

# Annual Report

Year ending 31 March 2016

## Introduction

### What is Martineau Gardens?

A therapeutic Community Garden, close to Birmingham city centre, it is a valued slice of organically maintained land that provides a place to learn, to heal, to connect with nature and to play. The Gardens are tended by a community of volunteers, many of whom experience social exclusion or isolation. The Gardens are open six days a week, as a tranquil place that is free to visit, thanks to the dedication and generosity of our volunteers and supporters.

### Martineau Gardens' 2015/16 overview

Thanks to our finances being more stable, we were able to improve services by increasing the number of employees. More people are aware of the Gardens as a place to visit, our visitor count is increasing so we had more donations and sales of goods and services.

### Our achievements

This report refers to our strategic document 'Mission, Values, Objectives and Activities' available on our website.

## I. Improving the mental and physical health of the people of Birmingham

### I.1 Training volunteers in skills that contribute to their progress towards volunteering, further learning and employment

Our Therapeutic Horticulture practice involves 61 people including people with mental health issues, learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, head injuries and strokes. These volunteers look after the gardens, supervised by our expert staff, whose work is funded by Charitable Trusts.

Volunteering gives people exercise, purpose, social contact and an opportunity to learn about plants, conservation and each other. Regular volunteering, even if only for half a day a week, can give structure to someone's life.



*A breath of fresh air. Martineau Gardens provides tranquillity, close to the city and an opportunity to get close to nature. (L) Amethyst deceiver fungi growing in our SLINC designated woodland (R) Bees on the chives growing in the Herb Beds*

Photocredit: fungi — Andrew Curran

## What drives our work?

- Social inclusion
- Accessibility
- A welcoming approach
- Environmental sustainability



*Volunteering is at the heart of what we do - the Green Flag Award celebrates the efforts of our volunteers and staff in keeping Martineau Gardens open, six days a week, throughout the year.*

( ←continued from 1.1 overleaf)

Volunteering can take people towards integration into society and possible employment. A waiting list of people wanting to participate in the Therapeutic Horticulture Programme at Martineau Gardens, demonstrates the need for, and value of this service.

We work with Baskerville School and Queen Alexandra College to give students with autism and learning disabilities the experience of volunteering outside their usual environment.

### I.2 Measuring outcomes and progress of participants

We use the Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale to assess volunteers.

We are part of the Edgbaston Wellbeing hub, a social prescribing project set up by local GPs who want to refer their patients with mental health issues to voluntary sector services. People referred in this way have 3 – 6 month placements; we use the Wellbeing Star to measure their progress.

### I.3 Maintaining and developing the restorative environment of the Gardens

Providing a restful green space that is free to enter improves the health of our volunteers and visitors.

### I.4 Securing sustainable funding

With the loss of funding from Birmingham City Council, we have been developing more sustainable funding from Charitable Trusts, donations, sales and events. (See pie charts on the back page.)

**'Martineau Gardens, where people, plants and wildlife meet'.** Pictured below (from left to right )  
(L) School children learning about plants and pollination with Juliette Green in the glasshouse surrounded by seedlings propagated at the Gardens ; (R) Miranda Kingston (Therapeutic Horticulture staff) with plants and produce grown here — Martineau Gardens demonstrates where food comes from and an enthusiasm for healthy eating .

2.To provide educational opportunities for the people of Birmingham in environmental issues, the sustainable use of resources, therapeutic horticulture and the value of organically grown produce

2.I Demonstrating organic practices, sustainable use of resources and good habitat for local wildlife

#### Our normal activity includes:

Composting and making leaf mould, organic pest control, reuse of materials, maintaining habitats (bird, bat, insect and hedgehog homes)

#### Purchasing consistent with our values:

Electricity from Good Energy, Telecoms from The Phone Co-op, Building work from Jericho Foundation, Recycled or FSC paper, Printing ink and Toner: refills from Cartridge World, Peat free and organic compost. Payroll services from BVSC, DBS checks from St Paul's CDT, Catering from ChangeKitchen, Consumables from Lembas Ltd, Tree Surgery from Midland Arboriculture, Log milling from Wildlife Trust Birmingham Black Country and for Aggregates we used crushed brick

2.2 Promoting the work of the Gardens by organising special events, producing interpretive literature for visitors, communicating our core values to the people of Birmingham through the securing of media coverage, maintaining an up to date and informative web site, attending local events and giving talks at local groups

Public Engagement enables Martineau Gardens to meet its Charitable Objects.

We promote the work of Martineau Gardens with a range of leaflets, newsletters, news and events e-mailings, securing media coverage, social media and an informative website. We gave two talks to groups and took seven stalls to external events. Nine groups of adults had tours of the Gardens, either self-guided or with a member of staff.



### 2.3 Providing education events, activity-based learning and opportunities for sharing knowledge

Our annual events programme gives people a reason to visit and return to the Gardens, and provides opportunity for family learning. This year we held the Big Dig, the Spring Event, the Storytelling Festival (with Traditional Arts Team), outdoor theatre: Hamlet and The Wind in the Willows (with Folksy Theatre), a Garden Party with an auction, The Honey Show (with Birmingham Bee Keepers Association), the Autumn Event and Halloween Storytelling Event (with Traditional Arts Team).

We hosted a series of short courses: Bat walk with Brum Bats; two Bee Keeping courses (taught by our volunteer Bee Keeper, John Gale); our Earth Oven was re-built for a course, (taught by Lizzy Bean, in partnership with Loaf) and the Herb Patch was taught by retired Medical Herbalist, Nicola Peterson.

### 2.4 Hosting and promoting school visits, Forest School and Outdoor Learning activities with an Environmental Education programme

We work with Juliette Green, an experienced Environmental Education freelance teacher. She has created material for schools to use whilst here and has devised and delivers three lesson plans (Habitat explorer, Mini beasts and Plant professor) for primary schools. Each visiting receives a tour of the Gardens and a lesson that fits with the National Curriculum. We had visits from ten Primary schools over 17 days.

We provided work experience placements for students from Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, and Aston Manor Schools.

## 3. To conserve, protect and improve the natural environment of Martineau Gardens

### 3.1 Providing opportunities for volunteering in horticulture and conservation

The wildlife area of Martineau Gardens is designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). Our conservation work parties during the winter months, coppice and thin the woodland to let more light reach the 'herb layer'. We remove ivy and brambles to encourage the growth of wildflowers. A diversity of plants supports a diversity of insects which feed birds and bats.

### 3.2 Conducting surveys and recording wildlife to monitor the outcomes of conservation management work

To monitor the quality of the habitats we care for, volunteers Brian Perry and Andrew Curran continue

to record our wildlife sightings. Birds, invertebrates and wild plants seen during the month are recorded in the bird hide, our records contribute to Eco Record and wildlife news shared in our newsletters and social media posts.

### 3.3 Maintaining a balance between the educational, therapeutic, productive, recreational, aesthetic and wildlife-friendly aspects of the Gardens

We monitor our feedback from volunteers and visitors through a range of sources, including TripAdvisor (on-line travel review website). A quote from a visitor:

*"Lovely bit of tranquillity - hidden gem. A working garden. Beautiful little wood. Small play area and plants and crops growing. There are even bee hives hidden in there. What a lovely little Eco oasis".*

*(Source: TripAdvisor Review July 2015)*



*Families picnicking during our events*

### 3.4 Managing the land using organic principles so that it produces high quality food and plants

We produce and sell plants, vegetables, fruit, preserves, honey and chopped logs.

## 4. Planning the construction of an ecologically designed building to enhance Martineau Gardens

The Studio has been rented out to a group of artists in the short term, but the rearrangement and refurbishment of the buildings is now more possible. The plan is to insulate the Pavilion and toilets so it is warm and sustainable in the long term. The Trustees will review the need for a new building after the refurbishment is completed.

## 5. An effective and sustainable organisation

For the sixth year running, Martineau Gardens has achieved a Green Flag Community Award in recognition of being a 'superb community green space'.

Ernst and Young Birmingham have kept us as one of their two 'Charities of the year' and supported us with staff fundraising activities.

The Visitor Welcome team of 33 Meet and Greet volunteers continue in the front line of welcoming our visitors, providing information, sales assistance and cups of tea.

Venue hire continues to increase, with lots of return visits for children's parties, significant birthdays and events run by other organisations. Staff and selected volunteers attended external training courses including, various fundraising courses, First Aid, Therapeutic Horticulture CPD and in house training for the Visitor Welcome team. The Trustees review the Risk Management policy annually.

## 6. Looking ahead

As more people visit and we become better known as a visitor attraction, we continue to develop our programme of events, courses and activities. With more stability, we have been able to plan for the future building improvements and take on more staff to support our work.

## 7. Further information

### 7.1 Legal status

Martineau Gardens is a Company Limited by Guarantee (4273209) and a Registered Charity (1092364).

### 7.2 The Trustees

Peter Arnold, Tim Bruton, Margaret Holmes (Treasurer), Sue Roberts (Chair), Glenys Thomas and Tom Walkling

### 7.3 The Staff

Helen Bickley (Fundraiser) 2 days from April to May 2015

Michael Burnett (Fundraiser) 2 days from June 2015

Lee Davies (Apprentice Gardener) from June 2015

Juliette Green (Environmental Education) sessional from April 2015

Sarah Hill-Daniel (Marketing and Communications) 2 days

Stewart Holmes (Therapeutic Horticulture) 4 days

Caroline Hutton (Director) full time

Miranda Kingston (Therapeutic Horticulture) 2 days

Alec Middleton (venue hire) sessional from July 2015

Dharmendra Parmar (Events co-ordinator) sessional until June 2015

Jane Summerton (administrator) from April 2015

### 7.4 Patrons

Alys Fowler and Mollie Martineau who sadly died in August 2015

### 7.5 Finances

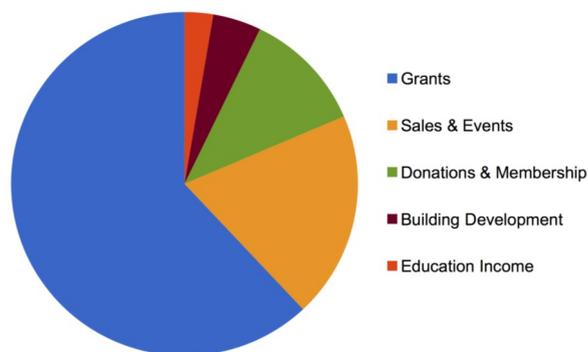
Income: £149, 783 Expenditure: £115, 521

Balance at 31 March 2015 = £35, 974

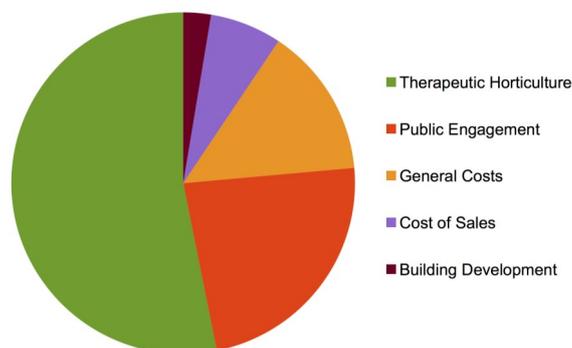
Balance at 31 March 2016 = £72, 342

For further information, our annual accounts are available on request.

### Income



### Expenditure



## How to contact us

Martineau Gardens, 27 Priory Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7UG

T: 0121 440 7430

E: [info@martineau-gardens.org.uk](mailto:info@martineau-gardens.org.uk)

[www.martineau-gardens.org.uk](http://www.martineau-gardens.org.uk)

## Opening Hours

For visiting: Mon - Sat, 10am - 4pm, Volunteering: Mon - Thurs, 10am - 4pm, Volunteering for women: Fri, 10am - 4pm