

An educated movement

potential funders about the benefits our members create for local communities.

Education is not just reflected in our core work, but is particularly relevant to many of the initiatives and partnerships we are involved in.

The Allotments Regeneration Initiative has been particularly successful in educating a new generation about the benefits of growing your own food. The School Farms Network supports teachers and experienced of farm animals or gardening, they offer training opportunities which translate to the jobs market and they have become resources they need to develop local sustainability. There is also a growing recognition of the therapeutic benefits of farms thanks to the work of the National Care Farming Initiative.

Our movement never stops moving forward and it never stops learning. It is this desire to evolve that helps city farms and community gardens bring so many benefits to local people and the places they live.

The Federation plays an important role in this learning process through the support of our regional development staff, the networking opportunities we offer and the information resources we provide.

Our work also helps the public gain a clearer understanding of the work of community farms and gardens. By raising the profile of the movement at national level, we can help educate other organisations and government departments, decision-makers and

regeneration, known as Seeing is Believing tours, they are a fun way of showing work in action to a wide variety of organisations and government officers. The tours also contribute to our aim of promoting good practice.

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Federation news

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Around the UK

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Review of the year 2006 - 2007

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Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens

The Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens exists to support, represent and promote community-managed farms and gardens



Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

Newsletter & Review of the Year Winter 2007

Patron HRH The Prince of Wales

Finance summary: April 2006-March 2007

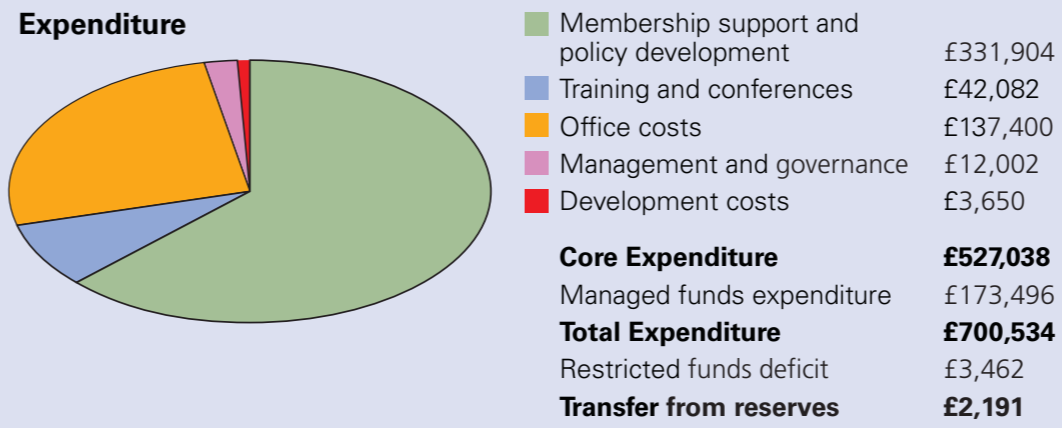
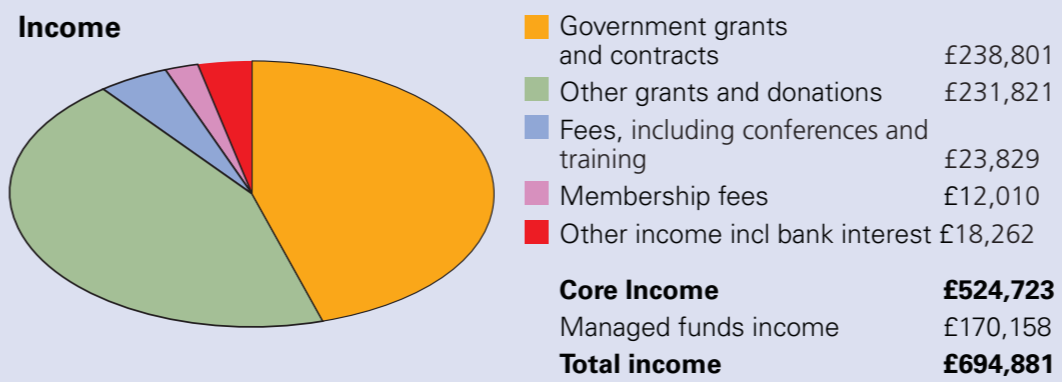
The deficit on restricted funds was £3,461 and the deficit on unrestricted funds £2,191.

Reserves

The unrestricted deficit reduced our reserves to £116,458. Our target is to hold at least three months of our core expenditure in reserves, in line with Charity Commission guidance. A copy of our full accounts is available on request from our head office.

Our **core income** of £524,723 represents a decrease of £20,678 on the previous financial year. An additional £170,158 of funds managed by us on behalf of other organisations gives a total income of £694,881.

Our **core expenditure** of £527,038 plus managed funds expenditure of £173,496 gives a total expenditure of £700,534.



Chair & Director's report

Meanwhile the growing National Care Farming Initiative has recognised the excellent work done in this area by pioneering city farms.

FCFCG was instrumental in helping develop the £50m Local Food programme and £50m Community Spaces programme, both of which were announced earlier this year, demonstrating that our flexible and innovative approach to support complementary initiatives can pay huge dividends.

As ever, we are aware of the need to plan for the future. FCFCG is currently developing five year strategies for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and London in consultation with our members and partners. This will ensure we deliver a useful and coherent service through the best use of available resources.

Jeremy Iles (*Director*) & David Drury (*Chair*)

During the last year we have continued to support and promote the tangible benefits of city farms and community gardens, which are increasingly recognised by local and national government, funders and other stakeholders.

The number of city farms has remained constant - reflecting the difficulties in obtaining funds and land to develop new projects - while there has been an upsurge in interest in community gardens, allotments and school farms.

FCFCG Action Plan

- We want to:
- Strengthen the core services we provide for our members
 - Continue to promote good practice to community farms and gardens
 - Further our links with regional bodies and funders
 - Diversify our income so we can be more financially secure in the future
 - Raise our public profile to ensure that community farms and gardens are regularly in the public eye
 - Develop new networks in Northern Ireland and Wales to support community farming and gardening
 - Maintain our ability to work in partnership and support new initiatives

UK partnerships

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FCFCG would like to thank our funders, which include:



Find a full list of all our funders on our website.

Become a Federation Supporter

Your donation will help strengthen our work across the UK and in return you will receive our public newsletters and annual review. Remember: if you pay income tax we can claim back 28% tax on your donation.

Yes, I'll become a Supporter. I'd like to:

enclose a cheque payable to FCFCG (£20 minimum).

give permission for FCFCG to reclaim tax on my donation

I also wish to receive *Growing Places*, FCFCG's quarterly newsletter for its members.

Date

Signature

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address

Postcode

Please return to FCFCG Head Office. Alternatively visit www.farmgarden.org.uk/donate to make a donation online

This newsletter is also available in large print, braille or on audio tape from our Head Office

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London & East: 0207 485 5001

North: 0191 263 5125

Northern Ireland: 01207 562 317

Learning to grow



Rooftop garden is perfectly pitched

Reading International Solidarity Centre, Reading



Developing the garden also provided an opportunity to twin with partner groups in countries such as Nepal, Cuba, the Philippines and Zimbabwe.

Culturally significant

Plants from around the world are used to teach visitors both about biodiversity and the way different cultures use plants. Culturally significant plants have been selected to relate to some of the groups using the garden, including Turkish rocket, a peppery salad plant; Chilean myrtle, which bears the delicious 'ugni' berries and maize, the staple food crop of much of Latin America and Africa. There is also Emmer wheat, a 4,000 year old variety originally grown in ancient Egypt.

Each plant has its own information label – giving its Latin and common name and showing a picture of it in flower/leaf, details of its uses and where it is from.

A series of laminated sheets are also on display at the site, explaining the philosophy behind the roof garden and helping to make it relevant to people's own gardens with ideas for recycling, water collecting, vegetable growing and composting.



Sustainable garden

The result was the Growing Our Futures project, which aimed to make a sustainable garden that would demonstrate the philosophies of RISC: education, recycling, sustainability and a consideration of the environment and our impact on it.

This broader aim successfully attracted funding from the National Lottery's Social, Economic and Environmental Development (SEED) program and the Environment Trust for Berkshire. Transforming the roof began in March 2002.

Using permaculture principles (creating sustainable human habitats by following nature's patterns) the 32m x 6m roof garden copies the layers of a natural forest and is home to 140 trees, climbers, ground cover plants and root crops.

Minority ethnic

The garden has a strong educational element. Every plant is edible, medicinal or has some practical use, and all tell a story about the diversity of climates and cultures around the world and their fragile state of interdependence.

Plants and food are excellent mediums to explore how actions taken in the UK can affect the livelihoods of people elsewhere. Consultation with minority ethnic community groups, schools, artists and environmental organisations took place during the design stage.

Want to find out more?

This is an adapted version of a case study from FCFCG's great new good practice publication, *Chillies & Roses*, which concentrates on the important task of encouraging and inspiring minority ethnic participation in community groups.

The colourful and comprehensive 44-page booklet was launched at Cornwall's Eden Project in 2007 by Judy Ling Wong CBE of the Black Environment Network. It has already received praise from a number of quarters.

Chillies and Roses is stuffed with ideas, contacts and fascinating case studies featuring FCFCG members. In addition there are loads of innovative ideas and strategies that can help your group meet the needs of, and engage with, minority ethnic communities.

Copies of the publication are available for £10. (FCFCG members are entitled to a free print copy of the publication and can order extra copies at cost price).

To order a copy, please contact: FCFCG, The GreenHouse, Hereford Street, Bristol BS3 4NA
Tel: 0117 923 1800 Email: admin@farmgarden.org.uk

A great environment to learn

Edwalton School Farm, Nottingham



"This school is unique - a magical place with its wood and farm. The environmental education that takes place here is vital to the development of the whole school and its well-being."

It is clear from his words that head teacher Brian Owens strongly believes in the benefits of the rich environment at Edwalton, the only primary school in England with a working farm and a three-acre wood attached to the school grounds.

Utilising these facilities is a key element in creating a school with an holistic approach to helping children become happy, successful and well-adjusted.

"All our eco-activities, including the farm, our gardens and the woods, have a significant impact on improved pupil participation, ownership, leadership, achievement and self-esteem throughout the whole school. This impact encompasses not just the children, but staff, parents and the local community as well."

Rich diversity

"We are an international school with children of many different faiths, colours and backgrounds. We reflect the rich diversity found in the city of Nottingham and I am immensely proud of what we are trying to achieve," says Brian.

The farm started in the early 1970s with a collection of rabbits and hens. Later, the school acquired an adjacent 12-acre field and put two ponies out to graze. The farm grew when Jacob sheep and Alpine goats were added.

Brian arrived in 1995 and felt strongly that part of his role was to build on the work of his predecessors. A



key part of the strategy was to widen the ownership of the farm in order to involve not just staff and pupils, but parents, governors and the local community.

Stronger links

As a result stronger links were forged with local conservation groups like Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and national organisations such as FCFCG.

An Animal Club was also formed and has proved a big hit. Each week up to 50 children and 14 adults get involved, donning coats and wellies before heading off to clean out cages and pens, top up food and provide fresh water. This continues through the holidays and weekends, including Christmas Day.

Children also engage in horticultural activities such as planting spring and summer bulbs, decorating tubs and tending garden plots for their classes. Three beehives provide honey for the school kitchen and local community.

Environmental work

The school also acts as a trustee for the wood and projects have included fence painting, construction of outdoor classrooms, making bird boxes, plus a variety of environmental work linked to the curriculum. Recently a pond dipping platform was built.

The results of the school's all-round environmental effort are tangible. In 2006 Edwalton achieved Green Flag status for Eco-Schools and recently came second in a national environmental award organised by Blue Peter and the BBC.

"The school has a long and proud tradition of environmental awareness and the children reflect these values in their caring attitudes towards nature, animals and others," says Brian.

Official praise

An Ofsted report for 2007 described the school as "making a magnificent contribution to the environment!" It goes on to say:

- The resources [the farm and wood] are fully integrated into the curriculum and all pupils gain great benefit from regularly using them.
- Regular exposure to the school farm and wood means pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of different environments.
- Pupils are well aware of what constitutes a nutritious diet. For example, they grow their own vegetables in the school allotment which are used to make school meals.
- Many pupils demonstrate great care and understanding for animals, wildlife and the environment through their work as part of the Eco-club and the Animal Club. Teams of pupils work together very effectively to save energy and recycle waste and water.
- In the Reception Year, teachers make good use of the outside classroom, planning many stimulating activities for the children.

A lesson in community action

Golspie Recycling and Environmental Action Network, Scotland

The picturesque village of Golspie, nestled on the shores of the Moray Firth under the shadow of Ben Bhraggie hill, doesn't seem an obvious spot for a flagship urban environmental project.

But located in the village is the Golspie Recycling and Environmental Action Network (GREAN), which started in 2002 after local residents decided to take action about the lack of recycling and environmental resources in the area.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of its staff and the community, GREAN has rapidly developed and now encompasses a kerbside recycling collection scheme, facilities for recycling other materials (from textiles to food cans) and a composting scheme which helps divert garden waste from landfill sites.



Community garden

Much of the compost ends up on GREAN's community garden, which was created from a patch of waste land in 2004. Here a variety of groups - from the Brownies and Scouts to a gardening club - grow fresh fruit and vegetables in mini-allotments, often using organic methods.

GREAN Training and Development Officer Pete Higgins says growing fresh food in this way has particular resonance in the remote Highlands location because shop-bought vegetables have often been in transit for several days.

In spring and early summer the garden's polytunnel is used by Golspie in Bloom to grow bedding plants for hanging baskets and containers. Meanwhile peripheral beds are being planted to create a pleasant place for relaxation and to attract wildlife.

Native species

"We have planted a hedge with a wide variety of native species and added shrubs which provide food sources for butterflies - the result is a huge increase in biodiversity, with species ranging from insects to hen harriers," said Pete.

The garden has proved invaluable as an outreach and education tool, for both children and adults. Half of the cropping space is used by Golspie High School students taking a course in Rural Skills. There is now a partnership agreement in place with the school to provide placements for up to 13 students per week.

Results so far have been very encouraging: "All students are given small plots to cultivate, an

exercise which enthused the first intake so much they gave up part of their lunch break and some have tended their plots out of school hours. Students will also be involved in soft landscaping, raising plants and garden design.

Training placements

"There are also plans to involve domestic science students by growing herbs and other produce to order in the polytunnel," said Pete.

School leavers also benefit from GREAN. Since 2005 training placements have been provided for school leavers who experience difficulty in securing and keeping jobs.

This has now grown into a training project aimed at non-academic school leavers, although other groups are also taken. The scheme seeks to impart basic job skills, a good attitude to work and learning, and improved employability.

And an arts space too...

A project to develop the community garden as an arts space is nearing completion. More seating is being installed, an artist-designed trellis has created a sense of seclusion, and the central area has been paved with stone slabs incised with a formalised floral pattern.

In addition, four columns define the centre, each with surfaces inscribed to reflect the patterns of pores on a plant leaf, and three large stone structures have been erected; these will act as platforms for the display of outdoor artworks, as informal seating during performances, and as architectural elements in the overall garden design.



One dramatic performance has already been staged, artworks produced by local children are ready for installation and a series of fortnightly musical performances is planned for the summer of 2008.

The art garden project will increase access to contemporary art for the whole community; it will also provide more seating - creating a place to meet in the centre of Golspie which will be used by school students, local residents and visitors.