

Martineau Gardens

Annual Report 2021



Martineau Gardens is a highly valued and much-loved, organically-maintained Community Garden close to Birmingham city centre. A place to learn, to heal, to connect with nature and to play.

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.

A MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES



2020 was a difficult year for everyone, with talk of Covid-19 dominating every public and private sphere. We are immensely proud of Martineau Gardens staff and volunteers who successfully navigated all the obstacles posed by the pandemic, and we are thankful to have ended the year financially resilient and with the Gardens looking spectacular. A bright spot at a particularly gloomy time, was achieving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This recognises the dedication of hundreds of people over the past 23 years that has made Martineau Gardens an exemplary community garden.

Delivery of our charitable objectives required many changes in 2020, not least the need to increase the staffing numbers required to support socially-distanced and smaller groups for Therapeutic Horticulture. Over the year, despite three lockdowns we lost only eight weeks of Therapeutic Horticulture and, throughout the many disruptions, hundreds of hours were dedicated to staying in touch with volunteers unable to return to the programme. We are thankful for Covid-19 Emergency Funds from Heart of England, Mind and The National Lottery. This financial support, plus the Job Retention Scheme, enabled us to continue to be a lifeline for many vulnerable people. The grants also made possible several much-needed improvements to covered working spaces, providing a new roof for the potting shed, an extension to the green wood-working shelter and a dedicated covered wood-chopping area with storage. Work also began on improvements to the play area, with funding from Persimmon Homes and the Co-operative Community Fund.



Public engagement through social media and newsletters kept us in touch with our wider community and helped with two on-line funding appeals. The response to these indicated just how much love and support there is for Martineau Gardens and the work we do. We are, as in every year, deeply indebted to our regular Friends scheme donors, to the unwavering support of Jo Malone London and to everyone who made one-off gift contributions. Highlights of the past year included delivering produce to volunteers unable to visit the Gardens; opening for a plant sale in July, where a line of socially distanced supporters patiently waited up to an hour to make their purchases, and being able to reward all our wonderful volunteers with a Christmas gift bag. The latter was made possible by an additional grant from the Heart of England Community fund. We took a cautious return to public opening for first time in over a year, welcoming visitors for "Martineau Mondays" on a sunny 29th March 2021, just as new life was visible on the trees to bring hope for a better future.



In closing, we remember two much-loved volunteers, Maggie and Steve, who passed away in 2020, and send our condolences to those of you who also lost loved-ones.

Tim Bruton, Chair of Trustees

OUR TRUSTEES

Tim Bruton, Chair; Peter Arnold; Liz Hensel; Glenys Thomas; Peter Townley MBE, Tom Walkling. (Out-going: Sue Roberts, Sarah Colles)

OUR STAFF 6.2 (Full Time Equivalent)

Gill Milburn, CEO; Jane Bradshaw, Deputy; Michael Burnett, Fundraising; Sarah Hill-Daniel, Marketing and Communications; Juliette Green, Environmental Education; Stewart Holmes, Therapeutic Horticulture; Miranda Kingston, Therapeutic Horticulture; Felicity McCabe, Administrator; Alec Middleton, Event Host. Jacky Hotchin; Kim Knowles; Isis Bradshaw, Therapeutic Horticulture Support

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Therapeutic Horticulture 55 Visitor Welcome 4 Events Support 6 Corporate 0



THERAPEUTIC HORTICULTURE

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, we were using a self-reported wellbeing assessment developed by The International Wellbeing Group, to monitor wellbeing of volunteers on the therapeutic Horticulture programme (TH). Our data suggests that in every area of life that contributes to wellbeing, current TH volunteers' average score was higher than that of prospective volunteers, particularly with Overall Life Satisfaction.



We had to pause assessments in 2020 because it is impossible to correct for the impact of the pandemic. Lockdown, fear of the virus and social contact, inability to access normal support services, isolation from support networks and lack of access to safe outdoor space have all had a massive impact on our volunteers' wellbeing. We closed in March 2020 and kept in regular telephone contact with volunteers. It soon became apparent that people's mental health was deteriorating, so we re-opened in smaller groups with increased staff ratios. We have found that in this situation, the most effective means of evaluating our impact has been by listening.



Bryan said: "I was like a pressure cooker; I could feel myself building up ready to blow. As soon as I came back to the Gardens, I could feel my heart rate drop, it was like the stress was just oozing away".

Steve said: "This is the only place I feel safe now, I hadn't realised how important the Gardens were to me until I couldn't come

In addition to quantitative data collection, we also collect testimonials, which shed a more qualitative light on the benefits of the Programme, for example Aubrey: "I needed to work. I need to make some change in my life. It was only moving furniture into a van, I knew I could do it, but as soon as they saw my prison record they rejected me. I felt proper wounded, I just wanted a chance to work. When I'm working [at Martineau Gardens], Stewart notices if I don't know how to do something. I don't even have to ask. He shows me without making me feel stupid. That matters. This place has given me hope. Hope that I can get a legal job and never have to be looking over my shoulder again." Aubrey has now left the programme and set up his own business. He often visits us.



From April 2020 to March 2021

55 volunteers completed **2549** hours of therapeutic gardening and we facilitated **17** private visits to the Gardens. An additional 14 volunteers contributed **541** hours to help maintain the Gardens.

OUR CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES IN PRACTICE

We provide:

A safe and welcoming space which enables adults, young people and children to connect with nature and improve their wellbeing.

Long-term social and therapeutic horticulture and related programmes, which facilitate improved wellbeing and the development of transferable skills of vulnerable people. Including but not exclusively: people with mental health issues; brain injury; Autistic Spectrum Disorder; Special Educational Needs or those living with dementia.

High quality, affordable, Environmental Education for children of school age and engaging family activities using the natural landscape and features of the Gardens to encourage outdoor play.

Gardens and woodland managed along organic principles with biodiversity and sustainability at its core and which seeks to enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of food growing, caring for the environment and the positive impact a green space has for a local community.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

A full diary of school bookings had to be postponed or cancelled, and mindful that many local children do not have access to a garden or live near a green space, environmental education moved online. The wonder of the natural world and the consistency that it

presents is enormously beneficial, particularly at a time of great uncertainty. We added to our range of online resources to spark

children's adventures in the natural world, and Facebook became

the conduit for reaching families, with weekly live streams. These were

supplemented with short engaging videos of things to look out for on the daily walk, and hands-on, nature-based craft ideas for families to undertake together.

The whole range of ideas and activities, from pond-dipping to making dragonfly wings can be found on our website at:

<https://martineau-gardens.org.uk/education/family-activities/martineau-gardens-nature-for-kids-in-lockdown/>



WILDLIFE AND CONSERVATION

The dedication of our wildlife volunteers reaped real joy this year. They continue to carry out conservation activities to preserve habitats and increase biodiversity within the SLINC. Wildlife recording identified our 400th

species of moth, the Ruby Tiger Moth, over 60 fungi, including two new species one of which

is the Redlead Roundhead (actual size 2mm across); 60 birds and 22 butterflies identified on site. Along with 32 other green spaces across the country, we were delighted to

receive The Bees' Needs Champion Awards for 2021. This recognises our efforts in demonstrating pollinator-friendly habitats, and food-growing sources to the public.

The cycle of weather, heavy rains, periods of drought all puts a strain on mature trees in the woodland. We have sadly lost one or two. Where possible, their trunks remain to provide new habitats for wildlife. We are grateful to the Woodland

Trust for donating 400 British native saplings, which were planted

in our wildlife areas by the Therapeutic Horticulture Team.



Income
£212,096

Grants 80%
Charitable Services <1%
Sales <1%
Donations 16%
Building Development 0%
Friends Scheme 3%
Bank Interest 0%

Expenses
£158,881

TH Salaries 36%
Other TH costs 14%
Charitable services 11%
Premises / overheads 9%
Public engagement 21%
Building development 6%
Cost of sales 3%

People
654

TH Volunteers 97
Visitor Welcome Team 4
Events Volunteers 6
Corporate Volunteers 0
Trustees 6
Staff (FTE) 6.2
Friends 135
Visitors 400 approx.

