



CAG Oxfordshire  
**COMMUNITY  
ACTION  
GROUPS**



# COMMUNITY ACTION GROUPS OXFORDSHIRE



*Photo courtesy of Oxford Community Action*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Oxfordshire is home to an incredible array of organisations, community groups, and social enterprises all doing amazing work harnessing the power of collective good will. 105 of these groups are part of CAG Oxfordshire, a network comprised of mostly volunteer-led efforts to make the place we call home a greener, safer, fairer, more sustainable place

to live, work, and play! This year, groups reported engaging more than 84,000 people in activities, events, and outreach – nearly 12% of the County’s population. Volunteers contributed more than 96,000 hours worth of time, a 47% increase over last year, to initiatives such as repair cafes, tree plantings, draughtbusting, community markets, bike repair training, growing food, ensuring food is not wasted, but rather redistributed, and so so much more. I am incredibly proud to be associated with such an inspiring, motivated group of individuals from all corners of the County. As an organisation, it is vital that we provide ongoing support to the network as well as individual groups to ensure no one feels alone in their work and that all have the tools necessary to carry out such a wide range of activities. To this end, CAG Oxfordshire could not do what we do without the support of Oxfordshire County Council. We appreciate their ongoing, and increased commitment, to empowering communities to deliver local solutions.

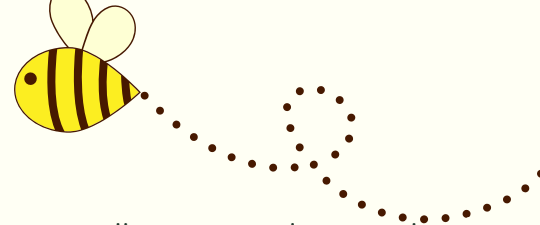
I encourage you to soak in the amazing contributions happening across Oxfordshire as you make your way through this report – to feel inspired and hopeful. And if you’re one of the 40,000 volunteers who made it happen, to take a moment to reflect on, and take pride in, your work. Thank you!

***Katherine Chesson***

Director, on behalf of the CAG Oxfordshire team



# WHO WE ARE

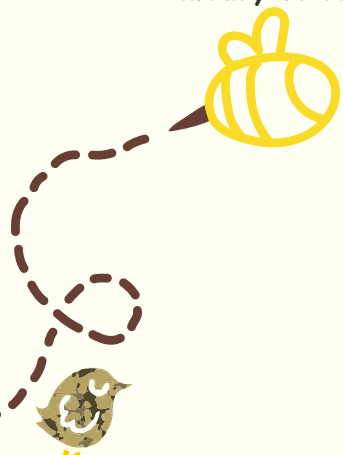


Our mission is to support and facilitate the development of a strong, well-connected network that is enacting community-led social change. This network of more than 100 community action groups is working across Oxfordshire to make it a safer, fairer, greener, more sustainable place to live, work and visit.

Started in 2001, the network is the largest of its kind in the UK, that we know of. Our member groups work in their local communities organising events and projects to take action on issues including waste, transport, food, energy, biodiversity and social justice.

As well as running the network, CAG also delivered projects that support our values and mission. In 2022-2023, we delivered:

- **Replenish** - Cooking and growing healthy food with zero wastage
- **Owned by Oxford** - Building community wealth in Oxford
- **Escalate** - Supporting community and socially motivated organisations
- **Communities and Nature** - Connecting people less likely to have access to green spaces with nature
- **Library of Things** - Expanding the Library of Things provision in Oxfordshire



[Want to know more? Watch our 'About CAG Oxfordshire' film on youtube](#)



## OUR VISION

We have a vision of an Oxfordshire with resilient and empowered communities, working together so that people and planet can thrive.

## OUR VALUES

- Respecting the natural environment
- Building relationships and supporting each other
- Demonstrating practical change
- Being community-led
- Being proactively inclusive and valuing diversity
- Prioritising equality and social justice
- Experimenting, learning and working imaginatively
- Looking after our own wellbeing, and that of others
- Being part of wider movements for change



# NETWORK OVERVIEW



The CAG Oxfordshire network continues to grow and evolve in response to the needs and opportunities in communities across Oxfordshire.

There are a total of 105 CAGs with 4 groups joining during the year.

You can find all our CAG members here



OR read the 'District Factsheet' to find a regional breakdown



Photo courtesy on Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon

## CAGS BY DISTRICT

COUNTYWIDE  
7.5%

CHERWELL  
13.2%

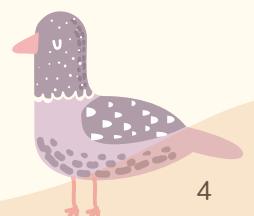
WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
16%



VALE OF WHITE HORSE  
13.2%

OXFORD CITY  
33%

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE  
17%



# OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

In our 2022-2023 reporting year, the CAG network delivered some impressive achievements! We are proud to share the impact of the network and grateful to all those who showed up for their communities last year.

The network clocked in over **97,650** volunteer hours which has a value of **£1,572,995** and equivalent to **50 full time jobs!**



More than **80,000** people participated in over **4,000** events, activities and outreach programmes! That's enough people to fill **five and a half football pitches!**



These activities resulted in approximately **198 TONNES** of food diverted from waste, preventing nearly **500 TONNES** of carbon dioxide emissions.



Throughout the year, groups planted over **6,000** trees and hedgerow plants.

21 groups ran **172 REPAIR CAFE** events enabling members of the public to 'fix not bin' broken household items, from electrical appliances and bicycles to clothes. We also launched **THREE new Libraries of Things!**



# NETWORK ACTIVITY

photo: Barracks Lane Community Garden Sunday Singing Session

## Connecting people with nature

CAG members ran a whole range of events that supported people to spend time in and deepen their connection with nature. Recognising that access to nature is a privilege, several groups have run targeted activities with people experiencing health and other inequalities.

- Barracks Lane Community Group hosted 'Singing the Seasons'.
- Low Carbon Oxford North facilitated 8 'Climate Cafes'.
- Oxford City Farm ran 'Little Wellies', a regular parent and toddler group.
- Oxford Urban Wildlife Group hosted 70 'forest school' sessions for children.
- A two-year campaign by End Sewage Pollution Mid Thames led to a popular swimming spot in Oxford being granted bathing water status.



photo: Oxford Conservation Volunteers create a new pathway through Aston's Eyot

## Biodiversity and nature recovery

Supporting nature's recovery is a focal area for many CAG members, with over 30 groups working to make space for nature through habitat restoration, tree planting and wildlife gardening projects.

- Sustainable Blewbury converted a disused sewage treatment site into a new nature reserve.
- South Stoke Wildlife and Conservation Group initiated a biodiversity mapping project, over 755 species have been identified to date!
- Banbury Trees (part of Banbury CAG) led the planting of 1,500 trees at Banbury Country Park.
- Abingdon Carbon Cutters set up 14 'Bee Beds' full of pollinator-friendly plants.
- Haseley Earthshot Action Group worked with their parish council to restore the local 'Millenium Wood'.
- Oxford Conservation Volunteers organised 52 conservation sessions across Oxfordshire.

## Community food growing

Within the network, there are 25 community gardens and orchards that provide a space for people to learn how to grow their own organic fruits and vegetables using nature-friendly methods.

- Banbury CAG ran almost 70 community events at their Bridge Street Community Garden.
- Oxford City Farm recruited five new members of staff, allowing them to open to the public every Saturday and Sunday.
- Cherwell Collective now manage nine 'greenspace' community food gardens in Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Redbridge.



Photo: Planting onions at Bridge Street Garden

## Tackling food waste and food insecurity

Two of our members are part of the OX4 Food Crew, Flo's Cafe offered free lunches to school-aged children during half term, while Oxford City Farm operated a food distribution programme.



*Photo: Witney Community Fridge, part of Witney Food Revolution*

- Five CAGs operate community fridges and larders that distribute food surplus at no or low cost across Oxfordshire.
- Witney Community Fridge distributed 77 tonnes of food that would otherwise have gone to waste.
- Sustainable Wantage distributed 44 tonnes.
- The 'Botley Bikers' distributed 2,000 pints of milk and 3,000 pieces of fruit.

## Liveable streets and active travel

A number of CAG members are working to encourage active and sustainable travel, reduce traffic and pollution, and create accessible and people-centred streets.

- The Broken Spoke Bike Co-op delivered a certified bike mechanic training programme for six women, trans and non-binary people.
- Thame Green Living worked with Zero Carbon Haddenham to set up an electric vehicle hire club.
- Cyclox delivered the Sanctuary Wheels project in partnership with Asylum Welcome and other partners.
- Sustainable Woodstock worked with Blenheim Palace to improve connectivity in the villages to make it easier for people to travel on foot or by bicycle.



*Photo: Bike Mechanics for women, trans and non-binary people with Broken Spoke Bike Coop*

## Transition to a circular and sharing economy

Many CAG members have continued to avert waste in Oxfordshire by encouraging reuse, repair and upcycling of materials and household items.



- Watlington Climate Action Group worked with researchers at Oxford University to develop eco-friendly inks and paints.
- Cherwell Collective runs the Oxford Party Library.
- Oxford Wood Recycling diverted 1,414 tonnes of wood waste by selling it for reuse or sending it to recycling.
- Six groups organised 18 swap shop events.
- Oxford GreenPrint continued to provide eco-friendly print services using non-toxic inks, recycled paper, and all delivered by bicycle.
- Bicester Green partnered with SOFEA and Aspire to deliver 'Getting Oxfordshire Online,' which tackles digital exclusion.
- Orinoco Scrapstore continued to operate its two scrapstores in shopping centres in Oxford and Banbury.

*Photo: Rose Hill Repair Cafe*

## Sustainable energy

A number of CAGs have been busy delivering activities to help Oxfordshire residents save money on their bills and reduce their energy consumption.

- Sustainable Wantage delivered leaflets with energy-saving tips to over 13,800 households.
- Three CAGs ran 18 energy advice stalls at community larders, libraries, churches and other locations.
- Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon, Low Carbon Oxford North and others from the Communities for Zero Carbon Oxford collective delivered the 'Energy Saving Homes' project.
- Deddington Environment Network held an energy conservation workshop and a tour of Duns Tew solar farm tour, which were attended by a total of 60 people.
- Low Carbon East Oxford worked with local homeowners to carry out thermal imaging of their properties to highlight improvements that could be made.

*Photo: Energy Saving Advice from Low Carbon Oxford North*



## Community-led spaces

Several network members have been working to bring underused spaces back into community use, to provide spaces for local people to come together and organise.

- Sustainable Shrivvenham set up The Hub, a community centre aimed at supporting the local community to live more sustainable day to day lives.
- Having launched in late 2021, the Abingdon Climate Emergency Centre went from strength to strength, hosting an incredible 267 events throughout the year, supported by 922 volunteers and attended by 4,503 people.
- Makespace set up 'The Source', a Meanwhile Space in central Oxford for global majority-led organisations and enterprises.
- Oxford Poetry Library was able to secure a permanent space opposite Oxford Train station at another Makespace building, The Community Works.



*Photos: Activities at the Hub run by Sustainable Shrivvenham*



## Community markets

There are several community markets selling fruits and vegetables, bread and pastries, zero-waste refills and other products from independent and sustainable traders. Between them, four CAGs held 171 markets throughout the year.

*Photo: East Oxford Community and Farmers Market.*





# OUR SUPPORT

Our core work is supporting our members to run effective community action groups. In 2022-2023, CAG staff offered support in many different ways.

## TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

The CAG staff team organised or collaborated on 16 Network support events, these included a series of training workshops, webinars and socials.



Photo:  
CAG AGM and Social

*"Every [Collaborate] meeting I have attended has had several gems of wisdom and new learning."*

## PEER TO PEER SUPPORT

To enable network members and partners to work together on themes of shared interest, the team organised 20 'Collaborate' meetings.



Photo:  
The Owned by Oxford Team

## 1:1 SUPPORT

CAG staff offered 1:1 advice and guidance to member groups, particularly those starting out or dealing with change or conflict.

*"We really appreciated the support and funding and as a result this will now be a monthly event. The help and the grant made a huge difference in getting an idea of the ground."*

## NETWORK COLLABORATION

The CAG team collaborated on various opportunities for large-scale collaboration between network members and other partners, notably Great Big Green Week and The Library of Things expansion.

*"CAG is so important because it breaks down silos."*



Photo:  
Library of Things coordinators

## NEWSLETTERS

We sent out 45 Newsletters: The Network Update providing resources and opportunities for groups, and The Key sharing events and general sustainability news to a distribution of over 1,600 subscribers.

*"I've been living in Oxford for 18 months... and have often found events and things of interest to me through your newsletters, and love what you do!"*

## INSURANCE

CAG provided a total of £5,478 of grants to network members to support them with insurance costs and to obtain appropriate insurance policies.

# Special Project Grants

CAG offers Special Project Grants for our members to deliver projects, events or activities for which limited external funding is available. There were six successful applications for the Special Project Grants in 2022-2023, in which we awarded £2,440. We are grateful for additional funding to support Special Project Grants this year from the DinnerTime Fund.

## First and Last Mile

For a rebrand of their minibuses which has raised awareness of the group in the local area, encouraging more people to use community based transport rather than their own cars.

## One Planet Clanfield

Organised a community pop-up event where people could bring their broken items to be repaired by skilled volunteers, all from the local area.



Photo:  
One Planet Clanfield repair cafe

Photo:  
OUWG Living roof project



## Oxford Urban Wildlife Group (OUWG)

ran a 'Living Roof Project' on Boundary Brook Bird Hide, including a series of six public engagement volunteer sessions.

## Witney Food Revolution

The grant enabled Witney Community Fridge to collect food that would have otherwise gone to disposal and distribute it to the people of Witney and surrounding villages.

## Oxford Mutual Aid

expanded their provision for Muslim families through additional items alongside their delivery to celebrate the festival of Eid.

## Abingdon Carbon Cutters

carried out a tree planting session with the local community, with over 300 volunteers getting involved to plant a total of 420 trees.

Photo:  
Abingdon Carbon Cutters Tree Planting



## COMMUNITIES AND NATURE

Photo:  
Refugee Resource and ITF visit Botanical Gardens



In addition to our Special Project Grants, we awarded grants of £500 to five groups around Oxfordshire to deliver projects that deepen people's connection to nature. These include:

- International Trees Foundation (ITF) with partner Refugee Resource
- HomeStart Oxford
- Banbury CAG/Bridge Street Community Garden
- Oxford Community Action
- Oxfordshire African Caribbean Mutual Association

[Read more on our website](#)



# OUR PROJECTS

Alongside supporting our growing network of community and climate action groups, we run projects that support our vision and values. We ran four projects during 2022-2023.



Addressing inequality through community wealth building

Photo: Part of the Owned by Oxford Team

## OWNED BY OXFORD

Oxford has a wealth problem. There's no shortage of money in our city, it's just not fairly distributed. And that's a problem for everyone. Owned by Oxford is using community wealth building to address this problem.

Owned by Oxford is a partnership of eleven community-based organisations and was funded with support from Friends Provident Foundation, Oxford City Council, and The Transition Network.

[Visit the Owned by Oxford Website](#)



[Read the Owned by Oxford Report](#)

Photo: Fermentation workshop

## REPLENISH OXFORDSHIRE

Replenish is a project, funded by Oxfordshire County Council, which supports residents of Oxfordshire to grow and cook nutritious food with zero wastage.

During the project year, Replenish delivered 78 in-person and online public engagement activities, which included new workshops 'make your own D.I.Y composter' and 'cooking with scraps.'

Partnering with SOFEA on the 'Nourish and Flourish' project, Replenish led composting and vegetable growing lessons in three Didcot schools.



[Visit the Replenish Website](#)



## LIBRARY OF THINGS



With support from Oxfordshire County Council, we facilitated a pilot project into how a Library of Things model of reducing material waste could be expanded across Oxfordshire. SHARE Oxford was the lead partner on this work sharing their knowledge and expertise of running a Library of Things since 2018. Fellow CAGs Oxford Wood Recycling, Sustainable Wantage and Bicester Green partnered in this project. As well as three new library sites, there is also a resource guide on how to set up a library.

[Read more and find resources](#)

## ESCALATE

CAG served as an Enterprise Support Hub, on this European funded project delivered by OSEP and OXLEP. We provided support through workshops, events and peer to peer groups to enterprising charities, social enterprises, purposeful businesses and social entrepreneurs. The eScalate program concluded in April 2023,.

# OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

We wouldn't be where we are today without the funders that support our work and our network of partners with which we collaborate. Thank you for working with us in 2022-2023 and we look forward to building our relationships in the years to come.



Photo:  
CAG staff team



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Our core work is funded by  
Oxfordshire County Council.



## STAY IN TOUCH

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SIGN UP TO 'THE KEY', OUR FORTNIGHTLY  
SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER



CAG Oxfordshire is a community benefit society with charitable objectives. We are owned by our members. We are registered as The Community Action Groups Project Oxfordshire Limited with the FCA, number 8117.