



## 2024 Trustees Report

The Trustees present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

### Organisational structure

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

Address: Bull Street, Brierley Hill, West Midlands, DY5 3NQ

### Trustees during 2024:

Ken Smith	Chair	
Michelle Betteridge	Secretary	Resigned 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024
David Hadley		Resigned 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
John Merrick	Appointed 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	Resigned 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Jason Bloomer	Appointed 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	
Tracey Hingley	Appointed 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	

### 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

The past year has been a busy and exciting period in the life of the gardens, with the long term engagement between our landlord, Dudley MBC and the trustees of Hawbush Community Gardens, nearing the end of negotiations. The trustees have agreed to take responsibility for the care and management of the site under the terms of the long term lease, which we are hoping will finally be signed in 2025.

There have been a number of challenges throughout the year, with a number of long-term trustees stepping down, and the additional challenges of running an increasingly busy site and the increased attendance of groups and individuals. But we have been blessed with a number of different community initiatives taking place in and around the gardens which have allowed the gardens to continue to make a positive impact on the community and the families and individuals who have been able to enjoy the facilities and connect with nature whilst attending at Hawbush Community Gardens.

EKHO Collective have again been a brilliant asset to the gardens this year, facilitating a number of community projects on a weekly, monthly and drop in basis, including a Social Prescribing Community Cooking & Craft group, which ran from June-December 2024, which saw roughly 185 attendees over those months. Another 30 attendees came to the Winter activity afternoons in collaboration with Canal

and River Trust, including the Dudley College SEN group. They worked in partnership with Black Country Touring and the Brierley Hill Cultural Consortium and Wildworks to host a number of gatherings, which saw up to 200 attendees over 4 different sessions enjoying community singing, a poetry gathering and picnic. EKHO Collective also successfully gained funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority to install a community compost toilet, share shack and build a cob oven from September 2024 onwards which are important assets to our gardens. A Green Week Community Open day was also hosted welcoming over 250 visitors to the Gardens.

Amblecote Christian Church also continued to host family events throughout 2024, with up to 100 attendees at each of the 6 family afternoons. The majority of these attendees live within DY5 and the area surrounding the community gardens. At one summer event, 12 young people from the church assisted with the set up, running of activities and clearing up, and did a fantastic job. We are grateful to ACC for all the hard work and fantastic food and activities they organise at these events.

Mom's Mindful Hub also continued to use the Hawbush meadow for their Nature play group throughout March-Nov 2024, which saw a number of parents with young children receive mental health support whilst providing a safe and engaging place for their children to learn and play. Feedback for this group has been incredibly positive and we are looking to work closely with this group in the future to widen it's reach and engagement within the gardens.

Towards the end of the year, we were able to secure funding through Dudley CVS Integrated Plus to set up a "Gardening Club Plus" group, to provide practical support and training for social prescribing referrals, as well as new and existing volunteers. These volunteers have been crucial in keeping the gardens ticking along, working tirelessly on many days to tidy, trim, paint, build and maintain the large site.

Part of our work is centred around 26 allotment plots, all of which are currently tenanted. Just over half (16) of these plots are now under group tenancy which is beneficial, not only in terms of plot use and management, but in relation to community engagement.

With significantly increasing costs as a result of added Leaseholder responsibilities for the site, an increase of the annual plot fee from January 2025, amongst other charges, was agreed by the trustees.

Daily logging of on-site hours has continued and gives an indication of the increasing impact of Hawbush Gardens on the community, providing opportunity for enjoyment and growing activity in a beautiful location and impacting positively on health and well-being of large numbers of people, of all ages. Based on total hours worked by month and average hours /day, the **total volunteer hours for 2024 was 10,600. Overall daily averages were 29 hours per day for 2024.**

## **Achievements and Performance**

As in previous years, the trustees need to record our thanks for the major volunteer (regular and short-term groups) input & contribution to the maintenance requirements and development work in HCG, as they have again ensured that our gardens continue to remain a place of belonging, friendship and welcome.

We have again supported Pens Meadow School, with weekly attendance of pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties, working with the staff and pupils to help them achieve their full potential. The sessions encourage the pupils to be active participants at the gardens, working hard, cultivating their own allotment plot, in spreading wood chip around the site, in leaf clearance on the car-park and in maintenance of Queens Memorial Garden.

The regular input by young people through Dudley YJS and their leaders has also made a significant impact throughout the year, e.g. in hedge cutting, pathway maintenance and being willing to undertake "whatever is needed." Not only their hard work, but some of the feedback from the youngsters on reparation has been a great encouragement.

Students from Dudley College also visit regularly with their group of Animal Care students who have SEND. They regularly come down to enjoy the gardens, eat their lunch and tend to their plot. The tutor in charge has volunteered at several community events and also supported the gardens in other ways.

HCG volunteers gave significant support to Dudley Stroke Association -who welcome participants onto their allotment weekly -,with installation of an accessible pathway around the DSA plot and in the installation of three large raised beds and some benches for seating. Some practical support provided with Dudley College students, in the installation of pathway edging and in propagation and planting.

As part of the original vision for Hawbush Gardens, we continue to supply freshly grown fruit and vegetables to the Black Country Food Bank (potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, vegetables, fruit). HCG food donations in 2024, were 502kg, with 2024 a notable year for potatoes - 187kg, cucumbers – 82kg, tomatoes - 45kg. Fresh produce is always very well received and is very popular amongst the people who access the foodbank provision, particularly freshly dug potatoes, cucumbers and courgettes. Over the 8 years, 2017 to 2024 inclusive, a total of 2.25 tonnes of fresh produce have been donated to Food Bank and local families, an average of 281 kg per year.

## **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 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 2024 amounted to £8402 which equates to 23.5 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 8th July 2025, and signed on their behalf by



**Amy Wager**

**Chair of Trustees**

# Hawbush Community Gardens

## Analysis of income and expenditure Selected period: 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

	General	Designated	Restricted	This year	Total Last year
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
<b>Donations and legacies</b>					
0400 - Donations	4,737.12	-	-	4,737.12	131.72
<b>Donations and legacies Totals</b>	<b>4,737.12</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,737.12</b>	<b>131.72</b>
<b>Income from charitable activities</b>					
0100 - Allotment & Woodland Fees	752.50	-	-	752.50	780.00
0200 - Room Hire	295.00	-	-	295.00	520.00
0220 - Events & Activities	360.00	-	-	360.00	180.00
0300 - Grants	-	-	1,100.00	1,100.00	4,500.00
<b>Income from charitable activities Totals</b>	<b>1,407.50</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>2,507.50</b>	<b>5,980.00</b>
<b>Other trading activities</b>					
0600 - Other Income	289.70	-	-	289.70	665.11
<b>Other trading activities Totals</b>	<b>289.70</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>289.70</b>	<b>665.11</b>
<b>Investments</b>					
0700 - Interest	54.04	-	-	54.04	-
<b>Investments Totals</b>	<b>54.04</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54.04</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Income and endowments Grand totals</b>	<b>6,488.36</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>7,588.36</b>	<b>6,776.83</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities</b>					
2000 - Garden Equipment & Tools	1,022.82	-	-	1,022.82	5,269.27
2006 - Toiletries & Consumables	14.32	-	-	14.32	10.20
2010 - Repairs & Maintenance	477.07	-	-	477.07	897.12
2020 - Utilities	228.15	-	-	228.15	236.88
2021 - Insurance	489.77	-	-	489.77	454.54
2040 - Licenses & Subscriptions	180.00	-	-	180.00	150.00
2050 - Accountancy & Professional Fees	1,875.67	-	-	1,875.67	152.39
3000 - Bank & Finance Charges	-	-	-	-	15.40
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities Totals</b>	<b>4,287.80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,287.80</b>	<b>7,185.80</b>
<b>Expenditure Grand totals</b>	<b>4,287.80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,287.80</b>	<b>7,185.80</b>

**Hawbush Community Gardens**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**For the period from 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024**

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	4,737.12	-	-	4,737.12	131.72
Income from charitable activities	1,407.50	1,100.00	-	2,507.50	5,980.00
Other trading activities	289.70	-	-	289.70	665.11
Investments	54.04	-	-	54.04	-
<b>Total income</b>	<b>6,488.36</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,588.36</b>	<b>6,776.83</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Expenditure on charitable activities	4,287.80	-	-	4,287.80	7,185.80
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>4,287.80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,287.80</b>	<b>7,185.80</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer</b>	<b>2,200.56</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,300.56</b>	<b>(408.97)</b>
<b>Transfers:</b>					
Gross transfers between funds - in	-	-	-	-	-
Gross transfers between funds - out	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains / losses</b>					
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	-	-	-	-
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>2,200.56</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,300.56</b>	<b>(408.97)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>	<b>6,610.25</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>8,401.84</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,501.84</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>
<b>Represented by</b>					
Unrestricted					
General Fund	8,401.84	-	-	8,401.84	6,201.28
Restricted					
Dudley CVS Spring Into Action 24-25	-	1,100.00	-	1,100.00	-
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>8,401.84</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,501.84</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>

**Hawbush Community Gardens**  
**Balance Sheet detailed**

		As at 31/12/2024	As at 31/12/2023
<b>Current assets</b>			
	7001: Current Account - Metro	2,147.80	6,201.28
	7002: Deposit Account - Metro	7,354.04	-
	<b>Total Current assets</b>	<b>9,501.84</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>
	<b>Net Asset surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>9,501.84</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>
<b>Reserves</b>			
	Excess/(deficit) to date	3,300.56	(408.97)
	Z01: Starting balances	6,201.28	6,610.25
	<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>9,501.84</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>

**Represented by Funds**

General (Unrestricted)	8,401.84	6,201.28
Restricted	1,100.00	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,501.84</b>	<b>6,201.28</b>