

Annual Report

Thistles Market Garden Ltd

2024 -2025



www.ThistlesMarketGarden.net

thistles.enquiries@hotmail.com

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Thistles Market Garden Ltd.

Station Road

Sutterton

Boston

Lincolnshire

PE20 2JX

Tel: 01205 461286

A Charitable organisation

Registered under the
Co-operative and Benefit
Societies Act 2014

Reg. Company number: IP031461

FCA Reference: 31461R

HMRC Charities Ref. No. ZD03863



Management Committee:

Chairman: Sarah Nash
Secretary: Sonia Bowman
Treasurer: Nikki Phillips

Committee Members: Cheryl Gratton
Sue Clark
Kerry Gibson
(Until 19.05.25)
Mark Elston
Steve Ring
Rachel Bowser
(Until 19-05-25)

Service Manager: Michael Burgess



Chairman's Report

This year marks the third year under the current management, and it's been very encouraging to see how much Thistles has continued to grow and develop. Thistles is now a well-established and valued community hub, regularly operating close to capacity and providing fantastic opportunities for our members.

Throughout the year members have taken part in a wide range of activities including gardening, cooking, crafts, and community projects. The garden continues to produce a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, many of which are used in cooking sessions or shared with the wider community. Members also enjoyed many trips, walks and community events.

Our annual Open Day was once again a great success thanks to the fantastic support from everyone.

I would like to thank our staff, volunteers, committee members, parents and carers for their dedication and continued support. I would also like to say a special thank you to our landowner, Jessie Scattergood, for her ongoing generosity in allowing us to use the site.

Sarah Nash

Managers' Report

This year marks my **third year leading Thistles Market Garden**, a milestone that allows me to look back with immense pride at how far we have come. What began as an exciting challenge has evolved into a deeply rewarding journey of growth, both for the land and for our community.

Sustained Growth and Impact

Under my continued leadership, Thistles has transitioned from a developing project to a **consistently high-performing hub**. For another consecutive year, we have operated at near-capacity levels. This is no longer just a "short-term achievement" but a testament to our sustainable model and the unwavering dedication of the entire team.

Strengthening Our Presence

We have moved beyond simply "upping the ante" on social media to establishing a **robust digital and physical presence**. Our Facebook community continues to thrive, serving as a vital link between the service and the local area. This visibility has solidified Thistles as a household name in our community, known for quality, inclusivity, and passion.

Strategic Partnerships

Our professional landscape continues to expand. While we have nurtured and matured our long-standing relationships with local businesses and organisations, this year was also defined by:

- **Deepening existing collaborations** to provide more value to our stakeholders.
- **Forging new, strategic partnerships** that align with our long-term vision for the service.

A Message of Gratitude

Thistles is, and always will be, a collective effort. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our staff, volunteers, parents, committee members, and carers. Your continued trust over these past three years has been the bedrock of our success.

I am especially grateful to the **committee** for their ongoing guidance and to the **staff team** for their tireless commitment to our ethos. You are the heartbeat of this operation.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to **Jessie Scattergood** for her continued support regarding land usage. We remain truly grateful for the opportunity to grow and flourish on this site.

Michael Burgess

Activities:

Autumn

Autumn is always a busy time at Thistles, whilst the growing season is coming to an end, there are still plenty of crops that need to be harvested including: runner beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, melons, potatoes, courgettes, beetroot, rhubarb, aubergines, cauliflower, cabbage, butternut squash, onion, pumpkin, and parsnip. And then in turn, land that then needs weeding, digging over and fertilising ready for next year's crops.

This autumn, members planted foxgloves, lavender, apple trees, and lily bulbs, and re-potted many plants including crocosmia, pansies, sweet Williams, and strawberry runners. With the season changing lots of other jobs need to be tended to around the site, grass to mow, leaves to rake, planters to empty, the herbs to be cut back, and general cleaning up around the site, the building, and the cleaning the bus. The group members all work hard around Thistles with members encouraged to learn new skills and taking pride in their achievements in the work place.

We also enjoy using our own produce for cooking activities, members have made and enjoyed eating apple turnovers and apple crumble with custard, home-made burgers with vegetable kebabs and homegrown salads for a BBQ, various soups including tomato, potato and leek, & pumpkin soup, green tomato chutney, honey glazed parsnips, grape juice, pickled beetroot, pumpkin pie, and mince pies.

For all their hard work, members have lots of off-site trips and activities to promote community inclusion such as adaptive cycling, sailability, indoor bowling, horse therapy, a trip to Skegness, various venues for health walks and picnics including Ferry meadows, Jenny's woods, Ostlers Plantation, Snipedales, Bolingbroke castle and more local walks. The group have visited Geoff Moulder community garden, The Chaple centre for their Christmas fair, Boston for an archaeological dig, and Endeavour Academy for a careers fair.

Other activities at Thistles include making a sensory garden, writing postcards to the Flower-pod members, carving pumpkins, and making Halloween decorations for Thistles Halloween Party, making and decorating Christmas wreaths using dogwood canes, construction of a bug hotel courses provided by the Pelican Trust on Money skills and Calligraphy. Making Christmas cards, decorations, and crafts projects such as making Gonks, decoupage jars, fabric bowls, and wax melts ready to sell, preparing the wreath rings, associated decorations and cutting the foliage ready for wreath making to commence in November and sanding and painting pallet projects for Christmas.



Winter

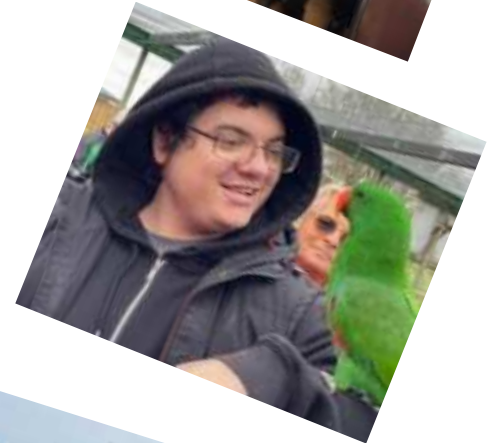
Winter continued to be a hive of activity for Thistles members, Christmas of course dominates December, decorations went up and wreath making carried on with members busily cutting the foliage ready to use. Christmas crafts, cards and decorations were made, our tree at the stump was transported for display at Frampton church, and members enjoyed their Christmas lunch at Boston College's restaurant as well as the trip to panto at Blackfriars and the parties laid on at Thistles.

However, even in winter we had Brussel sprouts and hale to harvest. There is still lots that needs doing onsite during the winter months to prepare for the new growing season ahead, so leaves were raked, mole hills removed, pots washed, sorted and tidied, horse manure collected from our neighbour, spread and dug into the plot and raised beds. The poly tunnels were tidied, the smaller one dug over and rotavated, fruit trees were pruned, potted plants weeded, cuttings taken, donated plants from B&Q were repotted along with crocosmia bulbs, Broad beans, onion sets, shallots, tomatoes and garlic was planted, seed potatoes chitted, herbs were seeded along with pepper, Chilli, Dahlia and Lavender, some of these seedlings were also pricked out in the latter winter months. The propagators both has new heating wires put in to keep our seed warm to enable germination, and raised bed were topped up with compost in readiness for the oncoming growing season. Bulb planters and pots were weeded and arranged around the building, and strawberry beds weeded.

Winter activities included Music-man concert, various health walks at Surfleet Park and Witham Country Park, Karaoke sessions, beetle drives, making Christmas cards & crafts then later Valentines cards & decorations. The group also did pot washing and made wooden signs for the veg plots, and collected compost from Fountains and sieved it ready for seeding. Donated craft supplies were sorted out and put away, the sheds and poly tunnels were tidied up.

Trips for this period included a visit to Your day your say Christmas coffee morning where Thistles had a stand to sell Christmas crafts and wreaths, Glow golf, Ten pin bowling, a wander around Ayscoughfee House and gardens, two trips to Lincolnshire Wildlife Prak at Friskney, and a couple of cheeky trips out for drinks at Pinchin's farm shop and The Fisherman's Rest. The group also participated in adapted cycling at Peterborough, Indoor bowling, Top Banana fitness gym and attended a Healthy Eating workshop at Scott House.

Members cooked mince-pies, veg soup, mini quiches, made and iced biscuits, roasted sprouts with honey and bacon, made frittatas, cheese & cherry scones, carrot cake, cupcakes and Pancakes on and around pancake day.



Spring

With the onset of spring seed sowing followed by pricking out and then planting into the land started in earnest, our crops for this year included: carrots, potatoes, runner beans, French beans and broad beans, cauliflower, broccoli. Swede, several varieties of cabbage, leeks, onions, garlic, parsnips, spring onions, cucumbers, lettuce, various tomato varieties, aubergines, and peppers. The group members also grew many herbs such as dill, parsley, thyme, chives, coriander, and basil. We planted new black current bushes and raspberry canes, replenished the strawberry bed, and grew three varieties of melons.

Of course, to grow so many crops, there was much work to do around the site to prepare the land and poly tunnels for planting, so there was plenty of weeding, digging, and rotavating. Elsewhere the site was mowed, strimmed, molehills removed numerous times, watering and shrubs pruned back. New netted cages were erected, plant labels cleaned and some bird boxes were put up around the site.

Many flowering plants and bedding plants were also seeded, pricked out and potted too, these include: Dahlias, foxgloves, petunia, lobelia, chrysanthemums, salvia, lavender aubretia, sunflowers, calendula, and asters. Dogwood canes were also planted along with crocosmia which were re-potted, tidying up ivy and Ajua plants, and weeding potted plants ready for re-sale.

There were plenty of activities in the spring too to involve group members in the community, such as working with Kirton clean up Squad to clear undergrowth from pathways, and attending Geoff Moulder celebration day. Our members continued with adapted cycling, attending Music Man, Top Banana fitness gym, and participated in two courses delivered by The Pelican Trust, one about Health and Safety in the workplace and the other was a first aid course.

Group members enjoyed several health walks and different locations such as West Wood lakes, Haven country park, Surfleet park, Hartholm park and Snipedales, many of which we took our lunches to picnic in the fresh air. Our guys enjoyed several 10 pin bowling sessions, Karaoke, and a visit to Willowbridge Sheep Farm to see and pet the new born baby lambs.

In Easter arts and crafts activities, members made cards and hats, and cooking sessions included shortbread, cupcakes, carrot cake, and flapjacks.



Summer

Thistles enjoyed an action-packed summer season, with lots of preparations around the site for our annual Open Day, Thistles was mowed, strimmed, weeded, tidied up and the crops and flowered watered to ensure we looked our best. Hanging baskets were made up, and a fantastic array of planters and flowering plants and herbs displayed. Raffle, tombola and lucky dip prizes were all labelled and wrapped in anticipation for a bumper Open Day. We were well supported on the day, visitors enjoyed the music, BBQ and petting the Willowbridge sheep, and Thistles raised an amazing £2240 to invest in new equipment and some summer trips.

Prior to the Open day, our picnic tables were sanded and stained, gazebos erected and garden chairs washed down. Plants tidied up and prepared for sale, lupins, ajuga, sunflowers, asters, marigolds, geums and chives were all re-potted, and oregano, cosmos, salvia, morning glory and foxgloves seedlings were all pricked out. Elsewhere on site, we planted the lots of crops including 3 varieties of melons, spring onions, lettuce, radish, Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, leeks, kale, sprouts, shallots, carrots, pumpkins, courgettes, butternut squash, asparagus, and fennel.

Summer harvests included, radish, potatoes, cucumbers, gherkins, broccoli, broad beans, runner beans, & French beans, cauliflower, tomatoes, beetroot, courgettes, spring onions, strawberries, black currents, rhubarb, and wild plums. We had so much excess produce that several donations were made to Restore church in Boston who were very grateful for the organic produce.

Thistles group members continued to enjoy many off site activities, they practiced and participated in the Music Man concert, attended Top Banana gym, Sailability, indoor and outdoor bowling sessions, and several health walks and picnics, they also filled and planted up the Jakeman Planters in the village. On site, Thistles assembled a large flower arrangement in the theme of Joseph's 'technicoloured dream coat' for Frampton Church flower festival, and made-up bouquets with left over flowers, and a collage for Heckington show where we received first prize. Group members especially enjoyed soaking each other and staff alike in water fights, and enjoyed bracelet making, and playing a beetle drive. The group cooked Pavlova, wild plum jam, pickled beetroot, quiche, courgette and cheese loaf, plumb crumble & custard, pear & white chocolate tartlets, rhubarb crumble, pear and butterscotch tart and apple crumble tartlets.

All the group's hard work over the summer months with a variety of trips out including; Lincolnshire Aviation centre where we watched the Lancaster taxiing, Southall Workhouse, Tattershall Farm Park, Hubbards Hills, Hartsholm country park, Ferry Meadows & Snipedales for a walks & picnics, Sunflower picking, a fantastic visit to The Flower Pod at Southall who operate a similar set up to Thistles, Boston College garden party, Cuckoo Allotments, Mencap summer BBQ, Scott House Summer garden Party, The big Sky Hideaway for a fitness session and Alpacas visit, The Wong coffee morning, Baytree car boot, Ivy's for drinks, skimmers for ice-creams, Westgate wood and of course Skeggy.



Community Support:

Thistles are especially grateful for the continued support we have received from our community throughout this year. We would like to thank local businesses and individuals that have given their time and supported us financially.

A big thank you to the many organisations and individuals who have helped Thistles during this period, including the following:

Jessie Scattergood, our landowner who continues to support Thistles with the peppercorn rent as well as her generosity of cash donations.

Mark Elston for his time and effort with the group, collecting donations and helping to mend our plant staging.

Vikky Allen, our neighbour who supplies us with horse manure, and allows us to pet and feed her horses treats.

Cheryl Gratton for her generosity in donating both raffle and tombola prizes and her time and enthusiasm in running stalls.

Nick Gratton for supporting Thistles Open Day and Halloween party days and providing us with his much loved disco.

Alan Cropley for donating a variety of brassica plug plants.

Fountains, who continue to support us with donations of top-quality compost.

Nicola Helen for the donation of compost bags and pots.

Councillor James Cantwell for the donation of £448.50

Mark Osbourne who kindly came to fix our leaking outside tap, and leaking radiator in the building.

Seeds and plants, and various other garden materials donated by staff member Tracy Mulvaney

Steve Ring, Thistles minibus driver, for his many tip runs and small fixes around the site.

Barbara Mulligan, Thistles minibus driver, for her many raffle donations and fabulous cakes.

Liz Judge for the numerous donations and cuttings and biscuits.

Andy Butler who provided some seed potatoes.

B & Q (Boston) who donated many plants and baskets via the neighbourly scheme.

John Bark from Willoughby Sheep visits for a group visit and for bringing some sheep to our open day.

Café Aurora, Holbeach for the donation of raffle prizes and cake donations.

Tanya from Boston Indoor Bowling Club for arranging group visits, and their members who have helped to instruct our group, and for the raffle prize donation.

Our Station Road neighbours for donating apples and pears.

Naylors for the donation of flowers used to create a floral arrangement for Frampton Church's flower festival.

We also had several compost bins kindly donated by local members of the community.

TA Blackmore for foliage for the wreaths.

Pilgrim Fathers Lodge for a donation of £500

Harmony Lodge donation of £500

Thomas Bailey Foundation Funding of £ 3,000 for a new greenhouse.

Gleeson Homes 300 Breeze Blocks

Baytree Garden Centre for seeds

Lincolnshire Community Foundation funding for the shed £1000

Shooting star Donation of laptops

Blue Diamond Garden Centre for plants

Thank you to you all...we could not do what we do without your continued support.

Treasurer's Report:

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's report for the past financial year.

Overall, Thistles remains in a stable financial position thanks to careful management, successful fundraising and the continued generosity of our supporters and grant providers.

One of the highlights of the year was our Open Day, which raised £2,240. These funds will go towards new equipment and activities for our members.

We were also fortunate to receive several generous grants and donations. These included £3,000 from the Thomas Bailey Foundation towards a new greenhouse, £1,000 from the Lincolnshire Community Foundation for a new shed, £500 donations from both Pilgrim Fathers Lodge and Harmony Lodge, and £448.50 from Councillor James Cantwell.

In addition to financial contributions, we received many valuable in-kind donations such as plants, seeds, compost, building materials, and equipment from local businesses and community supporters. These donations greatly reduce our running costs and help us continue to develop the site.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank everyone who has supported Thistles financially or through donations of materials, time and expertise.

Nikki Phillips

Statement of Accounts:

THISTLES MARKET GARDEN LIMITED 31461R					
Receipts and payments accounts					
For the period from	Period start	to	Period end		
	01/10/2024		30/09/2025		
Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations & gift aid	856	-	-	856	3,666
Fund raising activities	3,055	-	-	3,055	4,348
Fees for provision of services	153,596	-	-	153,596	92,638
Feed in tariff	116	-	-	116	-
Grants received	3,000	-	-	3,000	1,000
Other	79	-	-	79	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	160,702	-	-	160,702	101,652
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
Vehicle	-	-	-	-	3,000
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	160,702	-	-	160,702	104,652
A3 Payments					
Salaries, cover staff & pensions	106,558	-	-	106,558	76,918
Vehicle & transport expenses	3,469	-	-	3,469	4,769
Days Out & Gym	1,346	-	-	1,346	-
Repairs & maintenance	7,961	-	-	7,961	4,211
Light & Heat	1,382	-	-	1,382	651
Water rates	637	-	-	637	364
Premises Insurance	2,316	-	-	2,316	2,259
Telephone & internet	763	-	-	763	915
Stationery, postage, carriage & advertising	3,443	-	-	3,443	134
Legal fees	729	-	-	729	-
Accountancy charges	1,206	-	-	1,206	1,099
Cleaning	397	-	-	397	4
Sundries	7,146	-	-	7,146	4,828
Training costs	215	-	-	215	274
Sub total	137,567	-	-	137,567	96,426
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Vehicle	-	-	-	-	7,830
Equipment	-	-	-	-	1,929
Greenhouse	2,126	-	-	2,126	-
Sub total	2,126	-	-	2,126	9,759
Total payments	139,693	-	-	139,693	106,185
Net of receipts/(payments)	21,009	-	-	21,009	-1,533
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end	11,305	-	-	11,305	
Cash funds this year end	32,314	-	-	32,314	1,533

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at bank	31,981	-	-
	Cash in hand	333	-	-
	Total cash funds	32,314		
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))		OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets				
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Property	119729	-	-
	Motor vehicle net of grant	7830	-	-
	Equipment	2686	-	-
	Greenhouse	2126		
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Accumulated fund	164,685	-	-
Examined and approved on behalf of the Society	Chairman	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Treasurer			
	Secretary			