can be highlighted within the SDG framework, aiming to guide our work with the SDGs, which offer numerous benefits such as:

- Optimising organisational resources
- Defining priorities within the organisation
- Creating more value in the work you do locally
- Opening new opportunities for resourcing local communities



## Community Ecology

By Edward Simpson

The 2023 ecology programme has been shaped by our 2021 and 2022 stakeholder-led programming, taking the form of weekly ecology walks, talks and workshops exploring the Nature Reserve designed and led by the people who help care for the space.



The programme explored various themes including birds, trees, mycelium, wetlands, and the medicine garden. These sessions were free and advertised across the local estates via diy posters. We look to build upon this weekly knowledge sharing and engaging local communities in 2024 by holding community led sessions each Saturday May till September.

During 2023 we held over 30 volunteer sessions where people were able to come and learn more about the nature reserve and how to care for it. As well as nurturing the plant and wildlife of BGNR the volunteers keep the site a safe and welcoming place for everyone who visits. Lots of our keyholding volunteers also come outside of these organised sessions to continue this vital work. It is always great to visit and see that someone has popped by and picked up litter or has been shovelling woodchip out of hours.

This year we decided to keep the sessions running once a month over the winter dormancy period as there was a lot of energy and enthusiasm to continue following on from the previous year's mushroom farm project. This decision really benefited the reserve as well as providing continuity for our community.

Early spring saw a transformation of the forest floor. We built up mulch piles of organic material to improve the soil quality and as our volunteers returned to weekly sessions we planted 232 bulbs, plug plants and saplings. To increase biodiversity this planting introduced 26 new species to the nature reserve. The selection of the plants came from our community's collective knowledge of which plants should thrive in a woodland habitat. The spring of 2024 should see all this work culminate as these new species start to thrive.



Lots of learning came through patient observations of the work done over the last couple of years. The pond continued to thrive and teach us how best we can care for it. Last year the pond was dense in vegetation and plant diversity but observationally there were less birds and mammals interacting with it. Over 2024 we will keep some areas of the pond clear in order to provide habitats that support both wildlife and plant life.

As a community we spent a lot of time with the mushroom farm, we had the first glimmers of successful growth with wine caps and turkey tail mushrooms appearing. Everyone is still really excited about this project and embracing its mycelial pace. We've been thinking of ways to keep people engaged and in autumn we welcomed back Able from last year's internship to run a workshop on oyster mushroom inoculation which introduced new people to the project.

We experimented with the ancient technique of hedge laying as a way of managing some of our trees. An incision is made at the base of a small tree and then folded over so that it continues to grow



horizontally. This creates a very dense habitat that is great for wildlife, especially nesting birds. When done at the edge of the reserve it has a secondary function of letting in more light without removing the trees. We experimented around the Billboard area and it has worked very well, creating a healthy hedgerow, bringing more light to the meadow and increasing the visibility of the billboard. Now we know that this is a viable form of woodland management for the reserve we will continue this practise in 2024.

The wildflower meadow had its second year in bloom, the first year was full of annuals such as poppies, cornflowers, and corn marigolds. This year saw the biannual plants thrive, like the mini teasels for the first time. Alongside these new plants lots of the classic BGNR plants like mallow and comfrey started to appear. Although these plants are great, we wanted this meadow area to support a different variety of plant species. I have developed a management plan to experiment with different ways of caring for the meadow and keep it a biodiverse habitat. Volunteers cut back the meadow in autumn, leaving some areas for wildlife refuge, then scattered it with new wildflower seeds ready for the spring.

This project was generously supported by **Postcode Neighbourhood Trust** and **Chapman Trust**.



### **Knitters Circle**

In 2023 a group of regular volunteers formed the Knitters group, a weekly meet up for all ages where knitting, basket weaving, and other craft bases skills are exchanged. The knitters met most Saturdays beside the Nature Reserve pond across spring and summer, moving into the local Bethnal Green library in winter.

### **Food Growing Hub**

In 2023 the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve received funding to develop a food growing space opposite the Nature Reserve entrance. The project aims to offer residents with space and resources to grow food locally, while connecting with the Nature Reserve resources and opportunities.

Tower Hamlets Homes have granted a five-year lease for the land located on the corner of Middleton St & Pundersons Gardens. The project will evolve over a twelve-month period, working closely with the Teesdale & Holybush Tenants and Residents Association.

We hope the food growing hub becomes a much-loved resource for the local communities, while also encouraging greater curiosity and engagement with the Nature Reserve, especially for individuals currently underrepresented at the Reserve.

This project is generously supported by **Groundworks London & Tower Hamlets Homes**.

### **Billboard Commissions**

#### **Farzana Khan**

Farzana Khan was artist in residence at the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve during 2022, and part of, '*We Speak In Tongues About The Thing(s) We Love*' programme curated by Adelaide Bannerman for the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. From 1st February till 31st June 2023 Farzana exhibited her largescale artwork titled 'We Extend Ourselves Towards Each Other's Aliveness'.

The billboard quote originates from writing Farzana made and shared during her residency, which explored, what grief, loss, and trauma is, and how the process of healing can lead to understanding 'aliveness' – the state of being alive. What does that mean to us as individuals and communities?



Aliveness is more than being physically present, it's a generative approach and feeling that pulsates, and reaches deeply, amongst beings. 'We Extend Ourselves Towards Each Other's Aliveness', invites us to consider what it means to access and offer each other life during times of multiple and cascading losses of many kinds. How do we commit to our own and each other's aliveness whilst honouring grief, practices of liberation and survival.

This project is part of '*We Speak In Tongues About The Things We Love*' generously supported by **Arts Council England**.

#### **Polly Townsend**

Polly Townsend's billboard is inspired by her 2023 experience as Artist in Residence in the Antarctic. The billboard work uses acrylic and watercolour paint, both long-standing mediums in the painting tradition. Acrylic, a plastic polymer mix, is used to form the ocean backdrop of the painting. The iceberg is painted in watercolour; mixed with the water collected off the Western Antarctic ice shelf.



Over a three-month period, the iceberg painting will degrade, changing colour and shape due to exposure to the elements (rain, sun, wind). The work raises questions of value, impermanence, and connection. As the world's largest and most distant wilderness melts, what is the link with our local community? What is the role of the City of London, whose skyscrapers look down on the billboard, and which continues to finance multi-billion-pound fossil fuel investments? These contribute to an accelerating destabilisation of the polar regions that regulate the Earth's climate. The work connects two ecosystems: 10,000 miles apart, one 10 billion times larger than the other, yet interdependent and equally miraculous.

Supported by the **Friends of Scott Polar Research Institute**.

### **Website**

In 2023 the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve launched a new and improved website [www.bethnalgreennaturereserve.org](http://www.bethnalgreennaturereserve.org). The website replaced the previous [www.phytology.org.uk](http://www.phytology.org.uk) site, transitioning to centre the Nature Reserve as the core project overseeing the day-to-day management of the Nature Reserve. The new website features a much-improved archiving and search system, helping to make our work more accessible.

### **Governance**

A Board level incident regarding a Trustees code of conduct was triggered in May 2023, impacting the Trust delivering aspects of our public programme between June-August. The incident was addressed by the Board with the support from Personology (Human Resources) and Howard Kennedy (legal service). The Charity Commission & ICO were informed at the time and are satisfied with the Boards processes and protocols. A full statement will be available once the Board have concluded their investigations.

In 2023 the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve commenced an internal review of our governance structures and policies guiding our day-to-day work with the generous support of Law Works and the legal team at Inmarsat.

This work includes making the existing policies more accessible, prioritising plain-speak by removing unnecessary jargon, along with removing past systems that are no longer fit for purpose as our organisation evolves. The Board are also producing new policies to guide our work, including an anti-racism policy and statement, recruitment policies, service level agreements for site partner



organisations and a more extensive keyholder handbook. To ensure transparency and accessibility the Board will be publishing all our governing documents on the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve website in the spring of 2024.

In 2023 the Board and site team re-assessed the Nature Reserves constitution and charitable objectives. The Board have proposed a new set of objects that include our ongoing work addressing community health, biodiversity and more profoundly advocating for non-human populations that rely on the Nature Reserve. The new constitution also reduces the time a Trustee can serve (maximum of x2 terms) and enhances the vetting and recruitment process for governors. The new constitution will also introduce the 'associate' scheme, a non-legal governance role for stakeholders to participate in Board decision making. Associates will be involved in overseeing our work in areas such as mental wellbeing, ecology, cultural programming, and allocation of financial resources. The new constitution will be voted on at our AGM and integrated into our work across 2024 and beyond.



## Compost Loo with A View

By CJ

We all know the compost loo at Bethnal Green Nature Reserve is the best loo in London. Volunteering to oversee the taking care of it is a continuous win, win. It helps the community and helps stabilise and ground me.

For this I want to express my gratitude to the people who made it a reality - without them there would be no compost loo - and to the people in the community who let me get on with it while respecting my differences and needs.

## Behind the scenes

There is a lot more to maintaining the compost loo than basic cleaning and filling up the water tank.

Weekly, the compost loo is de-cobwebbed. Although there are numerous species of spider in residence at the compost loo, it is not a structure for spiders to dominate. It is a structure for many species to share including the human species - which many forget is as much a part of nature as any other species and who is in desperate need of compassion than is generally given to this species.

If spiders were left to their own devices they would cover the compost loo structure in webs. Unregulated; it would look like a scene from Miss Havesham's room in Great Expectations. Clearing cobwebs and making the compost loo hospitable for all species is essential.

### **Trixie**

There is a big - by British standards - spider in the compost loo who I named Trixie. She likes to get cosy behind the insect drawings or in one of the pieces of pottery on the lower shelf behind the Dada urinal. She often makes me jump and I suspect she makes a lot of the other spiders jump, also as she is much bigger than most of the other species of spider resident.

### **Changing rooms**

Each week there is often something new the community has left in the compost loo and each week I include it as part of the ongoing organic makeover.

### **Much, much more goes on**

I did an exercise on Christmas Eve called what do you see in the compost loo for this piece of writing. Here is what I saw and what goes on inside the wooden walls:

Information, Activism, Education, Lost Property, a reminder of being in the urban East End of London, artwork cherished and exhibited, recycling, repurposing and reusing many street found objects, little things found and loved, statements, values, community contributions, communications, crafts, ornaments, object d'art, designs, plans, gardening items, woodwork, a bicycle wheel repurposed, bird feathers, a divine nest, sculptures, art projects, cleaning tools which are repurposed items normally discarded, quotes, motivational sayings, smiley faces, sticks for drying gloves, homemade soaps and perfumes, signposting, photography, pottery, Dada art, zines, drawings, First Aid, Fire Safety, important Information about the site, eco calendar, LGBT + badge, poetry, sawdust donated freely from a local business, recycled toilet roll, and much, much more.

Keeping on top of all these elements is the sort of productivity which is usually hidden and taken for granted. Not anymore, I am making it visible!

### **Suggestion for the community**

The next time you have to visit the compost loo you might want to look around and guess how many items have been found on the street and repurposed?

What is your favourite? My latest favourite - I have too much going on in my brain to have one favourite - is the umbrella handle which is great for all sorts of cleaning and maintenance jobs as well as being a walking stick for when my hips and knees are playing up.

### **Finance & Admin**

The net deficit for the year amounted to £23,251 (2022: surplus of £25,568). Total restricted funds are at £21,004 for the year (2022: £29,925), with general reserves (unrestricted and designated funds) now standing at £9,957 (2022: £24,287) with total funds at 31 March 2023 being £30,961 (2022: £54,212).

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, Mayor of London, Groundworks, Arts Council England, Postcode Neighbourhood Trust, Awards For All and Foyle Foundation.

#### **Bethnal Green Nature Reserve - Aims & Aspirations 2024**

- Devise and co-design a site management plan with stakeholders that encompasses climate change, social justice, and habitat protection.
- Develop closer links with the hyper local community, especially residents of neighbouring housing estates.
- Continue nurturing viable and accessible opportunities for residents to connect and engage with habitats for insect, birds, bats, mammals, and amphibians via weekly engagement sessions (walks, talks, workshops). These sessions are led by local stakeholders with the central aim of sharing knowledge and centring the Nature Reserve as a core local resource.
- Co-design and test a community led cultural framework for commissioning and collaborating with artists, research, and cultural institutions.
- Develop an 'associate' scheme of local experts in specific areas e.g. health, education, culture, ecology and resourcing. The associates will be appointed annually, advising and working closely with the Board. This role aims to enhance dialogue around site management, diversify the consultation process and build connections and capacity for stakeholders to influence Board decisions and ultimately progress into Trustee roles.
- Develop the food growing hub in collaboration with the Tenants and Residents Association to ensure local engagement and sustainable management systems for the new space over the coming years.

Trustees report for the financial year ending 2022/2023.

This report was approved by the Trustees at the 2023 Annual General Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 and signed by:



Sajida Malik  
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 Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the Trustees of the Charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the Charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

### **Independent examiner's 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:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Hakim Oreagba

*H Oreagba*

4 Hertford Walk  
London DA17 5JW  
23 January 2024

Charity Name: Bethnal Green		Charity No	1166648	
Nature Reserve Trust		Company No		
Annual accounts for the period				
Period start date	01/04/2022	To	31/03/2023	

## 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
<b>Income (Note 3)</b>					
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	S01	20,000	45,658	65,658	63,484
Charitable activities	S02	5,088	-	5,088	28,370
<b>Total</b>	S07	25,088	45,658	70,746	91,854
<b>Expenditure (Notes 6)</b>					
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	S09	33,133	58,650	91,783	66,190
Other	S11	2,214	-	2,214	96
<b>Total</b>	S12	35,347	58,650	93,997	66,286
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before tax for the reporting period</b>					
Tax payable	S13	(10,259)	(12,992)	(23,251)	25,568
<b>tax before investment gains/(losses)</b>	S14	-	-	-	-
Net gains/(losses) on investments	S15	(10,259)	(12,992)	(23,251)	25,568
	S16	-	-	-	-
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	S17	(10,259)	(12,992)	(23,251)	25,568
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	S22	(10,259)	(12,992)	(23,251)	25,568
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward	S23	20,216	33,996	54,212	28,644
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	S24	9,957	21,004	30,961	54,212

## Section B Balance sheet

	Guidance Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total this year £	Total last year £
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stocks (Note 18)	B06	-	-	-	-
Debtors (Note 19)	B07	-	4,900	4,900	-
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 24)	B09	26,361	25,636	51,997	84,512
<b>Total current assets</b>	B10	26,361	30,536	56,897	84,512
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 20)	B11	300	25,636	25,936	30,300
<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>	B12	26,061	4,900	30,961	54,212
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	B13	26,061	4,900	30,961	54,212
<b>Total net assets or liabilities</b>	B16	26,061	4,900	30,961	54,212
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>					
Endowment funds (Note 27)	B17	-		-	-
Restricted income funds (Note 27)	B18		21,004	21,004	29,925
Unrestricted funds	B19	9,957		9,957	24,287
Revaluation reserve	B20			-	-
Fair value reserve	B21				
<b>Total funds</b>	B22	9,957	21,004	30,961	54,212

*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/yyyy

Sajida Malik

23/01/2024

Company Registration No. (England and Wales) 1166648

*S. Malik*

## 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\* 

ü
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 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\* 

ü
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 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*	<table border="1"><tr><td>✓</td></tr></table>	✓	*-Tick as appropriate
✓			
No*	<table border="1"><tr><td>ü</td></tr></table>	ü	
ü			

### 1.4 Changes to accounting estimates

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

Yes*	<table border="1"><tr><td>✓</td></tr></table>	✓	*-Tick as appropriate
✓			
No*	<table border="1"><tr><td>ü</td></tr></table>	ü	
ü			

### 1.5 Material prior year errors

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

Yes*	<table border="1"><tr><td>✓</td></tr></table>	✓	*-Tick as appropriate
✓			
No*	<table border="1"><tr><td>ü</td></tr></table>	ü	
ü			



## Note 2

### 2.2 INCOME

### Accounting policies

#### 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

#### 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

#### 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

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

#### 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

#### 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	✓

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	✓

#### 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

#### 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	✓

#### Deferred income

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

Yes*	No*	N/a*
✓	ü	ü

#### Creditors

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

Yes*	No*	N/a*
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

#### 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

### 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

<b>Section C</b>	<b>Notes to the accounts</b>	<b>(cont)</b>
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**Note 3                      Income**

Analysis of income		Restricted income funds			Total funds £	Prior year £
		Unrestricted funds	income funds	Endowment funds		
Donations and legacies:	Donations and gifts	-	-	-	-	-
	General grants provided by government, other charities	20,000	45,658	-	65,658	63,484
	<b>Total</b>	20,000	45,658	-	65,658	63,484
Charitable activities:	Charitable activities	5,088	-	-	5,088	25,000
	Donations	-	-	-	-	3,370
	<b>Total</b>	5,088	-	-	5,088	28,370
<b>Total</b>		-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		25,088	45,658	-	70,746	91,854

**Note 6                      Expenditure**

Analysis	This year			Last year		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds
£						
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities:</b>						
Freelance Fees	-	-	-	13,748	31,435	45,183
Professional fees	300	-	300	300	-	300
Project Costs	32,833	58,650	91,483	5,763	4,865	10,628
Other - Materials	-	-	-	4,882	5,197	10,079
<b>Total expenditure on charitable activities</b>	33,133	58,650	91,783	24,693	41,497	66,190
<b>Other</b>						
Insurance	1,170	-	1,170	-	-	-
Bank Charges	72	-	72	96	-	96
Maintenance	972	-	972	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total other expenditure</b>	2,214	-	2,214	96	-	96
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	35,347	58,650	93,997	24,789	41,497	66,286

## Note 19 Debtors and prepayments

## 19.1 Analysis of debtors

	This year £	Last year £
Trade debtors	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	4,900.0	-
Other debtors	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,900.0</b>	<b>-</b>

## 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	25,936	30,300	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,936</b>	<b>30,300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## 20.2 Deferred income

Please complete this note if the charity has deferred income

Please explain the reasons why income is deferred.

This year	Last year
£10,000 from Charities Trust	£10,000 from Charities Trust
£15,635 - Groundwork	£10,000 from Raine's Foundation
	£10,000 from A4A Ecology
	All restricted for 2023/24

## Movement in deferred income account

	This year £	Last year £
Balance at the start of the reporting period	30,000	9,777
Amounts added in current period	15,636	30,000
Amounts released to income from previous periods	(20,000)	(9,777)
<b>Balance at the end of the reporting period</b>	<b>25,636</b>	<b>30,000</b>

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

<b>This year</b>	<b>Last year</b>
<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
51,997	84,511
51,997	84,511

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

<b>Fund names</b>	<b>Type PE, EE R or UR *</b>	<b>Purpose and Restrictions</b>	<b>Fund balances brought forward</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Timberland	R			4,800	(2,400)	-	2,400
ArtsCouncil England	R		22,476	3,798	(24,037)	-	2,237
Raines Foundation	R			10,000	(9,181)	-	819
Awards for All	R	Garden project	7,203	10,000	(15,311)	-	1,892
NinevehTrust	R		1,702	-	(1,702)	-	-
Postcode Society	R		932	17,060	(4,336)	-	13,656
City of London	R		1,683		(1,683)	-	-
SHED	UR	Mycelium project		15,000	(13,141)		1,859
Foyle Foundation	UR	Garden project		5,000	(2,461)		2,539
Other unrestricted income	UR	Charitable activities	2,114	5,088	(6,117)		1,085
TRIODOS BANK UK	UR	Shed	18,102		(13,628)		4,474
<b>Total Funds as per balance sheet</b>			<b>54,212</b>	<b>70,746</b>	<b>(93,997)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30,961</b>

**Note 27 Charity funds****27.2 Details of material funds held and movements during the PREVIOUS reporting period**

<b>Fund names</b>	<b>Type PE, EE R or UR *</b>	<b>Purpose and Restrictions</b>	<b>Fund balances brought forward</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Gains and losses</b>	<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Awards for All	R	Garden project	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
Nineveh Trust	R		-	2,000	(298)	-	-	1,702
City of London	UR		20706	150	(16,487)	(2,686)		1,683
SHED	UR	Shed	-	25,000	(6,898)	-		18,102
Sajida Forest Scho KANTINE	UR	Charitable activities	-	3,000	(1,049)	-		1,951
National Medical	UR	Charitable activities	-	150	(56)	-		94
Donation	UR	Charitable activities		70				70
<b>Total Funds as per balance sheet</b>			<b>28,644</b>	<b>91,854</b>	<b>(66,286)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54,212</b>