

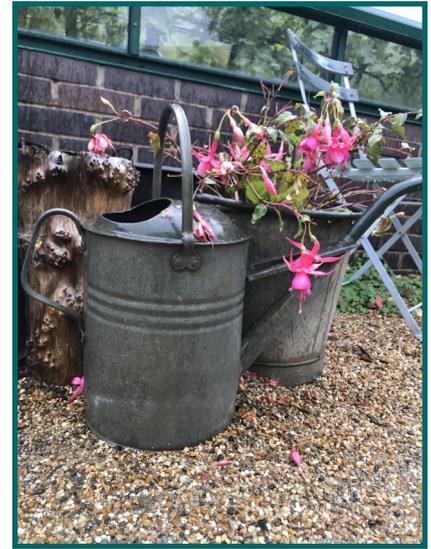
Newsletter Autumn 2020

Welcome to this Autumn edition of the newsletter.

The Autumn colours in the Gardens at this time of year bring such joy, from berries and fungi to foliage and even the odd apple still hanging in the orchard. We are continuing with our phased re-opening and look forward to sharing the tranquillity of the Gardens with you. (See **Martineau Mondays** below). At Martineau Gardens, one of the pleasures is the long-term

friendships we gain as we garden together - and yet, we also have to say goodbye too. With sadness we learnt that much-loved volunteers Maggie McCormack and Steve Campbell have passed away. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their families. We congratulate Peter Townley (Trustee) for his MBE (bit.ly/31rNH6d) and bid Sue Roberts a very fond farewell as she steps down as Chair of Trustees (bit.ly/2OFk22N)

Gill Milburn, CEO



Update on public access

Martineau Mondays

Our priority during the pandemic has been to support Therapeutic Horticulture volunteering. We opened to Friends on Mondays, and from **Monday 2 November** Martineau Mondays will be extended to all.

Read more here to help you plan your visit: bit.ly/3dPI1ZJ



Stop press! Can you donate unwanted cold water header tanks to help volunteer John Gale extend our rainwater harvesting system. [More info here](#). Call the office 0121 440 7430.



Weathering the storm We need your help more than ever. Please help us to carry on so that we can still be the hope in many people's lives. **Please donate here:** <https://localgiving.org/charity/martineau-gardens/>

Gardening together – a lifeline



The Covid-19 crisis has challenged us all in ways beyond what we could have imagined. For people with existing mental health conditions, many are experiencing greater depths of social isolation than before. Gill Milburn, CEO for Martineau Gardens said: "For some volunteers on the therapeutic horticulture project, gardening together, week in, week out can be a lifeline that gives purpose to one's life and provides the support they need to stay healthy." When lockdown began, the future of the project was challenged as government guidelines meant that the volunteers were unable to attend the gardens for five weeks. Seven months later, we are still weathering the storm but as reported in our previous newsletter, we received

funding from the Heart of England Community Foundation's Coronavirus Resilience Fund enabling the therapeutic horticulture project to continue. This has been further strengthened by a grant award from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund. Some of our more vulnerable volunteers have not yet been able to return and so we stay in touch with them to keep them connected with the Gardens.

What is Martineau Gardens? Our Therapeutic Community Garden is looked after by Volunteers, many of whom have mental health issues or learning disabilities. Hundreds of school children visit the Gardens to learn about science and the environment. Every year, Birmingham people (now in their thousands) visit the Gardens to enjoy its peace and tranquillity. We host events and courses and sell plants and produce.

£5k boost for outdoor play area



We're delighted to announce that we have been awarded £5k in the Persimmon Homes' Building Futures scheme. Whilst we didn't win the top prize, we are overwhelmed with all the support shown by you, our supporters, regularly voting on-line for Martineau Gardens and sharing the initiative with friends and colleagues. With our new windfall, we plan to redevelop the play area. Find out more here: <https://bit.ly/3nkiqE6>



Our wildlife volunteers have been busy — not only have they weeded the pond, but their regular wildlife surveys have identified our 400th species of moth, and two new fungi. Get the full story here. bit.ly/3mdkUKF

Green Flag Award

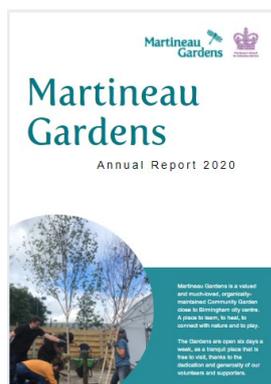
Congratulations are in order, for all our volunteers. For the eleventh consecutive year, the Gardens have been awarded a Community Green Flag Award. More details here: <https://bit.ly/3o7tE6T>



Connect with us ...

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Modernising our governance structure



This year's AGM will be held on Saturday 24th October, and in line with government guidelines the number of attendees must be restricted. The Annual Report and accounts will be published on our website on Monday 26th October [here](#), alternatively we would be happy to send copies by email or post for those that would require them.

The original governance documents from 2001 have served Martineau Gardens well, but with the onset of the challenges posed by Covid-19 and the Companies Act legislation, the Trustees have looked closely at how we can continue to provide organisational oversight whilst preparing the charity for the future. Clearly communications must be maintained in these uncertain times when in-person meetings may not always be safe or practicable. For many, Zoom and Teams meetings have become the norm, but digital meetings are not prescribed and accommodated under our existing Articles of Association and should be. It was therefore decided by the Trustees that we should modernise and attempt to future-proof our governance documents, to incorporate digital communications as allowed for under the 2006 Companies Act and the Charities Act 2011.

As part of this wide ranging review Trustees have also addressed the need to restructure the membership. This will acknowledge and retain, as Honorary Members, individuals who have guided the organisation over a long period of time, showing dedication and excellent service to achieving our charitable objectives. Existing Friends of Martineau Gardens and current volunteers will, of course, be eligible to apply for affiliate Membership, and in doing so continue to influence decision-making and the future direction of the charity. The Trustee/Directors will be given adequate authorities to continue to manage and guide the charity into the now uncertain future

We look forward to the time when we can safely welcome everyone back to Martineau Gardens. In the interim, we are thankful for the community backing that has enabled us to continue our work in support of our volunteers.