

Barracks Lane Community Garden Project Ltd

Chair's Annual Report 2016

Presented at AGM

Company Registration Number: 05945388

Charity Number: 1116544

For year ended 31st March 2016



Photo (c) Mim Saxl



*Our funders and supporters
in 2015 / 2016:*



**St Michaels and All saints
Charitable Funds**



Members of the Board and Professional Advisors

Registered Charity Name:

Barracks Lane Community Garden Project

Charity Number: 1116544

Company Registration No.: 05945388

Registered Office:

c/o 36 Kenilworth Avenue

Oxford

OX4 2AN

Trustees (Directors) as of April 2016:

Jenny Creese

Roger Felton

Clare Ferguson
(treasurer)

Christopher Grimshaw

Peter Lefort

Lizzie MacHale

Susie Ohlenslager

Martin Stott

Trustee (Company Secretary):

John Green

Bankers:

Co-operative Bank PLC

The Bank House

13 New Rd

Oxford

OX1 1LG

Barracks Lane Community Garden Project Ltd

Chairperson's Annual Report - Year ended 31st March 2016

The Chairperson, (also Company Secretary) on behalf of the Trustees, (also Directors for the purposes of company law) present the report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2016.

The Trustees

The current Board of Trustees appoints new Trustees at a General Meeting, and the decision is duly minuted. One third of Trustees are obliged to retire by rotation at each Annual General Meeting and offer themselves for re-election if that is their wish.

Governance and Management

Barracks Lane Community Garden Project was originally registered as a charity in 2005 and became a company limited by guarantee and incorporated in September 2006. The company registration number is 05945388. Charity number 1116544.

The Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association govern the Charity

The work of the Charity is undertaken by the Company Secretary and Trustee Directors. They are responsible for ensuring that the strategic aims of the Charity, as determined by the Trustees, are achieved to their satisfaction.

The Charity does not employ staff but relies on tremendous help from volunteers and on contracted specialist knowledge and skills for project development and programme delivery.





Chairperson / Company Secretary's Summary John Green

This year in the garden has been marked by physical changes with the aim of improving access for everyone. As we signed a new fifteen year lease with Oxford City Council we agreed to take on a new area of land and part of our work has been to clear this and build an access ramp, path and seating. Students from Oxford Brookes University produced a new covered gateway with green roof into this new area and we were delighted to have their creative and practical input.

Funding from the National Lottery Awards for All programme enabled this to happen and to have more lighting installed making the garden easier to use throughout the year and into the later evening. Additional funding from the St Michael's and All Saints' charitable fund has enable us to improve our outside kitchen area, plumbing and handwashing facilities and to install a baby changing unit.

We hope that all these improvements will help to make the garden a wonderful place for all members of the community come to, use and enjoy and we shall continue to work to ensure this.

A special vote of thanks to Jaqui for holding all our projects together and for taking on increased hours and responsibility and to all our volunteers, garden guardians and other voluntary supporters who have helped with these improvements and developments and looked after the garden throughout the year.



Photo (c) Mim Saxl

John Green, April 2016

**Barracks Lane Community Garden
Project Ltd**

Objectives & Activities

The objectives of the charity are:

1. To provide and maintain a public Garden or Gardens for the use and the benefit of the inhabitants of the Oxford area and others (the beneficiaries) in the interests of social welfare and with the objects of improving conditions of life for the said beneficiaries and to promote develop and support community led Gardening initiatives in the Oxford area generally.
2. The advancement of public education in the area of the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability and biodiversity by the development and delivery of educational activities including vegetable and flower growing, waste management and the use of renewable energy sources.



Kate Jury leads a foraging team to harvest nettles for making soup
Photo (c) Mim Saxl

To achieve this the garden project:

1. Has built and maintains a garden for all members of the community and general public to use free of charge for recreation and leisure.
2. Offers the garden for bookings to organisations and individuals who want to hold their own events for their members, for courses and for private functions. All the community can access the garden for this purpose.
3. Works in partnership with other organisations to facilitate events and activities that benefit certain community groups in particular those who are disadvantaged socially, economically, through disability or life circumstance.
4. Puts on events and activities open to everyone to encourage general use of the garden.
5. Use the garden as a venue to demonstrate and encourage a greater understanding of sustainable and environmentally friendly ways of urban living. In particular to demonstrate sustainable and environmentally friendly ways of building, growing food, managing water, managing waste and the use of renewable energy sources.

Thanks to our Funders

We would particularly like to thank our funding bodies:

CAG (Community Action Groups) who have provided financial support, but also excellent resources, information and development advice.

Oxford City Council who are our landlords. The Council have been working with us during this year on the new lease which has included the new area of land. We would like to thank the officers and councilors who have helped throughout these negotiations.

National Lottery Awards for All Programme.

For funding physical improvements to the garden and events, helping to ensure greater access for all.

St Michael's and All Saints Charitable Trusts.

For funding improvements to our kitchen area, plumbing and sanitary facilities.

Heritage Lottery Fund.

For funding a special project called 'The Heritage of Common Plants'.

Other donors too numerous to mention for donations of money, skills and energy.

Thanks to all our Community Fundraisers!

The garden receives donations from users of the garden, both regular groups and individuals who use the garden for private events and well as visitors who give generously. These donations provide the garden with unrestricted income and are vital to its development.

A huge thank you to all the individuals who make the garden project work

The garden is run by volunteers from the board of trustees to the Saturday volunteer gardening group, the fundraising sub group and the garden guardians. It could not happen without you! Nor could it happen without all the community who use the garden. THANK YOU!

A special mention to Helen Osborne who stood down during this year after nearly 6 years as treasurer and trustee. Helen's work has been invaluable.

Summary of Achievements & Highlights (2015-16)

Overview

This year has been another very challenging and successful one with the majority of our commitments and expectations met. The Garden has continued to develop and thrive, with a whole host of new activities running alongside regular user-groups and many new visitors discovering the garden for the first time.



*Felt making workshop in March 2016 at BLCG
Photo (c) Mim Saxl*

4. Events, workshop and celebrations

Because of grants, community fundraising, donations, trustee and friends gift days we have been able to deliver a full range of workshops and events.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time to make these events happen. This is particularly vital for the garden at a time when funding from external sources has become

more difficult to access.

Events and courses have included a seed swap, nettle festival, plant share, swap and upcycling events, gardening skills courses, art activities, meditation and mindfulness days and craft days.

Our thanks to 'The Nature Effect' for their creative and loving input into the garden with the workshops and events.

1. Use by the community

Our visitor numbers have remained high in 2015 / 6 with just over 6000 visits being made. Most visits come via private bookings for community events and gatherings and tend to be in the evening and at weekends. We are delighted that our youth groups have continued to use the garden and increased lighting has made access easier in the winter evenings.

2. Making sure the garden is suitable for everyone

Amongst our aims and objectives perhaps one of the most important is to ensure that the garden is suitable for use by all the community and is as accessible as possible. We had made significant physical improvements in the garden during this year to ensure this happens and run a series of events to ensure the community knows about these changes. We have continued to undertake routine maintenance of the garden and buildings.

3. Developing our volunteer programme

There has been a weekly volunteer group running at the garden on Saturdays lead by our gardener and caretaker, Matt. We see this as an area we hope to grow and we would like to encourage more people of all ages to become involved in this aspect of the garden's work.

Our volunteer programme of garden guardians means that the garden is kept open for drop in visits by the public on Sundays. Our wonderful garden guardians have enabled this to happen again this year. Roger Felton served as both a trustee and garden guardian and this year more than ever has helped with practical tasks at the garden.

5. Communications

The website www.barrackslaneGarden.org.uk and the linked Yahoo calendar and Flickr site and facebook enable public access to the Garden, providing a means of finding out about events, of contacting and booking the Garden, and a resource of materials. We continually update the website to make it more user friendly. Many thanks to Tim Pullen for his work on this.



The homepage of the Barracks Lane Community Garden website

Open Garden Welcome Sessions



At Barracks Lane Community Garden off Cumberland Road Oxford OX4 1AP Every Saturday in October, Noon-2pm

Do you know about Barracks Lane Community Garden? Would you like to find out more about this beautiful community space and what it has to offer? Do you fancy doing a bit of gardening if you feel like some physical work, or sitting by the wood burner?

You are invited to drop in during one of our open garden welcome sessions running throughout October. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. You are welcome to bring your own lunch, games or hobbies.

We will have the woodburner going to provide warmth if needed in the cabin. Please do come by, say hello and take a look around.

On Saturday 17th October 2015 we host our annual Harvest festival. There will be a lot going on including apple pressing, bread making, foraging and crop sharing. This and all our welcome sessions are free. All welcome! Wear warm clothes. More details about the garden here: barrackslanegarden.org.uk



BLCCG

Night Lights

Festival of Light @ Barracks Lane Community Garden Saturday 7th Nov 2015 Open to all! 3pm - 6:30pm

We have Music and Stories, Fire and Fasting and a Fairy garden to explore.



Be entertained by story telling around the wood burner in the Octagonal cabin.



Nick Cope!

For families with younger children, this is an alternative to noisy fireworks night. The fabulous Nick Cope will be singing from 3:30pm.

Keep warm by the fire and watch the sparks fly upwards. Take time to explore the garden and discover the secret fairy garden.

Numbers will be limited to 150



BLCCG

Make your own Pizza with The Pizza Midwife from 4:30pm Hot drinks available from the tea stall, and warm indoor comfort in the Octagonal.

For more information, and to see the other activities that happen at BLCCG, please visit our website: barrackslanegarden.org.uk

www.TheNatureEffect.co.uk

Dress for the weather and bring a torch. Fairies are welcome. Suggested donation of £5 per household to support the work of the garden.

BLCCG

Our Heritage of Common Plants

Events at Barracks Lane Community Garden in 2016

Nettle Festival & Community Seed Share
Saturday 19th March 11am - 4pm
Come find out more about the amazing nettle plant. Make and taste nettle tea, pesto and soup, find out about nettle products.

May Blossom & Community Plant Share
Saturday 21st May 11am - 4pm
Make drinks and cordials with elder and rose flowers. Bring plants to share & swap. Join a Creative Nature workshop to make rose face-cream or felt flower fairies & creatures.

Herbs for Health & Wellbeing
Saturday 16th July 11am - 4pm
Learn about herbs for health & wellbeing. Make lavender hand and mint foot lotion with Creative Nature. Celebrate summer in our beautiful community garden.

Harvest Festival
Saturday 8th October 11am - 4pm
Join us for foraging, harvesting, cordial making & preserving. Bring crops to share, apples to press & celebrate our community harvest.

Family friendly activities. Refreshments available. All Welcome!

With 

www.barrackslanegarden.org.uk



BLCCG

Posters promoting some of our recent events

Increasingly people find out about events through social media and our facebook exposer has grown steadily over the past year. The trustees believe that it is important to continue to put out printed material (flyers and leaflets) to help people without use of the internet to access the garden. Stig continues to work with us to design material for print and web use and we thank him for his vision, creatively and patience!

Local media is also important for increasing access to the garden we have continued to receive coverage from the local press this year including T.V., radio and the local papers.

6. Community use and partnership work

The garden is used by a large number of individuals for their own private events, parties and functions. Groups and organizations from the local community regularly use the garden for their different activities. We have worked steadily to maintain these relations and to foster new ones. A full list of groups that have used the garden this year and partners we have work with are in annex 2.



Children play at our Summer Party

7. Special Projects

In November we were delighted to hear about the success of a funding application to the Heritage Lottery to fund a project called The Heritage of Common Plants. Most of this project will take place in the summer of 2016 but planning work has been undertaken this year. The project has a number of strands and in particular will look at the shared cultural heritage of common plants found in the garden. One outcome of the project will be our very own herbarium and the process of collecting samples and related material for this project was begun in March.



A set of new hand-painted slate signs help visitors navigate around the garden

Looking Ahead:

Planning for the future

An important aspect of the trustees work is to plan ahead to ensure the garden's future. We are working in a challenging climate with great pressure on smaller charities and organisations. We have seen some of our regular groups unable to continue to use the garden because of funding and staff cuts. The trustees are particularly keen to increase the use of the garden by regular groups, to involve groups that are currently under represented such as older people and to encourage all members of the community to use the space for their own events and activities.

Signed: _____

John Green

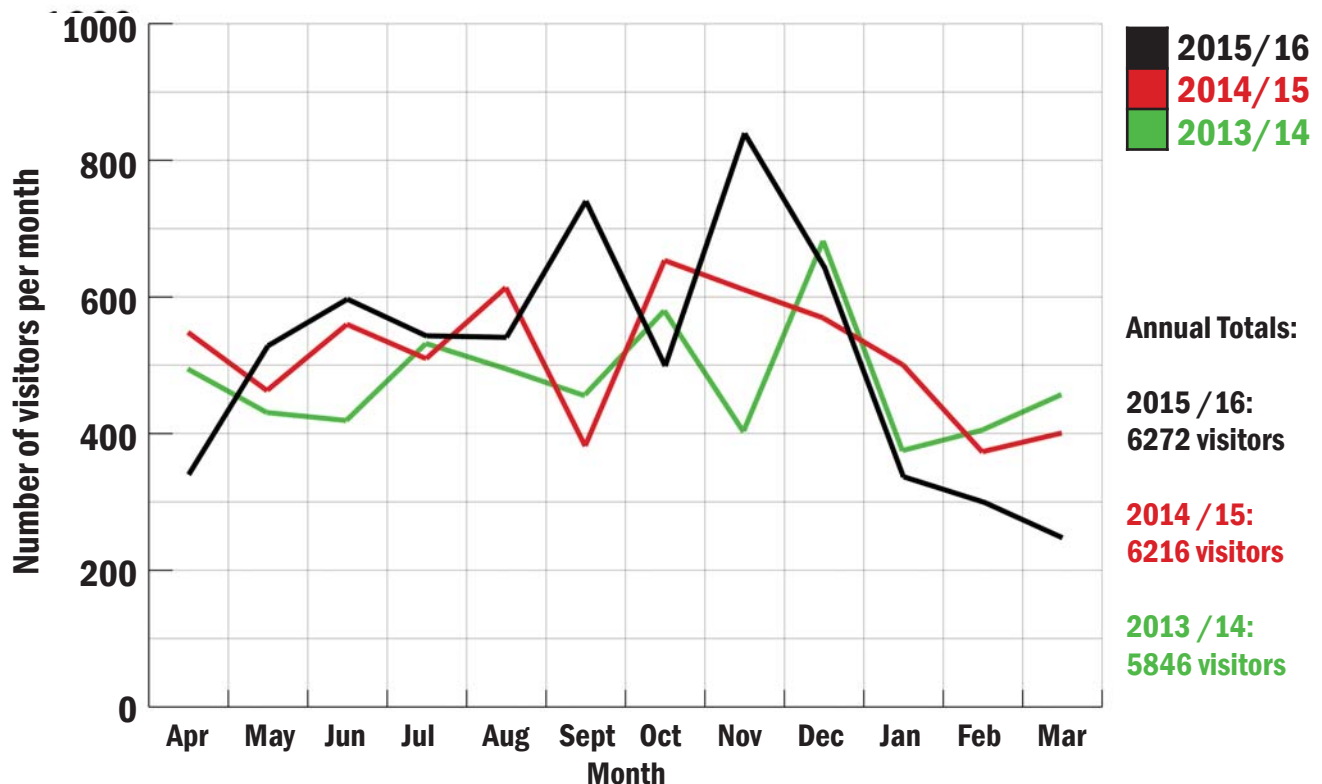
Date: _____

Financial review and reserves policy

Our total funds increased by £7,013 in the year to 31 March 2016, mainly due grant funding from the Lottery which had not been spent at the year end. Total reserves at the end of March 2016 were £48,280, of which £33,726 were unrestricted.

The charity is dependent on a mixture of grant funding, donations and other fund raising efforts. Reserves are retained in order to allow the charity to be able to continue to cover its operating costs for at least the next six months and continue as a going concern in the event that incoming donations are unexpectedly reduced for a period of time. The unrestricted cash equivalent reserves of £21,781 at the year end represents just over two years of core operating costs.

Annex 1: Number of Visitors to BLCG per month



Annex 2:

Partners and groups that have used the garden in 2015 / 16

Partnership work & networks

We work in partnership and in collaboration with a number of organisations for events and ongoing projects:

- Abundance Oxford - Community Harvest and waste reduction group
- Community Action Group Network Oxfordshire
- Cultivate Oxford - Growers and social enterprise
- Oxford Spires Academy - young people
- Oxford Permaculture
- Transition Oxford - Low Carbon group
- The Nature Effect - Social Enterprise Group
- Timebank Oxford - Time credit union open to all



Groups

- East Oxford Children's Centre - Children under 5 and carers
- Eastwind Pioneers – Children 8 - 12 and young people as helpers / guides
- Face to Face (Scope) Family Group
- Gaia Meditation group - Open group
- Kangaroo playgroup - carers and children
- Mindful meditation group - Open Group
- Name It ! Youth group project for young people in Oxford
- Open gardening volunteer group - Open group
- Woodchips - Children and carers



Battered elderflowers at our Plant Share in 2016



Working with Abundance Photo: Hugh Warwick