It’s time to write the annual report again – so it must be autumn. The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness turned into ‘phew what a scorcher’ earlier this month and that unseasonal hot spell was rapidly replaced by the tail end of a hurricane! Oil, gas, electricity and food prices have continued to rise and – by the time this foreword is actually printed – we could see the global financial markets in free fall and the UK back in recession…

Forgive me if I sound a little too cheerful at the prospect – I don’t mean to be – it just seems that the predicted ‘perfect storm’ of climate change, energy constraints and economic volatility has actually arrived. We’re in it.

And like most people, I fear recession. On the other hand, I also fear the pursuit of economic growth because it seems to me to be the engine driving environmental destruction and exploitation of the planet’s resources. Perhaps it makes no difference which I fear most because I suspect that we’re not going to be able to ‘return to growth’ – certainly not in the way our current economic system defines it – even if we wanted to.

While I do not mean to detract from the very real hardship that many people are going through at the moment, I also think that we need to try and think about our situation a bit differently: if we are facing a slow (ish) but inevitable economic contraction, it makes sense to acknowledge and manage the process of having less. And to start thinking about how to use the money we do have to buy things that bring us more: to work out what’s important to us and to invest in those things that bring added value into our lives.

This is not about ‘talking us down’ or suggesting we give up – quite the opposite. Because, while we may not be able to have more stuff, if we rise to this challenge, we might just be able to have more of lots of other good things: mutual support, connectedness, local jobs, sharing, space (once we share some of that stuff around), resourcefulness (less waste), self-reliance, protection of the environment, community.

And funnily enough, the next few pages are packed with more of all of these things.

The added benefits of the community-led trade carried out through the box scheme and the market shine through this report – benefits which are available to everyone in our community, but which are only given the opportunity to emerge because you continue to be a member of the box scheme or to shop at the farmers’ market. So thank you.

Perhaps we may not be able to grow the economy but, together, we are growing community.

Julie Brown, November 2011
Emli Bendixen

Over the past year we’ve been able to make new connections across our community and further afield - we have a new farmers’ market site and four new box scheme pick-up points. We have also extended our outreach work. London by working with five community groups across the UK through our Start-Up Programme to help them set up community-led box schemes based on the Growing Communities model.

Here in Hackney, we continue to provide a key outlet through the box scheme and the farmers’ market for 33 small-scale, local, organic producers and processors. This chapter is about an income been even more important to scale, local, organic producers and a key outlet through the box scheme. Here in Hackney, we continue to provide community-led box schemes based on the Up Programme to help them set up new box scheme pick-up points. We now make new connections across our community.

Steve Mackey, Hook & Son

This year are the Dalston Eastern Curve Garden; Dalston Lane; Organic; Nags Head; Lower Clapton Road; Passing Clouds in Richmond Road and the Happy Kitchen café at London Fields.

This year’s weather is extreme and weather is extreme and we’ve experienced both extremes on the farm. Reduced yields and crop failures mean that the box scheme bought slightly less produce direct from farms and had to top up the bags with more veg from co-ops and wholesalers. Despite this, overall 85% of our veg came from the UK, slightly more than last year. Over the past year 58% of our veg came from the UK, slightly more than last year.

The market’s new location at St Paul’s Church on Stoke Newington High Street is working to find more sites which will be run by our Apprentices (left to right) Jo, Shelagh and Julie picking with salad packs to make a decent living and fuelling the market

Our Patchwork Farm, which is training new growers and increasing the amount of organic salad produced in Hackney received a major funding award from the Big Lottery fund in April 2011. Over the year, we’ve planted more than 8,000 trees and offer training for apprentices. Jack Cox, Shelagh Martin, Julie Porter and our lead apprentice Jonathan now have two new Patchwork farm-mizo sites at Hackney Downs, Hackney Downs Community Garden and All Angels Church. Stephanie Irving who joined us as the Patchwork Farm Co-ordinator in April is working to find more sites which will be run by our graduate apprentices.

As part of our commitment to promoting knowledge we set up a programme for growing workshops over the growing season funded by Capital Growth. Almost 100 people participated.

Since its launch in October 2010 at the market with Jim Arbury from RHS Wisley on hand to identify unusual varieties Hackney’s harvest of may trees was so plentiful that we were able to sell 250kg of the salad to various local restaurants and cafes, such as the Duke of Cambridge in Islington, the ES Bakehouse in London Fields and The White Horse in Hackney.

The Growing Communities’ Start-Up Programme started in January 2011, providing mentoring and an online tool kit for Barney Crossman; Late Eats Local in Moffat, Scotland; Bite in Hulme, Manchester; Winchester Community Allotment Box Scheme in Margate; and Local in Moffat, Scotland.

The site now has 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes it easier for people from the relative success of this income even more to be important for these small producers over the last year as the recession hits and the economic pressures increase.

The box scheme now supplies fruit and vegetables to about 700 households with the market to our local community is reflected in the fact that the market has a thriving newsletter and a Facebook group. The market is also reflected in the fact that the market has a thriving newsletter and a Facebook group. The market can now be accessed to people through the box scheme even more accessible to people through the box scheme.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

The connection of the market to our local community is reflected in the fact that despite the economic downturn, which has affected retailers and supermarkets across the UK, local customers have been even more important to scale, local, organic producers and a key outlet through the box scheme. Here in Hackney, we continue to provide community-led box schemes based on the Up Programme to help them set up new box scheme pick-up points. We now make new connections across our community.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.

We now have 12 community pick-up points in the borough, which makes the connection of the market to our local community even more accessible to people.
GROWING COMMUNITIES ACCOUNTS 2011

GROWING COMMUNITIES
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 (£)</th>
<th>2010 (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TURNOVER</strong></td>
<td>447,910</td>
<td>394,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Sales</td>
<td>402,388</td>
<td>321,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROSS PROFIT</strong></td>
<td>45,523</td>
<td>73,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>53,005</td>
<td>50,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPERATING PROFIT</strong></td>
<td>(7,483)</td>
<td>23,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest receivable</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(LOSS)/PROFIT ON ORDINARY</strong></td>
<td>(7,255)</td>
<td>23,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax of profit on ordinary activities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RETAINT (LOSS)/PROFIT FOR</strong></td>
<td>(7,255)</td>
<td>23,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE FINANCIAL YEAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>155,161</td>
<td>131,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance carried forward</td>
<td>147,906</td>
<td>155,161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIXED ASSETS**
Tangible assets 14,871 11,759

**CURRENT ASSETS**
Debtors 32,171 11,610
Cash at bank and in hand 190,089 168,071

**CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year** (57,053) (24,669)

**NET CURRENT ASSETS** 133,036 143,402

**TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES** 147,907 155,161

**CAPITAL AND RESERVES**
Profit and loss account 147,907 155,161

**MEMBERS' FUNDS** 147,907 155,161

The most recent pick-ups to joint the box scheme (left to right): Passing Clouds on Richmond Road, Mother Earth at Newington Green, Dalston Eastern Curve Garden under the mural opposite Dalston Junction, Organic & Natural on Lower Clapton Road and Happy Kitchen in London Fields.

---

TREASURER’S REPORT

2011 has been another successful year for Growing Communities. Income has continued to increase, being made up of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box scheme</td>
<td>362,311</td>
<td>333,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafe sales</td>
<td>12,441</td>
<td>14,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers’ market</td>
<td>36,672</td>
<td>37,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other trading income</td>
<td>6,470</td>
<td>9,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure offset by grant income*</td>
<td>30,016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>447,910</td>
<td>394,510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Box scheme sales have continued to increase this year, albeit at a slightly lower rate than in the past five financial years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 (%)</th>
<th>2010 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Expenditure offset by grant income:

Overall £60,566 in grant income for projects was received for projects in the year; however £28,105 of this income was not recognised and was deferred until future years when it will be matched to expenditure. £1,911 was released to income from a grant received in previous years meaning that overall £30,016 was recognised as income in the current year.

The main element of the amounts not recognised and carried was the Tudor Trust grant of £25,000 which is due to offset potential bad debts arising from the loans issued to partner organisations as part of the Start-Up Programme. £17,470 of amounts owed by partner organisations are shown in debtors in the balance sheet (see left).

As only a very minor proportion of the grant income finances our core operations these remain largely self financing as in previous years. The organisation made a small operating loss (1.6% of turnover). However, this was planned and budgeted for and the organisation remains robust and sustainable financially, achieved without building up unnecessary reserves. Cash balances as seen on the balance sheet remain at similar levels to the prior year.

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 19 October 2011.
Growing Communities can only do what it does because of the energy and hard work put in by our staff, management committee and volunteers. We employ 20 part-time members of staff. They are Kwame Appau, Paul Bradbury, Pip Bromley, Julie Brown, Helen Carey, Marcus Cope, Nicole David, Nicki East, Phil England, Stephanie Irvine, Fiona McAllister, Amy McWeeney, Shelagh Martin, Giles Narang, Kerry Rankine, Ximena Ransom, Shelagh Martin, Tim Watts, Richenda Wilson and Alan Wilkinson, with extra support from Liz Brownless, Ebe Oke, Frank Newby and Maisie Kendall.

We said goodbye this year to Rachel Stevenson and Sara Davies (above). We want to thank Rachel for her stoic work in managing the GC office in her unflappable style. Thanks to Sara for her incredible work on the sites, not just in raising yields and launching the Patchwork Farm but also for being an inspiration to the apprentices and volunteers. Paul Bradbury is our new grower.

Our volunteer management committee are: Kath Dalmeny, Sarah Havard, Nick Perry, Nick Saltmarsh, Piers Vimpany and Penny Walker.

Over the year, 117 people volunteered on our sites. Special thanks to Sue Long, Precious Martini-Brown, James Cabbett, Doug Schwarz, Alice Roberts, Raymond Orsolyak, Francesca de Gasparis, Sherolyn Tramel, Martha Jackson, Ania Zymelka.

"I volunteered with GC along with other food-growing projects. This experience gave me lots of ideas for what I would like to do in the future. My plan is to set up a food-growing project and I am keen to use the Growing Communities model as I was really impressed by the organisation. I went on to work on an organic farm to gain more growing experience and now am undergoing social enterprise training."

Growing Communities volunteer, October 2011

GROWING COMMUNITIES

Transforming food and farming through community-led trade

How do we feed urban communities in a sustainable way in the face of climate change, ecological crises and fossil fuel depletion? Growing Communities is a community-led organisation based in Hackney providing real alternatives to the current damaging food system.

We believe that if we are to create the sustainable, re-localised food systems that will see us through the challenges ahead, we need to work together with communities and farmers to take our food system back from the supermarkets and agri-business. Over the past 15 years or so, we have created two main community-led trading outlets: an organic fruit and vegetable box scheme and the Stoke Newington Farmers’ Market.

Growing Communities has also pioneered urban food growing and we produce salad for the box scheme on our small organic market gardens and micro-sites in Hackney.

We have launched a Start-Up Programme and are working with a number of groups who have set up community-led organic box schemes across the UK based on the Growing Communities model.

Our urban market garden in Springfield Park