

Annual Report

Year ending 31 March 2015

Introduction

I.I 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.

I.2 Martineau Gardens' 2014/I5

Martineau Gardens, like other small charities, is facing a common problem of increased fundraising pressures as we become less reliant on the State. After a very difficult 18 months, the more secure funding from Charitable Trusts and the European Social Fund enabled us to take a deep breath and progress with some of our other projects. More people are aware of the Gardens as a place to visit, which leads to more donations and sales of goods and services.

How to contact us

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www.martineau-gardens.org.uk



Photocredit: B Perry



*A breath of fresh air. Martineau Gardens provides tranquillity, close to the city and an opportunity to get close to nature.
(L), Southern Hawker dragonfly perched at the edge of the pool
(R) Snowdrops in our SLINC designated woodland*

What drives our work?

Social inclusion, accessibility and 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

2. Our achievements

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

2.1 Conserving and protecting the natural environment of Martineau Gardens

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 provide food for birds and bats.

2.1.1 Wildlife recording

In order 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 species lists promoted on our website and wildlife news shared in newsletters and social media posts. This year, we were pleased to add a raven to our records, making a total of 60 different species of birds.

2.2 Improving the mental and physical health of the people of Birmingham

Providing a restful green space that is free to enter improves the health of our volunteers and visitors (including patients and visitors from the Priory Hospital opposite). Our Therapeutic Horticulture practice involved 56 people including those with mental health issues, learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, head injuries and strokes, in looking after the gardens as volunteers, supervised by our expert staff, 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 and take them towards integration into society and possible employment. A waiting list of people waiting to participate in the Therapeutic Horticulture Programme at Martineau Gardens, demonstrates the need for, and value of this service.

2.2.1 Evidence of outcomes

We are a champion of 'Growing Health', a network of organisations interested in the health benefits of growing food, we share evidence to demonstrate the positive impact that connecting with nature can have. Please watch our short film to hear the volunteers themselves explaining why community gardening is good for them. <http://www.martineau-gardens.org.uk/about-us/what-is-a-community-garden/>



'Martineau Gardens, where people, plants and wildlife meet'. Pictured here: understanding how plants grow teaching sessions (L) school children studying habitats within the Spring Meadow (C) plants and produce grown here demonstrate where food comes from and an enthusiasm for healthy eating and (R) a lesson in the glasshouse surrounded by seedlings propagated at the Gardens.

2.2.2 Working with the NHS

We are part of the Edgbaston Wellbeing hub, a pilot project set up by local GPs who want to refer their patients with mental health issues to voluntary sector services. Because of our substantial waiting list, we take people referred in this way for three month placements.

2.3 Education and public engagement

Public Engagement enables Martineau Gardens to meet its Charitable Objects (see <http://www.martineau-gardens.org.uk/about-us/our-charitable-objectives/>)

2.3.1 Education for children and young people

More schools are visiting the Gardens. 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 school receives a tour of the Gardens and a lesson that fits with the National Curriculum. We had 12 visits from Primary schools.

We provided work experience placements for students from Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, Kingshurst Academy and Aston Manor Schools. We had six visits from Nursery schools and pre-school groups, one visit from the Woodcraft Folk and one from a home education group.

2.3.2 Providing work experience for vulnerable young people

Attached to the Therapeutic Horticulture practice 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.

2.3.3 Promoting sustainability and the value of organically produced produce

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

promote the work of Martineau Gardens with a range of leaflets, a newsletter, email news and events mailings, social media and an informative website. We issue media releases and obtain coverage regularly in local media.

2.3.4 Events

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 Spring event, the Storytelling festival (with Traditional arts team), the Taming of the Shrew (with Folksy Theatre), a Garden Party with an auction, The Honey Show (with Birmingham Bee Keepers Association), the Autumn Event, Halloween storytelling event (with the Traditional Arts Team), Nomad Variety night and Compost and Vegetable event (with the Big Dig).

2.3.5 Talks, tours and stalls

We gave five talks to groups and took six stalls to external events. Seven groups of adults had tours of the Gardens, either self-guided or with a member of staff.

2.3.6 Courses

We ran a bat walk with Brum Bats, hosted an outdoor cooking course with Winterbourne House and Gardens, we hosted two Bee Keeping courses (taught by our volunteer Bee Keeper, John Gale), a series of T'ai Chi classes and 'Herb Patch' with local retired medical herbalist, Nicola Peterson.

2.4 Planning the construction of an ecologically designed building to enhance Martineau Gardens

During the year, BITA Pathways had to close the Pottery Studio, due to funding cuts, after 10 years of partnership. 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 present

buildings so they are warm and sustainable in the long term. The Trustees will review the need for a new building after the refurbishment is completed.

2.5 An effective and sustainable organisation

For the fifth 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 21 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 Wellbeing Star, various fundraising courses, First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Therapeutic Horticulture CPD and in house training for the Visitor Welcome team. The Trustees review the Risk Management policy annually.

3. 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.

4. Further Information

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

4.2 The Trustees:

Peter Arnold, Margaret Holmes (Treasurer), Sue Roberts (Chair), Glenys Thomas and Tom Walking,

4.3 The Staff:

Helen Bickley (Fundraiser) 2 days from August 2014, Rachael Burt (Education and Therapeutic Horticulture) 2 days until June 2014, Lorraine Carden (Cleaning) half day, Sarah Hill-Daniel (Marketing and Communications) 2 days, Stewart Holmes (Therapeutic Horticulture) 4 days, Caroline Hutton (Director) full time, Miranda Kingston (Education and Therapeutic Horticulture) 2 days from August 2014, Dharmendra Parmar (Events co-ordinator) sessional.

4.4 Patrons:

Alys Fowler and Mollie Martineau

4.5 Finances

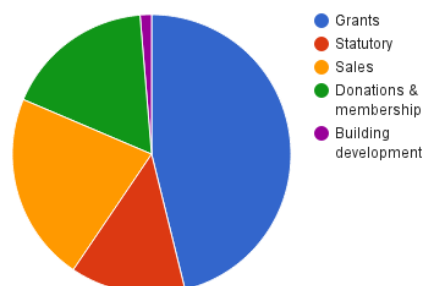
Income: £101,249 Expenditure: £87,642

Balance at 31 March 2014 = £22,387

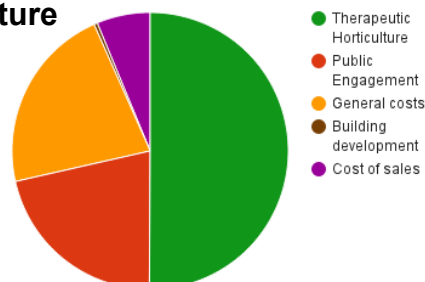
Balance at 31 March 2015 = £35,974

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

Income



Expenditure



Opening Hours

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