



Presented at AGM for year ended 31st March 2024

Company Registration Number: 05945388

Charity Number: 1116544

*Our funders and supporters
in 2023 / 2024:*



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 38 Kenilworth Avenue
Oxford
OX4 2AN

Trustees (Directors) as of April 2023:

Nicole Pohl (Chair)
Helen Osborn (Treasurer)
Jenny Crease
Melissa Smith Reobertson
Yasmin Spark
John Green (Company Secretary)

Trustee (Company Secretary):

John Green

Bankers:

Co-operative Bank PLC
P.O. Box 101,
1 Balloon Street,
Manchester
M60 4EP

Barracks Lane Community Garden Project Ltd

Chairperson's Annual Report - Year ended 31st March 2024

The Chairperson and 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 2024.



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 and the Charity number is 1116544.

The Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association govern the Charity

The day to day work of the Charity is undertaken by the Charity Chairperson 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 employs a part time Coordinator, Gardener and Caretaker for project development and programme delivery.



We'd like to thank:

- All the people, groups and organisations that have booked the garden for their own events – this provides an essential part of our income
- All those who give donations to the garden and offer their time and skills
- Oxford City Council who are our landlords and charge a peppercorn rent
- Our singing workshop leaders: Holly, Emily, Blackbird Leys Choir and Refugee Voices Welcome
- Oxford High School for all their hard work during a volunteer session



Chair's Summary

Nicole Pohl

This report confirms the achievements and hard work of all involved in the garden. Special thanks to Tracy, Esmee, Jane and all the Trustees for their commitment to the garden. Thank you also to the funders and users of the garden - see below for the amazing opportunities the funders allowed us to pursue.

This financial year, we hired a new Community Engagement gardener, Jane, and a new caretaker, Esmee - both have already excelled in their work and engagement with the garden.

Singing has continued to be very popular in the garden and this year we've hosted a Singing and Gardening for Well Being project, funded by Oxfordshire County Council and delivery partners Community First Oxfordshire, which will continue into July 2024. We are committed to delivering community singing in the garden so will be exploring options to fund this in the next financial year.

Thanks to our Funders

We would particularly like to thank our funding bodies and community fundraisers:

- Pye Charitable Settlement - Community Engagement Gardener, contributed towards the Coordinator and paid the Caretaker expenses
- TOE - raised beds to brighten up the alleyway and donate for community use
- OCF - Singing and Gardening for Well Being
- OCF - Food and Skill Share project (continued from 22/23)
- Oxfordshire County Council and delivery partners Community First Oxfordshire - Connected Communities project (continues into 24/25)
- CAG Oxfordshire - funding for Food Waste Awareness Week event
- Our local Oxford City Ward Councillors, Lucy Pegg and Rosie Rawle, for supporting our Harvest event in September 2023

We ran our normal series of events, including bread making, fermentation, smoothie making, tree pruning workshop and a plant and seed swap session, which were well attended and received by the local community.

In September 2023, we started hosting Flo's Nature Nursery for 3 days a week in the garden and will continue to do so.

Thanks to our trustee Melissa and her husband, the website has informative and professional videos (one already set up, the other to come this year) that promote the history and the workings of the garden.

We have had some significant work done in the garden, including some tree removals and redesigning the back garden space. Discussions are in progress at the moment to replace like with like to maintain the tree growth in the garden.

Costings are sought to clean up and modernise the pond, as well as updating our soakaway for the compost toilet and kitchen sink.

At the start of 2023 we were awarded funding from Oxfordshire County Council and delivery partners Community First Oxfordshire to run our Connected Communities Project. This grant paid for our Community Engagement Gardener to be in the garden one Sunday a month during 2023, as well as supporting our caretaking. We were also awarded funding from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation to run a Food and Skill Share project. This grant paid for our Community Engagement Gardener to open the garden to the community every other Tuesday till September, people to run monthly workshops, and provided free lunches.

We are excited about the future of the garden and look forward to welcoming old and new members into our beautiful, safe, green space.

It goes without saying that the garden would not be in such great shape if it wasn't for our amazing team. Thank you again to Tracy, Esmee, Jane and our Trustee team and fabulous visitors.

Nicole Pohl, September 2024

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.

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 to organisations and individuals who want to hold their own events for their members, for courses and for private functions.
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. Uses 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.



Summary of Achievements & Highlights (2023-2024)

We are delighted that **Flo's Nature Nursery** have taken up residence in the garden for 3 days a week during term time. It is lovely to see the difference they have made to the space, with bird feeders, a mud kitchen and planting in a raised bed.

Thanks to our grant from **TOE**, we have two wonderful **recycled plastic raised beds** in the alleyway leading to the garden. These are being maintained by the **Steps Programme** Students at Oxford Spires Academy, who have been growing beautiful sunflowers in them.

The **Singing and Gardening for Well Being Project**, funded by the **Connected Communities Fund** (OCVA and CFO), gave us the opportunity to increase our offer of singing in the garden and also volunteering opportunities for the local community. Our **Community Engagement Gardeners** worked with a number of volunteers who have continued to come to the garden on a regular basis. We were lucky to have a number of different choir groups leading on singing sessions and sharing songs from all over the world.

The garden hosted a number of events that were open to the public, including a **Festival of Fire and Light**, Seasonal **Wreath Making** workshop, **Harvest Festival**, **Spring Garden Tidy** and a **Plant and Seed Swap**. In March 2024 we held an event that was part of Food Waste Awareness Week and funded by **Replenish Oxfordshire's** Small Grants Programme. We hired the smoothie bike from **Share Oxford** and made some delicious smoothies with leftover bananas, spinach and soft fruits.

The Garden has been kept safe and beautiful with the work of **Dan Thorpe** (Maintenance), **Hannah Jones** and **Tracy Walsh** (Coordinators), **Beth Astle** and **Jane Wallace** (Community Engagement Gardeners), **Stig** (art & design) and **Esmee Quinton** (Caretaker). It is fantastic to have the continuity of their service to the Garden.

1. Use by the community

We are thrilled to report that 2023/24 saw the garden increase its number of visitors to 4105. Many visits came via private bookings for community events and gatherings. We are delighted that we can continue to provide a safe, green space for our long term and regular users of the garden who continue to play such an important part in the garden activities such as:

- Name It Youth Group
- Woodcraft Folk and Woodcraft Pioneers
- Dharma Recovery
- Flos Nature Nursery

We were glad to be able to offer the garden as a space for parent and child singing groups, yoga, meditation, children's parties, management away days and training sessions.

2. Making the garden suitable for everyone

Keeping people safe while they are in the garden is important to us and we make regular checks to make sure that we provide a garden that is suitable for all the community. We listen to the feedback from our users and respond to identified needs and problems as they arise, such as a separate hand washing sink, moving the the kitchen around to make it more accessible. We continue to keep up the running repairs and have improved the soakaway from the kitchen sink. We have explored a number of options this year to consider how we can improve the soakaway and also make better use of the pond. We hope to have completed a number of changes during 2024/25

3. Developing our volunteer programme to support and care for the garden

Our Community Engagement Gardeners, Beth Astle and Jane Wallace, have committed so much of their time and experience during the year to keep the garden in such excellent shape, as well as engage with the local community and groups on garden open days. People were able to volunteer for a variety of gardening tasks to suit different abilities, or just enjoy being in the garden, so vital for people's wellbeing.



The pedal-powered smoothie-maker in action

4. Events, workshop and celebrations

Because of grants, community fundraising, donations, trustee and Community Work Days we have been able to celebrate the renewal of the infrastructure of the Garden. It was wonderful to be able to offer an exciting programme of workshops and events this year and be open more regularly with the Community Engagement Gardeners. This will continue in 2024-25.

This year we ran:

- Plant and Seed Swap
- Fermentation Workshop
- Harvest Festival
- Festival of Fire and Light
- And lots of pizza making with the Pizza Midwife



Harvest Festival 2023

5. Communications

Our redesigned website www.barrackslaneGarden.org.uk and online bookings system was launched, making it easier to book via the website and less paperwork. We also have Facebook and Instagram pages as well as our Mailchimp Newsletter, to enable the 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 also produce posters as a way of reaching people not connected to digital media. Thank you Stig for designing the posters and Computer Assistance for hosting our website.

Plant & Seed Swap
Sunday 16th April 2023 **FREE - All Welcome!** **11am - 3pm**

Bring your spare seeds, seedlings, plants & other garden goodies to swap with other community member's garden treats!

Singing - 11.30am & 2pm - join!
 Children's plant + seed art activities
 Music from DJ Baps
 Light refreshments by donation
 Part of the #RHSBigSeedSow

Between Cumberland Road and Kenilworth Avenue off the Cowley Road

www.barrackslanegarden.org.uk

Supported by The Midcounties Co-operative Community Support Donation Fund



Fermentation workshop



Festival of Fire and Light

6. Special Projects

Funding from TOE allowed the garden to build two more raised beds from recycled plastic that have been used by local community groups to grow plants and food.

A grant from the **Connected Communities Fund**, funded by **Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action** and **Community First Oxfordshire**, gave us the opportunity to run a number of regular singing for wellbeing sessions in the garden, where we had many people from the local community as well as asylum seekers. The grant also meant we were able to have extra open sessions for people to volunteer in the garden or just come along and enjoy the peace and quiet in a beautiful space.

Food and Skill Share
Free lunch for OX4 folks every other Tuesday

Lunch is served around 12.30pm on the following days:
 May 9th + Growing Food in Small Spaces 10am - 12 noon
 May 23rd
 June 6th + Home Composting Workshop 10am - 12.30pm
 June 20th
 July 18th + Meditation 10am - 12.30pm

Jul 18th
 August 1st + Make Your Own Pizza & Dough 10am - 12.30pm
 August 15th
 August 29th
 Sept 12th
 Sept 26th + Fingerless Mittens Workshop 1.15pm - 4pm

Between Cumberland Road and Kenilworth Avenue off the Cowley Road

Details: barrackslanegarden.org.uk/news_events.php

www.barrackslanegarden.org.uk

Oxfordshire Community Foundation



New mural on the shed, to welcome the new Nature Nursery, by Stig. Can you see the sleeping dragon?

Harvest Festival

Sunday 10th September 2023 11am – 3pm

**Barracks Lane
Community Garden**

<p>Art Activities For all ages - inspired by fruit and vegetables</p>	<p>Reggae Music Bop along to great sounds from our very own DJ Baps</p>	<p>Garden Kitchen will be offering Soft Drinks & Snacks by Donation</p>	<p>All Welcome! FREE entry! Proud to be part of:</p>
 <p>Fermentation Workshop Make the most of your excess harvest Places limited so book by emailing: barrackslanegarden@yahoo.co.uk</p>	 <p>DIY Pizzas From noon until we've sold out!</p>	 <p>OXFORD OPEN DOORS oxfordpreservation.org.uk</p>	<p>Thanks to Cllr Lucy Pegg (City Councillor for Donnington Ward) for supporting this event</p>

www.barrackslanegarden.org.uk



Looking Ahead:

Planning for the future

An important aspect of the trustees' work is to plan ahead to ensure the garden's future. The garden was very successful in being awarded grant funding this year which enabled the day to day activities of the garden to be funded, support the core aims of the garden, and run new projects and adding to the infrastructure of the garden.

We have seen our social media presence grow this year which brings this unique venue to the widest groups of users in our diverse community.

Moving forward we are looking to encourage new, regular groups to the garden. We have made plans to ensure the infrastructure of the Garden remains safe and that items are replaced when they are no longer serviceable.

Kate Jury, an important advocate for Barracks Lane Garden, died suddenly in 2023. Barracks Lane Community Garden are developing a partnership with The Nature Effect CIC which will continue to support projects in East Oxford that were close to Kate's heart.

We have submitted several funding bids for 2023-24 which if successful will ensure we to make the Garden a welcoming space when the Community Engagement Gardeners are onsite to provide a sustaining cup of tea and snacks, a newspaper to read as well offering suitable gardening tasks for those who have come to offer their physical support in the upkeep of the Garden. Funding will also be sought to employ an additional garden worker to complement the volunteers and the Community Engagement Gardeners.

Financial review and reserves policy

Our total funds decreased by £12,051 in the year to 31 March 2024 mainly due to expenditure Oxfordshire Community Foundation Food and Skill share and Connected Communities grant funding which had been received the previous year. Total reserves at the end of March 2024 were £39,329, of which £32,017 were unrestricted.

The charity is dependent on a mixture of grant funding, donations and other fundraising 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 £29,683 at the year-end represents just less than two years of core operating costs.

Signed:



Nicole Phol (Chair)

Date: 15.09.24

Signed:



John Green (Company Secretary)

Date: 15.09.24