



A year in review

2024-2025

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

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INTRODUCTION



Bankside Open Spaces Trust brings people together through nature, working closely with our community to create and care for award-winning, sustainable green spaces.

Our 16 parks and gardens are inclusive places where people can learn, grow, play, and thrive. Each year we welcome over a million visitors.

Alongside these spaces we run and support projects designed to grow community connections, develop people's skills and interest in gardening and nature, and promote the benefits of an active lifestyle.

The foundation of all this work, are the spaces themselves.

This is because we know they play an invaluable role in combatting our changing climate and rising health inequalities in our area.

An area with high levels of poverty and a severe deficit of public green space and where 90% of houses are flats with limited access to private gardens.

It's because of this threat to the health and wellbeing of our communities that we've always ensured our spaces are welcoming to everybody.



"The connections I have made with other volunteers, the chats about gardening, being involved in keeping the historical space alive, partaking actively in the local community and sharing life experiences more generally have been incredibly enriching moments for me as a recent arrival to the neighbourhood."

Volunteer, March 2025

FOREWORD



Thanks to a multi-year grant from the City Bridge Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund, we've been able to invest in community outreach.

Over the past year our team delivered several partnership programmes with and for people living with anxiety, young adults with special educational needs and disabilities, and migrants and refugees.

Unfortunately, the financial risks for charities like Bankside Open Spaces Trust are growing. The ongoing cost of living crisis, high inflation and recent National Insurance rises are all contributing to substantial increases in the cost of project delivery.

To protect our work, we've developed and will continue to grow as broad an income portfolio as possible, including income from hires, gardening contracts, consultancy, corporate workdays, and individual donations.

This reflects our passion for ensuring that everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, can access vibrant, healthy spaces and take part in projects that support wellbeing, strengthen community, and build more resilient futures.



OUR MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

Bankside Open Spaces Trust works to:

- **Transform open spaces**
- **Empower and engage local communities**
- **Enhance health and wellbeing**
- **Champion sustainability**

OUR MISSION

Enhancing Health and Wellbeing

We protect and improve existing open spaces and develop, design and create new ones, increasing accessibility for all.

In 2024/25 we continued to manage a total of 16 spaces, holding the lease for six sites across Southwark and Lambeth and contracts with **Tate Modern**, **English Heritage for Winchester Palace** and **Southwark Council**.

All our gardening and landscaping projects are built around the core principle of community engagement through consultation and volunteering.

This year we worked with those, who have experienced homelessness, people with mental health needs, older people experiencing isolation, people of all ages and local business workers.

2024/2025 highlights - Parks and Gardens



In 2024/25 we:

- Maintained **16 open spaces**
- Planted **2279 bulbs, 300 shrubs/herbaceous plants and 8 trees**
- Maintained **5 wildlife ponds**
- Created **5 log piles** and **3 dead hedges for wildlife**
- Maintained **1 rain garden**

Nominated for **Britain in Bloom - Urban Community Award - 2025**

Four **London in Bloom Awards** including gold for **Red Cross Garden**, **Tate Community Garden** and **Waterloo Millennium Green**

Three **Community Green Flag Awards**

Key figures 2025

7

awards for Horticultural Excellence

20,000

people attended BOST events

1019

new plants and 2279 bulbs were planted

20

resident-led green projects delivered

61

% of Future Gardeners students that graduated, are now in employment or further training

16

open spaces maintained

245

community gardening sessions

KEY FIGURES

16,221

attendees visited **Living Space** for **944 hires** of the space

352

children were registered for **free afterschool activities** at **Marlborough Sports Garden**

300

children attended the **Big Easter Egg Hunt** at **Red Cross Garden.**





Parks and Gardens

We are extremely grateful for the time and energy our volunteers dedicated to improving, maintaining and showcasing our parks and gardens, helping deliver our events, acting as trustees and supporting our wider work.

In 2024/25:

- we worked with **63 Community Gardening Volunteers**
- **69 people** took part in our community outreach and engagement sessions designed for specific groups such as SEND students, people with anxiety, refugees and asylum seekers
- we worked with **29 Crossbones Wardens**
- we hosted **245 community gardening sessions**
- our **Community Gardening Volunteers** contributed **5776 hours** to keeping our parks looking beautiful

In 2024/25, our Future Gardeners course, Green Hub network, Living Space community centre, events and outreach programmes helped thousands of people connect with nature and spend time together outdoors.

89% volunteers felt that their volunteering had an impact on the local community

71% of volunteers felt more connected to nature and 68% felt more connected to the local community

OUR ACTIVITIES

Community Outreach and Engagement

Our new **Community Engagement** work focuses on three key areas: **Outreach, Engagement and Recruitment**. This year we strengthened our relationship with charities and individuals from marginalised and minority communities and those managing disability by creating and delivering micro-volunteering sessions.

742

Corporate Volunteers attended the volunteering gardening sessions



Corporate Volunteers

This year we delivered **58 corporate volunteering gardening sessions**, with a total of **742 volunteers**.

Many companies, both returning and new, joined us outdoors to help improve the local area for everyone to enjoy.

In follow-up surveys, **100%** of respondents reported feeling a sense of achievement, said the event had a positive impact on them, and that they had fun and enjoyed themselves.



"I think the MSG is a very fun place to be in and I feel like when I first came here, I felt welcomed and there is a nice community among the people who come here, and I've enjoyed coming every holiday.
I really like the coaches, they really support your decisions."

Holiday camps participant, 2024



Marlborough Sports Garden

MSG and our **free programmes** are a unique and vital resource for our local community who face multiple challenges.

In our ward, child poverty is high, housing is dense, and most people live in flats without private outdoor space.

At MSG in 2024/25:

- **352 children** registered for our free afterschool sports sessions.
- **136 children** accessed the free places on our sports holiday camps.
- **12 children** with SEND were able to participate thanks to funding that enabled teaching assistants from two local schools to attend and support them.
- We ran a '**SEND Mornings**' programme benefitting **20** neurodiverse children from two local schools.

OUR ACTIVITIES

We also ran a **SEND Sports Festival** for five primary schools in partnership with Access Sport. The festival was attended by **47 participants.**

During the school holidays we ran affordable multi-sports camps and allocate **48 free places** per camp to children from low-income families who might otherwise struggle to attend.

Over the year, we welcomed **136 registered participants** into our free programme, generating **766** attendances.

We continued to make space for local schools to run sports activities such as **PE lessons, extra-curricular PE, sports days** and end-of-term activities.







"I think that coming together to learn with different groups of neighbours and to share experiences strengthens the community. It creates new social connections and motivates others."

Green Hub participant, 2024



Green Hub

Over the course of its third year, the **Green Hub** supported **20 resident-led green projects** in our community across the **Borough, Bankside and Bermondsey** areas, working with local estates-based community gardens and food-growing projects, small parks, nature reserves, orchards and street planning.

This has resulted in :

- **38 group gardening sessions** and workshops attended by **117 residents**
- **1,019 new plants** and **2,279 bulbs** planted in our community's green spaces
- **52 new tools** provided for our Green Hub projects
- **6 new wildlife habitats** created
- **2 Green Hub Projects** being awarded **London in Bloom Awards** for the "It's Your Neighbourhood" category



"I know a lot of mums on the estate really appreciate when their children come down to the garden, they burn up energy and the mums get some peace. Personally I find it fantastic for de-stressing and for connecting with people."

Green Hub participant 2024

LIVING SPACE

In 2024/25 Living Space went from strength to strength, with a total of **944 hires** with **16,221 attendees** (excluding children services). Activities included **workshops, dance, karate, bands, crafts, self-development, theatre, disability groups, local residents' sessions, parties** and **church groups.**

16,221

Attendees visited Living Space in 2024/25



In addition, Living Space hosts regular coffee mornings for adults run by the **National Autism Society,** an advice service for individuals with SEND requirements provided by **SOS!SEN.**

Living Space delivered activity sessions in the school holidays in partnership with **Oasis Hub Waterloo** and **South London Kings** football. We had **277 registered attendees** who participated in 10 weeks of holiday provision.

During term time **Oasis** provided family sessions twice a week with crafts, sports and games and football, with hot meals provided for the whole family. There are currently **165 registered users.**



OUR ACTIVITIES









FUTURE GARDENERS – GROWING CAREERS

The Future Gardeners programme aims to provide horticultural training to people who have been long-term unemployed or faced challenges in their lives and who would benefit from gaining confidence, skills and the opportunity of training and employment.

In the 2024–2025 year, **57 students** enrolled in five Future Gardeners programmes, with **49** successfully completing them – resulting in a graduation rate of 86%.

61% of those who have completed a Future Gardeners course have now gone into employment or further training in the industry.

Employers include:

Royal Parks Apprenticeships, Chelsea Physic Garden Traineeship, *i*dverde, Frognal Gardens, Planet Turf, The Outside Group, Bankside Open Spaces Trust, Clarion Housing, Glendale, Peabody, Spitalfields City Farm, School Food Matters, Wilder and Rozario Gardens.

EVENTS

- In 2024, we launched our most diverse Bankside Open Spaces Festival yet. Despite the unpredictable weather, the event opened with a sun-soaked Latina Fiesta.
- The BOSFest hosted dynamic Irish and Ghanaian dance workshops.
- We delivered a free plants giveaway.
- The Niimei Cultural Group showcased rich Ghanaian drumming and dance.
- As always, The BOST Easter Bunny made a joyful appearance during the Big Easter Hunt.













"This was a brilliant and inspiring day out. A wide section of the community was represented in multiple ways."

BOSFest attendee, 2024

SUSTAINABILITY







CHAMPION SUSTAINABILITY

Bankside Open Spaces Trust works to reduce our impact on the environment by gardening without chemicals, choosing drought resistant plants and using peat-free compost.

We now have **three zero green waste sites:**

- **Red Cross Garden**
- **Tate Modern Community Garden**
- **Waterloo Millennium Green**

In addition to this, designs for **Marlborough Sports Garden** are based on **Circular Economy** principles.

TRANSFORMING OPEN SPACES



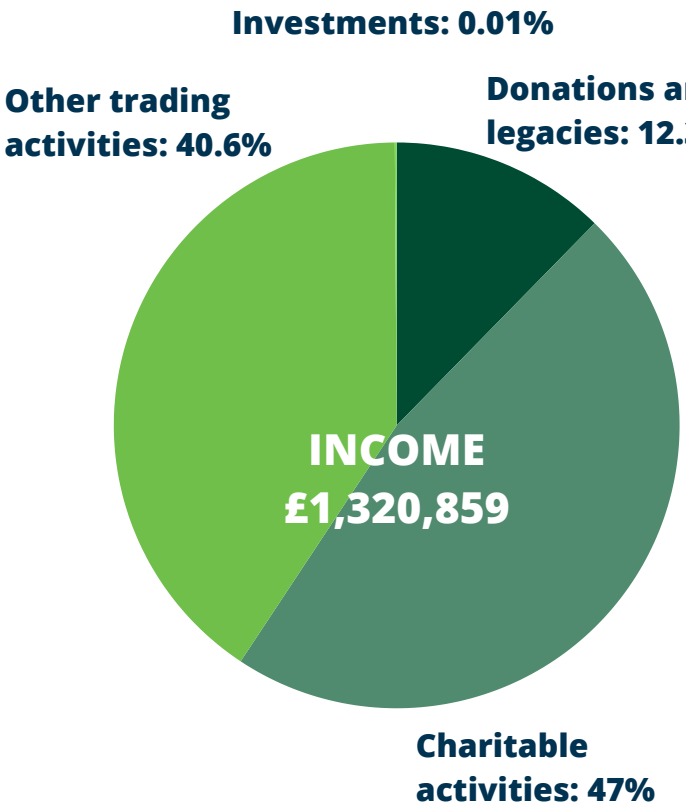
MARLBOROUGH SPORTS GARDEN CAPITAL WORKS

Our exciting plans for the site took a leap forward this year with more funding secured and partnerships reached.
This is an ambitious **£5 million** project for a charity of our size and is of great importance as the upgraded site will allow us to double our impact.

Our plans include:

- A 40m running track, covered fitness deck, and flexible indoor spaces.
- An affordable café, accessible toilets, and all-weather facilities.
- Over £500,000 of greening infrastructure, tackling poor air quality, overheating, and lack of shade.

FINANCES





Donations and legacies:	**£162,940**	**Charitable activities:**	**£1,440,175**
Charitable activities:	**£620,321**	**Raising Funds:**	**£27,824**
Other trading activities:	**£536,178**	**Other:**	**£576**
Investments:	**£1,420**		

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year and all income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.
The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.



FUTURE PLANS

Looking forward to 2025/26 and beyond, Bankside Open Spaces Trust will continue to consolidate and strengthen our activities.

Planned initiatives will include:

Transform Open Spaces

- Continuing to secure full funding to realise the capital project at Marlborough Sports Garden.

Empower and Engage Local Communities

- Increasing our networks with the business community to generate additional unrestricted income through expanding our portfolio of opportunities.

Enhance Health and Wellbeing

- Enabling the local community to access public space at The Grotto and developing Guy Street Park as part of the Snowfields development.

Champion Sustainability

- We will work towards our aim of being net zero across our parks and green spaces by 2030.



BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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