

Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the year ending 31 March 2025



## Contents

Trustees Report.....	2-23
Independent Examiner's Report .....	24
Statement of Financial Activity.....	25
Balance Sheet.....	26
Notes to Financial Statements.....	27



The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (BGNRT) was officially registered as a charity (1166648) in April 2016. Our charitable purpose is to protect and enhance the flora, fauna and fungi of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve for public benefit. We support this by promoting biodiversity, fostering learning, strengthening community health, supporting the arts, encouraging participation and enabling research.

## Governance

**Trustees:** Sajida Malik (Chair), Gwen Wright (Treasurer), Bryony Harris (Secretary), Adelaide Bannerman, Oliver Grazebrook, Angharad Davies.

### 2025 Site Team:

Abel Daniel (Deputy Site Manager)  
Ash Miah (Food Garden Site Manager)  
Edward Simpson (Site Manager)  
Fatima Ali (Community Gardener)  
Hakim Oreagba (Finance)  
Ingrid Chen (Forest School Lead, Community Gardener)  
Izzy Johns (Community Gardener in Residence)  
Mark O'Leary (Forest School Tutor)  
Maryam Hoang (Forest School Tutor)  
Michael Smythe (Senior Manager)  
Odhran Lawlor (Community Gardener)  
Phyllis Martin (Development)  
Shilpi Choudhury (Forest School Tutor, Community Gardener)

We extend heartfelt thanks to the dedicated volunteers who care for the Reserve each week. Your commitment ensures the site continues to thrive both ecologically and socially. We would also like to extend our gratitude to our funders who support the vision and range of the work we do.

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve is generously supported by Anton Juergens Charitable Trust, Arnold Clark Community Fund, Awards for All, BBC Children In Need, Canary Wharf Community Fund, Chapman Charitable Trust, City Bridge Foundation, Forte Charitable Foundation (formally Trusthouse), Garfield Weston, London Marathon Foundation, Marsh Charitable Trust, Nineveh Trust, Postcode Neighbourhood Trust, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Skinners Company, Stafford Trust, Tower Hill Trust, Womble Bond Dickinson.

## Site Manager's Report by Edward Simpson Ecological Work & Volunteer Achievements



The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve continues to flourish thanks to the dedication of our volunteer community. This year, the clay pond project at the Bethnal Green Ecology Garden (BGEg) was completed with the addition of aquatic plants and the final hedgerow installation. Volunteers also worked across the Nature Reserve site to maintain woodland, wildflower meadows and wetland habitats.



A major focus was the large ecology pond, where rapidly dropping water levels over summer and reduced bat activity signalled a need for intervention. Dense vegetation was cleared and relocated to reopen the water surface. Bats have since returned this autumn, skimming the pond at dusk. We also advanced long-term efforts to improve the forest understory, prioritising soil-building and expanding in-house compost production.



At the Ecology Garden, the Community Ecologies programme supported the creation of a new solitary bee habitat led by community member Eamonn Postlethwaite. Annual bird-box monitoring recorded another successful nesting season, with at least six boxes used by great tits and blue tits. Thanks to these collective efforts, biodiversity continues to increase. Newly recorded species in 2026 include a female stag beetle, silver-washed fritillary and firecrest.

## Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

A new rain canopy installed at the start of the year has transformed our capacity to host education sessions, volunteer days and events during unpredictable weather. The Canopy was generously funded by Tower Hill Trust.



### Climate Resilience

Climate change continues to shape our site management. This year saw extreme weather and more site closures than usual due to high winds, drought and sudden rainfall. Several trees required emergency work, meaning we brought in arborists twice instead of the usual annual visit. We anticipate this becoming standard practice and will adjust future budgets accordingly.

The main pond dried more quickly than in previous summers. Volunteers installed a new filling system to stabilise water levels. Improvements to woodland soils are beginning to show results, with healthier plant growth and better moisture retention. Expanding this work is a core part of our climate-resilience strategy.

### Volunteers, Data & Newsletter

From January onwards, we ran 35 volunteer sessions (with only two cancelled due to weather), averaging 12 participants per session—a total of approximately 840 volunteer hours.



We welcomed 122 new volunteers, many of whom have since become regular contributors and keyholders. Most new volunteers joined to support the Medicinal Garden, connect with nature and build community links. The majority live locally in E2, with many discovering the Reserve while passing by; others joined through word of mouth and our digital platforms.



## Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

A major achievement this year was the relaunch of our monthly newsletter. Rebuilt from scratch using the past two years of volunteer opt-ins, it now reaches 214 subscribers and serves as both a communication tool and an ongoing archive of activity across the Reserve.

### “The Reserve” - A Film by Karolina Raczynski



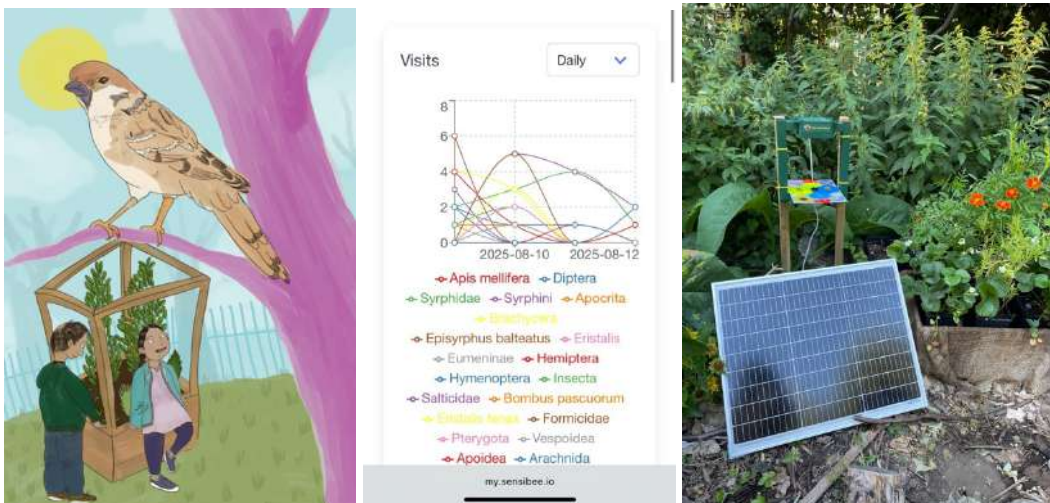
Filmmaker and community member Karolina Raczynski produced *The Reserve*, a poetic documentary capturing volunteer life at the site during winter 2025. Through personal stories, natural imagery and plant-chemistry film techniques, the work reflects the generosity of volunteers and the importance of the Reserve in their daily lives.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/1071870940?fl=pl&fe=sh>

### PhD Pollinator Project

We were pleased to support part of Ana Vadeanu’s PhD research (UCL Bartlett School of Planning / National Institute of Agricultural Botany), examining pollinator activity across London’s green spaces. Early findings from data gathered at both the Medicinal Garden and BGEG food-growing areas have already offered valuable insights, with further analysis and a public talk planned for 2026.

### Grow Wild Follow-On Grant



A follow-on grant from Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Grow Wild initiative funded a booklet documenting our clay pond project—a practical “how-to” resource for other community gardens. We also commissioned Sadie St. Hilaire to illustrate key pond-supporting species, which will inform future educational materials. Looking ahead to 2026, we aim to:

- finalise our management plans to strengthen long-term site resilience
- improve accessibility through infrastructure upgrades, including toilet plumbing, a new wheelchair ramp and additional seating

- expand soil-building and climate adaptation work
- support new research, including Bonnie Wang's PhD project on human–bat interactions



## Mycelium Alley Report by Abel Daniel

In 2025, work within Mycelium Alley continued to strengthen connections between the community and the world of fungi. What began as an experimental growing zone has now developed into a hub for learning, cultivation, and ecological observation. A significant milestone this year was the completion of both the Mycelium Ecology Report and the Introduction to Mycelium Alley booklet, documents that distil several years of collective research into an accessible guide for visitors and growers. Design and typesetting are underway, with the official launch planned for 2026.



## Mycelium Alley: Developments and Observations

The mushroom habitats were consistently productive this year, with regular fruiting of Turkey Tail, Oyster mushrooms, Birch Polypore, and Shiitake. These successful cultivation areas appear to have positively influenced the wider Nature Reserve, where a greater diversity of wild fungi was observed—likely supported by increased spore dispersal and growing volunteer awareness.

Experimentation remained central to the programme. New species were introduced, including Velvet Shank on logs and Dryad's Saddle on fresh substrates, alongside several new Oyster mushroom strains. To accommodate these trials, the older Wine Cap bed was cleared and repurposed.





A key development was the creation of a new mushroom-growing area within the BGEG polytunnel, providing a controlled environment for species that are less suited to external weather conditions. Early trials included Velvet Shank and a Lion's Mane growing kit, both of which generated interest among visitors and volunteers.

Mycelium Alley also continued as a focal point for volunteer activities, including watering, harvesting, and inoculating logs. These hands-on sessions supported learning about fungal lifecycles and ecological functions. Beyond cultivation, volunteers developed a dual-extraction Turkey Tail tincture and produced paper from fungi, highlighting the artistic and medicinal potential of the site's mushroom species.



In 2026, work will continue across the polytunnel and Ecology Garden, with a focus on trialling additional native UK mushroom varieties. Finalising the Mycelium Ecology Booklet remains a priority; the draft is complete and now requires funding for professional design and printing. Once produced, this guide will support wider public engagement and practical fungal education.

The day-to-day running of the Nature Reserve is generously supported by Awards for All, BBC Children In Need, Chapman Charitable Trust, Forte Charitable Foundation (formally Trustshouse), Garfield Weston, London Marathon Foundation, Marsh Charitable Trust, Postcode Neighbourhood Trust, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Tower Hill Trust, Womble Bond Dickinson.

## Community Ecologies Programme by Abel Daniel



The Community Ecologies Programme completed its second year in 2025 as a stakeholder-led initiative shaped through an open call for proposals. A panel of local volunteers selected projects aligned with the Nature Reserve's charitable objectives: health, ecology, culture, and learning. The resulting programme offered a platform for diverse practitioners to share skills, perspectives, and creative approaches to engaging with the Reserve.



Sessions ran on Saturday afternoons (3–4 pm) throughout the year, encouraging more visitors to explore the site. Programme highlights included:

- Creative Plant Naming Walk-shop, Yaya Wang
- Embodying Nature Through Butch Movement, Elspeth Chan Chi Fan
- Singing with the Birds, Catherine Clover
- Sensing, Mapping, Visioning: Collective Cartographies of BGNR, Leela Keshav
- Wild Food Preparation & Preservation, Magdalena Gomez
- After-Life Drawing Workshop, Kirsty Badenoch
- Unravelling the Patterns of Nature, Eden Rickson & Anand Joshi
- Providing Solitary Bees with Bed and Board, Eamonn Postlethwaite
- The Colour of Herbs Walk, Odhran Lawlor
- Wild Food Walk, Thanusan Gunabalasingham





Looking ahead, the 2026 Open Call will centre on climate change and climate adaptation, inviting proposals that approach these themes in creative, accessible, and community-building ways. Climate change can often feel overwhelming; this programme aims to offer entry points that foster curiosity, encourage meaningful engagement, and support both community wellbeing and ecological health.

Community Ecologies is generously supported by Chapman Charitable Trust, City Bridge Foundation, Nineveh Trust.

## Phytology Medicine Garden Updates by Izzy Johns



This year, we successfully completed the Apothecary Shed, our new feature for the medicine garden. We installed new shelving, introduced a wide range of jars for storing dried herbs and finished preparations and added a removable hanging drying rack. The drying rack has proved to be highly effective. The shed is now fully stocked with ingredients, tools, and kitchenware for making balms, tinctures, oil infusions, and other herbal preparations. It has been great to see the shed being actively used by many members of the community. People have begun collecting herbs and preparations independently, as well as with guidance from the Saturday afternoon medicine garden team.

## Plant Species in the Medicine Garden

This year, we reintroduced several plant species that have historically been part of the medicine garden but had become scarce or absent in recent years. These include clary sage,

## Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

oxeye daisy, self-heal, borage, calendula, and pansy. Our purpose in expanding or reintroducing species remains the same: to meet a diversity of community needs. This means growing plants that support a broad range of ailments, supporting biodiversity in the wider ecosystem, and including species from a variety of cultural herbal traditions.



Looking ahead, we are planning to introduce further new species next year. A new sunny area has opened beside the shed after a storm brought down an ivy-covered dead tree, and we intend to develop this into a new growing bed. Next year's focus will be on increasing our selection of nervine herbs to support stress, burnout, and anxiety. As always, we will be working with suggestions from the community on what new plants they would like to see growing in the garden.

### Volunteer Sessions

This year, volunteer sessions in the medicine garden have included a greater emphasis on herbal knowledge sharing alongside regular gardening tasks. We've also been familiarising volunteers with the Apothecary Shed and teaching them how to use the space effectively. A significant development has been the introduction of hands-on remedy-making. Volunteers have helped produce tinctures, infused oils, vinegars, and balms using plants grown within the garden. In a recent session, for example, the group made a plantain balm together. This work not only equips people with valuable practical skills but also allows us to preserve our harvest, so herbs remain accessible even out of season.

### Medicine Garden Team & Saturday Afternoon Opening

This year, we introduced a small rota of community members to care for and host the medicine garden during Saturday afternoon openings. We'd like to thank Ingrid, Fatima, Shilpi, Odhran and occasionally Bones, for holding the space regularly and for sharing their knowledge, enthusiasm, and support with visitors.

### Medicine Garden Booklet Updates

Our Medicine Garden Booklet is now close to completion. The booklet provides a clear and accessible guide to common plants in the garden, including how to identify them, what they can be used for, and basic preparation methods. Once finished, it will empower community members to confidently harvest and use herbs independently when visiting the space.





Phytology Medicine Garden is generously supported by Anton Juergens Charitable Trust, Awards for All, City Bridge Foundation, London Marathon Foundation, Postcode Neighbourhood Trust.

## Forest Friday by Ingrid Chen



Forest Friday is a free after-school nature club for families with school-aged children at the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve (BGNR). Sessions run on Fridays during term time and parts of the school holidays, continuing a long-standing local tradition of Friday nature clubs dating back to at least 2005. Our core aim is to welcome local families into the Reserve and support their wellbeing through nature-based play, learning, and, especially in recent years, providing much-needed shade and outdoor space.

This spring, we said goodbye to one of our long-standing Forest School leaders, Judith Stanley, who moved to Yorkshire to become a grandmother. We extend our warmest congratulations and heartfelt thanks for her years of dedication to both Forest Friday and the wider Nature Reserve. We are also grateful to Elwira, who volunteered with us during the transition, and to Maryam and Mark, both experienced Forest School practitioners who have recently joined the team. Maryam first attended sessions as a parent, and we are delighted to now have her as part of our leadership team.

## Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

In 2025 we were able to increase our frequency of sessions and began the year by supporting volunteer days with on-site childcare. Across the year, we delivered 43 sessions:

- 31 Friday sessions from February to November
- 12 Saturday sessions spanning the winter months, the summer holidays, and September, our busiest period
- During winter, although attendance is quieter, we contributed to habitat-enhancement work by helping build willow structures at the Bethnal Green Ecology Garden (BGEG). We continued collaborating with BGEG throughout the year, joining adult volunteer sessions and participating in the Community Harvest Picnic in September. We intend to continue this partnership in 2026.

This year we also expanded our feedback systems for both children and parents/carers. We will collate and analyse this data over winter to improve our offer for 2026.

Throughout 2025, families took part in litter-picking, maintaining the fungi farm, moving woodchip, cooking popcorn over the fire, sculpting with clay, and exploring the Reserve through games and guided learning. These activities help build confidence, resilience, and a sense of agency for young people facing the uncertainties of a changing climate.



Highlights included:

- building new willow structures
- watching blue tits raise their chicks in nest boxes
- enjoying a successful mushroom season
- ending our year with a bat watch during the final Friday session
- In the months ahead, we aim to strengthen our winter outdoor cooking skills and begin a small wildflower nursery to support nocturnal pollinators.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the trustees, staff, volunteers, and partner teams across BGNR, BGEG, and the Medicine Garden, as well as to our funders and fundraisers, for supporting this work and enabling families to enjoy our little woodland.

Forest Friday is generously supported by Arnold Clark Community Fund, BBC Children In Need, Marsh Charitable Trust, Skinners Company, Stafford Trust.



## Bethnal Green Ecology Garden by Michael Smythe



The Bethnal Green Ecology Garden (BGEG) completed its second growing season as a community food and ecology garden, addressing local needs around food security, biodiversity loss, and access to nature. A hotter and drier summer created challenges for our young hedgerow and meadows but resulted in an excellent crop of pumpkins and tomatoes. This year we:

- our first annual vegetable growers' competition, with awards for best raised bed and best vegetable
- installed our new polytunnel for year-round food growing
- built three shared community beds for residents wanting to participate without managing a full plot



In 2026, we hope these additions will broaden access and help more people connect with the soil, the seasons, and each other. Our summer events included the following highlights.

- Summer wild food foraging walk
- Forest Saturday children's activities
- Harvest Picnic (September 2025), attended by over 150 residents
- Winter working bee, supported by GoodGym and local volunteers

The garden continues to welcome weekly visits from Mission GP Practice, Stephen Hawking School, Misery Medicine & Rangers Kindergarten.



Bethnal Green Ecology Garden is generously supported by Anton Juergens Charitable Trust, Canary Wharf Community Fund, London Marathon Foundation, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Womble Bond Dickinson.

## Experimental School of Urban Ecology (2025–2026)

In 2025 we began developing the Experimental School of Urban Ecology, an annual learning programme supported by the City Bridge Foundation. The initiative aims to establish BGNR as a community learning hub, offering accessible ecological education rooted in the site's values: care for the land, community participation, practical skills, and environmental understanding. It also contributes to the financial resilience of the Nature Reserve. Early planning focused on shaping course structures, schedules, and teaching approaches, with detailed budget and governance work to follow. The project will evolve over time, and 2025 marks the first formal articulation of its vision.



### Course 1: Tree School – Children's Nature & Mental Health Programme

Led by Ingrid, Tree School builds on Forest Friday and offers a week-long immersive programme for children aged 5–11. Activities include nature walks, conservation tasks, creative projects, mindfulness, storytelling, and introductory herbal practice. The programme runs in late August, Monday–Friday, 9:30–4:00. Sliding-scale pricing and prioritisation of local families ensure accessibility.





### Course 2: Foraging & Land Stewardship

Led by Izzy, this course fills a national gap in ethical foraging education. Across six modules taught in spring, summer, and autumn, participants learn field practice, plant identification, sustainable harvesting, herbal preparation, legal responsibilities, and cultural histories. A tutorial system supports individual projects, and the course includes a dedicated mushroom module. It targets forest school leaders, ecologists, chefs, and others seeking to deepen their knowledge. Accreditation and a balanced fee structure (full-cost and subsidised places) are planned.



### Course 3: Climate, Ecology & Population Health

Delivered by a multidisciplinary team, this course integrates climate science, ecology, philosophy, health, culture, and social justice. Participants explore urban resilience, biodiversity, ecological needs, and community-based responses to climate change. The course concludes with a capstone project proposing actionable, local-scale interventions. Format and accreditation remain under development.

In 2026, the Experimental School of Urban Ecology will become a central focus for the BGNR Trust, accompanied by a rolling public programme of lectures, exhibitions, and community ecology events. This will offer valuable opportunities to gather participant insights and shape our work for 2027.

The Experimental School of Urban Ecology is generously supported by the City Bridge Foundation.

## Mobile Apothecary

In 2025, the Mobile Apothecary continued its mission to provide high-quality, plant-based remedies to community members in Bethnal Green and the surrounding neighbourhoods. Our street service operated on the last Sunday of each month from 7pm to 8pm, stationed outside Bethnal Green Tube Station. We continued our partnership with Refugee Community Kitchen (RCK), who generously supplied hot vegetarian meals each week, helping create a warm and welcoming environment for attendees.



Each session supported an average of more than 30 people, with approximately 80% being regular visitors. This consistency allowed meaningful relationships to form between residents, our street service team, and the remedies we offer. Throughout the year, our product range included Good Skin Balm, Decongestant Rub, Muscle & Joint Rub, Immune Support Vinegar, Cough Syrup, Hand Sanitiser, and Epsom Salts Deodorant. All products continued to undergo formal testing at Oxford Bioscience, ensuring they perform as intended. This rigorous process informs our descriptions of benefits, potential contraindications, and common irritants; all information is available upon request. Beyond our street service, volunteers delivered quarterly medicine-making workshops at a nearby community centre, using herbs grown in the Phytology Medicine Garden and sourced from local shops along Bethnal Green Road.



In 2025, we also hosted a visioning day with our core team. This gathering provided valuable feedback and helped us explore ways to evolve the service while maintaining our focus on fostering meaningful connections and mutual care within the neighbourhood. Looking ahead, the Mobile Apothecary will continue its monthly street distributions and medicine-making workshops to meet the community's needs. Sadly, our cargo bike was stolen from the Nature Reserve in November. Replacing this essential resource will require additional fundraising efforts in the year ahead.



We are grateful for the generous support of Fote Charitable Foundation (formally Trustshouse), Lush, and the Hollybush & Teasdale Tenants & Residents Association.

## Misery

In 2025, misery continued a residency at Bethnal Green Nature Reserve, offering the beloved programme: 'misery medicine: plant magic'. misery is a mental health community and sober rave based in London and led by and for queer, trans, intersex, black people and people of colour (QTIBPOC).

Through a series of outdoor, communal and nature-centred gatherings for QTIBPOC, participants came together at the Reserve, connected with each other and the natural world.



This year, misery's monthly sessions took place between February - December, travelling through all four seasons at the Reserve. In winter, we dove deep into warming herbs and roots with chai. In spring, we made medicines with beautiful violets and shared queer, floral folklore. Summertime had us making decolonial cyanotype prints and discussing how we might reclaim ecological art practices. Autumn began with a session on roses, which we made monographs of and heart-centred teas from. The year ended with a fire ritual, where we wrote intentions for the new year on wildflower seed paper.



## Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

As usual, each session was centred on rest, collaboration, curiosity, and care, honouring our shared cultural wisdoms, queerness, and the various multispecies ecologies that inform misery and the Reserve. The programme also continued to respond to land-based colonial genocides across the world in Palestine, Sudan and Congo.

misery also tended to plants in the Bethnal Green Ecology Garden, and summertime saw a flurry of tomatoes, chilli, nasturtium, lavender, rosemary, marigold. The tree spinach was especially formidable!



### Mission GP Practice

In 2025, the Mission Practice, our local GP surgery, continued its weekly site care sessions, tending both the Medicine Garden and the food-growing areas. Facilitated by the Social Prescribing team, these sessions encouraged staff to care for the Nature Reserve—and for each other—throughout the warmer months.

From September 2025, the Mission Practice continued its residency connecting local residents with food growing at the Bethnal Green Ecology Garden. This initiative provides a dedicated space for growing food and offers patients experiencing isolation the opportunity to connect with others and support their wellbeing through participation in a vibrant community garden.





In the summer of 2025, we lost Esther Bissessar, a much-loved member of the Mission Practice Social Prescribing team. To honour Esther's deep connection to the Nature Reserve and her dedication to supporting local community members, we held a memorial gathering at the Reserve and installed a bench in her name.

### Esther's Bench Dedication

*In the heart of Bethnal Green, where cultures meet and stories intertwine, there was a woman whose presence felt like a quiet sunrise—gentle, warm, and full of promise. Her name was Esther Bissessar.*

*Esther served at The Mission Practice as a Wellbeing Link Worker, but her work was far more than a job. She was a bridge between people and services, between fear and hope, between isolation and belonging. She dedicated herself to supporting asylum seekers and vulnerable patients, many of whom arrived with little more than the weight of their pasts and uncertainty about their futures.*

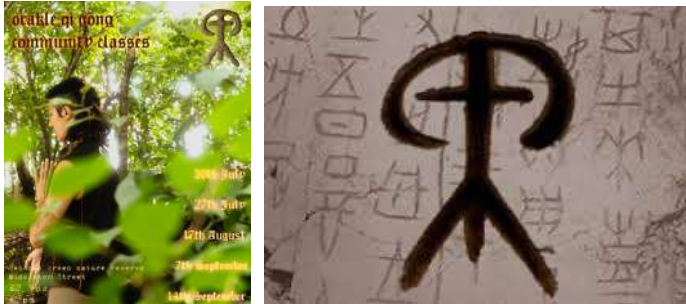
*Esther had a rare gift: burdens felt lighter in her presence, and even the most anxious hearts found rest. She met each person with calm grace and made people feel seen—not as cases, but as human beings worthy of care and connection.*

*The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve was one of her sanctuaries. Here, she found space to breathe, reflect, and restore. Sometimes she sat quietly beneath the trees; at other times, she accompanied someone who needed peace, grounding, or a moment of safety. Her love for nature was inseparable from her faith in a creator God, a faith that flowed through everything she did.*

*Even in the hardest moments, her message of love and connection shone brightly, drawing the Mission Practice team closer together in both grief and gratitude for a life so generously lived. Although she is no longer with us, her legacy remains in every life she touched, in every seed of kindness she planted, and in the quiet moments of connection that continue to bloom in her memory.*

## Qi Gong with Orakle Apothecary (bones tan jones)

Throughout the spring, summer and autumn, bones tan jones facilitated accessible Qi Gong sessions beneath the woodland canopy. Held on Sunday mornings, these sessions helped participants connect with their bodies, their community, and the Nature Reserve.



The sessions introduced foundational movements, theories, and concepts, emphasising soft strength and playful movement—core elements of Qi Gong’s health benefits.

## Stephen Hawking School

Stephen Hawking School continued its outdoor learning sessions at the Nature Reserve and neighbouring Bethnal Green Ecology Garden throughout 2025. The school, located across the road from our site, provides education for children aged 5–11 with profound, multiple, and severe learning, health, and care needs.



The school maintained weekly visits focused on growing and caring for herbs and vegetables in their dedicated beds. We look forward to strengthening this partnership in 2026, with plans for visits to increase from one day a week to several shorter sessions.

## Rangers Kindergarten

In 2025, the Forest School children continued to deepen their connection with nature through play and activities at the nature reserve, while also branching out into the ecology garden. Here, they cared for their own growing bed, nurturing baby trees grown from seed. This has been a particularly meaningful experience, and the children have shown their attachment to the nature reserve by regularly asking whether we can plant some of the trees “at Forest School.”

This year, we explored permaculture more deeply. Following the Wheel of the Year, the children learned about the trees within the reserve, how to use them respectfully, and how



## Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

they support wider ecosystems. Trees and plants were incorporated into activities such as ink making and foraging for teas, while continuing to play a central role in imaginative and physical play.



The children have also embraced practical conservation activities, including litter picking, wood-chip spreading, and dead hedge building. In the early months of 2025, they became deeply engaged in an animal tracking project, creating ink traps with charcoal and oil and using cardboard boxes to record footprints of resident and visiting animals. They also captured images of nocturnal wildlife using a night-vision camera.



One area that has featured heavily in play this year is the space left when the old writers hut was moved and transformed into the Medicine Garden Apothecary Shed. This open area allowed children to explore freely without disturbing new trees, plants, or animal habitats, and has proven to be a real gift. Leaving land fallow to observe what emerges is a core permaculture principle, and this year we applied it not only to land but also to time. By intentionally leaving space in the day for observation and spontaneous activity, alongside the fallow shed area, we fostered rich, child-led play. This included physical activities such as climbing, balancing, swinging, and running, as well as imaginative play like shops, dragon dens, home and den building, and tea ceremonies. We look forward to seeing what emerges in 2026.

Heartfelt thanks to our close local partners Praxis, Revoke CIC, Hackney Herbal for another great year working alongside one another.

### Renku Group by Claire Chatelet

In November 2024, a workshop on Renku, an ancient form of collaborative poetry, was the recipient of the 2024 'Community Ecologies' micro-grant. The workshop served as an

introduction, as there are many rules and guidelines for creating and presenting a finished poem. Some participants were keen to continue, so we met three more times and plan several more sessions before completing a Kasen—a 36-stanza poem, the favourite form of Matsuo Bashō, the most widely known master of Renku. Once finished, it will be illustrated and displayed in the Reserve.



Our writing focuses solely on the Reserve and its local area. Participants have found it a meaningful way to share reflections on what the Reserve means to them, especially as we meet across different seasons. The activity has sparked engaging conversations and broadened our appreciation of the place, offering an accessible, creative way for anyone involved with the site to participate.

## Knitters/Yarn Group by Claire Chatelet

In 2025, the Knitting/Yarn Group at Bethnal Green Nature Reserve consolidated into a recognised and resilient creative community, evolving from its informal yarn-bombing origins.



Summer 2025 brought increased interest from newcomers, prompting the group to clarify its purpose, boundaries, and responsibilities: key members completed site inductions for safe access, sessions were formalised to run twice monthly during autumn and winter, and publicity was updated to emphasise that the group is a shared, non-instructional inclusive craft space.

Members also continued creative work beyond BGNR, with three Nature Knitters contributing to a jute-history project linking Dundee and Bangladesh, and 2025 reaffirmed the group's social and emotional impact, welcoming diverse participants and fostering connection, craft, and moments of belonging in the Reserve.



## Aims & Aspirations for 2026

- Continue nurturing intergenerational connections locally, building meaningful engagement with both Nature Reserve and Ecology Garden as a hub for community and ecosystem health, culture and learning.
- Strengthen Understanding of Climate Impacts - continue to explore how climate change affects our local area, supporting greater collective understanding of its impacts on community mental and physical health.
- Enhance Feedback Systems – by furthering the development of feedback mechanisms across all programmes to ensure our work is continually shaped by the voices of those we serve.

This report was approved by the Trustees at the 2025 Annual General Meeting on 13th December 2025 and signed by:

Sajida Malik   
Chair, Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust  
Charity No. 1166648

# Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A Independent Examiner's Report

#### Report to the trustees

Charity Name  
Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust

#### On accounts for the year ended

31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	<b>Charity no (if any)</b>	1166648
-----------------------------	--------------------------------	---------

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 03 / 2025**.

#### 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 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:

- 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.

**Signed:** VBEQIRI **Date:** 15/12/2025

**Name:** Visar Beqiri

#### Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

ACA - ICAEW

**Address:** 6 The Abbey Woods, Douglas, IM2 5PL



Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the year ending 31 March 2025



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name:	Charity No	1166648	
Bethnal Green Nature	Company No		
Annual accounts for the period			
Period start date	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025

## Section A Statement of financial activities

Recommended categories by activity	Unrestricted funds £ F01	Restricted income funds £ F02	Total funds £ F04	Prior year funds £ F05
<b>Income (Note 3)</b>				
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	25,900	88,557	114,457	36,178
Charitable activities	3,952	-	3,952	8,467
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,852</b>	<b>88,557</b>	<b>118,409</b>	<b>44,645</b>
<b>Expenditure (Notes 4)</b>				
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	20,074	76,542	96,616	42,873
Other	4,968	-	4,968	2,367
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,042</b>	<b>76,542</b>	<b>101,584</b>	<b>45,240</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>4,810</b>	<b>12,015</b>	<b>16,825</b>	<b>[595]</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Total funds brought forward	8,175	22,191	30,366	30,961
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>12,985</b>	<b>34,206</b>	<b>47,191</b>	<b>30,366</b>

## Section B Balance sheet

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Total this year £	Total last year £
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors (Note 5)	-	-	-	100
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 7)	19,154	34,206	53,360	71,101
<b>Total current assets</b>	19,154	34,206	53,360	71,201
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 6)</b>	6,169	-	6,169	40,835
<b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>	12,985	34,206	47,191	30,366
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	12,985	34,206	47,191	30,366
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>				
Restricted income funds (Note 8)		34,206	34,206	22,191
Unrestricted funds	12,985		12,985	8,175
<b>Total funds</b>	12,985	34,206	47,191	30,366

*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.*

On behalf of all the trustees

Sajida Malik



Company Registration No. [England and Wales] 1166648



**Section C**

**Notes to the accounts**

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

**1.4 Changes to accounting estimates**

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

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

**1.5 Material prior year errors**

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

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

# Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

Section C		Notes to the accounts		(cont)
Note 2		Accounting policies		
2.2 INCOME				
Recognition of income	These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the charity becomes entitled to the resources;</li><li>it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources;</li><li>the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.</li></ul>	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
Support costs	The charity has incurred expenditure on support costs.	Yes *	No *	N/a *
		✓	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



Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the year ending 31 March 2025

<b>Section C</b>	<b>Notes to the accounts</b>	<b>(cont)</b>
------------------	------------------------------	---------------

**Note 3**

**Income**

Analysis of income		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total funds	Prior year
		Income funds	income funds		
				£	£
<b>Donations and legacies:</b>	Donations and gifts	-	-	-	-
	General grants provided by government/other charities	25,900	88,557	114,457	36,178
	<b>Total</b>	25,900	88,557	114,457	36,178
<b>Charitable activities:</b>	Charitable activities	3,304	-	3,304	5,743
	Donations	648	-	648	2,724
	<b>Total</b>	3,952	-	3,952	8,467
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		29,852	88,557	118,409	44,645

**Note 4**

**Expenditure**

Analysis	This year			Last year		
	Unrestricted income funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Unrestricted income funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds
			£			
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities:</b>						
Professional fees	4,988	-	4,988	918	-	918
Project Costs	15,086	76,542	91,628	6,964	34,991	41,955
<b>Total expenditure on charitable activities</b>	20,074	76,542	96,616	7,882	34,991	42,873
<b>Other</b>						
Insurance	1,226	-	1,226	1,170	-	1,170
Bank Charges	60		60	60		60
Maintenance and other overheads	3,682		3,682	1,137		1,137
			-			-
<b>Total other expenditure</b>	4,968	-	4,968	2,367	-	2,367
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	25,042	76,542	101,584	10,249	34,991	45,240

Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the year ending 31 March 2025

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
-----------	-----------------------	--------

**Note 5 Debtors and prepayments**

**5.1 Analysis of debtors**

	This year £	Last year £
Trade debtors	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	-	100.0
Other debtors	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Note 6 Creditors and accruals**

**6.1 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 £
Trade creditors	4,969	-	-	-
Accruals and deferred income	1,200	40,435	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,169</b>	<b>40,435</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**6.2 Deferred income**

*Please explain the reasons why income is deferred.*

This year	Last year
	<i>£15,635 - Groundwork £5,000 - London Catalyst £10,000 - Garfield Weston £2,000 - Chapman Trust £4,800 - Tower Hamlet Homes £3,000 - Rank Foundation Representing income for projects in 2024/25</i>

**Movement in deferred income account**

	This year £	Last year £
Balance at the start of the reporting period	40,435	25,636
Amounts added in current period	-	24,799
Amounts released to income from previous periods	(40,435)	(10,000)
<b>Balance at the end of the reporting period</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>40,435</b>



Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the year ending 31 March 2025

<b>Section C</b>	<b>Notes to the accounts</b>	<b>(cont)</b>
------------------	------------------------------	---------------

**Note 7    Cash at bank and in hand**

	This year	Last year
	£	£
Cash at bank and on hand	53,360	71,101
<b>Total</b>	<u>53,360</u>	<u>71,101</u>

Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the year ending 31 March 2025

**Section C** **Notes to the accounts** **(cont)**

**Note 8** **Charity funds**

**8.1 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	Fund balances carried forward
			£	£	£	£
Charities Trust	R	Food Garden and Bethnal (	6,300	-	(6,300)	-
Awards for All	R	Ecology/Garden	7,146	-	(7,146)	-
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	R	Mobile Apothecary	3,320	5,000	(3,320)	5,000
Tower Hill Trust	R	Outdoor Classroom	4,001	-	(4,001)	-
Groundworks	R	Bethnal Green Ecology Ga	-	31,270	(31,270)	-
Chapman Trust	R	Community Ecologies publ	-	2,000	(693)	1,307
Rank Foundation	R	Bethnal Green Ecology Ga	-	3,000	(2,994)	6
Postcode Society	R	Forest Friday	1,424	-	(1,424)	-
Tower Hamlets Homes	R	Bethnal Green Ecology Ga	-	4,800	(4,800)	-
London Catalyst	R	Bethnal Green Ecology Ga	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Royal Botanical Garden, Kew	R	Ecology & outreach	-	2,500	(1,616)	884
Museum of Homelessness	R	Mobile Apothecary	-	607	-	607
Lush	R	Mobile Apothecary	-	3,000	(2,660)	340
Stafford Trust	R	Forest Friday	-	4,180	-	4,180
Children in Need	R	Forest Friday	-	8,300	(2,918)	5,382
Nineveh Trust	R	Community Ecologies publ	-	4,000	-	4,000
City Bridge Trust	R	Adult learning research & c	-	12,500	(2,400)	10,100
Arnold Clark Foundation	R	Forest Friday	-	400	-	400
Skinners Trust	R	Forest Friday	-	2,000	-	2,000
SHED	UR	Mycelium project	1,859	-	-	1,859
Foyle Foundation	UR	Charitable activities	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Other unrestricted income	UR	Charitable activities	6,316	3,952	(7,540)	2,728
Postcode Society Trust	UR	Charitable activities	-	10,900	(2,502)	8,398
Garfield Weston	UR	Charitable activities	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
<b>Total Funds as per balance sheet</b>			<b>30,366</b>	<b>118,409</b>	<b>(101,584)</b>	<b>47,191</b>

Fund balances carried forward include assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency

Yes*	No*
u	✓



Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the year ending 31 March 2025

<b>Section C</b>	<b>Notes to the accounts</b>	<b>[cont]</b>
------------------	------------------------------	---------------

**Note 8**                      **Charity funds**

**8.2 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	Fund balances carried forward
			£	£	£	£
Charities Trust	R	Food Garden capital w	-	10,000	(3,700)	6,300
Awards for All	R	Ecology/Garden	1,892	9,000	(3,746)	7,146
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	R	Reserve Management	-	8,000	(4,680)	3,320
Tower Hill Trust	R	Outdoor Classroom	-	4,900	(899)	4,001
Timberland	R	Reserve Management	2,400	4,278	(6,678)	-
ArtsCouncil England	R	We Speak in Tongues	2,237	-	(2,237)	-
Raines Foundation	R	Forest Friday	819	-	(819)	-
Postcode Society	R	Forest Friday	13,656	-	(12,232)	1,424
SHED	UR	Mycelium project	1,859	-	-	1,859
Foyle Foundation	UR	Garden project	2,539	-	(2,539)	-
Other unrestricted income	UR	Charitable activities	1,085	8,467	(3,236)	6,316
TRIODOS BANK UK	UR	Mycelium project	4,474	-	(4,474)	-
<b>Total Funds as per balance sheet</b>			<b>30,961</b>	<b>44,645</b>	<b>(45,240)</b>	<b>30,366</b>

Fund balances carried forward include assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign	Yes*	No*
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>