Hawbush Community Gardens
2025 Trustees' Report

The Trustees present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Organisational Structure

Hawbush Community Gardens is constituted as a CIO – Foundation.

Charity Registration Number: 1170413
Address: Hawbush Community Gardens, Bull Street, Brierley Hill, West Midlands, DY5 3NQ

Trustees during 2025

Ami Woodlands – Chair	Appointed: 24/02/2025 | Chair: 20/05/2025	
Alice Cope – Vice-Chair	Appointed: 25/03/2025 | Vice-Chair: 20/05/2025	
Deb McDonald	Appointed: 24/02/2025	
Emma Foley	Appointed: 25/09/2025 |	Resigned: 22/12/2025
Ken Smith – Ex-Chair	Chair until: 25/04/2025 |	Resigned: 10/12/2025
Tracey Hingley		Resigned: 25/09/2025
Andrew Dudley	Appointed: 24/02/2025 |	Resigned: 20/06/2025
Jason Bloomer	Appointed: 24/02/2025 |	Resigned: 10/06/2025

Objectives and Activities

The objects of Hawbush Community Gardens are:

1. To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Brierley Hill (DY5) and surrounding areas the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, 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 the condition of life of the said inhabitants.
2. To further such other purposes as are exclusively charitable purposes under the laws of England and Wales as the Trustees from time to time decide.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when carrying out the activities of Hawbush Community Gardens.

Throughout 2025, the charity provided opportunities for local people to access nature, participate in recreation and leisure activities, develop practical skills, improve wellbeing and build connections within their community. The gardens were used by a wide range of people, including children and young people, families, people with disabilities and those experiencing social or economic disadvantage.

Through our own activities and our partnerships with local organisations, Hawbush provided opportunities for people to learn, volunteer, grow food, spend time outdoors, develop new skills and build relationships. The Trustees believe that these activities directly support the charity's objectives and provide a clear benefit to the local community and wider public.

Main Activities & Achievements

2025 was a significant year for **Hawbush Community Gardens**. Trustees worked closely with **Dudley CVS** to ensure that the charity was legally compliant and that appropriate policies, procedures and documentation were in place. A number of existing policies were reviewed and revised, while new paperwork and systems were introduced to ensure that the charity was being managed effectively and that appropriate records were maintained.

The Community Hub also underwent a significant clear-out and renovation. The community room was cleared of unused furniture and items that had been stored for many years, creating a more welcoming and usable space for community activities. The smaller room was also cleared in preparation for its future use as an office.

The trustee board underwent significant change during the year. Long-serving Chair of Trustees Ken Smith stepped down from his role as Chair during the year and subsequently resigned as a Trustee and Site Manager. This provided an opportunity for other members of the board to bring forward a renewed vision for Hawbush Community Gardens, with a strong focus on welcoming the local community and ensuring that the gardens are an inclusive and welcoming place for people of all backgrounds, beliefs and lifestyles.

As part of this renewed approach, the Trustees also worked to ensure that Hawbush's online presence reflected the increased activity taking place across the gardens. The Hawbush Facebook and Instagram profiles were brought under regular management, with photographs, events, activities and opening times shared more consistently. This helped to ensure that local residents were aware of what was happening at the gardens and when they were able to visit.

We also created a WhatsApp Community group to bring together volunteers, trustees, plot holders and others connected with Hawbush. This provided a way for people to communicate about activities, share information and contribute ideas. We also introduced regular plot holder and volunteer coffee mornings, giving people an opportunity to raise issues or concerns, share information and strengthen relationships across the gardens.

Throughout the year, trustees organised a number of fundraising and community events, including a school uniform giveaway, several jumble sales and family activities during the summer holidays. These events provided opportunities to welcome many local residents who had never previously visited Hawbush. It was particularly rewarding to make connections with people living within a mile of the gardens who had previously never stepped through the gates.

We also welcomed a number of community groups during the year. These included an art and craft group of children from **Hawbush Primary School**, while a local Guide unit visited for fire-cooking and campfire activities.

From August to December, Hawbush also hosted a local **Home-Ed Collective**, who used the gardens to provide a range of educational and social activities, including a popular visit from the local Fire Brigade. The children, who were mostly aged between 8 and 15, benefited from having the freedom to explore, play and learn across the whole site. As the gardens were often quiet during these sessions, the children were able to make full use of the space, creating opportunities for outdoor learning, social interaction, independence and exploration.

Our onsite partners, **Ekho Collective**, also had a busy and productive year. They began the year by building a traditional cob oven in the woodland kitchen, which enabled a number of pizza parties that were enjoyed by many visitors and community members. Through **WMCA** funding, Ekho also acquired a silent disco set, which was subsequently used for a number of disco parties in the Roundhouse for both onsite and local groups.

Ekho hosted three seasonal Everwild nature connection and wellbeing festivals, providing free activities and food through a variety of local organisations and partners. Ekho Collective and Hawbush volunteers worked together to welcome hundreds of people onto the site, many of whom were visiting for the first time. Visitors were able to enjoy activities across the gardens, alongside freshly prepared food provided by Ekho Collective and partner organisations. Each festival attracted approximately 300 visitors.

Throughout the year, Ekho also hosted regular gardening sessions focused on permaculture, called Tending People, Place and Planet. These sessions explored how we can care for ourselves, our environment and the wider world around us.

On Thursdays, they also established the Village Kitchen Experiment, giving people eligible for Foodbank support an opportunity to learn about foraging, cooking and sharing food together. Other smaller projects included community herbalism, food stories, nature connection sessions, evening community drop-ins and open-mic nights.

Ekho also welcomed Hawbush Primary School pupils to visit the gardens and learn about growing food, alongside community celebration days, Bonfire Night, heritage craft groups and a Silly Santa sing-along.

They hosted a number of Cake Not Hate groups, focusing on community cohesion and creating opportunities for people to talk openly about hate crime, while exploring connection and diversity through art, poetry and music. This work aligns closely with Hawbush's commitment to being a place where everyone feels welcome, particularly people who may experience discrimination or exclusion elsewhere in society.

Amblecote Christian Centre also hosted a number of family fun days at Hawbush, with more than 100 attendees enjoying crafts, food and activities. Young people from the church also attended during the summer to clear a large area of the previously overgrown meadow, while the men's group undertook work to renovate the path running alongside the plots on the left-hand side of the gardens.

Volunteers

Once again, Hawbush Community Gardens could not have achieved everything it did throughout the year without the incredible dedication of our volunteers.

From supporting projects and running groups and events, to maintaining the gardens and helping to create a safe and welcoming environment, our volunteers give their time, skills and enthusiasm to make Hawbush a special place for wildlife, our community and everyone who visits.

Volunteer hours across the gardens are difficult to calculate precisely, as many onsite groups contribute significant amounts of time independently, alongside the work carried out by trustees and other volunteers. Trustees have also invested considerable time throughout the year, both on the gardens themselves and behind the scenes, developing paperwork, policies and online systems.

Based on the information available to the Trustees, it is estimated that volunteers contributed approximately 11,000 hours during the year, demonstrating the enormous amount of voluntary effort that goes into maintaining and developing Hawbush Community Gardens.

Onsite Groups

Dudley Stroke Association (DSA) had an exciting year, seeing the original vision for their allotment come to life. They made a number of improvements to the space, including additional raised beds, a wildlife pond, fruit trees and a new sign created by a member of their community. They also added a small polytunnel to expand their growing space.

DSA's vision was to create an allotment that would become a sanctuary where people could enjoy gardening, spend time outdoors or simply sit and chat on their wellbeing benches. By developing their accessible gardening area, many people have been able to reconnect with nature and gardening following a stroke, bringing smiles to community members each week and providing encouragement to others facing difficulties.

DSA report that the allotment has become much more than a gardening project. People regularly visit to support their wellbeing, enjoy nature and connect with others. Being outdoors creates a relaxed environment where conversations flow naturally, friendships develop and people feel comfortable sharing their experiences. There is plenty of laughter, and the allotment has developed a positive atmosphere that benefits everyone involved.

During the year, DSA welcomed more than 110 community attendees to the allotment, alongside staff members.

Dudley Youth Justice (DYJ) continued to support children subject to court orders and those taking part in 'Out of Court' Prevention and Diversion activities. The team used the community gardens for meetings, general wellbeing sessions and reparation activities.

2025 was a productive year, with young people working across the main site and preparing the ground on the allotment. They were involved in the preparation, planning and planting of the allotment, successfully growing a range of fruit and vegetables including beans, rhubarb, beetroot and blackcurrants.

The allotment also supports local biodiversity by providing food and habitats for insects, bugs and the frogs living in the pond, who often seemed to keep a close eye on the team while they worked!

The team donated some of the produce they grew to support Ekho's Thursday cooking sessions, with additional leftovers being sent to the Foodbank. Young people attending on Thursdays were also able to take part in these sessions and try new dishes being prepared.

DYJ report that Hawbush provides the children they work with an opportunity to experience some peace within what can often be chaotic lives, while giving them the chance to connect with nature and try new activities. The community has consistently been friendly and welcoming to the young people attending the gardens.

Dudley College and **Pens Meadow School** used the gardens weekly during term time, bringing a selection of SEND students who benefited from taking part in gardening, site maintenance and spending time in nature.

The Community Hub provided a warm and comfortable space for students to eat lunch, while both groups continued to develop their plots, planting a variety of fruit and vegetables. Students enjoyed watching their plants grow and taking produce home when it was ready to harvest.

Mom's Mindful Hub continued to use the Meadow area to provide a variety of nature-based activities on Tuesdays. They also continued developing their allotment plot, giving children the opportunity to experience planting, caring for and growing their own produce.

The group is well attended and brings many families into the gardens throughout the year, providing opportunities for children and families to connect with nature, learn practical growing skills and spend time together outdoors.

Financial Review

2025 was a year of significant activity and development for Hawbush Community Gardens, and this is reflected in the charity's financial position.

During the year, Hawbush received £**3,321.50** in income. Income came from a range of sources, including donations, allotment and woodland fees, room hire, events and activities, other income and bank interest. Allotment and woodland fees increased during the year due to the increase in plot fees, netting £1,135.00 in 2025, while other income increased to £1,359.00.

Total expenditure for the year was **£8,617.74**. The largest areas of expenditure were repairs and maintenance (£4,169.06), garden equipment and tools (£1,184.01), website, marketing and communications (£1,170.00), and insurance (£993.63). The charity also incurred £414.02 in accountancy and professional fees and £302.77 in utilities. As a result of this level of expenditure, the charity recorded a net expenditure of £5,296.24 for the year.

The charity's total funds carried forward at the end of 2025 were **£4,205.60**, all of which were unrestricted funds. The £1,100 restricted fund brought forward from 2024 was fully utilised during the year.

The Trustees recognise that Hawbush Community Gardens continues to operate within a challenging financial environment. The reduction in reserves during 2025 reflects the significant expenditure incurred in maintaining and developing the gardens, alongside the increased level of activity taking place across the site. Going forward, the Trustees will continue to focus on developing a wider range of sustainable income streams, securing grant funding and encouraging donations and community support, while ensuring that expenditure remains carefully managed.

The Trustees remain committed to ensuring that the charity's available resources are used effectively to support its charitable objectives and to maintain Hawbush Community Gardens as a safe, welcoming and accessible community space.

Policy on Reserves

The policy agreed by the Trustees is to hold in unrestricted reserves not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets (the 'free' reserves) sufficient to cover the general overhead expenses and salary costs not specifically funded by external agencies, for a period of six months. At this level, the Trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. It would then be necessary to consider how the funding would be replaced or activities changed.

The amount of 'free' reserves at 31 December 2025 amounted to £4,205.60. Under the charity's reserves policy, six months of reserves is equivalent to £2,634.00. The current level of free reserves therefore equates to approximately 9.6 months of the level of expenditure identified within the charity's reserves policy and is above the Trustees' minimum target of six months' reserves.

Trustees' Responsibilities in Relation to the Financial Statements

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities

during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees on 26th September 2026, and signed on their behalf by



Ami Woodlands

Chair of Trustees

26th September 2026

Hawbush Community Gardens
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Total income	**3,321.50**	**-**	**3,321.50**	**7,588.36**
Total expenditure	**7,686.78**	**930.96**	**8,617.74**	**4,287.80**
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	**(4,365.28)**	**(930.96)**	**(5,296.24)**	**3,300.56**
Transfers:				
Gross transfers between funds - in	200.00	30.96	230.96	-
Gross transfers between funds - out	(30.96)	(200.00)	(230.96)	-
Other recognised gains / losses				
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	-	-	-
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	**(4,196.24)**	**(1,100.00)**	**(5,296.24)**	**3,300.56**
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	**8,401.84**	**1,100.00**	**9,501.84**	**6,201.28**
Total funds carried forward	**4,205.60**	**-**	**4,205.60**	**9,501.84**
Represented by				
Unrestricted				
General Fund	4,205.60	-	4,205.60	8,401.84
Designated				
Restricted				
Dudley CVS Spring Into Action 24-25	-	-	-	1,100.00
Total funds	**4,205.60**	**-**	**4,205.60**	**9,501.84**

Hawbush Community Gardens

Analysis of Receipts and Payments
Selected period: 01 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

	General	Designated	Restricted	Total This year	Total Last year
Receipts					
Donations and legacies					
0400 - Donations	283.33	-	-	283.33	4,737.12
0500 - Gift Aid	-	-	-	-	-
Donations and legacies Totals	**283.33**	**-**	**-**	**283.33**	**4,737.12**
Income from charitable activities					
0100 - Allotment & Woodland Fees	1,135.00	-	-	1,135.00	752.50
0200 - Room Hire	135.00	-	-	135.00	295.00
0220 - Events & Activities	360.00	-	-	360.00	360.00
0300 - Grants	-	-	-	-	1,100.00
Income from charitable activities Totals	**1,630.00**	**-**	**-**	**1,630.00**	**2,507.50**
Other trading activities					
0600 - Other Income	1,359.00	-	-	1,359.00	289.70
Other trading activities Totals	**1,359.00**	**-**	**-**	**1,359.00**	**289.70**
Investments					
0700 - Interest	49.17	-	-	49.17	54.04
Investments Totals	**49.17**	**-**	**-**	**49.17**	**54.04**
Other income					
Other income Totals	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Receipts Grand Totals	**3,321.50**	**-**	**-**	**3,321.50**	**7,588.36**
Payments					
Raising funds					

	General	Designated	Restricted	Total This year	Total Last year
Raising funds Totals	-	-	-	-	-
Expenditure on charitable activities					
2000 - Garden Equipment & Tools	715.34	-	468.67	1,184.01	1,022.82
2006 - Toiletries & Consumables	18.82	-	28.65	47.47	14.32
2010 - Repairs & Maintenance	3,735.42	-	433.64	4,169.06	477.07
2019 - CCTV 4G Connection	156.78	-	-	156.78	-
2020 - Utilities	302.77	-	-	302.77	228.15
2021 - Insurance	993.63	-	-	993.63	489.77
2030 - Volunteer Expenses	-	-	-	-	-
2039 - Website, Marketing & Comms	1,170.00	-	-	1,170.00	-
2040 - Licenses & Subscriptions	180.00	-	-	180.00	180.00
2050 - Accountancy & Professional Fees	414.02	-	-	414.02	1,875.67
3000 - Bank & Finance Charges	-	-	-	-	-
Expenditure on charitable activities Totals	**7,686.78**	**-**	**930.96**	**8,617.74**	**4,287.80**
Other expenditure					
Other expenditure Totals	-	-	-	-	-
Payments Grand Totals	**7,686.78**	**-**	**930.96**	**8,617.74**	**4,287.80**