



# Trustees' Annual Report for the period

	Period start date				Period end date		
<b>From</b>	1	Sep	2013	<b>To</b>	31	Aug	2014

## Section A Reference and administration details

**Charity name** Olden Community Garden

**Registered charity number (if any)** 1158105

**Charity's principal address** Whistler Street

London

N5 1NH

### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Terry Stacy	Chair		
2	James Lord	Secretary		
3	Carrick James	Treasurer		
4	Jill McKeown	Membership Secretary		
5	Malika El Ghasfhi			
6	Debbie Pippard			
7	Jennifer Sharpley			
8	Jeremy Urquhart			
9	Anna Sullivan			

## Section B Structure, governance and management

### Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Olden Community Garden is governed by the constitution which was agreed on 6 April 2014. It gained charitable status in August 2014.
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Olden Community Garden is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It currently has nine Trustees, the maximum permissible under its constitution.
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Trustees are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting for a three year period.

### Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

The charity has a simple structure, with no sub-committees, though individual Trustees take lead responsibility for different aspects of running the garden. These may be special projects (for example planning the physical development of different areas of the garden) or on-going work (such as day to day administration of the booking system).

We are negotiating a lease at peppercorn rent with the London Borough of Islington and expect to have that in place within the next few months.

Trustees regularly review risks associated with management of the garden and develop policies and action plans to deal with them. The nature of the garden means that some risks are on-going and are dealt with through policies (such as the policy of having no unaccompanied children in the garden) while others are one-off and are dealt with through an action plan (for example the risk posed by adjacent development, which required the isolation of a section of the garden for a period of time). We are supported in risk management by the London Borough of Islington, which retains responsibility for aspects of the structural integrity of the site, and has an advisory role.

Olden Garden holds full public liability insurance.

## Section C

## Objectives and activities

### Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The objects of the CIO are to promote for the benefit of those people living or working in the London Borough of Islington a community garden and associated facilities to advance education and for the purposes of recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving their condition of life.

**Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)**

During the year covered by this report, Olden Community Garden gained charitable status. During this process, Trustees reviewed Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and were satisfied that the activities of Olden Garden met the requirement both before and after registration. We continue to be guided by the requirement for public benefit as we plan our future programme of work.

Olden Garden was created 25 years ago when a group of local residents successfully campaigned to rescue a derelict railway embankment and turn it into a community garden. Over the years the two acre site has been turned into a haven for local residents and wildlife alike. The garden is a significant asset to the community. Islington has less green space than any other London borough, and the garden forms an important wildlife habitat. It, along with the allotments on the opposite embankment, contains the largest area of woodland in the borough. The Borough recognises the garden's importance to the area and has designated it a Grade 1 SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation).

The garden is open to members at all times, and to the general public at least 60 times a year. It is largely maintained by volunteers, with the support of two very part-time paid gardeners. Members can drop in at any time to garden or just to enjoy the surroundings, and the general public can attend any of the open events. The gardeners are present one day per week, and this tends to be a time when a lot of regular volunteers come in, particularly those who are less confident in their gardening skills, as they get support and encouragement from the gardeners. In addition there is a regular monthly work day, at which up to 20 volunteers (including both individuals and families) come along to work and to enjoy a social lunch.

This year our open events have included seasonal celebrations such as a spring party and harvest festival, a poetry festival and several open days (including London Open Squares Weekend and the National Garden Scheme) which attract visitors from all over London and further afield. Several local groups (including Age Concern, University of the Third Age, the local primary school and a group for people with learning disabilities) use the garden and we are actively working to extend the number and range of groups using the garden. As we become better known, we are receiving more enquiries about what we can offer - for example we are extending access to isolated and lonely people, have been contacted about using the garden as a forest school, and by a local youth group who want to hold activities in the garden.

Our main activities this year were:

Providing a regular programme of activities

Olden garden provides both a regular programme of activities and opportunities for members and local residents to drop in on an ad hoc basis. Our activities over the year included:

- weekly drop-ins for gardening, aimed particularly at those who want support and advice from our sessional gardeners. Those who attend value the tutoring that our gardeners provide.
- monthly community workdays, attended by up to 30 adults and children
- hosting regular sessions for community groups, including University of the Third Age and a gardening group for people with learning disabilities run by City and Islington College
- hosting a steady stream of visitors. The garden is particularly enjoyed by families whose children love the space and variety the garden

offers.

#### Maintenance and development of the garden

Although we have paid gardeners, much of the work to maintain the garden is carried out by volunteers. This year, improvements and developments have included:

- repairs to the railway slope carried out by LBI. These required dismantling and later reinstating our large greenhouse
- experimenting with a Forest Garden in the woodland
- improvements works to the Garden House, extending the food preparation area in the kitchen to allow for our expanding number of social events; and repairs to the entry gate, both of which were funded by a one of our grants from the London Borough of Islington. Funding also enabled us to commission a local artist, Derek Whitehead, to create a mosaic to add a finishing touch to the entry gate.
- growing a range of fruit and vegetables which are sold to raise funds and are enjoyed by local people. The produce made from our fruit and vegetables raise awareness of using local food, and inspire our volunteers, one of whom won an award at Capel Manor harvest festival for jam made from our damsons.

#### Expanding our events programme

We have an annual programme of events, aimed at both our members and the wider public. This year they included:

- opening the garden as part of the NGS Open Garden scheme and London Open Squares weekend. These events attracted visitors from across London
- a Spring event, at which we held an EGM to approve our new constitution
- the Chelsea Fringe came to Olden Garden, with a poetry, magic and music event led by the gardener, poet and broadcaster St John Stevens
- a jazz afternoon, which we put on especially for local residents to encourage existing members, neighbours and friends to get to know the garden.

#### Developing the charity

- We applied for CIO status and received it just before year end. We have also worked hard at formalising some of our processes and strengthening our governance, and this will continue in the year to come.

## Section D

## Achievements and performance

### Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

The charity's main achievements were:

- working with relevant statutory agencies to improve the physical fabric of the garden including health and safety works to the bank and railway bridge carried out;
- securing funds for our gardeners to enable local people to learn about and enjoy gardening
- running 10 volunteer workdays, which were well attended by individuals and families
- running open events that were attended by members and others including one at nominal/no cost (our jazz afternoon)
- growing our membership through our programme of events
- making our space available to those who otherwise do not have access to green space, and to those in need – and particularly to a growing number of elderly people who enjoy the physical activity and social aspects of gardening
- gaining CIO status, which will help with raising funds and with ensuring that the organisation is well governed

## Section E

## Financial review

### Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The Trustees policy is to hold a minimum of 3 months running costs in reserve, and currently the reserves stand at just under 9 months'. This provides a cushion for cash flow purposes, and for dealing with unexpected expenses.

### Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The charity's financial picture has been stable, with a small operating surplus. We have mixed sources of income and depend both on grants and on membership fees and earned income. We are particularly grateful to the Cripplegate Foundation for their generous support over many years and to the London Borough of Islington (LBI) for their long-standing financial and advisory support.

The grant from Cripplegate enabled us to continue to employ our two sessional gardeners, who form the backbone of the services Olden Garden provides. One of the grants from LBI enabled us to carry out much needed improvements to our building and entry gate, while the other will be used to create a planting bed alongside our new boundary wall.

We will be looking to expand our funding base over the next year with applications to other charitable funders. We also hope to grow our membership and maintain or expand our levels of lettings as unrestricted funds are invaluable in maintaining and developing the garden and the activities we can offer.

## Section F

## Other optional information

Trustees are starting on the process of developing a longer-term plan for development of the garden. We will be consulting members on these ideas, and will draw up a fundraising and development plan once we know our members' priorities.

Initial ideas on which we will consult include:

- improving access to all parts of the garden to increase accessibility for elderly and disabled people
- identifying new groups of people, including those in need and those who have less access to open space, who might benefit from use of the garden,

- more activities for families, such as a Saturday Gardening Club,
- increasing food growing through family allotments,
- surveying the garden with a view to enhancing wildlife habitats
- developing particular areas of the garden such as the orchard, woodland or wildflower meadow..

## **Section G Declaration**

**The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.**

**Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

<b>Signature(s)</b>		
<b>Full name(s)</b>		
<b>Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)</b>		
<b>Date</b>		