



# OrganicLea

Community · Food · Growing

Annual Review 2019-2020

OrganicLea grows and sells food in north-east London, and helps others do the same. Based at Hawkwood Plant Nursery, our 12-acre organic market garden and wildlife haven in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, we help Londoners to connect, learn and build skills and confidence for work and life. We're a not-for-profit workers' co-operative, managing our work ourselves and feeding any surplus back into our projects. We work for change in the food system locally and globally, in solidarity with peasant farmers and campaigners taking action for ecological and just farming systems.



### We do this by:

**Growing Food:** we grow vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers on our market garden site, Hawkwood Plant Nursery, involving volunteers, trainees, apprentices and course students in the work. We sell produce and some processed goods to our own outlets and to restaurants, cafés and shops in north-east London. We sell plants through our own outlets and to individuals and community groups. We're an accredited Better Food Trader, operating a weekly box scheme and three weekend market stalls, selling our own produce and produce supplied by farmers in East Anglia, Kent and Sussex, plus some from further afield in the UK and Europe.

**Growing People:** we run a volunteer programme at our market garden, open to all but including referrals from a number of agencies and partners working with disadvantaged beneficiaries, including supported volunteering for people with higher support needs.

We run a variety of training courses (including accredited Level 1 and Level 2 gardening courses), an apprenticeship, traineeships and programmes for young people with special educational needs or excluded from mainstream education.

**Growing Community:** we support community gardens on a range of sites around north-east London, including garden design, volunteering programmes and training courses. We offer family activities and community engagement through workshops and activities and tours at our site and at other local community events.

This report relates to activities prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly we had to pause some of our work, especially with vulnerable people. But we've been able to continue supplying fresh food and to support people to grow their own, at a time when that's been crucial for health and wellbeing.

## Bee Wild

In 2018 we were grateful to receive a 2-year grant from the Heritage Lottery for our Bee Wild programme, enabling us to increase our ambition to support wild pollinators and honeybees at Hawkwood and beyond. As part of Bee Wild we were able to:

- Train people in pollinator-friendly gardening and sustainable beekeeping
- Offer Bee Wild volunteer learning placements at Hawkwood
- Dig ponds and plant wildflower meadows
- Run stalls and workshops across Waltham Forest to support people to take action for wild pollinators
- Produce resources and increase communication on action for wild pollinators.



*“I’ve never experienced a level of calmness like when we’re observing bees and being in that space.”*

Goli, A Bee Wild participant

## Sowing seeds for collaboration

We have been glad to partner with two organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers. We were able to welcome Room to Heal (a therapeutic community for asylum seekers and refugees who have survived torture and trafficking) and Waltham Forest Syrian Refugee Family project, for gardening, family activities, outdoor play, community lunches and fireside gatherings.

*“Thank you so much for such a wonderful day on Saturday - everyone had a brilliant time and it definitely sowed the seeds for more collaboration! The women really enjoyed the seed sorting, the therapeutic nature of it.”*

*Isabelle, Waltham Forest Syrian Refugee Families Support*



Photo: Manal Massalha

## Developments in 2019-20:

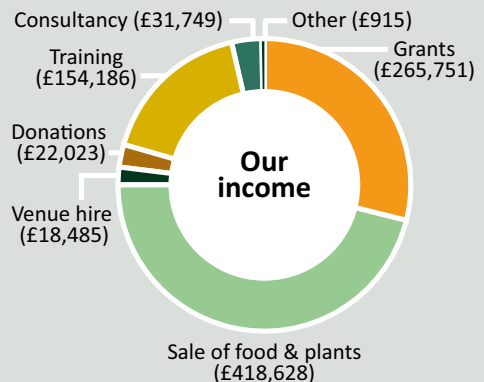
- We completed building the Woodland Classroom at our Hawkwood site, creating a new informal education setting for workshops and training, and an outdoor pizza oven.
- We were awarded £1.2 million from the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund to develop new facilities at Hawkwood Nursery and Wolves Lane, developing them as flagship growing hubs for London as a 'Market Garden City'.
- We worked to combat loneliness through shared meals, volunteering and green care activities supported by the Building Connections Fund.
- We received funding from the City of London to support green care wellbeing activities in and around Epping Forest.
- We worked with Waltham Forest Council to deliver holiday activities for under 11s and an Eco Camp for people aged 11-16.
- We purchased a tractor, and an electric van to bring our zero-emission produce and plant deliveries in-house.
- We employed an Apprentice Grower with funds from the Worshipful Company of Gardeners and Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust.
- We continued to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes for people referred via social prescribing, funded by the Department of Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Through Groundwork's Able, Capable, Employed (ACE)

programme, supporting Londoners with disabilities and long-term health conditions back into work, we were able to continue to provide supported paid placements.

- We started our Ready Healthy Eat project in partnership with the Hornbeam Café.
- Wolves Lane Consortium was formally set up with OrganicLea, Crop Drop and the Ubele Initiative as founding consortium members.

### Financial review:

OrganicLea's income for 2019-20 was £912,785. Expenditure was £910,699, with a net surplus (after interest and tax) of £2,086. Total funds carried forward were £169,533, of which £24,294 is fixed assets. Our self-generated income made up 68% of our turnover and increased by 17% on the previous year. Grant income was also substantially higher, so income overall was one-third higher than in 2018-19.



## 2019-2020 review

Over the course of the year:

- We produced over **7,825kg** of organic produce with a value of **£65,680**, distributing it alongside **£163,179** worth of produce from small-scale organic growers and wholesalers including the Better Food Shed. Our box scheme grew by **8%** from October 2019 to March 2020, reaching **755** bags in March 2020.
- We worked with **301** volunteers during weekday activities at Hawkwood, and another **66** joined our weekend Open Day volunteering.
- In this academic year, we enrolled **116** learners onto our City and Guilds accredited courses with an **89%** success rate.
- We worked with **13** schools on summer education and outdoor activity days, forest school, workshops, weekly sessions and work experience programmes.
- We harvested an estimated **980,000** litres of rainwater (an increase of 140,000 litres from last year), and stored approximately **10** tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> through our soil cultivation.
- We ran introductory council funded courses on allotment plots across the borough and started delivering gardening sessions in three council-owned care homes.
- With central government funding we created a therapeutic 'pocket park' at a wellbeing hub in Enfield and turned old allotment plots into a food growing training site.
- We delivered gardening sessions across **9** housing sites in Waltham Forest and Haringey.
- We grew and distributed **thousands** of plants and pollinator flowers to community groups and individuals across Waltham Forest.

**7,825**

Kilograms of organic produce we grew

**367**

Number of volunteers we worked with



Photo: Manal Massalha

**755**

Fruit and veg bags we delivered per week

## Find out more

### Box Scheme and Market Stalls

Fresh, sustainably-grown fruit and veg every week in your neighbourhood. Find out more on our website; email [box@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:box@organiclea.org.uk) or call 020 8524 4994.

### Produce Distribution

We sell our mixed salad leaves to restaurants, cafés and shops in Hackney and Waltham Forest. We also offer a Kitchen Garden scheme for restaurants wanting to grow with us. For more information contact [tsouni@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:tsouni@organiclea.org.uk) or call 020 8524 4994.

### Training

We offer a range of formal training courses, including accredited horticulture courses. Email [courses@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:courses@organiclea.org.uk) for more information.

### Volunteering

We have a vibrant and diverse volunteer community. Email [volunteering@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@organiclea.org.uk) if you would like to volunteer or do a structured placement with us; or if you would like to refer someone.

### Community Food Growing

OrganicLea supports food growing and gardening projects in the community. Contact [info@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:info@organiclea.org.uk) to find out more.

### Schools and young people

We can offer schools visits, activities within schools, teacher training and programmes for young people. We also offer tailored programmes for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and in alternative provision at our site and within schools. Email [schools@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:schools@organiclea.org.uk) for more information.

### Plants

Our main plant season is from April to June, with winter plants for sale in August and September. Contact [plants@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:plants@organiclea.org.uk) or go to our website for more details.

### Donations




If you'd like to support our work financially, please get in touch. Contact [info@organiclea.org.uk](mailto:info@organiclea.org.uk) for more information.

## OrganicLea CIC

Founded in February 2001 as a workers' co-operative. Not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee (Community Interest Company), Number 05135926; VAT Reg 161 391029

Registered Office: Hornbeam Centre,  
458 Hoe Street, Walthamstow,  
London, E17 9AH

Hawkwood Plant Nursery  
115 Hawkwood Crescent, Chingford  
London, E4 7UH

 [@Organiclea](https://twitter.com/Organiclea) |  [facebook.com/Organiclea](https://facebook.com/Organiclea) |  [organicleacommunitygrowers](https://organicleacommunitygrowers)  
[www.organiclea.org.uk](http://www.organiclea.org.uk)