

A small logo above the word 'Common' depicting a hand holding a green leafy tree.

Streatham Common Community Garden



**Annual report and accounts for the year ended
7th October 2023.**

This report has been compiled by the Trustees of Streatham Common Community Garden, registered charity 1154156. It was agreed at the Trustee meeting on 13th November 2023 and will be placed on our website, <https://streathamcommoncommunitygarden.org>.

The report covers the period 8th October 2022 to 7th October 2023.

Trustees' Report

This year has seen some changes on who manages the charity and who delivers our services.

Last year's report noted Maggie Charnley's intention to resign. She left the Board of Trustees in January 2023 after many years of valued service. This autumn Reece Owens also left the Board. We thank Reece for her expertise and hard work and hope that she and Maggie will keep in contact with us.

Three new Trustees joined the Board during June and July 2023 and are Steph Smith, Giovanni Tivan and Katharine Samuels. Each brings new and essential skills which will enhance our management of the charity. We also note, however, that sadly Giovanni will leave the Board at the end of the year, as described below.

Ruth Arnott, who had worked as the Project Coordinator/ Community Gardener for some years, advised us in January 2023 of her intention to terminate her contract. With Ruth's support we were able to engage a replacement, Poppy George, from March 2023. Poppy originally intended to work with us until 31st October 2023, but got a promotional role, leaving us at the end of August 2023. We are enormously grateful for Ruth's support during February 2023 in recruiting participants for the Learner Plotters' project, and to Poppy who worked alongside Patrick McCabe. Poppy provided support at the Wednesday sessions and Patrick on Sundays. Patrick also ran the highly successful Little Growers' project. A description of the Learner Plotters' and the Little Growers' projects are given later.

The garden has continued to welcome volunteers and visitors and to meet our main aims by the following, further details are given in the body of this report:

- Management of the Learner Plotters' and Little Growers' projects. The Learner Plotters' project continues to introduce new people to gardening and to unite people from different backgrounds through a common interest. The Little Growers' project offers children, from 6 to 9 years of age, the chance to grow their own healthy vegetables.
- Expanding the types of fruit and vegetables grown on site, through the introduction of the new 'world garden area', which also celebrates the diversity of our community.
- Being a welcoming place for new volunteers.
- Events, including a lunch for Black History Month, Apple Day, wreathmaking workshops and Wassail, that bring people to the garden for the first time and encourages them to spend time with others.

- Supporting habitats that encourage wildlife.
- Working with our colleagues from Streatham Common Cooperative (SCCoop) to maintain the site.

With the appointment of the new Trustees, we now have a planned schedule for newsletters and the use of other communication channels. These will help showcase what we do, and to bring more people into the Garden. Some of our other planned activities for the year ahead are noted at the close of this report. Sadly, this includes the recruitment of a Community Gardener. Patrick will not renew his contract next year. There are therefore personnel as well as funding challenges ahead but what the last year has shown is our ability to work together to deliver something amazing that everyone can enjoy.

Trustees, Streatham Common Community Garden

Our Charitable Purposes and Public Benefit

Availability of the Garden

We continue to open on Wednesdays and Sundays between 11am and 3pm. Unlike the summer of 2022, when extreme heat caused us to close on a couple of days, we remained open throughout the 2023 season.

Volunteers and Visitors

We welcome volunteers and visitors to the Garden, showcasing a place that inspires people to garden and to enjoy nature.

The Garden could not operate without our amazing volunteers. They continue to be core to our everyday activities of sowing, planting, weeding, digging, and watering. In the year ending 7th October 2023 **we had 117 volunteers offering 2,948 hours**. This is very similar to year ending October 2022 when we had had 118 volunteers offering 2,836 hours. (Please note that these hours include Learner Plotters for October 2022 to February 2023, plus the new intake from February 2023. They do not include Little Growers, the paid Community Gardeners or volunteer trustee hours which are spent administering the garden).

Some of our volunteers are long-term, including those who began with a learner plot and have remained committed to the Garden. The tasks that the volunteers undertake are tailored to the needs of the Garden and to people's individual abilities. There is no pressure to attend every week and people can stay for as little or for as long as they can. This flexibility is significant in our ability to attract a broad range of people and to welcome them back throughout the season.



Education and training

As in previous years we have supported the Learner Plotters' project, and we ran the Little Growers' project for a third year.

Our Learner Plotters start in spring and people can continue until the early months of the following year when they clear their plot for the next intake. People without a garden apply to have a small plot for a year to develop their skills with guidance from

the two community gardeners, one on Wednesdays and one on Sundays. As well as on-site support, they are offered workshops and can participate in a WhatsApp group to share ideas and to create a community of interest. In 2022/2023 we had 19 'Plotters' and from the spring of 2023 we had another 18 participants, some plots are shared by two family members.

To reflect funding, the Community Gardeners were contracted until 31st October 2023, just outside this reporting period. It is acknowledged that in previous years, Learner Plotters

have gained the ability to tend their plot unaided after this date and that numbers attending are much lower during the autumn and winter months. As noted previously, Poppy George left us at the end of August for opportunities elsewhere. The Trustees made the decision that it would be impractical to replace for Poppy for the period up to 31st October and that Trustees would support any Learner Plotters on Wednesdays, as needed.

During the summer, Poppy and Patrick sought feedback from the Learner Plotters on their experiences of the project. Some of their comments are as follows:

I really didn't know anything about gardening before starting with the learner plotters, so I am very happy to have grown some of my own food which I have thoroughly enjoyed cooking with. Particularly my courgettes and tomatoes.

The workshops have been great, but it has also been fantastic to have Poppy and Patrick in the garden on Wednesdays and Sundays to ask specific questions about my plot and share their wealth of knowledge. They have both been amazing.

The knowledge of both teachers has made all the difference between success and failure. Also, the shared knowledge of the volunteers is incredibly useful.

Just being able to be part of a wonderful team and learn so much about how we can easily grow produce, in what seasons and most of all being more confident and taking ownership found it was so good for my mental health as I don't have a green space, it means a lot to me.

In response to a question on potential areas for improvement, a respondent suggested longer opening hours, and another requested that the plots were bigger. Whilst we cannot amend our hours, the size of the individual plots will be increased next year.

The Little Growers project is attended by children between 6-9 years of age. They meet every Sunday, from 11am to 12pm with a parent/ carer, although there is some overspill as people are reluctant to leave. The project prioritises families living in flats who do not have



access to outside growing spaces. Each child has a section of a raised bed where they choose what to grow, how to look after their plants and to harvest their own crops.

The children are given seed starter packs to take home and grow on windowsills until the seedlings are ready for transplanting outside. In 2023, eleven children began and ten continued throughout the growing year, however most weeks up to a further three siblings joined them. Patrick McCabe ran the Little Growers' project, as well as supporting the Learner Plotters who

attended on a Sunday, see above. Patrick is a firm favourite with all the Little Growers, his skills and enthusiasm has meant that this is a very special project that undoubtedly enriches the Garden and entuses children to be involved in nature and gardening.



Our Little Growers learning about Paca Digestora

Four Duke of Edinburgh Award participants volunteered at the Garden during 2023. Initially three people, who were working towards bronze, and more recently someone working towards silver. All participants attended in accordance with our safeguarding policy requirements.

A Growing Hub and Wildlife

There have been some changes at the Garden on what we grow and how. We are now using a 'no dig method' for our rotational beds. We have had some fantastic results, and less weeding. Visitors will also note that we have areas dedicated to flowers to attract pollinators, a Christmas dinner bed for seasonal favourites, and our new polytunnel that houses our new world garden. This area showcases the growing of plants not normally seen in south London gardens, including gourds, tomatillos, bananas, and aubergines amongst others. This is a shared area, with a former Learner Plotter, Susanna, taking the lead.

In the remaining shared areas of the Garden, inevitably some plants liked this year's weather conditions and others struggled. Figs and quinces have been a huge success. Our peach tree, however, needs some tender loving care. Potatoes, beans, and beetroots remain reliable produce. We were doing well with tomatoes until blight hit, albeit very late in the season.

We were delighted that the Rookery was awarded Gold in the RHS London in Bloom assessment and within that we got 'outstanding'. Comments were made about our improvements in signage, the new world garden, and our ability to include local people in activities.

We have also received awards from Incredible Edible Lambeth for:

- Ivor Picardo Award for Abundant Growing of Edibles - Winner
- Best Space for Encouraging Wildlife – Highly Commendable

Please note, that notification of the Incredible Edible awards was received after the reporting period but relate to the 2023 season.

Maintenance of the Site

There have been no structural changes at the site. However, we continue to work with our colleagues at SCCoop to maintain the site, for example by the introduction of new compost bins, and ensuring that the Garden is secure.

Events Held at the Community Garden

In addition to workshops included in the Learner Plotters project, events that involved volunteers and the wider community included the following.

- Black History Month lunch in October 2022. As well learning about seed saving and how seeds were taken to other lands, as people were forcibly moved through slavery, we shared a lunch with dishes from around the world.
- Wreathmaking workshops in December 2022.
- Wassail attended by the Brixton Tatterjacks, to celebrate the New Year 2023.
- Tree pruning workshop in January 2023, run by Patrick.
- Hedge laying workshop in Spring 2023, organised by Reece, and supported by external facilitator.
- Apple Day returned in September 2023! This was a great success and brought new people into the garden.

In light of the above, the Trustees are satisfied the charity has met its obligations for charitable purposes and public benefit.

Apple Day 2023



Trustees for the year 2022-2023

Adam Gibbs

Anna Savage

Barbara Booth

Giovanni Tivan, Coopted Trustee July 2023 (please see note 1)

Kate Daly

Katherine Samuels, Coopted Trustee July 2023

Jill Seymour

Steph Smith, coopted Trustee July 2023

Those who resigned during the year.

Maggie Charnley, resigned January 2023

Ruth (Reece) Owens, resigned September 2023

Note 1 Giovanni Tivan will relocate to Italy at the beginning of 2024 and therefore will resign as a Trustee on 31st December 2023.

Elections

A third of trustees are required to stand down each year by rotation. This year the following will stand down and have indicated a wish for re-election:

Jill Seymour

Anna Savage

Kate Daly

We will also use the opportunity of the AGM to formally elect the two Coopted Trustees, who will continue into 2024, albeit this is not a requirement of the Constitution. They are Katharine Samuels and Steph Smith.

We will also seek to confirm Adam Gibbs continuing role as the Treasurer.

Finance Report

Donations

We would like to thank our visitors and volunteers for their monetary, as well as their time donations.

Fund raising

There has been a significant increase in the sale of plants and produce this year, with sales being made on Wednesdays and Sundays. As well as occasional visitors, we have people who purchase regularly and compliment the garden on the quality of the plants, fruit, and vegetables. Over £3,000 has been raised, an increase of over 15% on the previous year.



The Learner Plotters' project and Little Growers' project (including the Community Gardeners) were financed this year by money received from City Bridge and from Higgidy (the food producer), noting:

- An initial three-year grant from City Bridge expired in June 2023. However, we were successful in securing a further three-year grant of £5,090 per annum to run from July 2023.
- Money received from Higgidy was used to fund the third year of the Little Growers' project.

The Wreathmaking workshops were both popular and have significantly contributed to funding raising.

Comments on Full Year Accounts

These will be subject to approval, by members, at the AGM on 7th January 2024. To confirm, the accounts reflect the full year position, on a cash accounting basis, as of 7th October 2023, that is money within the bank account. Any income (for example, grant payments from City Bridge) or expenditure after this date is not included.

Overall, our financial position has not changed significantly since year ending 7th October 2022, seeing a £292 reduction. However, the balance between unrestricted and restricted reserves has changed. The amount held in unrestricted reserves has increased, now £18,830 (£14,558 in 2022) and the amount in restricted reserves has decreased, now £7,936, (£12,500 in 2022)

Community Gardener costs, include payments made to workers and related expenses.

Streatham Common Community Garden

Income & Payments

For the year ended 07 October 2023

INCOME

	£	£	£	£	£
	Yr Ending 7/10/23			Yr Ending 7/10/22	Variance 2022 & 2023
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL		
Grants (City Bridge & Higgidy)		8,030	8,030	5,000	3,030
Unrestricted (Cavendish Lodge)	228		228		228
Sales	3,066		3,066	2,652	414
Donations	373		373	915	-542
Subscriptions	60		60	75	-15
Events	2,045		2,045	1,538	507
Prizes	0		0		0
Easy Funding & Amazon Smile	116		116		116
Gift Aid	594		594		594
Gross Income	6,482	8,030	14,512	10,180	4,332

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL		
Payments					
Community Gardeners - City Bridge		10,694	10,694	15,384	-4,690
Community Gardeners- Higgidy		1,900	1,900		1,900
Restricted Donations		0	0	154	-154
Seeds Plants Garden Supplies	1,342		1,342	238	1,104
Equipment Maintenance	369		369	341	28
Volunteer Expenses	18		18	339	-321
Events	385		385	1,143	-759
Insurance	97		97	97	0
Postage	0		0		0
Website Hosting	0		0	159	-159
					0
					0
Total Payments	2,210	12,594	14,804	17,855	-3,051

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL	2022	Variance
Gross Income Less Total Payments	4,271	-4,564	-292	-7,675	-7,383
Transfer between funds	0	0	0		
Cash Funds at 7/10/22	14,558	12,500		27,058	
Cash Funds at 7/10/23	18,830	7,936	26,766		-292
Petty Cash 7/10/23	15		15	15	0
Bank Balance at 7/10/23	18,815	15,872	26,751	27,043	-292
Total Cash Balance	18,830	7,936	26,766	27,058	-292

Streatham Common Community Garden

Balance sheet

For the year ended 07 October 2023

	07/10/2023		07/10/2022	
	£	£	£	£
Current assets:				
Cash at banks and in hand	26,766		27,058	
Net Current Assets		26,766		27,058
Total Net Assets		26,766		27,058
The funds of the charity:				
Restricted funds	7,936		12,500	
Unrestricted funds	18,830		14,558	
Total charity funds		26,766		27,058

Notes to the Financial Statement

1 Accounting policies

The accounts reflect the full year position, on a cash accounting basis, as of 7th October 2023, that is money within the bank account. Any income (for example, grant payments from City Bridge) or expenditure after this date is not included.

2 Donations

Please note that last year income received from Easy Funding and Amazon Smile (the latter now defunct) were previously included in the Donations total but have now been shown on a separate line.

3 Events

Events in the current year accounted for £ 2,045. This is primarily the wreathmaking workshops and sales at 2022 Christmas fair.

4 Gift Aid

Please note that this covered more than one year, as allowable, and this level of income is not expected to repeat where claimed on an annual basis.

5 Restricted spending

Restricted spending relates to running our Learner Plot and Little Growers projects. In addition to the grants' income noted above, money to fund these projects had already been received outside this reporting cycle and was drawn from our restricted reserves during the year.

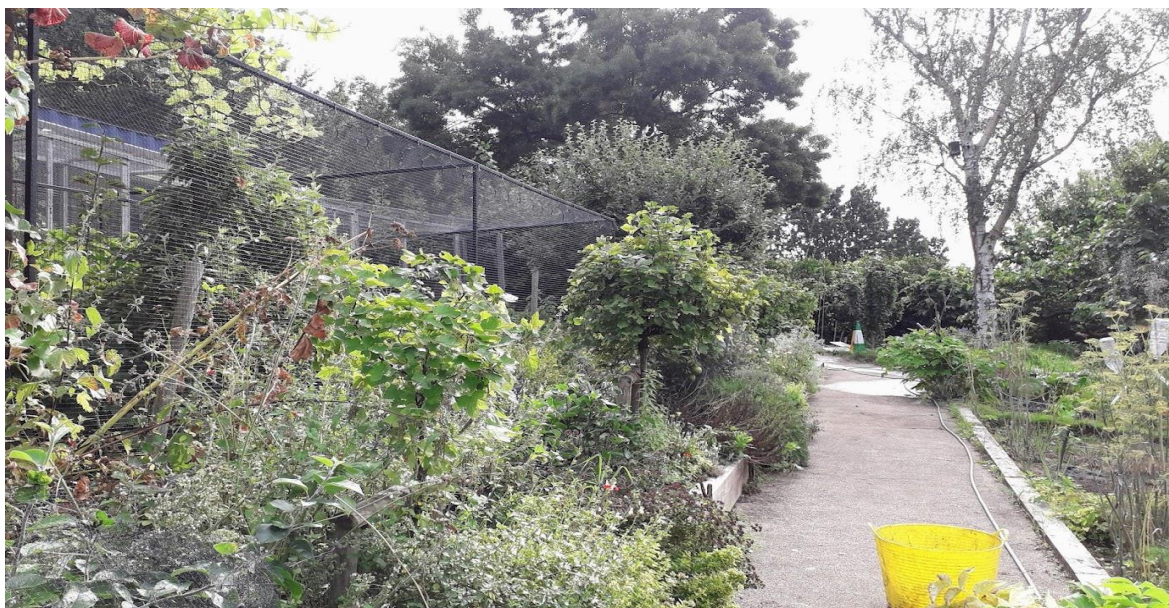
6 Seeds Plants Garden Supplies

There has been an increase in the money spent on seeds, plants, and garden supplies (includes compost) as well as equipment maintenance. In the year 2021-2022 some purchases of similar items were coded to Volunteer Expenses where a Trustee bought on behalf of the Garden.

Looking Forward

As well as continuing to welcome volunteers and visitors to the Garden, we are working to secure full year funding which will enable us to run the Learner Plotters' project and Little Growers' project without significantly drawing on our reserves. Albeit we recognise that the basis of the City Bridge award, see above, is that some match funding will be required. In addition, we will:

- Recruit a Community Gardener. This will be a priority and recruitment is scheduled for the start of 2024.
- Review the area we use for sales and houses the small greenhouse, including the installation of a new polytunnel. Those attending the AGM in January 2023 should already see significant progress in this area.
- Publish regular newsletters and improve our use of other communications, therefore increasing our reach and local engagement.
- Have a planned programme of workshops / activities throughout the year.
- Support new projects in the Garden such as the medicinal plants area being developed by a former Learner Plotter.
- Continue to work closely with our friends and colleagues from SCCoop, Friends of Streatham Common, Lambeth Council and like-minded groups in the area.



Report End