



Annual Report 2023

Welcome from the Chair of Trustees



Tim Bruton
Chair of Trustees

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2022–23 Martineau Gardens Annual Report. It's been a year of significant change at the gardens, on the site and in the staffing team, as well as a celebration of our 25th year as a charity.

We have taken several steps towards a new purpose-built eco building. Demolition of the Mollie Martineau Building was planned, and the proposal for the new building was submitted for planning permission. Staff and volunteers started 2023 with a move into the Pavilion and the clearing of the old building began, with much sorting and organising throughout the last quarter of the year.

This year saw the opening of our beautiful new gates, designed by metal sculptor Tim Tolkien in collaboration with our volunteers and the pupils of local schools. The gates which formed part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival, have created a wonderful focal point for the entrance as well as making access to the site much safer.

In 2023 we also said goodbye to Stewart Holmes, our Therapeutic Horticulture lead, who left the gardens after a 20-year career here at Martineau. Thank you to Stewart for all his hard

work, dedication, and commitment over that time and all the very best for the future.

We marked the 25th anniversary of the charity at our Autumn Celebration and throughout the year many memories were shared of the highlights of a quarter of a century.

The year has been a challenging one financially, with the costs of demolition falling into this period as well as news that a major long-term funder had made the decision to work with an international charity, ending their partnerships with UK-based community gardens.

Like all charities, we are seeing the impact of the cost-of-living increases in both what we spend, as well as in funding streams, which are becoming increasingly stretched as demand increases. We continue to proactively look for new funding opportunities, but the loss of a key funder plus the costs of demolition have contributed to a deficit this year.

Trustees would like to thank all the staff, volunteers and supporters who have been part of the Martineau story for the last 25 years. Every inch of the gardens has been shaped by the incredible community that support us so generously through giving their time, donations, and enthusiasm.

And we finish by remembering our longstanding volunteer, Munsab, who is sadly missed.

Our Trustees

Tim Bruton; Peter Arnold; Liz Hensel; Tom Walking; Felly Nkweto Simmonds; Peter Townley MBE; Cathy Powell

Thank you

This year has seen some amazing support from our corporate partners. We'd like to thank Chapter Restaurant for nominating us as their charity of the year. It's been wonderful to work with the team to develop a plan bringing together food, wellbeing, nature and education.

UK Cables also adopted us as a charity partner, and we are immensely grateful for their financial support, as well as some amazing cable drums which are being used throughout the site. We look forward to working closely with them in the coming year.

The team from Winvic have been a huge help across the site this year and we are incredibly grateful for the donation of time and skills from a range of trades. They have been painting our toilets, renovating our outdoor



kitchen, fixing our pavilion doors, and supplying us with skips and pallets throughout the year. It's had a massive impact on the site, and we'd like to thank everyone involved.

Fitzgeralds Contractors also stepped up to help when we installed our new gates, digging out and resurfacing the entrance for us to enable safe entry to the site, which is much appreciated by everyone who visits us.

Gates of welcome

We were delighted to unveil our Gates of Welcome this year, created by metal sculptor Tim Tolkien, and co-designed with staff, volunteers, and local school children. The gates were funded as part of the Birmingham Festival 2022, part of the Commonwealth Games legacy, and form a striking entrance to the site as well as a far safer one.

Thank you to Preet Gill MP who officially opened the gates along with pupils from Selly Oak Trust School and Heath Mount Primary School. We had a wonderful day of celebration and have received lots of positive feedback about the design, which was inspired by the gardens and the Commonwealth.



Therapeutic Horticulture

Therapeutic horticulture sits at the heart of the gardens, with volunteers working for 51 weeks of the year to maintain and develop the site.

Therapeutic horticulture (TH) uses gardening together as a way of improving peoples' well-being. The gardens are a safe and secure place where people can mix socially, make friends, and learn practical skills that will help them to improve their feelings of connection, contribution, and confidence.

The benefits of therapeutic horticulture range from the impact that green space has on wellbeing, to the connections created working as part of a group, sharing tasks, time and tea breaks. This year has also included a green woodwork-ing programme which has been valuable in bringing people together to use the gardens as a catalyst for improvements in wellbeing.



TH volunteers have worked incredibly hard on our outdoor kitchen this year, creating a new BBQ area and renovating the leaf bays. They have also refurbished the wildflower circle which continues to attract pollinators.

We measure the impact of our TH programme quantitatively using a self-reported wellbeing assessment.

Martineau Gardens TH volunteers reported an average Life Satisfaction score of 7.48, which is very much higher than people before they join the programme (4.50) and is in line with the National Average score (7.54).

When asked how important volunteering at Martineau Gardens was to their overall wellbeing, the average score of programme participants was 9.4/10.

“Volunteering has given me a role – there was a massive, terrifying hole in my life but when I began volunteering here, I could see there was light at the end of the tunnel. That light shines brightly now and my life feels so different.”

Therapeutic Horticulture Volunteer, Adam

We also welcomed groups of young people from Baskerville School and Queen Alexandra College to work in the gardens on a weekly basis.

Our supported work experience programme has provided valuable opportunities for young people from Baskerville School and Queen Alexandra College for whom finding suitable placements is very difficult.

“There is such a nice feel at Martineau Gardens which the students responded to well. They became more relaxed and started communicating with us more. It was lovely to see.”

Tutor from Baskerville School, 2023

Environmental Education

Our environmental education programme continued to bring more than 50 schools and home education groups from across Birmingham and further afield to the gardens throughout the year. More than 1200 students enjoyed becoming Plant Professors and going on minibeast hunts in the woodlands, while their learning at the gardens was linked to their lessons at school.

As part of our education work, we were funded to run workshops on the ‘Science of Compost’ for British Science Week for members of the public. Thanks to the team at the Compost Connection CIC for their help in delivering the sessions, which involved everyone getting tips and advice on starting their own compost heap as well as getting up close and personal with the worms.



Our Environmental Education teacher also demonstrated how to undertake soil texture and pH tests. These sessions were targeted at the local community and groups often under-represented in science education.

Our family activities programme continued to be a hit with visitors both young and old.

Wellbeing and welcome

Wellbeing and a warm welcome in all weathers has continued this year. Martineau Mondays, a day of Tai Chi, yoga and creative activities has once again proved popular, and we'd like to thank the Neighbourhood Network Scheme and Love Brum for their support of this programme.

Our visitor welcome team continued to offer a friendly face to everyone who came into the gardens, along with a free hot drink and a chat. This year we have introduced visitor



welcome briefings, keeping the team up to speed on what's happening in the garden as well as sharing their feedback and ideas.

The gardens continue to be free and open to the public six days a week and this year we have seen a significant increase in visitors, matching if not exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Wildlife and conservation

We continue to carry out conservation activities to preserve habitats and increase biodiversity within the SLINC (Site of Local Importance to Nature Conservation), woodland and other areas of the gardens. Our longstanding wildlife volunteers keep monthly records of the wildlife that finds a home at Martineau Gardens, reporting these to EcoRecord. Thanks to their efforts we have extensive records on birds, moths, fungi and more.

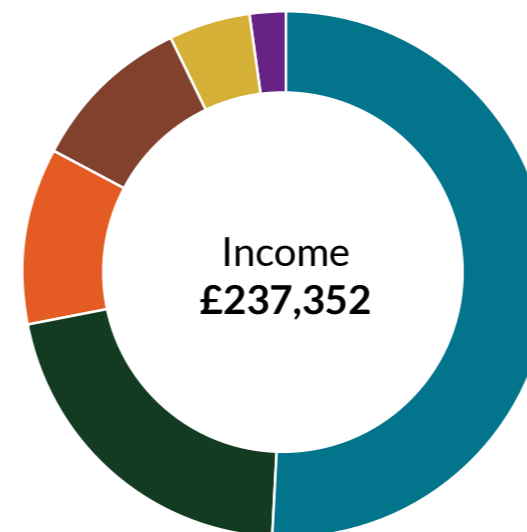


During this time the volunteers have continued moth trapping, with an amazing 422 species recorded since record-keeping started. And they have worked to protect our bird population, from woodpeckers who drilled into a birdbox and badgers who, not content with destroying a squirrel-proof bird feeder, also broke into our bird feed bin!

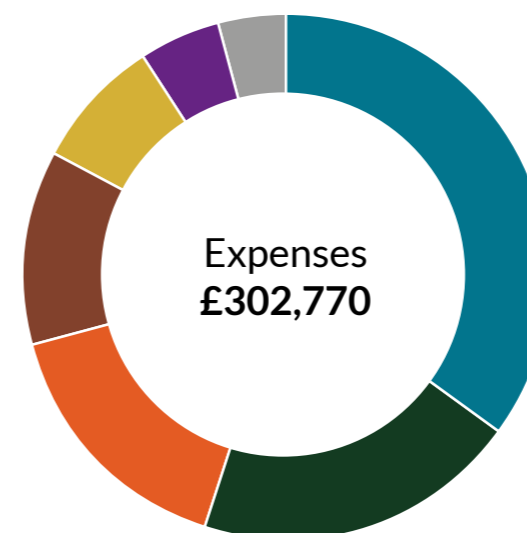
Remaining popular were our regular beekeeping courses, which brought together people curious about starting their own hive. Thanks to our beekeeper Sam for running the courses, looking after our bees and hives and the annual harvesting of the much sought-after Martineau Gardens honey.



Our year in numbers



- Grants 51%
- Sales and Events 21%
- Donations 11%
- Building Development 10%
- Environmental Education 5%
- Membership 2%
- Bank Interest 0%



- TH Service Delivery 35%
- Building Development 20%
- Public Engagement 16%
- Environmental Education 12%
- Premises and Overheads 8%
- Cost of Sales 5%
- TH Costs 4%

82

Therapeutic Horticulture Volunteers

16

Visitor Welcome Team

14

Events Volunteers

12,000

Visitors

25

Corporate Volunteers

7

Trustees

5

Staff (FTE)

Building progress



Plans for the year ahead

We're delighted to announce that planning permission has just been granted for a new community eco building in the heart of the gardens.

The new building will house our staff, volunteers and visitors as well as providing affordable, flexible space for the local community.

The building was designed by APEC Architects after a series of workshops with staff and volunteers, as well as a visitor survey.

We listened to feedback about creating a more accessible, welcoming space for the local community and updated the design to create an events, community and working space that is flexible enough to work for a wide range of activities.

The new building plans include:

- A volunteer area with a fully equipped kitchen and dining space, so we can eat together in all weathers
- An activity space that offers indoor working for the volunteers and schools who visit us

- A staff office that provides a secure, warm working space for our team, overlooking the garden so we can keep an eye out for anyone needing assistance
- Community space for meeting and socialising, which will be available to local groups and organisations
- A new visitor welcome space that is clearly visible as people arrive on site, and offers somewhere for visitors to find out what we do and have that all-important cup of tea
- A new hothouse, which will provide working and planting space for our volunteers, as well as more growing space
- Accessible disabled toilets
- A small private room for one-to-one meetings, for prayer and for a quiet moment if anyone needs it
- Cedar cladding along with solar panels, rainwater harvesting and an air source heat pump, to reduce our impact on the environment



Demolition

As recent visitors to Martineau Gardens will have seen, the old Mollie Martineau Building has been demolished with staff and volunteers now based in the Pavilion.

Demolition was planned for early in the year but was delayed by the arrival of some nesting blue tits.

It was a painstaking process clearing the building and rehoming the contents of both the building and the hothouse.

Demolition was planned for early in the year but was delayed by the arrival of some nesting blue tits, who were in situ for a few weeks before the chicks flew the nest and demolition could continue.

The site was left in a far better condition than first expected, leaving us with a flat space we'll be putting to good use in the coming months and for next year's events.



Next steps

Planning permission was granted in October 2023 and we now face the challenge of raising the funds for the new building, which will cost in the region of £700,000-£800,000.

We'll be applying to funders new and old, putting out appeals, running a series of fundraising events and working hard to raise the money over the next year. If you'd like to get involved by donating time or money, please get in touch we'd love to have you on board.

Contact info@martineau-gardens.org.uk, call us on 0121 440 7430 or pop into the gardens to find out more.

Donate at [justgiving.com/martineau-gardens](https://www.justgiving.com/martineau-gardens), or via [martineau-gardens.org.uk/support-us](https://www.martineau-gardens.org.uk/support-us)

Our charitable objectives

We aim to provide for the people of Birmingham and beyond:

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 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.

Our Team



Jenni Fryer
CEO



Jane Bradshaw
Deputy



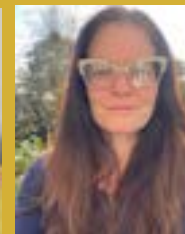
Matt Young
Therapeutic
Horticulture
Lead



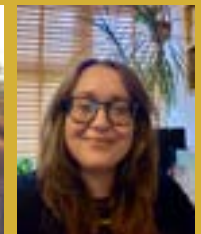
Jacky Hotchin
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Juliette Green
Environmental
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