



Area Committee Monitoring Report 2021-22

Friends of Midsummer Common

Important information: read this carefully to ensure you plan the collection of monitoring information required to be able to complete this report in full and return it by the deadline.

- This grant comes from public funds and **must only be used for the purpose allocated** as stated in your Grant Agreement (or an alternative purpose **approved in writing** by the Grants Manager)
- Adequate monitoring must be provided to **evidence how the grant has been spent and what difference it has made** to City residents with the highest needs to reduce social or economic inequality
- Any award **not spent or evidenced for the purpose allocated** will have to be **repaid in full**
- You must collect the information to be able to complete this form in full
- You must have **appropriate invoices and receipts** to evidence all income and expenditure and we may ask to see these
- This monitoring report must be **returned one month after the completion of your activity/service and by 30th April 2022 at the very latest** to: grants@cambridge.gov.uk
- Outstanding and inadequate monitoring will affect future awards

1. Award and purpose

£900 West Central Area Committee: **Community volunteering sessions, events and activities raising awareness of the orchard and increasing biodiversity of the Common.**

2. Project/activity

You undertook to provide the above project/activity. Please give full details of exactly what was provided with this funding. Please report separately on each different activity that is funded by this grant.

Community volunteering sessions

Our volunteering sessions now run weekly on Sunday mornings from 10am till approximately midday. We have had about 48 sessions in the 2021-22 year. As well as ongoing maintenance of the orchard – pruning trees and mowing – we have embarked on a couple of improvement and renovation projects. These include:

- Significant work to improve the soil structure of the Newmarket Road entrance to the orchard by mulching with soil improver and woodchip.
- New plantings, including donated root stock, a new local variety of apple (Mary Challis, from Sawston), a new mulberry tree, and some Japanese wineberries and raspberries.
- Planting herbs and flowers in our new raised bed.
- raking and scarifying the grass along the cherry tree avenue in preparation for wildflower planting.
- Sowing wildflower seeds and bulbs along our cherry tree avenue.
- Planting new hops and ensuring adequate support for the plants
- Construction of a compost bin.
- Construction of a gate to access the side of a neighbouring building owned by Emmanuel college, as they have kindly agreed that we can install water butts to collect water off their down pipes. Purchase of a water butt (another one donated) and diverters.

Events/activities raising awareness of the orchard

In January 2022 we held our first ever Wassail at the orchard – a traditional event to celebrate our trees. It was well

attended and enjoyed by all. We also held an apple day, where we pressed some apples and enjoyed the juice. These days have served to involve the wider community and engage future volunteers.

INFORMATION REGARDING NEWSLETTER, WEBSITE, OUTREACH RE: EVENTS ON THE COMMON AND SCOOTERS

Increasing biodiversity

We have done and continue to do a lot of work to try to improve biodiversity on the site, including working towards establishing a wildflower area, planting herbs and flowers for pollinators in our newly constructed raised bed, and the introduction of a bug hotel. We continue to manage the space without pest or herbicides, using mulch and the hard work of our volunteers to control weeds. The orchard comprises a mosaic of different habitats including hedgerows, longer grass, and well established mature trees.

On the wider common, we have been engaging with Guy Belcher regarding the Eastern Pound, which we have identified as an area of depleted grassland which might be a candidate for biodiversity gains. We have also solicited opinions from local residents' groups regarding the area, and there is considerable local enthusiasm for improving the area. To that end, a test dig was performed in the winter of 2021 to establish whether there was an old drainage ditch which might be opened up – this was unsuccessful, but we will continue to work with stakeholders to try to form a plan for the area.

We have also campaigned for the planting of three new Dawn Redwoods on the common and have been watering the new plantings to ensure that they thrive. In general, Friends of Midsummer common have worked hard to encourage new tree planting and ensure that said trees make it to maturity, and we will continue to do so for many years to come.

Public use of the Common – events and safety

We have a regular dialogue with the Council and event organisers to make sure that all events on the Common are properly managed (for example for noise and litter) and we act as liaison between local residents and council officers. This is particularly relevant to Midsummer Fair where we are trying hard to prevent a repeat of the extreme antisocial behaviour at the unofficial events held in 2020 and 2021.

We have been active on the issue of electric cycles and scooters, where we receive many representations from local residents about the danger to pedestrians walking on the Common. Last November, we met with Cambridge Council leaders and the police to discuss what could be done to control these in the absence of action by the government. They agreed to consider and come back to us with proposals to deal with the serious safety problems from these vehicles travelling at 20mph, even 30mph. Lewis Herbert, former leader of the Council, has written that 'local residents are very concerned given the speeds through parks and on walkways/pavements'. A further meeting is now being arranged with the Council and the police for us to discuss detailed proposals, and we hope that any such proposals can be tested on Midsummer Common.

Please ensure you state where the activity was held, when, how many sessions over how many weeks etc. e.g. meetings x 42 held at xxx community centre 10-12 am with coffee & biscuits, with a monthly speaker on topics such as xx.

Activity start date:	01/04/2021	Activity end date:	01/04/2022
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If there were any differences in the activity which you received an award for, from what you actually did, please provide details:

- We ended up hiring a scarifier to help with the establishment of the wildflower area.
- We got permission to install some water butts to collect rainwater from a neighbouring building and therefore had to buy a water butt & diverters.
- After discussion at our AGM, we embarked on some significant improvement work at the Newmarket Road entrance as detailed above.

- We planted new trees which required tree tape to secure.
- On discussion with the neighbouring synagogue, we cleared some brush and planted some very spikey Japanese wineberries along their wall (for security reasons).
- We repaired slats of benches.
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Changes because of Covid

As noted above:

We were able to carry out both our activities in the Orchard and liaising with stakeholders, including CCC, on developments on the Common – albeit largely virtually. However last year we were not able to hold an annual picnic, nor operate a stall at the Strawberry Fair.

The basic maintenance at the Orchard has been carried on throughout the last year. However the lockdown and other Covid restrictions reduced the extent of planned volunteer activity in the Orchard. For instance we were not able to repeat the sessions with GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) staff this year.

As a result of the Covid restrictions we have held all meetings virtually, however we have continued circulating a printed newsletter to a varied selection of local households, and our building our on-line presence.

Our insurers, Zurich, extended our 2020-21 period of cover to 15 months, which saved a bit of money.

Activity Start Date: 1 April 2021

Activity end Date: 31 March 2022

3. Beneficiaries

Our membership is about 200, but many more local people pass through on the way to work or the shops in the

Who benefited from the activity? (e.g. older people, children, people with disabilities etc.)? Who did you target?

Grafton Centre and enjoy the space. All ages come to our activities, with small children particularly keen to plant bulbs and trees. We have easy wheelchair access and quiet benches, very near to the bus stop for the Grafton Centre. The homeless often enjoy somewhere away from the streets.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life. Many of them are elderly. Some have disabilities. Many of us do not have gardens/outdoor space of our own. We performed a survey at our wassail event in January to establish what needs people had. This was optional and not all attendees filled out the survey. Of 15 respondents (about 1/3 of attendees at the event)

- 8 were regular volunteers
- 2 were under 17
- 4 were over 65
- 4 live alone
- 4 had no outdoor space at home (gardens, balconies, shared gardens etc)
- 3 of those with gardens stated that their gardens were very small
- 3 were retired
- 2 were students
- 2 were not in full or part time employment or study
- 4 people got their only form of exercise in the orchard
- 6 exercised in the orchard as well as elsewhere
- 4 considered themselves to have a disability
- 5 were vulnerable to covid and so have had to shield in the past two years.

How many people directly benefited in total? A direct beneficiary is someone actively participating in the activity and not observing the activity (such as audiences at performances etc.). There is a separate question to tell us about indirect beneficiaries

We had twenty regular attendees to volunteer sessions. Occasional participants and our wider membership is much larger, however.

What are the ages of the beneficiaries?		
	Total number of beneficiaries for each age group?	How many of these live in the City?
Under 5's	Estimate several hundred	Majority
5-17	Estimate several hundred	Majority
	Estimate several hundred	Majority
60 and over	Estimate several hundred	Majority
Total	Very hard to estimate the numbers who pass through Orchard. Perhaps 15,000, although maybe fewer this year because of Covid . Many more live in surrounding streets and use the Common, for whom we aim to act as advocates.	Majority

Where do those people live? Put how many against each ward in the table below. If you are not sure, please make a best guess.

Area	Wards			
North 20 members but many others commute through	Arbury	East Chesterton	King's Hedges	West Chesterton
East Some regular commuters who sit on the benches	Abbey	Coleridge	Petersfield	Romsey
South Some regular commuters who sit on the benches	Cherry Hinton	Queen Edith's	Trumpington	
West/ Central 200 members but lots of other local residents regularly use the orchard and common	Castle	Market	Newnham	
OTHER – who are not Cambridge City residents	Unknown number of visitors...			

Please provide details of any indirect beneficiaries, i.e. people who did not actively participate in the activity but have observed or benefited in another way, such as audiences and communities.

Thousands use the Common from everywhere, and we estimate at least 15,000 (more than 50 a day) visit the Orchard through the course of a year.

4. Benefits/outcomes

How did your activity reduce social and/or economic inequality for city residents? How do you know that this was achieved?

Parks and green spaces help to mitigate socio-economic-status related health inequalities¹, particularly when those green spaces are well maintained and high quality. This is particularly important in the context

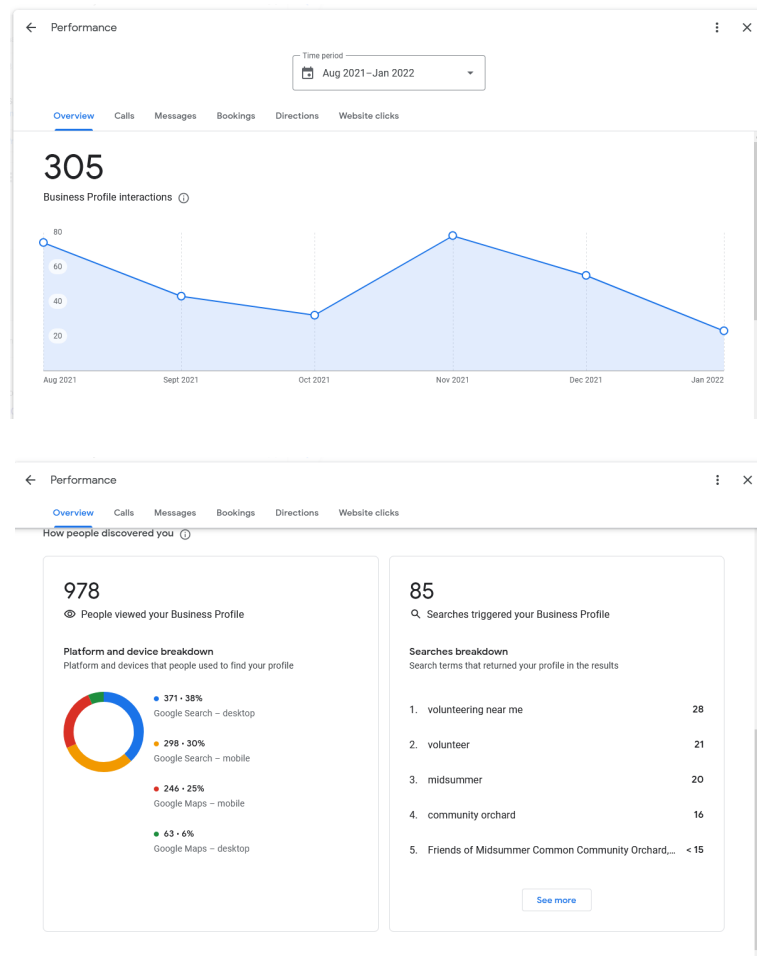
of COVID-19, and when considering those who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, including the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions.²

The Midsummer Common Community Orchard has always been volunteer-run by Friends of Midsummer Common since its establishment in 2009. It is a beautiful space and we get many verbal comments from those enjoying the orchard or simply walking through it on their morning commute.

It's important to point out that the orchard does not only benefit the affluent of Market Ward. There are many unhoused people who frequent the orchard as a quiet place to sit where they will be treated with dignity. We liaise with authorities when appropriate or when someone needs help.

The police are particularly keen that we keep the orchard well maintained and encourage local use, since this can reduce anti-social behaviour. The increased use of the orchard by all parts of the community, including families, retired people and students over the past year seems to have borne this out, making the orchard a safe and welcoming place for all members of the community. We dispose of sharps when we find them and record this with the police to try to minimise the risk of harm from intravenous drug use.

Our regular volunteer numbers have grown over the past year – probably because during the pandemic it was essential for people to find outdoor activities that provided opportunities for safe social interaction and exercise. Quantitative evidence of interest in volunteering and visiting the orchard can be found from our Googlemaps profile (set up last August):



As you can see, the majority of searches for us were for either “volunteering near me” or “volunteer”.

We solicited opinions on new options for the Orchard at our AGM last year from the FoMC membership

and decided upon some new planting at the Newmarket Road entrance to the orchard on the basis of a vote. We also discussed strategies to improve soil health there, including addition of organic matter and irrigation. It was also noted at the AGM that there was a strong desire within FoMC for improved biodiversity in the orchard – to that end, we are trialling a wildflower area starting spring 2022.

As noted above we performed a survey at our wassail event in January to establish what needs people had. This is not a comprehensive survey of those who were at our Wassail event, let alone a comprehensive insight into the wider impact of the orchard on all the other local stakeholders. Thus the broader purview of Friends of Midsummer Common, reaching out to all the members of the community including hard-to-reach groups as well as residents' associations, is also important alongside our orchard activities.

- (1) Wang, Qian, and Zili Lan. "Park green spaces, public health and social inequalities: Understanding the interrelationships for policy implications." *Land Use Policy* 83 (2019): 66-74.
- (2) Geary, Rebecca S., et al. "A call to action: Improving urban green spaces to reduce health inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19." *Preventive medicine* 145 (2021): 106425.

What other benefits were there from this activity?

- To improve the urban environment
- To provide nourishment for the local community
- To provide opportunities for exercise for people of all abilities
- To reduce social isolation and encourage a sense of community
- To provide a welcoming outdoor space for those who lack gardens and private green space
- To improve mental wellbeing of both volunteers and local people.
- To provide a variety of pesticide-free habitats for wildlife and improve biodiversity in the orchard
- To increase tree planting and biodiversity gains on the wider common, watering new plantings to ensure they get established.
- To liaise with residents' groups and other stakeholders regarding management of the common. **As noted above this includes advocating for good management of events and for safe use of the Common.**

How did you target beneficiaries and new members?

- We have a regular newsletter that is circulated to all members electronically, and we also print a few hundred to put through doors around the area
- Our website serves as a local resource – and we have rebuilt this during the year.
- We also have an active Facebook page which garners a reasonable amount of engagement. We publicise orchard volunteering sessions on Nextdoor in order to encourage new volunteers.
- We have a google maps page as detailed above which people refer to when looking for volunteering opportunities
- We liaise with other residents' groups to solicit their opinions and engagement regarding the management of the wider common
- We run occasional activities such as the wassail, an informal apple day and participated in Good to Grow. These events are quite helpful to introduce people to the orchard.

Please attach any other information to evidence the success / outcomes of this funding such as a photograph, publicity, case study, report, etc. that the City Council can use in reports and publicity.

4. Finances

Budget: Your application detailed the following budget for the activity/service.
Please complete the right-hand, white column with the actual income and expenditure.

Expenditure Do NOT include "in kind" expenses		
Expense or Cost	Estimate – do not change this column	Actual
Essential insurance to May 2022 – share for year	£251	£197
AGM expenses hire of hall and publicity - VIRTUAL	£104	£14
Orchard maintenance expenditure: repairs to machinery and tools, parts, petrol, training	£160	£125
Orchard maintenance expenditure: safety clothing	£75	£23
Mower store – extra work > now maintenance generally	£50	£187
Plants, seeds, bulbs	£50	£351
Extra signs	£150	£0
Public information, publicity material including newsletter .. 3 rd newsletter deferred to 2022-23	£540	£373
Public meeting about Management Plan including publicity	£104	£0
Other projects, raised beds, insect hotel, hop frame etc. > inc water diverter, compost bin	£220	£215
Theft of mower		£300
Natural Cambridge funded Eastern Ditch work		£550
		£
Total expenditure	£1,704	Box A £2,336

Income Do NOT include "in kind" expenses		
Funding Source	Estimate – do not change this column	Actual
Add any new funding secured/raised not on your original application form		
Eligible reserves carried forward from your organisation		£
Cambridge City Council Grant – Area Committee	£1354	Box B £900
Donations not guaranteed	£350	£305
Funding from open spaces CCC		£285
Natural Cambridge funded Eastern Ditch work		£550
		£
		£
Total income	£1704	£1,991 (exc in kind)

Full cost of the activity/service	Box A above	£2,316
City Council Area Committee funding	Box B above	£ 900
% funded by Cambridge City Council	Box B ÷ Box A x 100	39 %

Please confirm that all the money awarded by Cambridge City Council has been spent on the purpose it was allocated for.

YES / ~~NO~~ (delete as appropriate)

If **NO**, why not?

How much money is there unspent?

Please contact us at grants@cambridge.gov.uk as soon as possible to discuss what to do with this unspent grant.

I enclose a copy of the organisation's annual accounts (which must show our grant as restricted).

YES / NO (delete as appropriate)

If **NO**, please give a date by which you will send a copy of the annual accounts.

Living Wage - for organisations who have paid employees only **N/A – NO STAFF**

Cambridge City Council is an accredited UK Living Wage employer. We actively encourage organisations we fund to pay, or work towards paying, the UK living wage currently £9.50 per hour to their employees

Does your organisation pay the Living Wage? **YES / NO** (delete as appropriate)

If not please tell us your organisations position regarding the Living Wage:

Has your organisation undertaken any progress in working towards paying the Living Wage during 2021-22?

Declaration

I **confirm** the details on this form are correct to the best of my knowledge.

I confirm that Cambridge City Council can use all information and photographs, if supplied, for 2 years from the date of this declaration. Appropriate permissions adhering to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) have been obtained from subjects in the photographs (or their parents/guardians if they are under 18 years old).

Signed for and on behalf of: (full name of group)	Friends Of Midsummer Common
By: Authorised Signatory Name	Peter Gotham
Signature (please type your name if emailing the form)	
Position in Organisation	
Email	Peter.Gotham@outlook.com
Phone Number	07496 473 409
Contact Address	58 Humberstone Road, Cambridge, CB4 1JF
Date	

This monitoring report must be **returned one month after the completion of your activity/service and by 30th April 2022 at the very latest** to: grants@cambridge.gov.uk
Outstanding and inadequate monitoring will affect future awards