

gateway collective.

**Annual report July
2020 - June 2021**



gk.

gc.

Hello!

Welcome to our annual impact report for 20/21. During this year we needed to continually adapt due to the pandemic but most importantly we continued to work together to increase individual well-being and build community. Any report can only ever be a snapshot of our work and achievements however reading this will give you a flavour for who we are and what we do!

But first...

A massive thanks needs to go to our small but dedicated staff team who work hard to help us make a difference in our Bootle community. We also need to thank our funders, partners and stakeholders who invest in us to enable us to do what we do.



However the biggest thanks of all needs to go to our team of community gardeners and volunteers. We really do have an amazing team of people who join us in the sun, wind and rain to grow food, chat and laugh together. You are what makes North Park Community Garden a place to grow.

North Park Community Garden

North Park Community Garden continues to be our home and our place to grow – both literally and metaphorically!

We re-opened and welcome people back into the garden from July 20. Thanks to initial funding from the National Lotteries Community Fund (Covid Emergency) we were able to open the garden for an additional day every week from October 2020. When our summer opening times are included, this means North Park Community Garden is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursday evenings. In August 2020 many of our gardeners were telling us that they were missing their arts and crafts sessions that they attended in other organisations which were unable to open again due to being building based. After listening to our community we began a garden crochet club. Some of us were very skilled and made some amazing designs and some of us were complete novices but the group ran until the cold forced us to stop in November 2020. This is just one example of us being flexible and responding to local need.



Let's get into the good stuff...

A highlight of the year was gaining funding from Burbo Bank Community Fund (via Grantscape) which enabled us to improve the accessibility in NorthPark Community Garden. As a result we are now more wheelchair and pushchair accessible and have a large paved communal area with beds that can be worked on from a wheelchair. As part of this funding we were able to install a fully accessible composting toilet meaning we no longer had to use the facilities in the leisure centre. This improved the site and was a great fit with our environmental sustainability ethos. The toilet is incredibly clean, easy to use and the contents are used to help our flowers to grow, not our food!

During the third national Covid-19 lockdown in January 21 we were again forced to close our doors. Again we listened to our community, many of whom were worried about being isolated at home on their own during winter. To combat this we created a rota for the garden where people could attend in socially distanced pairs. As the weeks progressed the garden was used as a place of outdoor exercise every day, and over the week over 20 people benefited from being outside in the garden. This really helped combat feelings of loneliness and isolation and gave some much needed routine to people's weeks.

Over the year we firmly established eating together as part of our garden routine. In every session we would share a soup, curry or salad, where possible cooking with what we had grown. This social time became an integral part of our work and helped develop a community. It is said that the kitchen is the heart of a home, in our case the table of food became the heart of the garden.

In 2021, we smashed our previous numbers!

**3493
volunteer
hours**

**395kg of
fruit &
vegetables
grown**

**42 regularly
attending
community
gardeners**

**845
total visitors
to the garden**

Partnerships

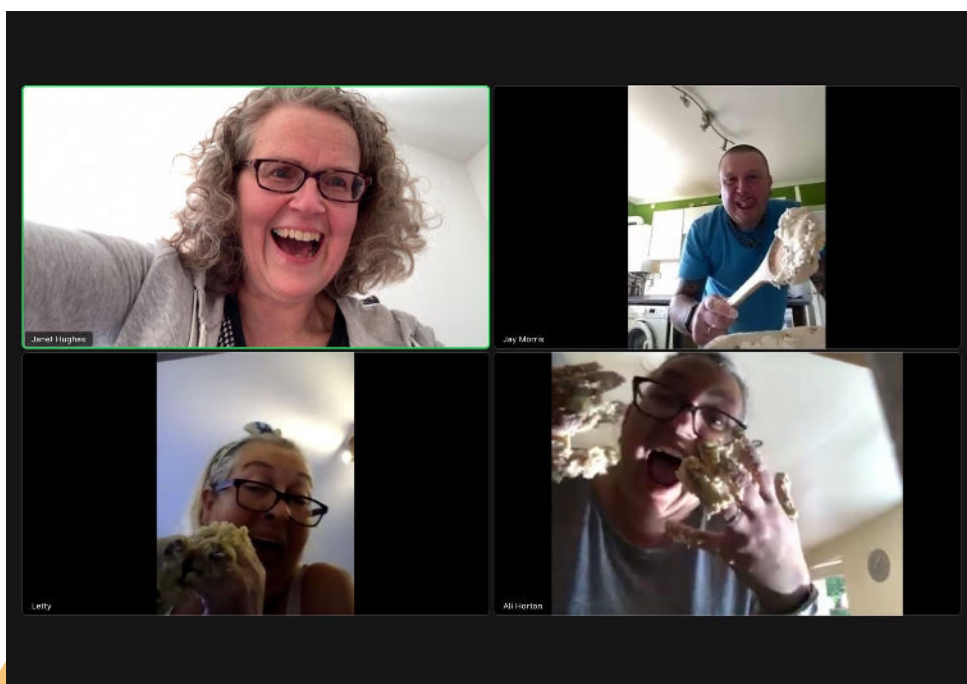
One of our key values is collaboration and even our name 'The Gateway Collective' tells that we like to work with others!

Our partnership with Taking Root in Bootle continued during the year. We began Taking Root Fridays in August 2020 where we co-ordinated small groups to grow on the streets. Unfortunately due to the pandemic Bootle in Bloom 2020 was cancelled however from Sept 20 onwards planning began in earnest for 2021!



We continued to work closely with B4Biodiversity supporting them to deliver online Bee-Keeping training and their bee-workers to key-workers campaign, distributing beeswax hand balms to key workers whose hands needed some love and attention after extended hand washing.

During the pandemic we delivered online cooking and arts sessions to our community gardeners to ensure we remained connected. These sessions were noticed online by Halton Carers Centre who asked us to deliver similar sessions to their young and adult carers. Together we created, cooked, baked and ate – all socially distanced in our own homes but all connected through the power of the internet and a shared experience.



**Sticky
fingers
but big
smiles!**

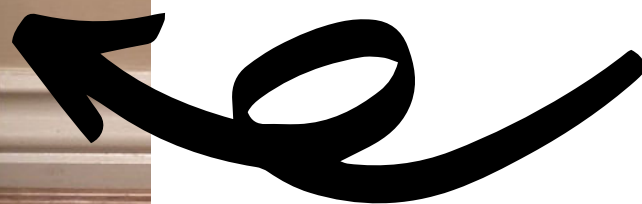
In December 21 we were commissioned by Liverpool CIC MAKE to create ‘the Bootle Box’ which they could give as gifts for key people involved in their project, ‘The Bootle festival of ideas’. We brought together 4 Bootle based social enterprises and businesses who contributed honey, hand balms, lip balms, coffee and chocolate to the gift boxes with supplemented our jams and chutneys. These boxes were distributed to over 50 people and helped led to the creation of Made in Bootle – a collaboration between Gateway Collective and B4Biodiversity.

Together we launched Made in Bootle on Earth Day, April 21, with the project designed to celebrate and bring together Bootle based creatives, sellers, independents and social enterprises to sell together on one platform. In May 21 we held our first Made in Bootle market at North Park Community Garden where 4 Bootle based came together to sell their products and over £1,200 was invested into the local economy.

"Made in Bootle" Earth day box



"The Bootle festival of ideas" Bootle box



Social impact

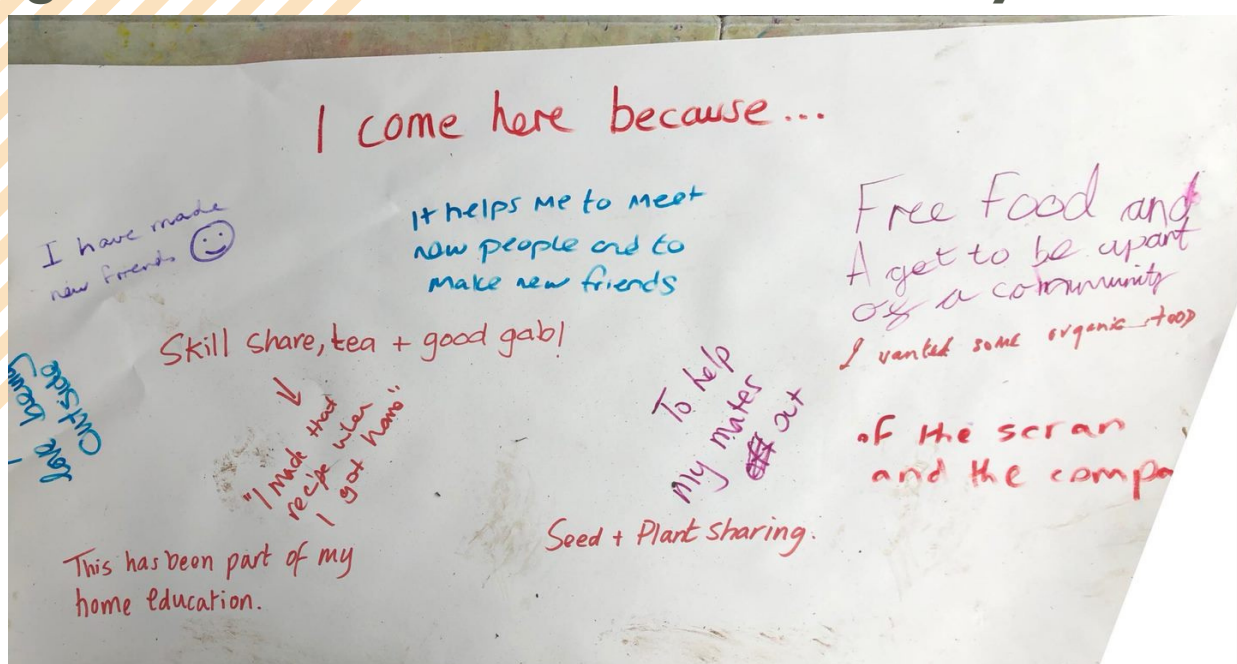
Our vision is to see thriving people and communities in Bootle and our objectives as an organisation are simple:

- To improve the health and well-being of people in Bootle
- To encourage and support the creation of collective care communities in Bootle.

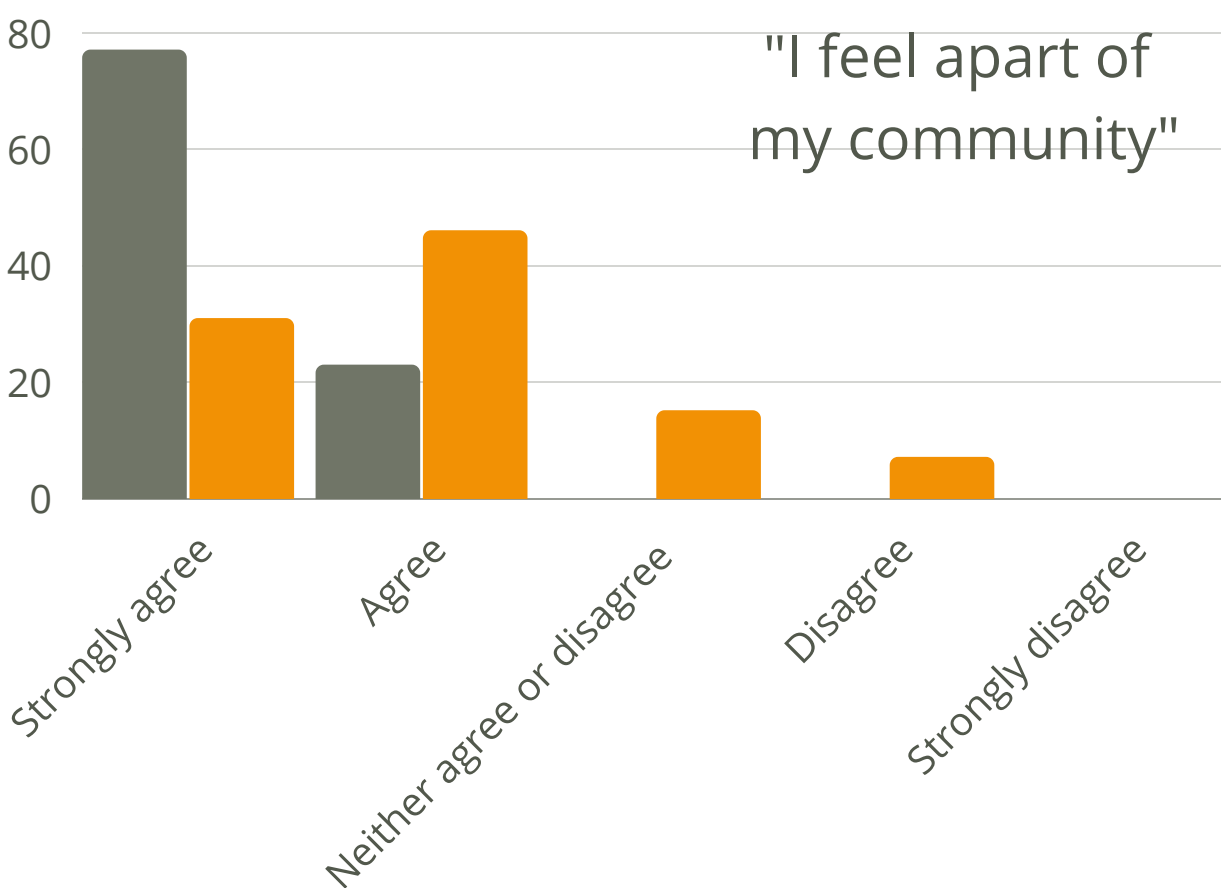
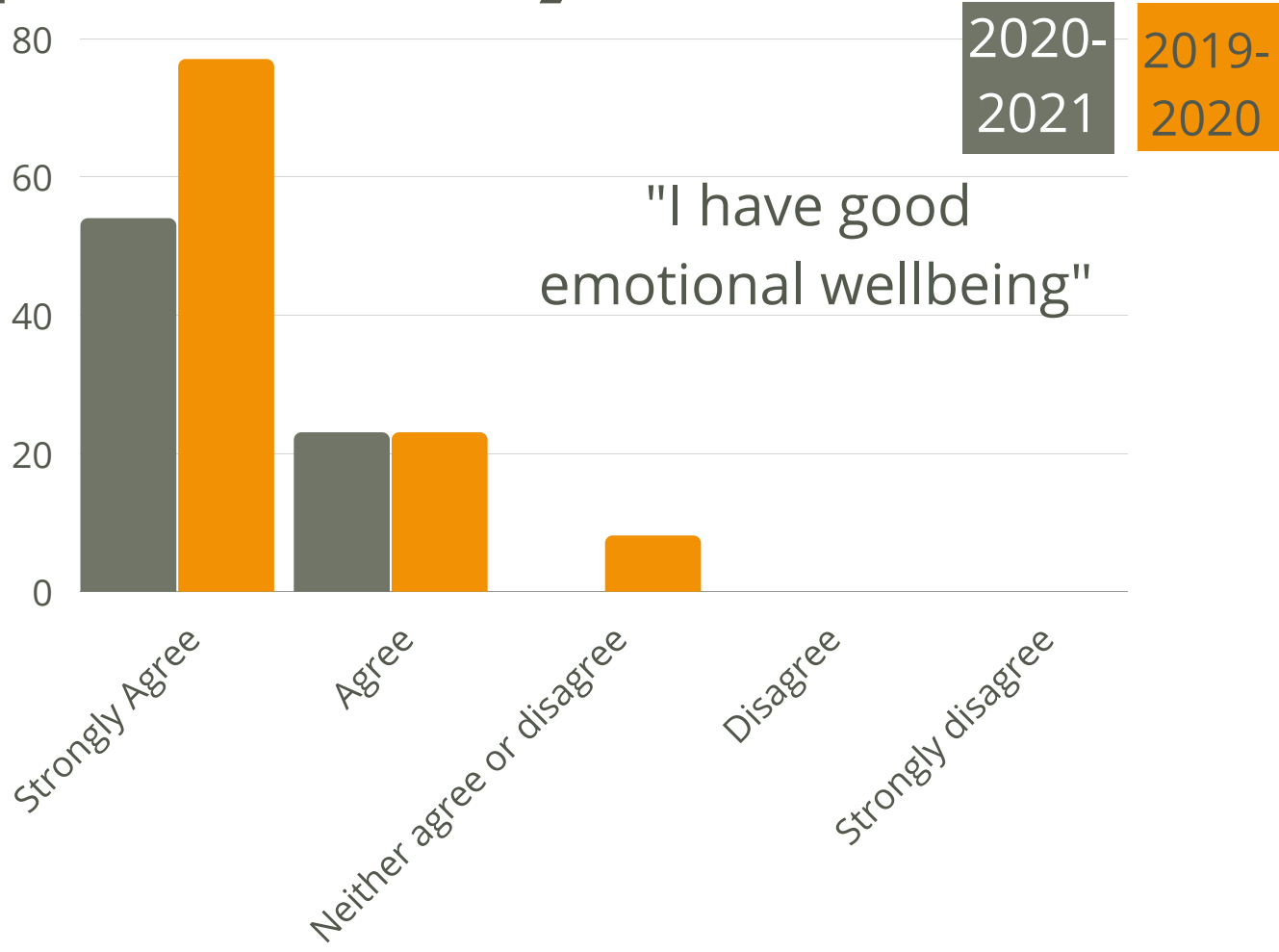
We collect stats and stories to help prove our social impact. We streamlined our monitoring systems in 2021 to ensure that what we monitor is relevant to our objectives.

As well as monitoring number of community gardeners, number of volunteers and amount of food grown we ask some simple questions to our community gardeners which we use to track our impact and success in achieving our objectives.

From monitoring that took place in November 21 we know that as a result of being involved in North Park Community Garden people have strong personal well-being and feel connected to their community.

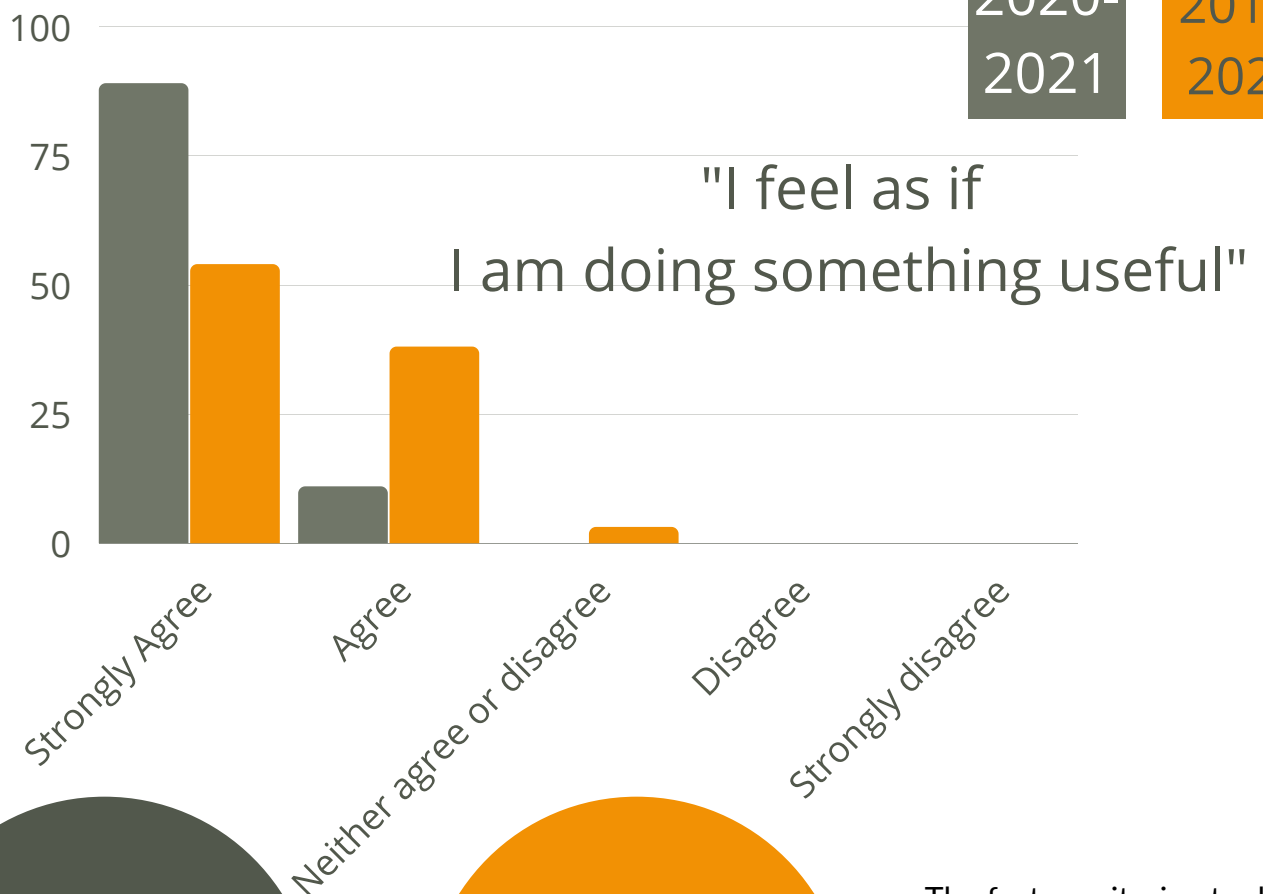


Impact survey results



2020-
2021

2019-
2020



**100% of
gardeners feel
part of their
community**

**100% of
gardeners are
meeting new
people**

The fact monitoring took place at the end of Covid lockdown may have contributed to overwhelmingly positive results



Case studies

Volunteer J said -

“I found out about the community garden at an open day during a break in lockdown, and I’ve been going ever since. It is important to me and has helped with my mental health. I am an outdoor person and the garden means that I can be outdoors growing stuff, that would otherwise be beyond my means, both financially and physically.

I suffer from a genetic condition called neurofibromatosis and fibromyalgia – both of which cause pain and exhaustion. Yet I have never been made to feel unwelcome because I may not be able to do as much as others. It has always been ‘do as much as you feel able but don’t overdo it’.

The social side is also very important. I don’t mix easily having been badly bullied in childhood, but I have found a great group of people who accept you for who you are. There have been days when just sitting having a chat has been as important as the actual gardening. I am now enjoying watching stuff grow and eventually enjoying the fruit of people’s labour in eating delicious organic veg.”



Volunteer P said -

" I first came to NPCG in 2015/2016 when I was 14/15, Alongside my mum who is a friend of Alis. Originally I felt anxious about going each week and struggled to make it through a whole session but with time the garden grew to be my time of peace and calmness. After a period of poor mental health, I later rejoined NPCG in 2020.

At the time my outlets I had been relying on for mental health support had been cut off due to the pandemic and I found myself in a position where I could have easily relapsed and lost the progress I had made with my mental health recovery.

NPCG has made an incredible difference to both my mental and physical health. It has allowed me to practice and gain confidence with my social skills. I now feel able to hold and engage in conversations with all types of people, even people I had not previously met, which used to be a large barrier for me. I feel more confident in myself as I now feel a part of a community space, I can recognise my efforts and the additions I can add to a group. I feel more independent and confident in completing tasks by myself.

The garden is a welcoming community. If one day you are feeling able to do something but not the next, you are not judged or forced to participate. NPCG has attracted a unique variety of people who all have different individual life experiences but are still able to connect and form bonds with one another.



I'd love to see NPCG grow larger as a place in Bootle and be able to have a wider impact on Bootle as a community space. Community events and workshops held in the garden would also be wonderful to be a part of. NPCG is a special and important part of Bootle, in its few years of existence it has already changed and grew to have a positive effect on people's lives."

As a CIC we are keen to generate our own income to reduce our reliance on grants. The main way we do this is via our partnerships and contracts with other organisations. However we also generate our own income via sales of our jams, pickles and chutneys and creative workshops. This year when we were unable to attend markets in person we focused on online sales to help generate income, hosting our own markets at North Park Community Garden when permitted.



Our Christmas wreath-making workshops continue to be popular and whilst we make them as affordable as possible to enable all to attend we use the opportunity to make a modest profit that is reinvested into our work at North Park Community Garden. This year for the first time we delivered a wreath-making workshop online! Whilst it is fair to say this wouldn't be our preferred method of delivery we made it work in the strange times we found ourselves in. The weather was kind to us for our wreath making event at North Park Community garden – the log fire and mulled punch helped us to keep warm

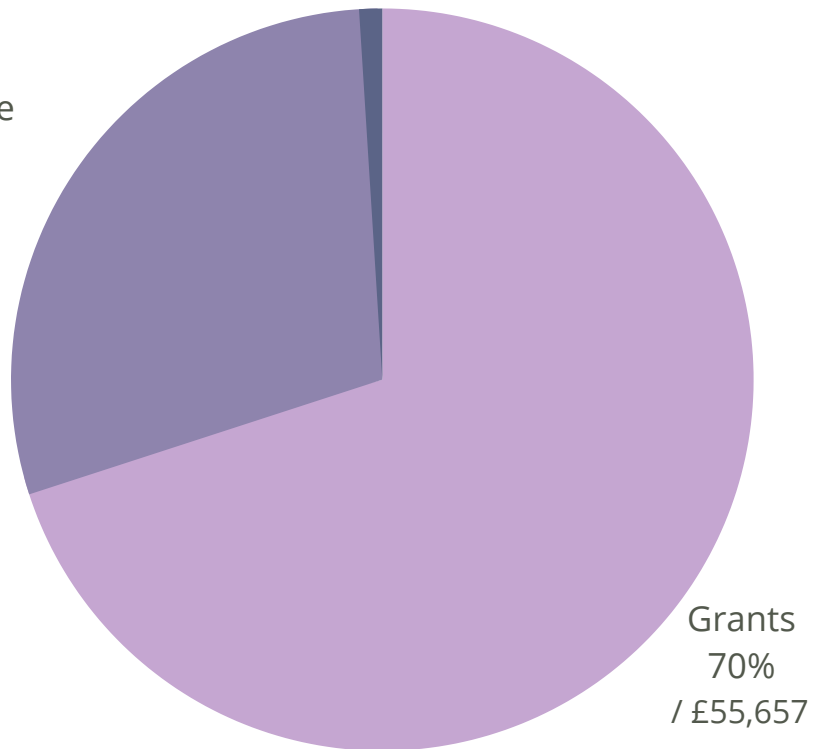
Financials

Income

Based on
total income
of £80,041

Traded income
29%
/ £23,027

Donations
1% / £1357



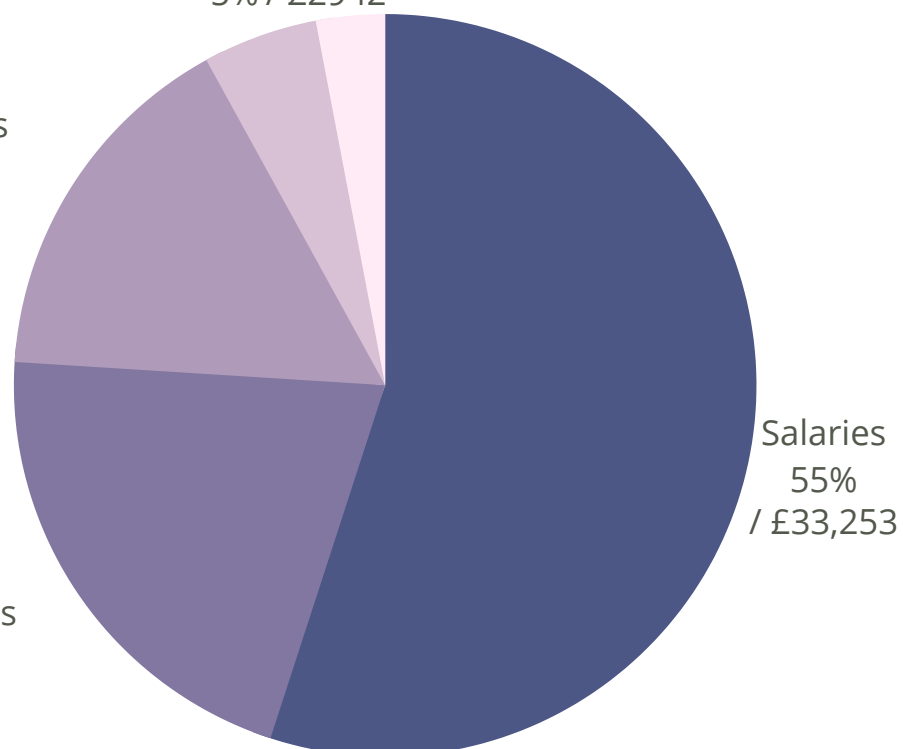
Expenditure

Based on
£59958 expenses

Garden capital projects
16%
/ £9554

Professional fees*
5% / £2942

Delivery costs
21%
/ £12,699



*includes architect fees as we explore the Lodge

Thank-you to all our funders and stakeholders who invest in us to create social change in Bootle.

