

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
16 JULY 2018	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Adrian Chapman, Service Director: Communities and Safety	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Irene Walsh, Cabinet Member for Communities	
Contact Officer(s):	Lisa Roberts, Head of Culture and Leisure	Tel: 01733 452386

GREEN BACKYARD PROGRESS REPORT

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: <i>Cabinet Member for Communities</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
It is recommended that Cabinet notes the Green Backyard progress report.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following a request from Councillor Irene Walsh, Cabinet Member for Communities.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider the progress made by the Green Backyard, from the 5 October 2017 signing of a 12 year lease to occupy the site.
- 2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.2, 'To promote the Council's role as community leader, giving a 'voice' to the community in its external relations at local, regional and international level, and fostering good working relationships with the Council's partner organisations, Parish Councils and the relevant authorities for Police, Fire, Probation and Magistrates' Courts Services.'

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 On the 5 October 2017 a twelve year lease was signed with The Green Backyard and Peterborough City Council to secure the charity's future on the Oundle Road site. This represented a major investment in the community project by the city council. The agreement includes:

- A 12 year lease
- Two council appointed members to join The Green Backyard's board of 12 trustees
- Six months to make improvements to the appearance of the Oundle Road site
- A requirement for an annual report to the council's scrutiny committee to measure positive community impact - which will include, for example, the levels of volunteering,

community learning, activities for the most vulnerable, and supporting arts and culture groups

As part of the agreement the council has retained the frontage of the site onto Oundle Road and will partition The Green Backyard site with a new fence.

The Green Backyard wrote a Business Plan in 2015 outlining its vision for the future of the site. This plan still represents the overall vision for the organisation, although the cash flow and targets require some revision in the light of the lease not being signed until October 2017. In the seven months that the site has had security of tenure the Green Backyard have:

- Secured £73,500 in grant funding
- Submitted bids for a further £100,000+ potential further funding, currently awaiting the outcomes
- identified further funding streams into which they will shortly be applying
- Relunched Backyard Food with new stock inspired by a community consultation exercise, including offering visitors the chance to avoid single use plastics
- Run workshops on wreath making, contemporary floristry and permaculture gardening, which have been well-received by the participants
- Run a programme of skills-based training through the Community Learning Trust
- Provided volunteering opportunities to, on average, 100 people per week
- Held a range of community events, celebrating the culture and diversity of Peterborough
- Improved the accessibility and aesthetics of the Green Backyard site

4.2 **Incorporation, Governance and Organisational Structure**

The Green Backyard is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the following charitable objectives:

1. To develop the capacity and skills of members of socially or economically disadvantaged communities within the community of interest in such ways that they are better able to identify, and help meet their needs and to participate more fully in society, including by:
 - equipping people with skills and competencies which they would not otherwise have
 - realising existing skills and developing potential
 - promoting people's self-confidence
 - encouraging people to get involved in their community and wider society
2. To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public by:
 - the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources
 - the promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration
 - the advancement of education of the public in subjects relating to sustainable development
 - the protection, enhancement and rehabilitation of the environment and to promote study and research in such subjects provided that the useful results of such study are disseminated to the public at large.

Site Management

Prior to 2016, the Board of Trustees and other volunteers were responsible for all the work carried out on site and all the organisational tasks required to ensure site activities took place safely and for the benefit of the public. Some paid roles have now been introduced:

1. In 2016 Contracted Site Managers: responsible for the day to day management of the site, including maintenance and improvement, volunteer management, welcoming visitors and running events and educational activities.
2. From September 2017: two part-time employees (21 hour contracts), covering a broad Team Member job description but with responsibility split into Operational and Business Development functions.

Progress since September 2017

Following the AGM in March 2018, the Board of Trustees have new members drawn from the community and two members representing Peterborough City Council, Cllr Irene Walsh, Cabinet Member for Communities and Lisa Roberts, Head of Culture and Leisure.

Key roles on the Board are:

- Chair – Jay Gearing
- Vice-chair - Sophie Antonelli
- Treasurer – Alun Williams
- Secretary – Hazel Perry

Governance Committee:

The Green Backyard has a governance committee responsible for ensuring good governance and compliance with legal and other obligations, the Governance Committee is made up of staff, contractors and trustees. Since September 2017, the Governance Committee has approved the following new policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Site Managers' Manual and Procedures
- People Care Code of Conduct

Business Development Committee:

Responsible for development of income streams (both trading and grant-funded) and diversification of the services and activities offered by the Green Backyard, the Business Development Committee is made up of both paid staff and Trustees.

Since September 2017, the Business Development Committee has overseen the development of new funding streams, the re-launch of Backyard Food wholefood shop and the promotion of courses, events, workshops, corporate volunteer days and private hires. Progress on all of these is detailed in Section 3: Business Development and Funding.

Operations Worker: (21 hrs per week):

Employed since September 2017, this worker is one of two part-time employees responsible for the day to day operations at the Green Backyard. His role is wide-reaching but encompasses acting as a key point of contact for Site Managers, working out the rota for covering opening hours, bookings, liaison with key partners, social media and marketing, financial management and working closely with the Governance and Business development committees.

Business Development Worker: (21 hrs per week):

Also employed since September 2017, this worker's role focuses on writing management systems, policies and procedures, writing funding applications, development of trading and other non-grant based sources of income, financial management and working closely with the Governance and Business Development committees. The Green Backyard continue to expand their contract delivery programme, delivering community learning for City College Peterborough.

Site Managers (Pool of Contractors working during site opening hours):

Members of the Site Manager pool are contracted on a rota and are responsible for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all visitors and volunteers on site, maintenance and improvement of the gardens and structures and are involved in educational and therapeutic horticulture activities. Site Managers also provide key support during events, courses, hires, corporate days and workshops.

Temporary Workers:

The Green Backyard have contracted a shop development worker one day per week, to ensure the opening of Backyard Food. This is funded through participation in the School of Social Entrepreneurs/Power to Change Community Build Up programme.

The partnership with Peterborough City College via their Community Learning Trust programme has allowed the Green Backyard to contract a temporary administrative worker and a range of teaching staff to deliver a programme of community-based learning called Seed to Sale.

There are also paid opportunities available to a range of teachers and workshop leaders to offer educational programmes.

4.3 **Site Improvements**

The Green Backyard could not invest in site improvements until the issue of the lease was resolved.

Over the years of operation, areas of the site have accumulated tools, materials and resources of varying quality and usefulness. Some of these belong to the Green Backyard directly, some belong to supporters, volunteers or site managers.

The lease contains a number of requirements to improve the visual and aesthetic quality of the site, maintain general tidiness and restrict certain kinds of activity. The lease also reduced the area of land constituting the Green Backyard and incorporated a car park at the Oundle Road end of the site. Work on this commenced in May 2018.

Progress since September 2017:

An ownership survey of items (materials and tools) has been carried out and the majority of personally owned items of no use to the charity's objectives have been removed. This process is ongoing with good progress made.

Additional works include the following:

- Painting and tidying of the boards around the perimeter, including removal of graffiti-based mural art
- Painting and screening of the shipping containers has commenced. Paint is on order to complete this work
- Planters situated in the area allocated to the new car park have been dismantled for re-use
- A new accessible compost toilet has been installed and work will be taking place in the near future to create new accessible paths and raised beds
- The poly-tunnel has been re-skinned and is now fully operational

- Work on removing brick edging to beds and replacing this with safer wooden edging has been completed
- Creation of new beds for cut flowers and herbs (linked to the CLT courses) has commenced
- Dead trees along the London Road boundary have been identified, the Council will make arrangements for their removal
- The animal enclosure has been moved from its former position close to the boundary with KFC to a more open area further down the site
- Improvements have been made to the storage areas behind the Hub and to the beehive area
- A new composting area has been completed with bays for perennial weeds and for composting of waste materials. This area is now much tidier and provides a closed loop for fertility improvements
- Pruning of willow and other trees has taken place, as well as weeding and tidying of the garden area is ongoing and the garden area is looking vibrant and abundant

A number of funding bids have been submitted which if successful, will allow the Green Backyard to make greater improvements to the site infrastructure, accessibility and aesthetics.

4.4 **Progress on Business Development and Grant Funding**

The Green Backyard's capacity for development is currently limited by the ability to employ sufficient high quality staff at a competitive rate of pay. The site lends itself to a multitude of potential uses and the degree to which they can develop it, particularly as a venue for hire, is dependent on being able to employ more staff directly (rather than as contractors) and to develop and retain talent within the organisation.

The Community Trade up Programme has provided enough funds to contract a self-employed Shop Development Worker for 1 day a week for sixteen weeks. It is anticipated that the shop income will be able to support continuation of this role.

Through the current fund-raising and income generation activities, Green Backyard will be able to maintain a level of provision, however to be able to deliver the wider vision, Green Backyard will need to both employ more people and improve income.

The grant awarded by Tudor Trust of £40,000 over two years plus the Green Backyard's projected income streams will allow the organisation to maintain a business as usual model for the current year. If they are successful in the Power to Change and/or Core Strength Fund bids, these will allow them more freedom to develop a stronger staff team and enhance their capacity to deliver a wider range of services including:

- More regular events/workshops/courses
- A Forest School offering wild play (after school/school holidays)
- Social prescribing/ therapeutic horticulture sessions
- A hire package for different events, such as parties and weddings
- More corporate events
- More tailored volunteering opportunities for people of different ages/abilities

4.5 **Partnerships, Volunteers and Visitors**

The Green Backyard's central ethos has always been to provide a "garden for the city": a place of beauty, where all are welcome. During opening hours (Weds, Thurs, Sat, Sun 11am-4pm all year), the site is freely open to anyone who wants to visit or to take part in day to day gardening, craft or site improvement activities.

On average, around 100 people per week visit the site, although this can be much higher

during events. For example, around 500 people came to the Holi May Day event to enjoy maypole and Indian dancing, food and drink and the throwing of the colours (a traditional Holi activity within the Hindu community). This event is run annually in conjunction with Vivacity and the Diwali Association.

Over the course of its history, the Green Backyard has built many partnerships with other local organisations, businesses, schools and playgroups, as well as attracting a committed volunteer following and occasional visitors. Regular attendees include the Belsize Bears Playgroup and Phoenix School. The Green Backyard provides volunteering opportunities to organisations/community groups and to individuals.

Progress since September 2017:

1. Community Partnership: Headway

Headway, the brain injuries charity, have been sending a group of their volunteers to site for regular sessions since 2016. They are hoping to move more of their activities to site in the future and to that end, have been working closely with the Green Backyard to train employees in understanding brain injuries and help with accessibility improvements. They have raised funds on behalf of the organisation for an accessible toilet, paths and raised beds, and facilitated other organisations to volunteer on site on construction projects. Headway joined the Board of Trustees in March 2018.

2. IKEA

IKEA have been a long-standing partner to Green Backyard. They have provided help through covering the costs of waste removal from site, providing a new skin for the dilapidated poly-tunnel and sent teams of volunteers to work on specific projects. In turn, The Green Backyard has run workshops for IKEA staff, including "Cooking Day", in which the IKEA team used the Green Backyard's rocket stove to cook a curry and staff enjoyed time working on the garden and adding fresh seasonal produce to the recipe. The Green Backyard's gardening experts are helping to advise them on the establishment of a growing area at the IKEA distribution centre.

3. Learning Partnership – Peterborough City College

Green Backyard has been delivering training via the Community Learning Trust for Peterborough City College, using their expertise in arts, crafts and growing vegetables, cut flowers and therapeutic plants. This year's programme was called Seed to Sale and invited participants to learn growing skills, whilst also learning how to market and sell horticultural products. The Green Backyard are currently applying to continue to develop this training into 2019.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Not applicable.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 The Green Backyard progress report aims to ensure compliance with the granted lease. The Green Backyard have complied with the terms of the lease as set out on the 5 October 2017.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Cabinet requested a progress report on the Green Backyard as part of the lease. This report provides a progress report and Cabinet are recommended to note the progress made in fulfilment of the lease.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Not applicable.

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial, legal or equalities implications arising from this progress report.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None.

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