

Chesterfield's Organic Demonstration Garden



Registered Charity No. 1167913

Annual Report 2022-2023

INTRODUCTION: Please note that this report covers the period of reduced / no Covid restrictions.

It is our 7th year of the garden which has seen a small change to the infrastructure but again has proved difficult at times with the reduced number of volunteers.



ACTIVITIES: Previous years have shown that water is critical to the effective growing of produce and has historically been in short supply as all water needs to be collected on site with there being no mains water supply. The building team installed 6 new, 7 in total 1000ltr IBCs which we hope will help. One of the solar pumps has been made transferable to enable us to use these tanks and can alternate with the existing tank, so it can be used to balance the water stored and used near the centre Polytunnel and top Greenhouse. Thanks to a local councillor providing a grant, we have the funding to lay a proper network of pipes around the garden to make best use of the new water storage system.

The Pond has now been relined and is carefully being replanted, having learnt some lessons from last time. We have even seen Newts in the pond so the relining was a good move.

We decided to re-instate the website, however we chose to use the existing transition website and have changed the address to <https://transitionchesterfield.org.uk/inspire/>



Another larger project (other than growing) was to create new bases for the compost bins in an attempt to prevent them being overrun with weeds growing up from the soil below.

One of the small but important tasks was the pruning of the Fedge (Fence/Hedge). The cuttings from this were used to create a wattle fence to protect our fig tree from the prevailing wind. This has been effective and it now looks a lot healthier.



During October, the Caravan was fully reopened after Covid closure. Hot drinks were again available, which was great on the colder days. Only one problem here is, that if the log burner is lit, the caravan becomes too attractive and people are reluctant to venture back out to get on with the tasks. 😊

In October and November, all the beds that were ready in time were sown with green manure. We did try this last season and it worked well to keep the soil 'alive' and the weeds down. The green manure did grow well, even in the cold weather and has survived the heavy frosts. At one point the temperature in the lower Poly tunnel dropped to -10c as it has its own micro climate.



The frame for the new espalier apple and pear trees was created and the land prepared and the new trees are growing well. At times it was cold work. New posts were added to the established cordon apple trees.

We re started some workshops with the first being a series of Pruning workshops.

This year (2023), we pruned the fruit trees in the Inspire Community Garden. The various sessions were well attended with most people having a go at pruning.



As in previous years, the surplus Potatoes, Green Manure, and other seeds

were sold from the Caravan at Inspire Community Garden during its normal opening times.



During February the soil began to warm enough for Parsnips and Jerusalem artichokes to be planted in their planned bed. While in the Polytunnel Onions and Shallots along with early Broad beans were started. As in previous years seeds were sown at people's houses, where it is a lot

warmer - Tomatoes, Peppers, Chillies, Leeks and Cucumbers were sown. These were then taken to the garden for pricking out and growing on. To prevent as much frost damage and loss as possible we used a mini hot bed technique. This was used last year with a lot of success. For those that are unsure what this is, plastic bread trays are lined and filled with fresh compost (usually horse manure) and this continues to rot, producing heat. Seedlings are then stood on this compost and covered with garden fleece, thus retaining the heat and helping ward off the cold. This system protects the seedlings down to at least -8c.

To continue with our program of removing all single use plastics from the garden, we began to use wooden plant labels (lollipop sticks). These actually worked out cheaper than buying new plastics ones. The retained plastic plant labels are being scrubbed clean and will be reused while they are still viable. We know from previous use of lollipop sticks that any writing, either permanent marker or pen, tends to become unreadable once the sticks get very wet. To solve this, we are using pre-labelled sticks with the plant names etched/engraved into them.



SEED SWAP

The Seed Swap library is at Inspire Community Garden and is available for anyone to come and have a look. Seed donations particularly welcome and can be dropped off anytime the garden is open.

FUNDRAISING: There have been few opportunities to raise funds during the year but again we started the year with a healthy balance in the bank by keeping spend down to the essentials and we have managed to cover the running costs for the garden for this which includes the cost of Insurance, Seeds, and Petrol for the mowers. Wickes kindly donated 20 bags of Peat Free compost to the garden.



The strawberry plants that were removed from the bed were potted up and sold as plants at the May market and also in planters. These proved popular at £20 each and we soon sold out of plants to put in them

THE FUTURE: This continues to look uncertain, primarily due the need to try to persuade volunteers to take a more active/formal role in leading the garden. The past few years have proved that foot access only has not restricted the use and possibilities of the Garden, rather that the focus has had to change. We continue to get a limited number of visits from external organisations, including the Cubs, Scouts, walking groups and Homeless Charities looking at what both sides can do for each other. Also, the garden has become a

successful place for people directed there by their doctor. Where people gain from the outside environment and the social interactions with new friends being made.

We would like to encourage anyone who is interested in community activities in a safe environment to get in touch and come along and see what the garden has to offer by way of a peaceful, calm environment. If you would like to be involved in growing and sharing produce, then perhaps we could persuade you to join our team of volunteers working on the plot.

Contact can be made via email to InspireCommunityGarden@gmail.com or come to look around on Sundays 10am to 3pm or Wednesdays 1pm to 3pm. During the Summer, Thursdays 6pm to 8pm. Access is via the footpath that is between Chester Street and Alexandra Road West. First gate on the right from Mecca Bingo or last gate on the left if coming from Chester Street. Just push the gate to see if we are open (it looks locked), then wander up the site where you will find us working or just chatting. No commitments, just come and look. Inspire are also open for new or returning volunteers to come and join us. There is no set requirement to attend, just as and when you can spare some time on a Sunday or a Wednesday afternoon.

Finance Report:

Financial Statement for Year Ending 31st March 2023



Receipts and Payments Account for year ending 31st March 2023				
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Last Year Total
Receipts				
B/Fwd (cash in bank & petty cash)	£3,891.88	£1,000.00	£4,891.88	£5,032.27
Grants		£200.00	£200.00	£0.00
Donations from Transition	£375.00		£375.00	£500.00
Events	£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Donations (individuals & plants & others)	£81.62		£81.62	£12.00
Sales (plants, clothing & compost)	£0.00		£0.00	£86.30
Gift Aid claimed	£0.00		£0.00	£125.26
Total receipts	£456.62	£200.00	£656.62	£723.56
Payments				
Caravan / site hut			£0.00	£0.00
Garden structures		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Tools and other equipment	£14.40		£14.40	£275.99
Fruit trees, soft fruit, plants and seeds	£158.04		£158.04	£232.52
Compost / Manure	£74.70		£74.70	£24.00
Toilet Twinning	£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Subscriptions & Conferences	£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Web services	£0.00		£0.00	£65.87
Insurance & Rent	£199.55		£199.55	£156.96
Miscellaneous & Clothing	£956.75		£956.75	£108.61
Total payments	£1,403.44	£0.00	£1,403.44	£863.95
Excess of receipts over payments	-£946.82	£200.00	-£746.82	-£140.39
C/Fwd (cash in bank & petty cash)	£2,945.06	£1,200.00	£4,145.06	£4,891.88

Statement of Assets			
Cash in Hand		£104.80	£100.35
Cash at Bank		£4,040.26	£4,791.53
Total Assets		£4,145.06	£4,891.88

In my opinion the above Receipt and Payments have been properly prepared from the charity's records.

Ala Booth

13.07.2023