



ABUNDANT BORDERS

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-23



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Abundant Borders is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) working to create a network of food production across the Scottish Borders. The charity's objects remain to promote the advancement of education by training people to produce food in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way and includes:

- ↪ The relief of food poverty through skills development
- ↪ Environmental protection & improvement
- ↪ Creation of community food gardens





“Abundant Borders continues to deliver projects and programmes to enhance lives and strengthen communities”

CHAIR'S REPORT

Nancy Woodhead

This year has been one of continued growth and success.

We welcomed more visitors and groups into the community gardens, delivered courses and workshops to support people with the cost of living crisis and in their journey towards a more sustainable future.

We helped volunteers to learn new skills and gain confidence and were delighted to see their contribution to their communities recognised in national award ceremonies!

The year ended in sadness with the death of Abundant Borders Co-Founder, Graham Bell. His knowledge, experience and encouragement is missed but we will continue his legacy in the work we do to spread the message that we must look after the planet, look after each other and protect the future of those who will follow us.

We will also miss Co-Founder Anne Casey, who retired in February 2023. Anne has been a hugely influential figure in the development of Abundant Borders and we are delighted that she remains as an active volunteer. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Rosalind McArthur

March 2022 saw the start of a second round of funding support from both the National Lottery Community Fund and the Robertson Trust.

This was year one of the second three-year funding cycle from both organisations, and is testament to the success of Abundant Borders in delivering positive outcomes for our communities.

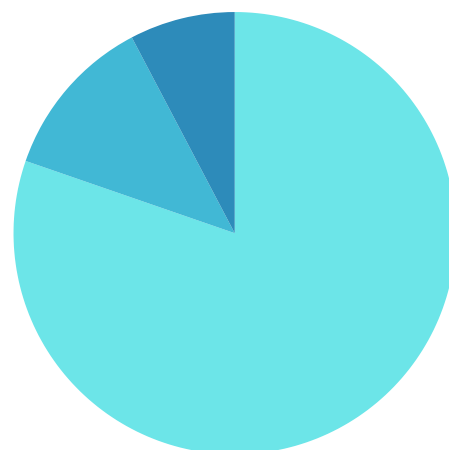
We also attracted funding from Scottish Borders Council, Dandelion, Tweed Forum, the Tree Council and Impact Funding Partners for a range of project work over the period.

We increased the income we received from consultancy by delivering training courses in cooking and food hygiene and providing food growing expertise to other social enterprises.

As ever we are grateful for the donations received from supporters and, once again, from the Toms Family Trust.

We also received a significant donation from sales of the poetry book written by local poet John Cobb.

The organisation remains in a stable financial position going into the financial year 2023-24 and strives to maximise the benefits to individuals and communities from the funding we have and constantly work to ensure that every penny is spent well.



Grants
Consultancy
Donations

We have added to the assets of the organisation, through garden installations, including polytunnels, raised beds and compost toilets.





COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING

Seeding Sustainable Futures

The Community Gardens continue to thrive, with additional growing space and a full programme of training, workshops and events.

Eyemouth has seen the most extensive developments with the new polycarbonate tunnel providing indoor growing space, additional raised beds providing better access for volunteers with physical impairment, an orchard, outdoor cooking equipment and the creation of fruit tree and willow nurseries.

As well as being a vibrant part of the local community, the Duns garden acts as a training base for pupils from Berwickshire High School studying NPA horticulture.

The Kelso garden opened in late summer 2022, taking as its inspiration designs from 100 Kelso High School students. The garden has hosted film screenings, climate conversations and a wide range of workshops and events.

All three gardens now have compost toilets, which makes the sites volunteer friendly.

The gardens in Ayton, Hawick and Foulton continue to prosper with local volunteers ensuring that these community spaces play a central role in community life.

We continued to support Cockburnspath, with the primary school children growing produce for a community harvest meal.

The gardens are active members of the Community Food Growing network.

COMMUNITY COOKING

Fresh, local, affordable

Following a break during Covid restrictions, cooking courses were restarted, with four courses in Duns and Eyemouth.

While the focus remains on cooking with fresh, local ingredients we have been adapting recipes to suit slow cooking methods to further support clients during the cost-of-living crisis.

Participants in the cooking courses gain REHIS qualifications in Basic Cooking Skills and an Introduction to Food Hygiene, entry level qualifications for working in the food industry, food retail and hospitality.



SOCIAL FOOD

Sustaining community

Social lunches, delivered in partnership BHABefriend, was a big success, with lunches held at most village halls/community centres across Berwickshire.

The success was two-fold, firstly in encouraging people to return to a social setting post-Covid and secondly in community capacity building.

Most communities have taken over the lunches themselves, offering meals to residents on a regular basis.

Abundant Borders continues to support community meals with produce from the community gardens, where possible, and by training volunteers and staff in food hygiene.

We also provided picnics to help communities celebrate the Platinum Jubilee!



The community gardens are valued community spaces, places where people can come together to learn new skills and share experiences.

Each garden hosted a full programme of workshops and events. Harvest festivals were held with apple pressing, plant swaps, willow weaving, music and storytelling.

Specialist workshops included willow weaving, tree grafting, wreathmaking, seed-saving and herbal remedies.

The Duns garden is a training base for pupils from Berwickshire High School, with Abundant Borders teaching National Progression Awards in Horticulture

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Teaching new skills and celebrating local produce



VOLUNTEERING

The Heart of Abundant Borders

In the Loving Our Volunteers Awards, Ayton volunteer Rhonda Noble was announced as Volunteer of the Year in the Hidden Assets category while Peter Guthrie was highly commended for his volunteering efforts in Eyemouth.

We are upskilling volunteers and creating lead volunteers who can, in time, take over management of the gardens so that they remain vibrant, active, inclusive spaces beyond the times staff are there to support volunteering sessions.

In the period of this annual report we recorded over 1800 hours of volunteer time - equivalent to 260 full days!

We helped 25 people gain REHIS certificates in Basic Cooking Skills and 26 in Food Hygiene.

We have 90 registered volunteers supporting the community gardens, cooking courses and of course our trustees. We would like to thank every one of them for the difference they make to their communities,

A great day and experience for all who attended, which simply highlights what a fantastic resource the Abundant Borders garden is for the people of Hawick



PARTNERSHIPS

Moving Forward Together

Over the year we have welcomed many community groups into the gardens, ensuring that they are welcoming spaces for the whole community, not just the gardeners!

The gardens have hosted film projects in partnership with Connecting Threads.

We continue to partner with Cockburnspath Development Trust to support the Primary School children in the community garden.

We are active members of the Scottish Food Coalition, lobbying to ensure that the Good Food Nation Act delivers on the potential to transform the food system in Scotland.

Chief Officer Karen Birch is part of the Steering Group of Borders Climate Action Network, which will work with individuals, groups and organisations to ensure a just transition to net zero.

Karen is leading the team creating a Borders Good Food Partnership and registering the Borders as a Sustainable Food Place.

We continue to be active members of the Scottish Borders Food Growers Network and a wide range of local and national groups.



An Audio-Visual Pollinator Project



LOOKING AHEAD

Our mission is to put **GOOD FOOD** at the heart of communities

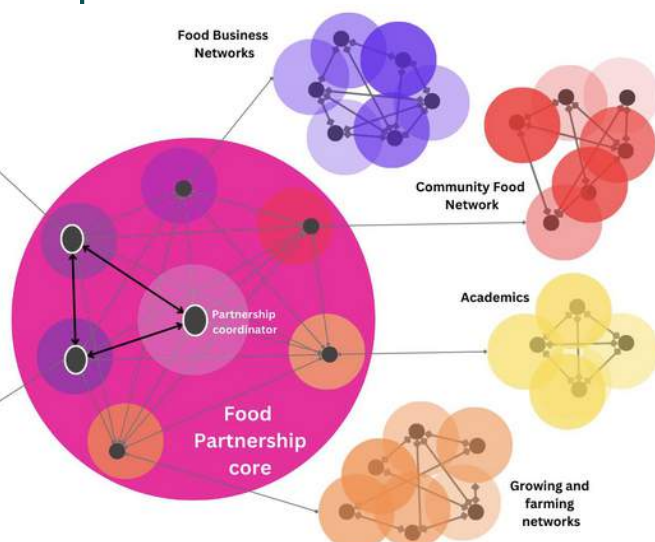


We will fulfil our mission by:

- creating a network of local food production through community gardens
- teaching people the skills to grow their own food and encourage them to seek out locally produced food
- teaching people the skills to cook healthy, affordable meals
- leading the response to the climate crisis with respect to the food system in the Scottish Borders
- supporting the transition to a fair and sustainable food system in the Scottish Borders

Over the next three years we will:

- Encourage learning by providing training opportunities through workshops, training courses, skill sharing and knowledge exchange
- Provide opportunities for communities to come together, through volunteering and events to support individual wellbeing and foster community resilience
- Promote community food growing by creating and maintaining a network of community food gardens and supporting other communities, groups, organisations and individuals to develop food growing initiatives
- Encourage healthy eating by teaching the skills needed to cook healthy, affordable meals from seasonal, local ingredients
- Advocate for Food System Change by collaborating with partners to support a just transition to a sustainable food system within the Net Zero Framework
- Collaborate to build a Borders Good Food Partnership and for The Borders to become a Sustainable Food Place



STAY IN TOUCH

Lots of ways to stay connected

WEBSITE

There are lots of information sheets, training materials, healthy recipes on our website at

www.abundantborders.org.uk

FACEBOOK

Keep up to date with the community gardens, workshops, cooking courses, training and events by following us

facebook.com/abundantborders.

VISIT (what3words)

Duns

Station Avenue (saved.chapels.dancer)

Ayton

Summerhill Park (rainfall.mastering.highlight)

Eyemouth

Golf Course Road (myths.elaborate.basics)

Kelso

Rodger Fish Gardens (outbound.units.grounding)

Foulden

Kerrigan Way (sharpness.passions.plums)

Hawick

High Street (reacting.warriors.listen)



HEALTHY EATING

Join in the discussions with seasonal recipes and tips at

facebook.com/groups/abundantborderscookfresh

COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING

Join the food growing community and share ideas and information and take advantage of a great range of gardening tips, foraging guides, training materials and more.

facebook.com/groups/virtualcommunitygarden

EMAIL

General Enquiries

robin@abundantborders.org.uk

Volunteering

volunteering@abundantborders.org.uk

Admin

info@abundantborders.org.uk