

# Thanks to all our supporters and partners

## Flo's is run by and for the community

- we are one team with many voices, and this includes a lot of people from different walks of life in and around Oxford.

## We would like to thank everyone involved.

### In particular:

- The Oxfordshire Community Foundation
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Power to Change
- Doris Field Trust
- Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- Good Food Oxfordshire
- Oxford Food Hub
- Co-Ops UK
- OSEP (Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Partnership)
- Aspire Oxford
- Dan Jessops from Jessops and Cook architects
- Brendan Rolle Rowan from Plainlaw Solicitors
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Oxford City Council
- The OX4 Food Crew
- The ARC Group
- Children in Need

- The Oxford Hub
- The Nature Effect CIC
- Barracks Lane Community Garden
- Community Action Groups (CAG)
- Kate Jury (Oxford Garden Partners)
- John Caunt (Step Change adviser)
- Laura Burt Gardens & Photography
- Cllrs Paula Dunn, Amar Latif & Charlier Hicks
- Jane Gallagher and Jane Fisher
- Sam Skinner and Nor Greenhalgh



## And thanks to the team at Flo's:

- All the volunteers who run the refill shop, tend the garden, read to the nursery children or deliver meals every week
- The nursery parents council and community sub group
- The Trustees of PPP Ltd. and Directors of Flo's Trading
- The wonderful staff at Flo's

For a list of staff & trustees see:  
[www.flosoxford.org.uk/meet-the-team](http://www.flosoxford.org.uk/meet-the-team)

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Report design by Stig

Flo's - The Place in the Park

[www.flosoxford.org.uk](http://www.flosoxford.org.uk)

# Flo's - The Place in the Park



# Annual Impact Report

Sept 2021 - Sept 2022





# Foreword and Executive Summary

**It is a great pleasure to introduce this, our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Impact Report. As original instigator, founding member and strategic lead for the project for nearly five years, I am hugely proud of what we have achieved. As we move to appoint a new Chair and an Executive Director, I will be stepping aside but will continue to support (and cheer!) in a new role.**

Flo's has been live for four years (two of which have been pandemic years) and during this time has grown to employ over 40 local people in the nursery, the café, the shop and in community services. People visit for so many reasons beyond what we provide ourselves - for example to attend support groups, to volunteer or to attend community midwife appointments. This report tells many of the individual stories of how people have been affected by the work this year.

## Highlights include

**Flo's Trading Company** is a wholly owned trading company set up in April 2021 to take on the café, shop and other food related services. All profits go to support the centre and activities for wider community benefit.

**The Nursery** continues to thrive and the team are now using the new 'NaturEscape' part of the park for Forest School sessions.

Flo's is the lynchpin for **OX4 Food Crew**, an alliance developed during the pandemic to meet emergency food needs and has grown to include nine grassroots groups working together to build resilience in the food system. A three year lottery grant will ensure this work grows. Watch this space.

**Our Environment** is constantly improving - we have spruced up the garden and signage with support from the ARC Group and won some grant funding to help us install solar panels and reduce our energy costs and carbon footprint.

**Family work** has grown with a range of groups and also participation in some place-based research with other early years settings in the area. Our First Friday events each month are hugely popular community events.

**Supporting other social enterprises.** Damascus Rose Kitchen, which started with us has outgrown the incubation kitchen and is now based in the Old Fire Station in the centre of town. No Vice Ice is growing slowly in both its lolly production capacity and its support for people with invisible health conditions. It has taken on two interns/trainees. We are working closely with Oxford Community Action (OCA Kitchen), who are piloting international cuisine 'pay as you feel' pop-up restaurants, on Thursday and Friday evenings at Flo's.

## Looking forward: challenges and opportunities

Like most other small charitable organisations, Flo's is concerned about the coming years. We have growing needs and stresses as the cost of living increases, the climate crisis continues, and worldwide human crises impact our physical environment, our means of sustainability and the nature and make-up of the communities we serve.

Our commitment is to secure sustainability for what we have grown whilst retaining the reflexivity to grow or improve in response to changing needs, learning and feedback.

## Our medium-term priorities are:

**People Sustainability:** Create and sustain jobs for a diverse community workforce. Improve working conditions, recruitment and retention, bringing our wages policy in line with the Oxford Living Wage and increasing the benefits we offer staff.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Reduce carbon footprint by installing solar power and other measures to reduce our carbon footprint and become less wasteful. Increase community environmental education in our nursery, families work and through community activity.

**Community Sustainability:** Provide safe spaces as community owned assets for community wellbeing. Develop our partnership work and continue to grow and support social enterprises which tackle inequalities. In response to requests to fill a gap, we are setting up a new Rainbow Families drop in and free intergenerational Nature Explorers group.



Annie Davy



**Governance and leadership sustainability:** Secure ongoing governance and effective leadership, enabling visibility of values in action, innovation and positive impact.

**Financial sustainability:** Generate sufficient income and increase efficiency to support our other goals. Continue to generate at least 80% of our funding through trading, applying for grants in partnership with others. Reaching a sustainable level of reserves.

## Recipe for success?

I would like to say a huge thank you to our brilliant Chair of the last two and three quarter years **Richard Hadfield** (right).

As I step aside from my leadership role into a more support and partnerships role, I have often been asked about key learning and a recipe for success. I will be taking time to distill and write about this more in other places but I think critical elements have been:

**Starting with a sense of place** - looking, listening, imagining, story-telling, thinking about the whole social AND ecological system and the interplay and interdependence between various parts of the systems we create and live in.

**A 'co-operative approach'** - deliberately blurring organisational boundaries and focusing on building relationships and common purpose.

**A small group of people with vision and willing to take a leap of faith creating something that is not already there:** particular thanks to Anna Thorne, Paul Roberts, Candida March, Marie Tidball, Tanja Fletcher, Makena Lohr and Scott Urban for the beginning and going beyond the pale in terms of gifting their time and expertise.

**Light touch bureaucracy** (although the weight of compliance requirements and complex landlord arrangements with two councils has made this very challenging at times).

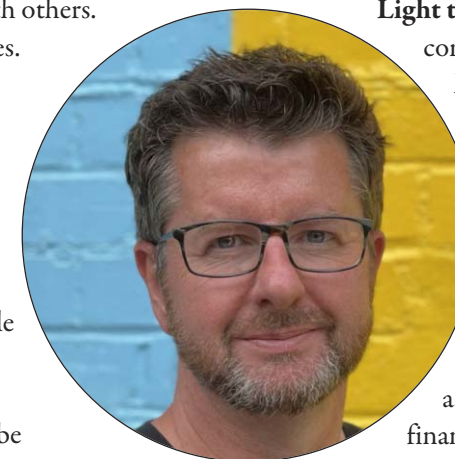
**Building iteratively through trial and error** - giving space to notice what needs and talents emerge - in favour of any traditional 'strategic plan' that sits on-shelf.

**Adapting the infrastructure as needed** - as proportionate to the level of activity and financial turnover and having flexibility about roles and responsibilities.

**Reaching out to a wider community** in many different ways.

The next phase of Flo's will be equally exciting. There are far too many people to thank individually here - but we are blown away by the amount of enthusiasm, positive feedback and support we get every day! Please continue to be involved - as members, as donors, as volunteers, as customers and as visitors using our different services! I hope you enjoy reading the body of this report.

Annie Davy  
Founding Member and Strategic Lead, 2018 - 2022





# Flo's 2021-2022 in a nutshell:

## Community ownership

- 143 members
- 102 community shareholders
- 45 volunteers contributing regularly
- 12 active trustees doing Cooperative governance
- 100% of funding generated by trading is used for community benefit



## Community wellbeing

- 67 children in Flo's nursery
- 1500 refill shop volunteer hours
- Our facebook reach rose by 35%
- Our instagram reach rose by 59%
- 9600 Cooked Meals Distributed by Flo's volunteers
- 77 family sessions supporting children's early development and intergenerational support
- 110 community events at Flo's



## Key themes

In terms of meeting needs and delivering our mission to reduce inequalities and support the environment, we have three key themes which are the current basis for our more focused community and partnership projects and for the services we provide directly:

- Food & diversity-led social enterprises
- Access to Nature & sustainability
- Families & early years

## Our Mission

*To grow a community enterprise hub(s): providing better local ethical opportunities for people to work, eat, play, learn and connect with each other, reducing inequalities and supporting the environment.*

## Core purposes

**Community ownership:**  
a hub run by the community for the community

**Community assets:**  
making just use of space socially and environmentally

**Finance working locally:**  
supporting social enterprise and the circular economy

**Community wellbeing:**  
delivering and hosting services that help people feel better

## Community Assets

- 1 decommissioned children's centre brought back to life
- 1 decommissioned bowls pavillion refurbished and turned into incubation kitchen
- 1 decommissioned mini golf area turned into bio-diverse area for nature and community connection



## Flo's goes solar!

*Flo's is fundraising for solar panels. Without solar panels our electricity bill was expected to be £40,000 next year. The panels will cost £21,700 to install and will pay for themselves within just 3 years. We'll save about 3.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. Over 80% of energy generated will be used here at Flo's - the rest goes to the grid. Thanks to all who helped with this development.*

## Finance working locally

£17,000 distributed to new diversity-led social enterprises or other local partners

- £18,230 invested in new community buildings & outdoor spaces
- £755,000 expenditure running Flo's as a flourishing community hub
- 40 local jobs created at Flo's





# From our Team

Four years after opening, Flo's now employs 46 people. Here you can meet just a couple of our wonderful team who keep Flo's open seven-days-a-week and the impact it has had on their lives.

## Ella

### Co-director of No Vice Ice

My involvement with Flo's started back in 2017, doing a small piece of work experience for the Nature Effect, researching routes to generating income to get Flo's going- at that point it was just an idea! Since then I have been involved in lots of different ways- initially it was mostly voluntary and ad-hoc hours. Flo's was a really supportive place- I was going through a difficult time in my life, so Flo's provided a welcoming and accommodating place to volunteer and gain back some confidence and experience. During the pandemic I was volunteering with the OX4 Food Crew and also started talking to the team at Flo's about my idea for No Vice Ice - a social enterprise that would support people with invisible health conditions back into work - while making ice lollies! No Vice Ice was taken on as one of the diversity led social enterprise that Flo's was supporting in Autumn 2020, and in April 2021 I was delighted to start paid work for the OX4 Food Crew (of which Flo's is a founding member - read more on page 15).

Flo's is a really supportive and accessible place for a diverse range of people to work and volunteer. I feel like there is an openness and honesty about working here- I could be open & direct about my health needs. Equally Flo's team could be open too, so expectations could be clearly and kindly managed on both sides.

Flo's has supported the company No Vice Ice by providing affordable space, mentoring/ coaching/ sharing of experience and knowledge, initial start-up funds and support with fundraising. Being able to tap into their networks and connections has been invaluable. At an emotional level, having the backing of another community organisation is amazing, it meant there were people who believed in us and had the energy to say "yes..its a good idea! Do it!"

As a whole I'd say what's so nice about working at Flo's is being able to be part of a community- it has helped me gain confidence in the workplace which I hope to be able to take with me wherever I work next.



## Fadia

### Café team

In 2020 I was looking for a job. I knew Flo's because I am part of a group called Syrian Sisters and we had done some meals there. They needed a weekend chef and I was offered a trial. I liked the community and people so I stuck with it.

We left Syria in 2012 and travelled to Jordan where we stayed for 3 years before coming to the UK.

I mostly learned my cooking skills in Syria from my mum. I also worked in Jordan in a restaurant. I remember as a younger woman cooking food for the family for Ramadam. The meals are particularly important after fasting. Once I forgot the salt which was terrible. Everyone just started laughing and asked for salt but this is how you learn.

My favourite dish as a child was Kosa - stuffed courgette with lamb and rice. It's still my favourite now. Every time I cook it I get excited.

The thing I liked about Flo's was the support I got - firstly financially because of paid work, but now I like the people and community and feel at home.

I like working with my son Karim because he has to do whatever I tell him! I really like the job and I am not planning on leaving anytime soon.



## Karim

### Café team

I started helping my Mum at Syrian Sisters' parties and then I volunteered at the pop-up feasts. One time my mum asked me if I wanted to work with her at Flo's and that is how I started.

My earliest food memory is eating water melons in Syria. My dad used to fill the kitchen with them. We couldn't eat that much. We used to give them away to the neighbours.

I came to the UK when I was 13. I couldn't speak any English when I came. At the start I didn't know what was what in English food like school dinners. It took me a year before I would buy anything because before I couldn't read English or know what to buy. The first thing I bought was wrapped cheese - which is all I bought for ages.

Working with my mum I can relax and be comfortable - it's easier. When I ask if I can sit down for rest sometimes she says yes but sometimes she says no. When I first started it would take me 10 minutes to do an order. We only had one menu back then. We now have the brunch menu too - so we have learned to be quicker and more efficient. 20 order would stay there for half an hour. Now it never happens - not because we have less people but because we are faster.

This September I am starting University to study biomedical science. It is in Oxford so it means I can carry on working here weekends. I am saving up for quite a lot of things. I want to get a holiday for my girlfriend's Nan who is 60. I am also saving to do a personal trainer course and learning to drive.

Here is a good work environment, genuine mistakes aren't a huge problem - nobody shouting! My mum and me feel valued and at home here.



## Victoria

### Family & Communities worker

I first came to Flo's when I moved to Oxford four years ago; my son was in the first intake at the nursery. I used to hang out Flo's a lot whilst he was in nursery, partly to support him settling in, and partly as I had a young baby and didn't want to be home alone all day. I knew at Flo's I was welcome to breastfeed. I could nurse one coffee all morning and knew I wouldn't be pushed out. It really helped me to be around people, which was particularly important for me as I was new to the area. I loved being able to connect with people and be part of what was going on in the community. I found small ways of helping Flo's, like tidying up the kids' toys and sorting through the books. It turns out this was really appreciated by the Flos' team and they even saw me as a volunteer.

My return to work was delayed because I was living with a hidden health condition. My family and I found ourselves in a difficult situation and we suddenly needed more support than we would have anticipated. We reached out to the OX4 Food Crew, though we were a bit nervous. We had never asked for that sort of support before. We wondered if we would be judged - before we were buying coffees at Flo's and now we were asking for food support. We were really grateful though because we were still treated like every member of the community. This gave me the confidence to be able to reach out for health support with other services which was so important.

Now, here we are, a year into my work at Flo's and its come full circle, I am now supporting families here. I am very grateful to be in a better place with my health and family situation. Having first-hand knowledge of services offered at Flo's and the wider community, I can share them with other people.

I see how my own experience has helped me be part of the Flo's team and community rather than it being a barrier.

A big thing for me is that need might not look like what people expect it to look like. Everyone faces different hardships and being part of something where all are welcome without judgment is so important, a way to feel valued.





# Flo's Café

Our trade both in shop and café has grown steadily this year. We now employ twenty part time staff! Since Spring we have increased our range of 'grab-and-go' items on the counter, and introduced popular cooked-to-order brunch dishes, including traditional shakshuka, free range local eggs on sourdough and avo toast!

The successes of Flo's café & shop helps keep the Flo's center in community ownership and contributes towards our community work, administration and maintenance of the building. Every penny of our optional spend stays in the community!



Keda, Flo's café supervisor



Our chef Daniel with the delicious new Turkish breakfast

## Supporting local suppliers

We use local independent suppliers, including:

**Oxford City Farm** - less than 1 food mile! Amazing salad and herbs - [www.oxfordcityfarm.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcityfarm.org.uk)

**Jenny Yeong flowers** - grown less than 1 mile away and bring happiness to staff and customers with the most amazing blooms!

**Bonnors of Oxford** - fruit and veg family business [www.bonnorsoxford.co.uk](http://www.bonnorsoxford.co.uk)

**Mayfield Farm** - free range eggs from Witney [www.mayfeldeggs.co.uk](http://www.mayfeldeggs.co.uk)

**Savona** - local Oxford business

**No Vice Ice** - 'Flo's-grown' ice lolly making enterprise [www.noviceice.com](http://www.noviceice.com)

**New Ground Coffee** - New Ground Coffee help rehabilitate ex-offenders within the coffee industry. We partner with them for our tea and coffee supplies and training! [www.newgroundcoffee.com](http://www.newgroundcoffee.com)



Café Manager Pippa



Syrian spread for a party cooked by Fadia



Rizwana with her amazing potato salad

## Customers and friends

We serve hundreds of people every day - sometimes serving as many as 400 hot drinks! We are popular with young families, for whom we provide a comfortable, spacious and uniquely friendly environment. Along with our location in the park and our other family services we feel that we provide a crucial relaxed space for young families to 'be'.

*"We love the park, and the cafe- we come everyday! It's the perfect setting and extremely family friendly"*  
(Customer)

We also have many regular older customers and we are fully wheelchair accessible and dog friendly. We now have a 2 for 1 offer on hot drinks for the self-identifying "old and wise," as well as £1 mug of tea and baby drinks. On Mondays our lunch is "pay-as-you-can".

Twice a day we provide a low-sugar, low-salt, vegetarian meal for the onsite nursery, with plenty of fruit, yogurt and snacks. We hope that the meals we provide to the little ones will inspire a love of natural non-processed food, hopefully influencing their little tastes for the better.

## Catering

We provide a useful space for group meet ups including walkers, business meetings and craft groups. We have provided catering for meetings and other local organizations including Oxford Hub, OxPip and OSEP. We hope this further facilitates social good.

We can host and cater for team meetings. Recently, for example, forty members of the EMBS Community College team came for a cooked breakfast on our terrace. Plus, at a recent party which Flo's catered for, one guest mentioned it was "It was the best food I ever had!"

## Our team

We have really invested in staff hours to help our team feel confident, supported and provide excellent service! Team work, respect and encouragement are core values to the café team. Most of our staff are in their first jobs in hospitality and we want to feel that they are receiving a good training, good experience, and a good work environment. They have training in customer service, coffee making, and hospitality skills! Our staff tell us that their job satisfaction is increased from knowing that they are part of a team with wellbeing of the community at its heart and where all profits go into community benefit - such as OX4 Food Crew.

*"Friendly environment, everyone is treated equally and with respect. The café team are like a family. Coming to work is less stressful because of the culture."*

Olivia - Café assistant

*"I love being a part of a project on a journey - seeing Flo's Trading evolve as a truly ethical independent business is inspiring and rewarding. Also I have been able to save money to travel and study,"* Makeda, Café Supervisor



Breakfast on the terrace for EMBS College



# Family work

## Story Explorers

Over the last year almost fifty different stories have been shared with families (plus Makaton signs, songs and nursery rhymes too). More than fifty children and their adults have attended, with 9% of children attending Story Explorers with grandparents, as well as or instead of with parents.

Story Explorers increased to twice a week from July, and has seen just as many people attend on Mondays as the long standing Thursday slot, which means more families are experiencing the magic of stories.

Lots of families say how they play games and use ideas from the classes at home with their little one, with particular appreciation for the popular 'what's in the box' listening game. One family said it was the thing that made their little one laugh the most when home unwell.

*"He loves coming to the nature creators groups. There isn't much on in the afternoons so this is perfect for us. I feel like even though we are in the room with the kids, you are engaging them and they have all this fun with you, and me and another dad were chatting away – it was a mini break for us!"*

Dad, Feb 2022



Victoria  
Community and Family worker

## Nature Creators

Forty sessions ran over the year, each with different craft activities, often led by the children themselves. Ten boxes of donated items were saved from landfill to equip the sessions, as well as finding natural treasures to use.



Oxford Community Action holiday camp visits the NaturEscape garden

One of the four new 'zone signs' made by Stig at NaturEscape. Have you seen the other three?



## Kindred Collective

The intergenerational Friday group has seen many families, spanning four generations, play together at Flo's and go exploring in the NaturEscape.

We had a wonderful six month partnership with Oxford University Museum of Natural History who led a monthly outdoor session focusing on the 'big 5' bugs, engaging older adults and sharing ideas for the young ones.

*"This is exactly what I need. After losing my husband this is the first time I have been able to get out and meet other adults my age. I am so glad this is here, as I would still be on*



Makena  
Communities Manager



## First Fridays at Flo's

Every first Friday of the month we host a celebration at Flo's! Story-telling and activities for children, delicious meals cooked by the Pizza Midwife, café and Oxford Community Action. We've been happy to welcome up to 100 people each month.

*"It is so good to know Flo's is there and I can sit in with a coffee and not be rushed out, and it is ok to be in there with a baby. I needed it today, when being home alone felt too much, and being in the park and with other people was just what I need to help me. I am coming to Story Explorers tomorrow – it is lovely to see other parents and have a reason to get out, but without going too far, else I'd probably stay home and still be in my pyjamas!"*

Parent

*"Sometimes it is a lot to be in a new country. I have two little children, I don't know any one and want to make friends. Then I come to Flo's, I chat to you, and I always feel better. You just want to be seen you know? It is good knowing I am not the only parent trying to work out what I am doing, we are all working it out as we go along."*

Parent





# Nature Nursery

Flo's Nature Nursery offers a rich and varied curriculum based on nature and real life skills for 67 children aged 2-5. We go on lots of walks to the park, NaturEscape and other local places! Our nursery has stayed open throughout 2021 and 2022, adjusting to keep everyone safe during the lockdowns and restrictions.

## Some of our highlights this year:

- We raised frogs, butterflies, ladybirds, and ducklings in our nursery this year, learning about life cycles while cultivating a love of nature.
- We have extended our Forest School sessions making good use of the newly developed NaturEscape site. The children have built shelters, learnt about Nature, cooked over the fire and generally embraced this exciting outdoor environment.
- We have evaluated our environment and made some changes to fit better with our Forest School ethos, e.g. halved the number of toys and instead brought more natural resources, such as sand, stones and wood.
- We have increased our woodwork provision, with woodwork being part of our weekly curriculum now and the children getting very skilled at it
- We created a "feeling board" to help children learn to identify and describe their feelings, building emotional literacy.
- We invited children to create their own stories using our Tales Toolkit, building imagination and helping children understand the components of stories (character, setting, problem, solution).

*"I really like working at Flo's, it's a great environment to work in, especially the staff at the nursery who have been very welcoming and helpful in making me settle in my job quickly. The children and parents have also been really nice. I enjoy working as a nursery assistant within the nursery team and I look forward to continue doing my job."*

Rukhsana,  
Nursery team



New 'retired' play-boat delivered by cargo-bike



Tanja, Nursery Manager



*"Flo's nursery has had a hugely positive impact on our daughter's early years and our family. It really is a nursery embedded in a community and totally linked to the park, the seasons and East Oxford. The staff team are dedicated and professional and put a lot of thought into creating an environment that is nurturing and stimulating. The nature ethos is really important to us - the kids love spending much of the day outside in all weathers and seasons, in the gardens or on walks into Florence Park, and in the summer at regular forest school sessions. The Flo's team and partners have put a huge amount of love and energy into developing the Naturescape site from a dilapidated mini golf course and it is brilliant to see it so well used now by the kids to learn outdoor skills."*

Father from the nursery



## This year we welcomed:

- 40 children who have English as an additional language
- 14 children who have additional needs
- 13 children in receipt of government funding for two year olds
- 15 children in receipt of Pupil Premium.





# Community Activities

## naturescape

From a disused and dilapidated mini golf course to a thriving nature resource for the community. NaturEscape is open and free for the public to explore and this year has gained a sensory path, pond and fire pit! Many community groups use the NaturEscape on a weekly basis to help more children and adults connect and learn from nature.

All thanks to fantastic collaboration between the Oxford Garden Partners, Good Gym Oxford, Flo's, The Nature Effect, Laura Burt Gardens, the Green Spaces Team and Oxford City Council Parks Team.



Volunteers helped build the pond at NatureEscape



OCA kitchen and members from the Interfaith Chaplaincy plant a tree



### Plant a tree for the Jubilee

We were glad to welcome the High Sherriff, Imam Monawar Hussain, to plant seven holly tree bushes as part of an initiative to plant thousands of trees across the UK for the Queen's jubilee.

Interfaith chaplains attended the planting, each saying a blessing from their own faith for the holly tree bushes. The event was followed by a delicious community meal served by Oxford Community Action Kitchen.

### Ashmolean Partnership

In spring 2022, we teamed up with the Ashmolean for Oxfordshire Art Weeks. 187 local children attended a free art workshop in the NaturEscape, with their work then displayed in the museum throughout May and June. Inspired by Pissarro and the impressionists, 'Painting in the Park' was a huge success, bringing a wonderful experience to our local community.



### The OX4 Food Crew

The OX4 Food Crew is an alliance of nine local grassroots organisations working towards a shared mission, that, *"Everyone in OX4 has enough good food, are well nourished and can thrive"*.

Flo's was a founding member of the OX4 Food Crew and continues to play a key role as the administrative partner of the group, providing community meals and incubating new food based social enterprises

Collectively over the past year we have responded to the food inequality in OX4. Much of this has been critical due to Covid and has been exacerbated due to the cost of living crisis, cuts to universal credit and post-covid challenges to returning to normal life.



### OX4 food crew has so far:

- distributed over 20,000 food parcels
- cooked & served over 20,000 hot meals in OX4
- hosted 17 community meals

Read more about the OX4 Food Crew here:  
[ox4foodcrew.co.uk/our-impact](https://ox4foodcrew.co.uk/our-impact)





# Flo's Refill Shop

## This year the refill shop turned 3!

Our small community shop, that focuses on providing unpackaged foods, has continued to grow and develop this year.

The shop is now open more frequently - **Tuesday through to Saturday from 11am until 5pm** - and has a wider range of products. Visitors often make positive comments about the great range of foods and competitive prices on offer - often less than at the major supermarkets. Given our limited space, we focus on high quality, basic goods that we are proud to offer.

One of the heartbeats underlying the Refill shop is to make people more aware of the problem with plastic and help them to **reduce their consumption of single-use plastic containers**.

One of our suppliers is local SESI - they let us know how many plastic bottles are saved with each order - for Flo's this is typically 110 plastic bottles per weekly order!



## Volunteering in the refill shop

Volunteering in the Refill Shop offers a way for people to give something to the community and to develop their skills and confidence. This year we welcomed 30 volunteers- a big thank you to all of them! Our current group of 14 volunteers span diverse backgrounds and generations.

We have developed a supportive environment with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere so that people with different needs can feel able to have a chance to develop their confidence, customer service skills and all the related tasks around running an efficient service.



Katie, a Refill Shop volunteer, with a new product: doggy biscuits!

One of our regular volunteers says, *"It has been good for my mental health to have a commitment that I knew I could come back to after having to have some time off. I have found that the support I get in the Refill Shop lowers my anxiety as there is no pressure but you can always be busy"*.

We have also been able to support 5 people with their Duke of Edinburgh Awards volunteering programme. Lucy writes, *"I've been volunteering one hour a week at the refill shop for around 2 years. I started for my silver DofE but wanted to continue because I enjoyed working here. I learn great transferrable skills, such as teamwork, customer service and problem solving, in a caring community with a welcoming atmosphere. I appreciate the commitment of working in the shop because it gives me a sense of routine and is a nice addition to my week. I've also recently done some paid shifts, such as the first Friday of the month and occasional cover work, where I run the shop alone. This responsibility has helped me to grow in confidence, as well as gain more maturity and develop my skills."*

We have also had 3 young students from 2 Schools and 1 College who have done a work placement with us. Amy says, *"I loved my time in the Refill Shop. It's the area I want to go into at university which is around Sustainability, Community and Environment. It's really friendly here and I've found out more about Zero Waste shopping"*.



We love getting suggestions from our customers for new products and we look forward to serving you soon!

Helen Osborn,  
Refill shop & volunteer  
coordinator





# Supporting new social enterprises

*Flo's works with emerging, diversity-led social enterprises in support of communities developing new routes to generating sustainable income and creating employment for people who may otherwise face barriers.*

## Damascus Rose Kitchen

Following a successful launch last summer and growth phase at Flo's, Damascus Rose Kitchen moved to run the café the Old Fire Station in September 2021. Damascus Rose Kitchen now provides employment and training for 10 refugee women and serves delicious Syrian dishes three days per week, and caters for events and parties.

## No Vice Ice

No Vice Ice have had a successful 2nd year - they are now selling their 2 flavors of ice lollies at 4 local vendors in Oxford! Tangy Apple lollies are made from 100% locally-pressed apple juice from the Oxford Farm House and Strawberry Crush lollies are made from surplus fruit from Rectory Farm.

NVI were delighted to welcome the first interns to their trainee programme - supporting people with invisible health conditions to have meaningful, accessible and paid work. They also ran a series of Lolly Labs which enabled children with invisible health conditions to meet their peers and learn to make ice lollies! Families commented on how good it was to have an inclusive and accessible space and the breakout room and sensory toys were well used.



## Oxford Community Action

Oxford Community Action is a multi-ethnic community group working in OX4, running children and youth activities, providing 320 families a week with emergency food parcels and leading on community research. Their community work is open to everyone, but in particular their aim is to support minoritized communities and individuals to tackle and overcome barriers created by structural inequalities.

As part of the OX4 Food Crew, OCA this year has been working with Flo's to launch their own social enterprise which will support their community work. **OCA Kitchen** launched as a **pop-up restaurant at Flo's** in summer of 2022. All cooked by local chefs, we serve food from a different nation every week on Thursday and Friday 5-8pm and you can bring your own drinks.

So far we have had delicious dishes from Nigeria, Jamaica, Iraq, Malaysia, Guyana, Afghanistan, Morocco, Guyana, South East Asia and the Caribbean!





# NHS Isis Community Midwives



The NHS Isis community midwives are based at Flo’s. Each week they see hundreds of women and newborns for clinical appointments, as well as visiting many more women and their babies in their homes nearby.

We asked the midwives why it’s important to have midwifery services in the community, that is, at Flo’s. One midwife shared:

“I feel that it’s important that Flo’s hosts community midwives as pregnancy and birth are part of normal family life and it roots the experience in the community and normalises it. By seeing us at Flo’s, women and their families are surrounded by other families who have been where they are now and who are unconsciously modelling the family lives and parenting that “our” women will be part of soon. It’s like a little glimpse into their own future.

For women who have had a baby before, it introduces them to an amazing community resource.



By modeling openness and inclusivity, Flo’s shows our women and their families that in the UK, all are welcome.

Even women living quite close to Flo’s often remark that they’ve never been inside the building before. Sometimes they’ve just seen it from the playground.

One woman with a toddler in tow asked me if the café was really open to everyone and if she could buy things from the shop. Sometimes in our cozy Euro-centric world we have no idea of other cultures experiences (where there are shops open only to certain people and spaces where only a certain type of family is welcomed) and their incomprehension of our world.

By modeling openness and inclusivity, Flo’s shows our women and their families that in the UK, all are welcome.”

# Finances

## April 2021 – Mar 2022

Flo’s - The Place in the Park is run by People Place and Participation (PPP).

In 2021-22 we generated income of £778,000 (£749,000 in the previous year). Expenditure was £755,000 (£627,000 in the previous year). Figure 1 shows this data.

Income from grants reduced in 2021-22 to £115,000 after reaching a high the year before during the pandemic. Income from the café more than doubled (£304,000) and income from the refill shop increased by a third (£65,000). We also increased room hire income after opening our new Pavilion building for hire (£29,000).

In April 2021 Flo’s new trading subsidiary, Flo’s Trading, was launched to manage the café and refill shop. This allowed us to continue to grow our trading activity alongside being a charity. We also invested in our operations and admin team to support our significant growth in the last two years.

As of March 2022, People Place and Participation held unrestricted reserves of £177,500 made up of £49,000 share capital, £54,500 designated funds and £74,000 general funds, plus £39,000 restricted funds. This represents approximately two months running costs in unrestricted funds.



Figure 1: Income and Expenditure for last 3 years at Flo’s

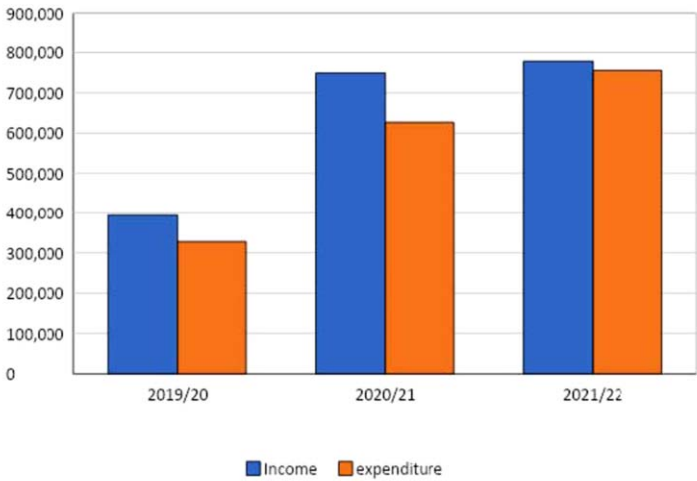
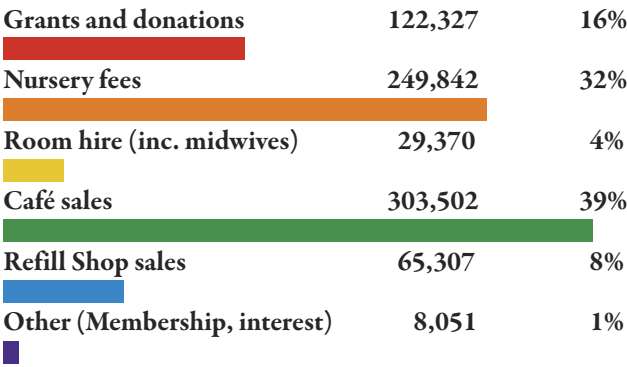


Figure 2: Main income sources at Flo’s for 2021-2022



Total: £778,399