

# CAG OXFORDSHIRE



## ANNUAL REPORT 2021



# CONTENTS

Welcome.....	2
Who We Are.....	3
Our Vision and Values.....	3
Network Overview.....	4
Network Achievements.....	5
Our Support.....	8
Special Project Grants.....	9
Our Projects.....	10
Our Partners and Funders .....	11
Contact.....	12

# WELCOME

**From the CAG Oxfordshire team  
(Alice, Anaïs, Anna, Eleanor, Jabu, Jo and Katherine)**

Welcome to the CAG Oxfordshire 2021 Annual Report! We are delighted to share the incredible achievements of the network over the last year. CAG members continue to inspire us with their enthusiasm and dedication to grassroots climate action, working towards our shared vision of resilient and empowered communities working together so that people and planet can thrive within ecological limits. This vision has never been more relevant, and we are excited to continue to support the invaluable work of our members.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the vital support of Oxfordshire County Council, our Board and the hard work and commitment of the Community Action Groups and volunteers of the network.



# 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 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. 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 deliver projects that support our values and mission. In 2021, we delivered:

- **Replenish** - Cooking and growing healthy food with zero wastage
- **Owned by Oxford** - Building community wealth in Oxford
- **The Repair Cafe project** - Fostering and building a network of Repair Cafes
- **Social Enterprise Hub** - Supporting community and socially motivated organisations
- **From the Ground Up** - Celebrating our 20 year anniversary

[Want to know more? Watch our latest '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 within ecological limits.

## OUR VALUES

- Building relationships and supporting each other
- Demonstrating practical change
- Being community-led
- Being proactively inclusive and valuing diversity
- Prioritizing 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
- Respecting the natural environment

# NETWORK OVERVIEW

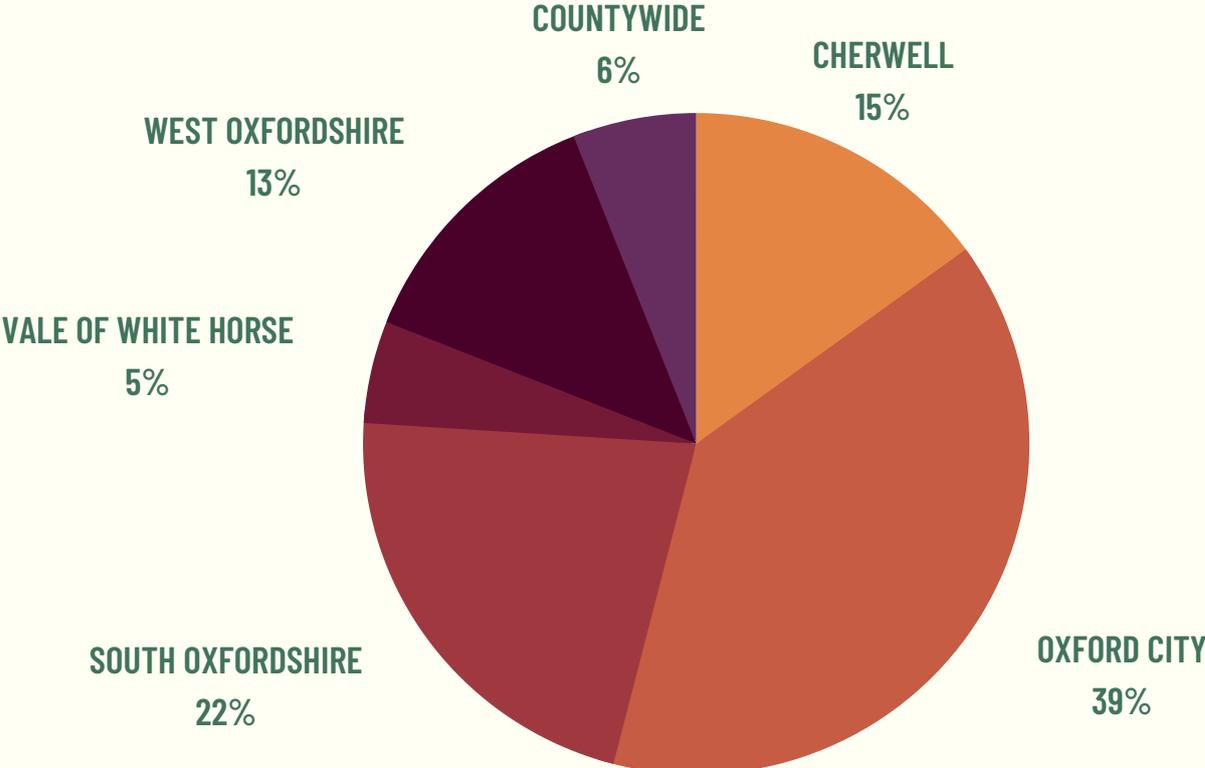
The CAG Oxfordshire network continues to grow and evolve in response to the needs and opportunities in communities across Oxfordshire.

At the time of reporting there are a total of 100 CAGs with 13 groups joining during the year. [See all CAG network members here.](#)

Picture: Sandford Talking Shop



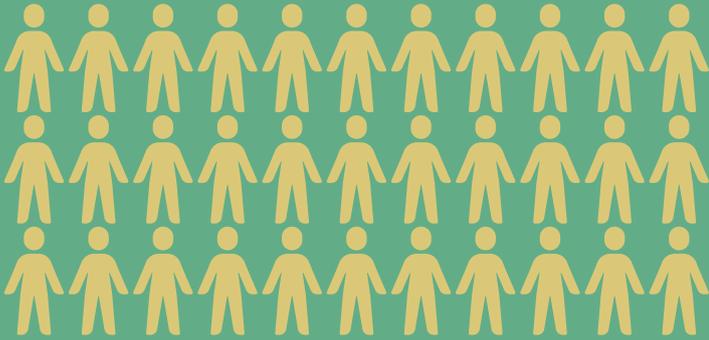
## CAGS BY DISTRICT



# NETWORK ACHIEVEMENTS

CAG Oxfordshire is incredibly proud of the achievements of our network members, and we would like to share some highlights in order to give a flavour of the breadth and impact of network activities.

## VOLUNTEERS



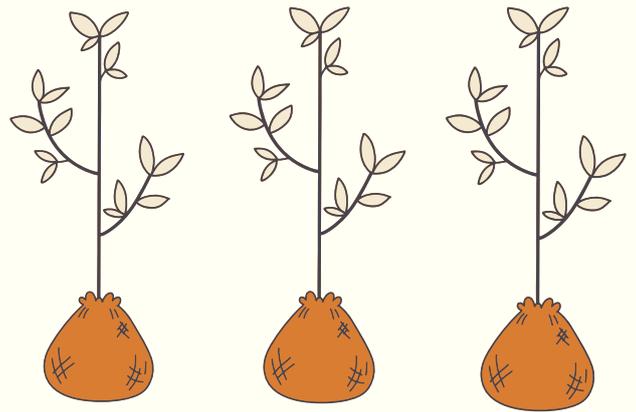
Collectively, CAGs benefited from the support of approximately 7,300 volunteers...

Offering almost 65,000 volunteer hours...

The equivalent of 43 full-time jobs.

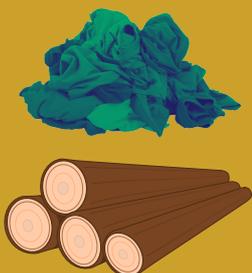
### 82,500 KG

food surplus was redistributed and prevented from going to waste



Approximately 2,000 trees planted by network members

### 1.5 MILLION KG



material waste upcycled, reused and recycled



Over 43,500 people attending over 7,000 CAG members' events

Plastic containers refilled

=

### 1 MILLION



CAG members work across a range of environmental and social justice issues, bringing innovative ideas and energy to everything they do. We've grouped some of the brilliant work carried out this year below according to thematic areas of work.



Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon organised a community orchard planting sessions with 105 participants from community groups including Rose Hill Youth Football Club, the Methodist Church, Nepali Association and Syrian Sisters.

## Tree planting and mapping

Tree planting remains a top priority for many groups, so as to address biodiversity loss, capture carbon, and reduce flooding. Mapping new areas for planting has also been a key activity, as well as developing local partnerships with the stakeholders needed to enable small and large scale planting projects. Throughout the year, groups planted approximately 2,000 trees.



## Biodiversity and rewilding

Protecting biodiversity and rewilding projects are also growing in number, with groups finding creative ways to encourage volunteer involvement and engage residents. These included establishing wildflower meadows, carrying out botanical surveys and organising conservation sessions.

Biodiversity Bloxham carried out 45 activities across the year including seed swaps



## 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. Four network members are active members of the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT Oxfordshire).

Broken Spoke ran cycle training, bicycle mechanics training, and the hugely popular 'Beryl's Night'. This is a free monthly evening for women, trans and non-binary folks.



## Material waste reduction

Many CAG members have continued to avert waste in Oxfordshire by encouraging reuse, repair and upcycling of materials and household items. Through public-facing activities such as pop-up refill stations, swap shops, repair cafes and repair workshops, they've helped to counteract 'buy it and bin it' culture and promote the circular economy.

Oxford Wood Recycling diverted 1,505 tonnes of wood waste by selling it for reuse or sending it to recycling.

## Food sustainability and the local food economy

A number of groups run community gardens and allotments and local producer's markets. These spaces provide people of all ages and backgrounds with access to fresh, organic produce, as well as sharing knowledge and skills around food growing, sustainable food production and nutrition. These spaces also enhance people's wellbeing through social connectedness and access to nature.

*Oxford City Farm's Squash Fest, held in partnership with Abundance and Good Gym, was the biggest event at the Farm in 2021 with an incredible 987 people attending.*



## Tackling food waste and food insecurity

The flip side of growing food and contributing to a thriving local food economy is ensuring food is not wasted and, importantly, that food gets to the people who may have least access to healthy, affordable options.

*Cherwell Larder worked in partnership with the Oxford Food Hub, Kidlington Parish Council, North Oxford Food Bank, Cherwell District Council and SOFEA, redistributing almost 39,000 kg of surplus food.*



## Sustainable energy

Sustainable energy projects are also an important part of CAG's work, from projects on solar energy and electric vehicles to promoting energy efficient homes.

*Sustainable Wallingford held a stall for Great Big Green Week, demonstrating the amount of electricity needed to charge small items with a pedal-powered bike generator.*



## Community-centred housing and spaces

Sitting at the intersection of climate and social justice, several network members have continued to work on promoting community ownership and housing solutions.

*Makespace launched their ambitious 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire' programme that aims to transform underused space in Oxfordshire's urban centres.*



## Broadening audiences and impact

Many CAGs are engaging their communities in ways that bridge between environmental and social issues. For example, CAGs are incorporating activities and engaging partners that focus on mental health, physical wellbeing, cultural relevance and more. This is contributing to a more inclusive environment, with the aim that everyone, no matter their background, feels able to participate



*Stonehill Community Garden provides outdoor learning experiences for diverse groups from the communities in South Oxfordshire, providing a safe space which offers more than purely a gardening experience.*



# OUR SUPPORT

Our core work is supporting our members to run effective community action groups. In 2021, CAG staff offered support in many different ways.

## TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

The CAG staff team organised 28 high quality workshops and webinars over the course of the year.

## PEER TO PEER SUPPORT

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

## INSURANCE

CAG provided a total of £4,280 of grants to 25 network members to support them with insurance costs and to obtain appropriate insurance policies.

## NETWORK COLLABORATION

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

## NEWSLETTERS

We sent out 50 Newsletters: The Network Update providing resources and opportunities for groups, and The Key sharing events and general sustainability news to a distribution of nearly 1,500 readers.

## 1:1 SUPPORT

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

## QUOTES

*Being part of the CAG network was extremely useful in the first year when we were setting up... tools such as the risk assessment, monitoring tools, and Collaborate groups all continue to be useful and [we like] the general feeling that someone has got your back.*

*A space where new ideas and collaborations were borne*

*It was a great learning opportunity to be in a group with a mix of previous experience of working with councils.*

*[CAG's support was] absolutely fundamental to us being set up.*

*[CAG's] support was invaluable! From information about insurance to talks on compost and general advice...*

Photos: Sustainable Didcot, Westmill Solar Cooperative, Wantage Community Larder



The continued lockdown and effects of the pandemic threw many challenges at all of us and CAG Oxfordshire was no exception. . Alongside our direct member support, we consolidated our organisation's processes, recruited key new staff and board members, and updated our financial management systems and HR processes.

# Special Project Grants

CAG offers Special Project Grants for our members to deliver projects, events or activities for which limited external funding is available. The grants are aimed at strengthening both individual members and the network as a whole, with a key focus on collaboration. We awarded four grants in the financial year 2020-21, distributing a total of £1,950.

## Oxford Urban Wildlife Group

Oxford Urban Wildlife Group ran hedge-laying training workshops based at Boundary Brook Nature Park, alongside Larkrise Primary School.



## Tandem Collective

Tandem Collective carried out scoping work for their Green Arts Charter, designed to promote and catalyse environmental action by cultural organisations across Oxfordshire.



## Banbury CAG

Banbury CAG used their funding to maximise their green space at Bridge Street Garden and organise a Food Forest Talk by Antony Melville.



## The Children's Allotment and Oxford Poetry Library

### Case study: The Many Voices Collection



**The Children's Allotment** is a cooperative founded by a group of parents, community members and educators after they discovered an abandoned plant nursery.

**Oxford Poetry Library** is a pedal-powered mobile poetry library, which aims to be a free and open resource of poetry for readers of all backgrounds, tastes, and ages.

The Many Voices Collection was established in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the global Black Lives Matter movement. United by their commitment to anti-racism, these groups came together to collate a collection of 50 books featuring Black characters, written by Black writers, or that centre an anti-racist message for a range of ages from toddlers to young adults.

They worked in partnership with Rawz and InSpire Productions to create three films of book readings and pop-up events at a local children's centre where families could read, borrow the books and watch the films.

[website](#)

[watch films](#)

# OUR PROJECTS

Alongside supporting our growing network of community and climate action groups, we run projects that support our vision and values. Here are the projects we ran during 2021.



## BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH

A project working to bring wealth and power back home for local people and communities.

We are working in partnership with Makespace Oxford, Solidarity Economy Association, Oxford City Council and Aspire with funding from Friends Provident Foundation to pilot Owned by Oxford, a project using Community Wealth Building to address inequality.

[Visit the Owned by Oxford Website](#)



Replenish is a project, funded by Oxfordshire County Council, which supports residents of Oxfordshire to grow and cook nutritious food with zero wastage. We partner with other local organisations around Oxfordshire to deliver cooking sessions, composting workshops and more!

[Visit the Replenish Website](#)

Repair Cafes are events where people can bring along broken household items and learn how to fix them. With funding from Valpak, we helped with the set-up of new Repair Cafes, reducing waste through community action.

11 groups ran around 50 Repair Cafes throughout the year! Requests to support new Repair Cafes popping up around the county are ongoing.



[Visit the Website](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

[Visit the Website](#)

[Watch the film](#)



In 2021, CAG celebrated its 20th anniversary by curating a collection of stories from across the CAG network working with local artists and storytellers.

The 20 Stories of Climate Action Exhibition ran from late August for six weeks at the Old Fire Station and then went on tour around Oxfordshire. Alongside it, there were workshops on climate conversations, repair cafes, poetry nature walks and natural pigment making. We look forward to the next 20 years!

## ESCALATE

The eScalate programme has been created by OSEP and OxLEP, delivering European funded support for enterprising charities, social enterprises, purposeful businesses and social entrepreneurs. We are an Enterprise Support Hub in partnership with Makespace Oxford, providing support through workshops, events and peer to peer groups. [Visit the eScalate website](#)

# 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 2021 and we look forward to building our relationships in the years to come.



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Our Core work is funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

## OUR PROJECTS HAVE BEEN FUNDED BY:



**Friends  
Provident  
Foundation**



## OUR KEY PARTNERS ARE:





Photos: Joyriders, Wantage Community Fridge and Oxford City Farm

# WAYS TO GET IN TOUCH...

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EMAIL: [info@cagoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:info@cagoxfordshire.org.uk)

ADDRESS: Makespace, 1 Aristotle Lane, Oxford OX2 6TP

WEBSITE: [www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk)



[SIGN UP TO 'THE KEY', OUR FORTNIGHTLY SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER](#)



[WATCH OUR LATEST 'ABOUT CAG OXFORDSHIRE' FILM ON YOUTUBE](#)

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.



CAG Oxfordshire  
**COMMUNITY ACTION GROUPS**

## WE ARE PROUD TO BE MEMBERS OF:

