



## Trustees Report

The Trustees present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022

### Organisational structure

Hawbush Community Gardens is a constituted as a CIO – Foundation. Charity Registration 1170413

#### Address

Bull Street  
Brierley Hill  
West Midlands  
DY5 3NQ

#### Trustees

Ken Smith	Chair
Michelle Betteridge	Secretary
Trevor Counley	
Serena Craigie	
David Hadley	
Tim Gallier	

#### Objectives and Activities

- 1 To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Brierley Hill (DY5) and surrounding areas the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

- 2 To further such other purposes as are exclusively charitable purposes under the laws of England and Wales as the Trustees from time to time decide.

### Main Activities

During 2022 activities and operations have continued to gain momentum in numbers of people visiting, attending group activities and our regular Hawbush Family Afternoons. In the latter part of the year, interest in the gardens increased significantly within the Hawbush and Brierley Hill Communities and more widely, as a result of the Queens Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the Queens Green Canopy Award and through our contact with other community groups and local forums. This interest was reflected in estimated attendance numbers; total hours for 2022 recorded at 13,882 (cf. 7,450 for 2021), representing on average 37.4 hrs/day (20.4 hrs/day for 2021). An estimated total of 205 HCG volunteers, assisted with activities during the year; also an estimate of 215 EKHO CIC/Integrated Plus volunteers and referrals.

During 2022, a total of seven family events were held, including a HAF Christmas event, joint with Harry's Café. The events consistently well attended with very positive feedback from attending families; a pre-registration booking procedure is necessary to ensure attendance numbers are restricted to within manageable levels, for the volunteers we have available.

Since early March, the mother and toddler support group, Mom's Mindful Hub has been running. Nature Stay and Play is aimed at mothers and their families. The group has a focus on mental wellbeing and aims to promote connection between both parent and child and parent to parent through child led play and nature-based activities. The primary target audience is mothers who are facing mental health challenges and social isolation. Weekly attendance varies with the weather, but sometimes over 15 families represented. Interest and popularity of the group has increased during the year and they received recognition in Dudley CVS Spotlight Awards, November 2022.

Dudley CVS Integrated Plus and EKHO CIC volunteers have continued to run the Friday support group throughout the year, with on average 10 adults attending and 10 volunteer staff (allotment project). Later in the year, a Wednesday session initiated, a closed group for more vulnerable adults, with an average of 10 clients each week.

The woodland space, through EKHO and IP volunteers has made a considerable contribution to both community engagement and the profile of Hawbush Gardens throughout the year, with craft activities organised at the family events during the year. The EKHO group have also linked with other community groups to run/support workshops with natural and sustainable craft activities. Two very successful "Woodland Folk evenings" were also organised, with food, fellowship and singing around the bonfire, with over 30 attending, many new to Hawbush Gardens. Further progress was made in the development of the sensory garden (therapeutic horticulture project); the aim to provide gardening activity and OT support for those with limited mobility, for whom there is limited provision at present.

The music group, organised by Integrated Plus, has continued to meet in the community building, Wednesday pm.



## Achievements and Performance

Renovation work on the large pond (begun in autumn/winter 2021), progressed well following re-lining and channelling of the spring water inflow, with some landscaping around the margins. The pond has become, both an attractive feature and a powerful draw for wildlife; with a range of bird species, aquatic plants and supporting a thriving population of newts, frogs, dragon flies and many other insects. The recently established lavender bed is attractive to bees and other pollinating insects.

A local bee-keeper has continued to make regular visits to manage the hives located in the main orchard. In August, with the help of the bee-keeper, we were able to harvest our second batch of "Hawbush Honey". In 2022 over 7 litres of honey were collected and sold in small jars; in total 33 jars, which were very popular with volunteers, visitors and local residents and sold without any promotional effort, raising a total of £165.

Following some hard work by young volunteers from Princes Trust and the High Oak Community Project, an attractive clearing has been created on the raised area overlooking the art garden and woodland to NE and picnic area to SW. This site was chosen by the family of a former Hawbush resident for a memorial bench and, also, for the Queens Jubilee Green Canopy planting, the latter in the presence of WM Deputy Lieutenant, Mayor of Dudley, Mike Wood (MP) and Cllr Adam Davies. A special tree was also be planted in this location in memory of Sheridan Jones, TCT Connect Project, who sadly died of COVID in December, 2021.

As part of the original vision for Hawbush Gardens, we have continued to supply freshly grown fruit and vegetables to the Black Country Foodbank and some families in the community; in 2022, a total of 241kg of produce (potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, vegetables and fruit).

Based on feedback from groups and records of events held throughout the year, an estimate of the number of people in the community impacted (positively) by the work of the volunteers and community groups on Hawbush Gardens has been drawn together, as follows:

HCG volunteers - 205

EKHO referrals & volunteers - 215

Family events – estimated 50 families – 200

Mom's Mindful Hub including children - 100

TCT Connect Project- 15

Plot holders & families - 40

Pens Meadow students - 40

Dudley YJS rep. - 20

Gardens in community - 10

Foodbank (indirect) - 30

Hence a TOTAL = 875 (approx.)

The Queens Award for Voluntary Service, was announced on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, anniversary of The Queen's Coronation. The Celebration of The Queen's Award was held at the Birmingham Hippodrome, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022. A glass fronted display case has been made for the crystal and mounted in the Community Building, alongside the QAVS Certificate, personally signed by Her Majesty.

## Financial Review

Principal sources of income included receipts from Allotment Fees, Donations, Grants and Hire Charges which are used to sustain the availability of the facilities for the benefit of the community.

## Policy on reserves

The policy agreed by the trustees is to aim to hold in unrestricted reserves not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets (the 'free' reserves) sufficient to cover the general overhead expenses and salary costs not specifically funded by external agencies, for a period of six months. At this level, the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. It would then be necessary to consider how the funding would be replaced or activities changed. The amount of 'free' reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 amounted to £6610 which equates to 33.35 months.

## Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees on                      and signed on their behalf by

05/09/23  
*K. A. Smith*

**Ken Smith**  
**Chairman of the Board of Trustees**



<b>HAWBUSH COMMUNITY GARDENS</b>				
<b>Cash in hand as at 31st December 2021</b>				<b>£5293.49</b>
Year to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022				
<b>INCOME</b>				
Plots Fee		880		
Sales		203		
Donations		2012		
Room Hire		560		
Sundry		40		
		0		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>				<b>3695.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
HB Project		0		
Maintenance		402.59		
Gardens		1185.88		
Utilities		258.61		
Social		0		
Charges		63.6		
Sundry		467.56		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>				<b>2378.24</b>
Cash in hand as at 31 Dec 2022				<b>6610.25</b>