

Grapes Hill Community Garden Group Annual Report 2025



L-R Nicky, Charity and Lilian represented Grapes Hill Community Garden Group at Norwich Biodiversity and Regenerative Food Festival. Photo credit Mary Doggett ETT Photography

The Trustees & Committee team are pleased to have seen another wonderful year for Grapes Hill Community Garden Group and report here on key happenings over 2025.

What we've achieved in 2025

The Grapes Hill Community Garden Group had a successful year in delivering its regular core events, workshops and volunteering days with several extras too. There were over 1000 separate visits to the garden for gardening, workshops and events. We've seen at least 270 people come to the garden for the first time this year, whether this was just coming to an event, taking part in a workshop or volunteering. We have recorded over 700 returning visits.

Volunteer Sessions

Throughout 2025 our volunteers, on Wednesdays and Sundays, were brilliant as ever. We had an amazing 52 sessions with an average of seven volunteers at all these sessions. As well as ongoing support from our regular volunteers we were joined by five new regular volunteers, including a father and son. They helped us keep on top of various tasks including weeding, watering and pruning. They have also reported how important the sessions are to them.



Working in the garden. Photo credit Jo Rice



Adding fresh compost to the raised beds. Photo credit Jo Rice

Our volunteers have been a great support behind the scenes on the website and the administration, also at events, serving refreshments and welcoming new visitors to the garden. Many have also joined us at external events to help us promote the garden and share their experiences of volunteering at the garden and how this has had an impact on their lives. We are also very grateful to those on gate duty, who take turns making sure the gates are unlocked each day and closed at night.

"I get satisfaction from growing fresh produce and working in the garden also I've enjoyed taking part in the events in the garden." Regular garden volunteer.

Raised beds

The raised bed tenants have been very active and productive this year.

"I feel so lucky to have the chance to grow veg at Grapes Hill Community Garden as I thought those days were over. I moved into a flat with no garden, and I developed a chronic health condition that meant taking on a big allotment was out of the question. The raised bed I have at Grapes Hill makes it possible for me to continue my passion for growing veg and meeting like-minded people." Raised bed tenant and volunteer

Changes in 2025

In 2025 we were happy to welcome James Tremlett as our new Web Master. We were sad to say goodbye to Sarah Davis, who helped us with administration, membership and record keeping.

Three cheers to all our volunteers, we cannot thank you enough for all you do!

Key Roles

Paid Officer Roles

- Jo Rice – Principal Gardener
- Caroline Fernandez - Outreach and Integration Officer
- Charity Lamb - Assistant Gardener

Trustees

- Richard Bearman - Chair
- Fran Ellington - Founder
- Wyn Hurst - Administrative support
- Peter Ellington - Treasurer
- Clare Nubel- Fundraising

Other Key Roles

- Ben St Ruth - Hon. Bookkeeper
- Sarah Davis- Admin. and Membership Volunteer (from Sept 2024 – Sept 25)
- Patrick Goodall - Garden maintenance, sculptor and bench creator
- Matthew Salmon- Committee Member
- Jeremy Bartlett-Web Master until July 2025
- James Tremlett-Web Master from September 2025



Some of the staff, volunteers and trustees of GHC GG Photo Credit: Aoi Shinoda

New for 2025

Seasonal Connections Workshops

Four Seasonal Connections workshops were held. The main purpose of them was to build connections to nature, the seasons and each other. Eighty-five people attended altogether over the year. This was funded by the Norfolk Community Foundation, through the Love Norfolk Fund. A short film that has been made about these workshops.



Seasonal Connections Workshop – Poetry sharing around the fire

“The warmth, joy and community feeling. The meditations felt very special and the poetry session was a delight. Bringing and sharing food added to the communal spirit.”

Seasonal Connections participant.



Shared food table at Celebrating Autumn Equinox- Seasonal Connections Workshop

- Winter volunteer gardening sessions were introduced this year. This was at the request of our regular volunteers and because there are always things to do in the garden.
 - The Norwich Community Gardens Festival -April 26th and 27th. Many community gardens were open over this weekend, and we welcomed 54 new people to the garden over that weekend as well as 78 old friends.
 - We attended a new event: Norwich Biodiversity and Regenerative Food Festival at Chapelfield Gardens in October.
 - A group of sixteen students and staff from English + came to visit us for the first time this year and several of them continued to volunteer at the garden on Wednesdays throughout the season.
- We took on the lead for Gardens Stream for Norwich City of Sanctuary which means we facilitate networking meetings for other Norwich Gardens of Sanctuary, and groups who are looking to become Gardens of Sanctuary.
 - Wine tasting and canapes for members and subscribers was a ticketed event with our friends Substrata Wines. It was an amazing taste adventure. Lovely weather!
 - Acoustic Jam sessions started this year in the garden. This is an opportunity to come together to play music. It was initiated by two of our volunteers. Over the Winter the sessions were held in The Temple Bar.



Acoustic Jam started in the garden in the Summer and has been held at Temple Bar in the Winter

Photo credits Jo Rice

City College Ticket Course Students

This group is based at City College, Norwich within the inclusive learning department, which is a provision for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students. Their course is called 'Ticket' and is based at the end of the student's time at college before they progress onto supported internships or employment. The aim of the course is to prepare the students for this big step.

"We really enjoy our project with Grapes Hill Community Garden, where we volunteer every Wednesday afternoon. It is essential for us to have projects and time away from the classroom and in the community where the students can work and engage with people who are not directly associated with the college to build their confidence and communication skills. The GHCGG offers a fantastic, supportive and safe environment for this, with the students engaging positively and confidently with the fantastic staff at the gardens as well as with other volunteers. The students have not only made progress in terms of confidence and communication skills, but they have also benefitted from the mindfulness and wellbeing side of being in nature and witnessing a natural space and how it changes with the seasons. They have also learnt so much about gardening and using different equipment safely and correctly. The students are excited to get some seeds into the ground and start growing our own vegetables, which is an experience they have not had before. This has prompted many conversations about where our food comes from, sustainability and healthy eating."



City College ticket course students have learnt about gardening and team working, as well as building confidence and communication skills. Photo credit Jo Rice.

Events

The garden hosted three big community event days seeing over nearly 300 people attend across the three days:

Nature in the Garden; Sunday 11th May 2025

We had new guests Norfolk Butterfly Conservation with live moth identification. The Norfolk Ukulele Society opened the event. We were proud to exhibit -eco-dyed textiles and hand embroidered poems from The Seasons Speak Exhibition thanks to Friends of Waterloo Park Weavers and Dyers group. We also welcomed back Substrata Wines, and Tom Conway, The Coffee Pedlar. All the musicians performed well and were well received. We are grateful to Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk Organic Group, and Norfolk Master Composters for all providing activities and stalls. We had a plant and book stall as well as offering tea and cakes for donations. There were many new visitors to the garden. We recorded 81 attendees. Hallswood Animal Sanctuary kindly brought animals, including a regular visitor Hercules, the hedgehog. Sustainable Living Initiative, Marlpit also had a stall offering candle making activity. Face painting was kindly provided by Ally and Clare of The Phoenix Centre. It was an enjoyable day focused on the natural world.



Pictured Sarah and Tony. Photo credit Jo Rice



Norfolk Ukulele Society. Photo credit Jo Rice

Celebration of International Cultures June 2025

The theme of International Refugee Week 2025 was 'Community as a Superpower'. At this celebration event there was music, food and language tasters. Open to all and free entry. We welcomed over 100 attendees to celebrate international culture, many of whom were new visitors to the garden. -The event included a singing workshop by Samia Malik, delicious vegetarian snacks provided by Namaste Village, a seed sowing stall, and a plant stall offering rhubarb and fresh herbs, a tea and cake stall. Coffee was supplied by The Coffee Pedlar- Tom Conway.

We extend our gratitude to our neighbours for providing electricity, and the Cloud Café for hot water. Thank you to all who made it so enjoyable! The event was marked by a lovely atmosphere, and we eagerly anticipate collaborating with New Routes Integration again in 2026.



Arts and Culture in the Garden Sunday 27 July 2025

The Garden's third event of the year connected people through visual and musical arts. Artists showcased their crafts, and Peter Turrell and other musicians entertained the visitors. The event offered wine tasting, henna tattoos, quiz and games, plants, and refreshments for all senses. Thanks to everyone who visited; we had over 90 attendees.



Photo Credit: Aoi Shinoda

Workshops

Throughout the year, we hosted a total of 10 free workshops. 111 people attended altogether. These workshops enhanced the opportunities available in the garden by providing participants with the chance to acquire new skills and knowledge while connecting with each other and nature.

- First Aid training for staff and volunteers delivered by The Red Cross.
- Yoga: Summer Yoga Workshop: led by Weronika.
- Herbal Tea: Finding out about garden herbs and sampling herbal teas.
- Eco-Dyeing and Woad (Rita, Jo and Caroline)
- Edible Flowers- participants sampled a large variety of edible flowers and found out how to grow their own.
- Flower Garden- Art Workshop: Crafting unique artworks from various materials.
- 'Shout Out!' - Participatory Art workshop, with environmental artist Jaqui Jones
- Winter Pruning and tool sharpening workshop.
- Seasonal Wreath Workshops: Crafting seasonal wreaths using natural materials.

The feedback from these workshops was overwhelmingly positive. People were very likely to recommend them to others. Other feedback:

"It's nice having a local open space with friendly people and activities"



Summer Yoga with Weronika. Photo Credit Caroline Fernandez Seasonal Wreath workshop. Photo credit Caroline Fernandez

Come Play with Us-Board Games in the garden

Board games and seasonal quizzes continued monthly during the year, with twelve board game sessions over the year and four seasonal quizzes. These were held in the garden when fine and in the Cloud Café during the Winter. We are very grateful to Klod, the owner of The Cloud Cafe, who allowed us to meet in his café at no extra charge during the Winter.



Board Games in the garden and in the Cloud Cafe. Photo credit Jo Rice

Family Garden Club

We offered eight family garden group sessions over the season. Activities included making fruity ice pops from fruit in the garden, clay bugs, games, origami flowers and planting sunflowers. A total of 51 children and adults came along an average of 6 per workshop.



Making origami flowers. Photo credit Jo Rice



Fruity Ice pops – Family Garden Club. Photo credit Jo Rice



Outreach and group visits



Group visit OPN network Photo credit Caroline Fernandez

We reached out from the garden at several other events, sharing information about the garden and how to get involved. We also hosted several group visits.

- Norwich Science Festival 2025, The Forum. On our stall making paper pots and potting up peas for pea shoots seeds we interacted with over 170 people.
- St Barnabas Fun Day (49 people)
- Marlpit Community Garden Open Day (approximately 20)
- Green Care Network event (30)
- At Harlequin Fayre we ran workshops with Norfolk Organic Group (NOG) and Permaculture Association. (68)
- Visit by English + (16)
- Two different corporate groups worked on the site at Douro Place: A47 Team – litter picking, puddle planting and weeding and then Pivotal in December- weeding and planting.
- Mousehold to the Marshes – representatives attended performances and we were on the map as a green space in Norwich.
- We had a quiz team at the Millenium Library gardening quiz.
- Gift Exchange at Carrow House. We won one off use of a meeting room and Voluntary Norfolk Community Team won our offer of an herbal tea workshop and garden tour.
- Sprouting micro greens online workshop for Carers
- We hosted a visit from members of Open Projects Network (OPN) as part of a joint visit to Train Wood and Grapes Hill Community Garden.
- We are grateful to Norwich City Council, Louise Curtis through OPN for donations of seeds and plants during the year.



Pivotal IT-Corporate Volunteer group at Douro Place.

Photo credit Patrick Goodall

Grapes Hill Community Garden Accounts

Income and Expenditure in 2025

Our income in 2025: The garden raised **£15,828** during 2025. The main sources of income were:

- **Grants from funders:** (£8,373) — We received grants from the following funders: The Talent Fund, Places for People, and the Community Cares Fund, East of England Co-Op, (administered by the Norfolk Community Foundation) to support specific projects and activities.
- **Individual donations via CAF** (£5,864) — including a very generous legacy donation of £5,760 from Alastair Amery
- **Bucket donations** (£642) — cash collected at events
- **Gift Aid from HMRC** (£380) — a tax top-up the garden receives on eligible donations
- **Bank interest** (£242)
- **Membership fees, raised bed rentals and small donations** made up the remainder

Our income in 2024 was significantly less than 2024, when the garden received **£29,137** — this is mostly due to receiving our large two-year grant (£17,934) from Awards for All, the National Lottery in 2024.

Our expenditure in 2025:

Total spending was **£20,427**, covering:

- Running the **Get Up and Grow programme** funded by Awards for All, National Lottery (volunteer sessions, public events, workshops) — the biggest area of spend (£6,051)
- The **Talent Fund project** for additional gardening hours (£5,000)
- **Love Norfolk Fund, Seasonal Living Workshops** (£1,760)
- General garden maintenance and the **Garden of Sanctuary** project
- **Insurance, website hosting, independent examination of accounts, and other running costs** (£1,471)

Grapes Hill Community Garden Accounts 31.12.2025

Summary Accounts			
Income statement			
		2025	2024
		£	£
Income		15,828	29,137
Expenditure		(20,427)	(15,463)
Depreciation		(5,789)	(6,100)
Surplus		(10,388)	7,574
Balance sheet		31.12.2025	31.12.2024
		£	£
Fixed assets		106,773	106,773
Depreciation		(76,340)	(70,551)
Net book value		30,433	36,222
Bank and cash		13,556	18,155
Total		43,989	54,377
Funds			
Awards for All, The National Lottery Fund (Get up and Grow project)		1,967	11,270
NCC Love Norfolk		-	2,116
Green in the community		-	748
Community Cares Fund East of England Co-Op		2,373	
General		39,649	40,243
Total		43,989	54,377
Cash flow summary		2025	2024
		£	£
Bank at start		18,155	5,180
Grants in		8,373	27,905
Capital additions		-	(700)
Other income		7,455	1,232
Expenditure		(20,427)	(15,462)
Bank at end		13,556	18,155

Plans for 2026

The plans for 2026 are well under way, building on last year's successes and continuing the good work. There will be four more Seasonal Connections workshops plus our usual volunteering sessions, board games, workshops and the following larger events:

Please mark these dates in your calendars. All events are free.

Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th April Norwich Community Gardens Fest

Sunday, 24th May: Nature in the Garden 11am-3pm

Sunday, 21st June: Celebration of International Cultures 11am-3pm

Sunday, 26th July: Arts in the Garden 11am-3pm

Grapes Hill Community Garden would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to all our funders for their ongoing support. Without which, we would not be able to achieve all this incredible work.



Supported by Norfolk Community Foundation by Love Norfolk

