



Annual Report 2025

Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Annual Report for 2024-25 for Martineau Gardens. It's one of my first jobs as the new Chair of Trustees and I am delighted and honoured to take on the role at such a pivotal time for the gardens.

Thank you from everyone at the gardens to Tim Bruton, who stepped down as Chair this year, but will be staying on as a Trustee. Tim has committed his time, enthusiasm and skills to the charity for many years and we wish him all the best in his new volunteer role as a magistrate.

Joining Martineau Gardens first as a Trustee and now as Chair is a great honour and reflects many of my passions. As a full-time garden designer working on everything from RHS show gardens to making a family's garden part of their home and daily living, I know the impact a great outdoor space can have.

But the magic of Martineau is far more than the garden, it's the impact on wellbeing which is so powerful. The sense of welcome and community that's present as soon as you enter the gardens; the connections that are so evident with all of the people who visit the space. I'm delighted to be on board in this role and look forward to meeting more people over the year.



Karen Tatlow
Chair of Trustees

This year has been a positive time for the charity and the Trustees are pleased to present these accounts. We would like to celebrate the success of our Crowdfunder – Small Seeds, Big Dreams – and thank everyone who gave their time, energy and support in so many ways to make it a success.

We would also like to thank the staff, volunteers and supporters of the Gardens for all their hard work in keeping this fantastic space open to help so many people benefit from the charity and all its activities.

And we finish by remembering our volunteer Tim, who is very much missed.

Our Trustees

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Tim Bruton | Karen Tatlow |
| Emma Payne | Peter Townley MBE |
| Cathy Powell | |



This year to date

New trustee

Welcome to Emma Payne who joined us as a new trustee at last year's AGM (October 2024). Emma brings a wealth of experience with young people through her work with Birmingham Playcare Network as well as running the Scrapstore, a fantastic initiative to reduce waste and connect communities.

We'd also like to give our thanks to Peter Arnold, Felly Nkweto Simonds and Tom Walking who have all served as trustees in recent years and have made the decision to step down this year (2025) due to other commitments.



Small Seeds, Big Dreams

This year has been a very busy one at the gardens, with the launch of our new building appeal, Small Seeds, Big Dreams. The appeal was launched through a series of Community Cuppas, at a launch at our charity partner Chapter and through a range of community events. We pledged to hand out 1 million seeds to launch our crowdfunder, which was to fund the next stages in the development of the building.



The response we received to the appeal was just amazing and the staff, volunteers and trustees involved in the project were all delighted and a little overwhelmed by people's fantastic generosity. We hit the £50,000 crowdfunder target and thanks to a very unexpected but incredible donation of £100,000 we are now well on our way with the next stage in the development.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time, energy and support to the appeal.

Therapeutic Horticulture

The Therapeutic Horticulture (TH) programme sits at the heart of the gardens, with volunteers working for 51 weeks of the year to maintain and develop the site.

TH uses gardening together as a way of improving people's wellbeing. The gardens are a safe and secure place where people can mix socially, make friends, and learn 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 an open access green woodworking and Tai Chi programme which has been valuable in bringing people together to use the gardens as a catalyst for improvements in wellbeing.

We launched two pilot projects, a TH group for people seeking sanctuary, funded by the Inclusive Communities Fund and a food project funded by our local Neighbourhood Network Scheme, offering all of our volunteers a fresh, vegan lunch, to further connect people while improving nutrition.

TH volunteers worked incredibly hard on our bog garden in woods as featured on Alan Titchmarsh's show on ITV, who also kindly donated some of the plants. Volunteers worked with Errol Reuben Fernades, show presenter and head gardener at the Horniman, to finish off the garden on camera. Take a look in the woods next time you visit to see how it's doing.



Other projects in the gardens also focused on planting to encourage natural predators and pollinators, as part of a funded project to share best practise and educate people on what they can do in their own gardens.

"I'm blessed to call Martineau Gardens my safe, happy place. Martineau Gardens means the world to me, without it in my life I dread to think how I'd be now, as I suffer mentally and physically with my health."

Therapeutic Horticulture Volunteer

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

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.

"The week that my son spent at the gardens was, and this is no exaggeration, transformative. Prior to his work experience, my son was incredibly anxious about interacting with people outside of the home or school environment. His week at the gardens allowed him to be himself, in a space where his needs were met instinctively, and he was supported to learn new skills. He was introduced to new adults and able to interact with them on his own terms, building his confidence with this."

"As an autism specialist school, our students have benefited enormously from learning in natural, calm environments. The therapeutic horticulture sessions, opportunities to explore the gardens, and the welcoming atmosphere at Martineau have all helped to build their confidence, communication, and connection with the world around them."

Thank you

As ever, we owe a huge thank you to everyone who supports the charity throughout the year. We have continued to receive support from Winvic, including skips and an endless supply of pallets, from UK Cables and from dozens of partners who have taken part in our corporate volunteering days.

We continue to receive generous support from trusts and foundations and we are incredibly

grateful to the people who support us every month through our regular giving scheme.

Our thanks to everyone who comes to our events, donates their time, energy and enthusiasm to volunteering and to our staff and trustees for their hard work.



Environmental Education

This year, we welcomed more than 1,650 children from schools, home education groups, nurseries and uniformed clubs (e.g. Squirrel Scouts, Brownies). The children learnt about where their food comes from, including tasting and smelling herbs; hunted for minibeasts on land and in the pond; explored a variety of habitats; identified trees and wildflowers; used maps to help them hunt for buried pirate treasure; played in the sandpit and on the shipwreck; carried out outdoor maths activities; tried barefoot walks; and sieved compost for our gardeners to use.

Many of the children who visit us come from areas of economic and green deprivation, with little or no access to safe, biodiverse green spaces. We see how much being outside during a visit to Martineau Gardens benefits them, both educationally and in terms of their improved wellbeing.



Wildlife and Conservation

We continue to carry out conservation activities to preserve habitats and increase biodiversity within the SLINC 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 more than 420 species recorded since record keeping started.

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.



News from the gardens

Launching a free community library

We were absolutely delighted to launch a free community library for children and adults, with materials donated by the EH Foundation and Dulux Decorating Centre. Our volunteers John and Mick worked tirelessly to make the book cupboards, which have been well used by people collecting a new read and dropping off old ones, particularly families with children who love a good read.



Pilotlight awards

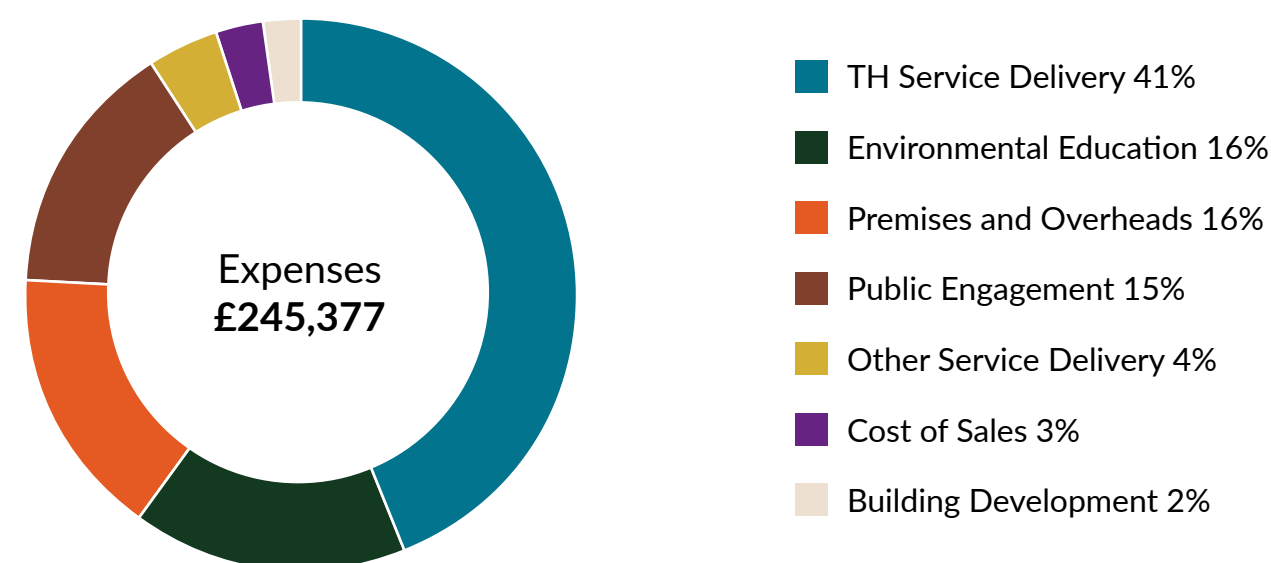
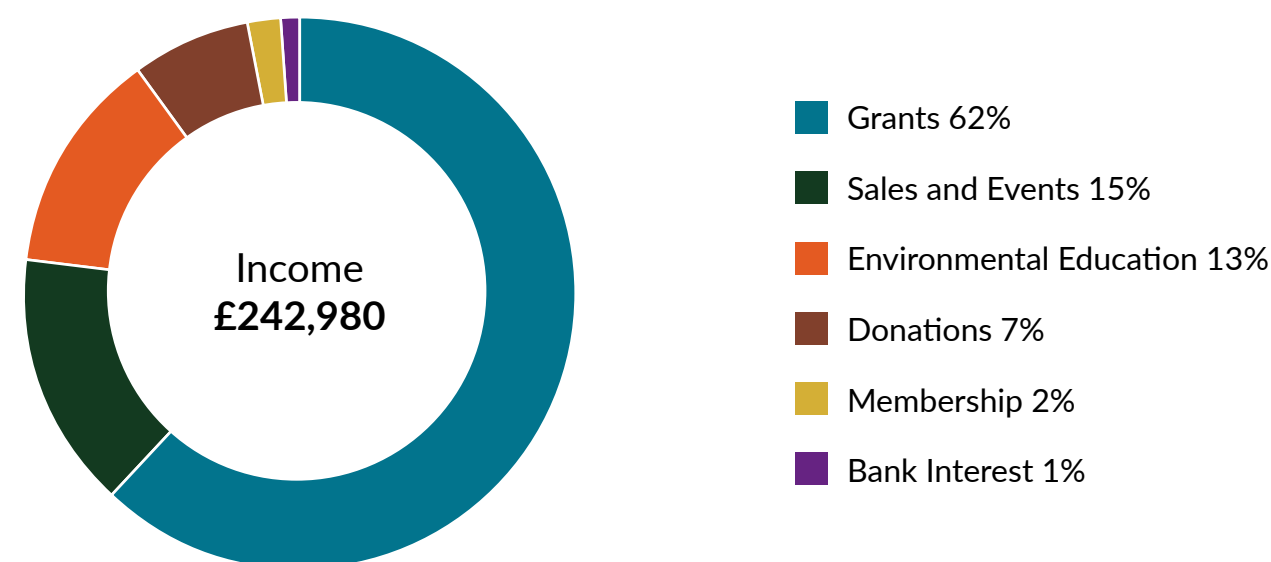
The gardens were one of 22 charities who won Pilotlight Awards. Their awards are sponsored by major funder Garfield Weston and include a leadership development programme for the charity as well as a grant to cover time and expenses incurred through the programme.

We were delighted to welcome our Pilotlighters to the gardens and thank them all

for their support throughout the programme which looked at our governance, board development and fundraising plans.



Our year in numbers



90
Therapeutic Horticulture Volunteers

17
Visitor Welcome Team

20
Events Volunteers

125
Corporate Volunteers

5
Trustees

4.8
Staff (FTE)

13,000
Visitors

Events in the Garden



Spring saw one of our most successful events ever, with our Spring Celebration bringing more than 600 people through the doors. Thanks to a grant from the WMCA Mayor's Fund and sponsorship from the National Trust as part of its Blossom Project, all activities were free of charge. By contrast, our Autumn Celebration was cancelled due to thunderstorms which saw two active weather systems pass over the gardens throughout the planned times of the event.

Playscheme

During the summer holidays we held our two-week playscheme – Wild Play at Martineau Gardens – as part of the Bring It On Brum! programme (part of the Government's Holiday Activities and Food programme).

This was run in partnership with Birmingham PlayCare Network and Rubix Arts & Wellbeing. Places on the playscheme were available to children aged 8-12 who receive income-based free school meals, and children from families living in temporary accommodation, who we arranged travel to the Gardens by minibus.

Each day, the children were provided with lunch and then took part in a range of outdoor



activities, including wildlife and food growing activities, crafts, sports and games. There were also visiting artists who worked with the children, and we ran food preparation/tasting sessions, with the children really surprising us by their willingness to try new foods – including a child who had never eaten a strawberry!

The children also had opportunities to take part in sports activities organised for us by Edgbaston Priory Club and Edgbaston Stadium one day per week; and each week ended with a celebratory communal lunch, provided by Chapter Restaurant, Edgbaston, with many parents/carers and siblings also attending. Around 50 children attended the playscheme every day over the two weeks and everyone had a lot of fun!



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
Therapeutic Horticulture

Juliette Green
Environmental Education/Fundraising

Felicity McCabe
Admin

Kirsi Lintula
Marketing

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