

Bohemia Walled Garden Association
Trustee Annual Report
For the year January - December 2022
Charity Commission report & for AGM in 2023

The Bohemia Walled Garden Association (BWGA)

The BWGA was formed in 2009 with the purpose of restoring, preserving and utilising the 19th Century Victorian walled garden in the Summerfields Wood. It aims to bring it back into active use for horticultural, educational, heritage and cultural activities.

The garden is owned by Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and leased to the BWGA for 25 years until 31 March 2036. The lease was renewed on the 5th January 2018 in line with the BWGA change of status to a Registered Charity. The garden is located in the Summerfields Wood which is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Structure, Governance and Management

The BWGA is managed by volunteers. It is a registered Charity (Registration Number 1167167) as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with voting members other than its charity trustees. The organisation is managed by charity trustees and governed by the BWGA Charity Commission Constitution. It follows Charity Commission (CC) guidelines and must report annually to the CC to affirm its obligation to function for the 'public benefit' and to uphold the BWGA/CC objectives.

The BWGA trustees are supported by other BWGA members on a committee who have delegated roles. BWGA members, plot-holders and volunteers are overseen by the trustees in the everyday running of the garden, events, fundraising and educational activities. The local community is encouraged to participate in all the above.

The BWGA Charity Commission Objects:

- (1) To promote for the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.
- (2) To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.
- (3) The provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure-time occupation in the interests of social welfare for the public at large with the object of improving their conditions of life.

To be a Charity it is necessary for the trustees to understand and to have regard to the 'public benefits' that the charity aims to provide as in the objectives. The Trustees Annual Report is to show how these objectives are being achieved. It is presented to the BWGA members at the AGM.

Members of the BWGA committee as confirmed at the 2022 AGM

Trustee(Chair)	Nigel Sinden
Trustee(Secretary)	Beryl Lovett
Trustee(Treasurer)	Sue Jirbandey
Trustee	Lesley Bruce

The current trustees are supported by other members in various activities.

Fundraising and Income

Income in 2022 has come from the plot fees and refreshments sales and donations at public events. We also received a generous donation from the Bohemia Residents Association from them winding up the association funds. We welcomed two of their members to the garden at which time the cheque was presented to us.

Expenditure

The following sizeable expenditures were made in 2022:

- Annual insurance, which covers public liability and protects the individual trustees.
- Water collection system over the three water containers by the garden entrance. This will collect rainwater via a large funnel.

Any expenses incurred by our volunteers are reimbursed, following a procedure of proof of expense and payment is always authorised by two trustees.

Grant applications

No applications were made.

Financial Management

The BWGA operates a bank account which is mainly managed online and can make and receive payments by BACS. Plot fees can be made by BACS and we make payments by BACS for members expenses and other expenditures (like insurance, membership fees). The financial controls online are the same as physical cheque payments that need two authorisations.

Our accounts for 2022 have not been examined externally as they were under £10,000, for which external review is not required. The accounts are prepared by the treasurer and are presented at the AGM and submitted to the Charity Commission.

Insurance, Health and Safety and Policies

The BWGA has public liability insurance and this is renewed annually. The BWGA does risk assessments for all events and activities at the garden. The risk assessment is based on a template policy before being customised for each event. Various policy documents (including risk management, volunteering and privacy) are available on our website.

Publicity, Information, Members and Supporters

Our main social media platform currently is Facebook. The garden has its own website (www.bohemiawga.org.uk) which contains a vast amount of information about the organisation.

We continue to use Mail Chimp to communicate with members and supporters, each maintained as separate lists. Members at times receive communications that are only relevant to them and they can vote at the AGM. The member group includes all plot-holders and active members who contribute in an active way to the garden's upkeep or development. Supporters are those who are keen to know what is going on and how to support us through our events. Supporters do not have voting rights at the AGM.

Open to the public

The garden is open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays 10 - 12 in the growing season March-November (weather dependent).

Currently the garden is opened by the same members. We are looking at the possibility of an "opening up rota" for Sundays with each week staffed by a plot holder and a committee member, to remove the reliance on them and get members to know who is on the committee and encourage community spirit.

Volunteers

The BWGA is completely run by volunteers and we welcome new members from the local community. We continue to aim to use the varied skills of our volunteers. Some volunteers come for a short period of time and others make up the backbone of the BWGA garden volunteer team, particularly on the Wednesday and Sunday sessions.

Community groups, collaborations and partnerships

There are areas for educational purposes at no cost, which the BWGA offers as a commitment to encouraging the appreciation and benefits of working in the garden.

Spaces were still allocated throughout 2022 to Christ Church CE Primary Academy, Eggtooth (wellbeing services for children, young people, parents and professionals) and two groups from East Sussex College.

BWGA continues a partnership with Groundwork South/Greener Futures project, whereby Groundwork runs weekly "gardening for health sessions" on a larger plot within the garden.

The Refugee Buddy Project (Hastings, Rother & Wealden) has two plots against the outer wall.

Plots

All plots have been in use throughout the year and any vacant plots have quickly been taken up by the next person on the waiting list.

Education

Many educational resources can be downloaded from the website. Greener Futures led regular weekly volunteering and learning sessions. Christ Church CE Primary Academy used the garden for activities as part of the school curriculum.

Garden Management and Development

Members continued to maintain the borders, to give pleasure to members and visitors and also to benefit pollinating insects.

Bringing piped water to the garden: Our committee member Abi has continued to investigate options for getting piped water into the garden which has proved more involved and costly than was first thought.

BWGA Public events in 2022

We held our usual public events which were well supported.

Event	Adults	Children
Easter	69	68
Heritage Open Day	147	30
Pumpkin Day	70	55
	286	153

Total attending: 439

Pumpkins were kindly donated by the local Morrisons supermarket to top up those grown at the garden.

BWGA Members events in 2022

In September, there was a bring-your-own picnic by the plots for plot holders and members.

In December we held two social gatherings; indoors and outdoors.

On Sunday 4th December we toasted marshmallows around a fire pit in the garden during the afternoon.

On Thursday 8th December we met at the Welcome for a drink and food during the evening.

All events were well supported and set to become annual events.

Conclusion

The BWGA works for the benefit of as many people in our community as possible so they can enjoy the environment of this lovely garden and area. We ensure that the Walled Garden is conserved, protected and improved for future generations to enjoy.

The BWGA trustees would like to thank all BWGA members, volunteers and partners for their support in 2022. We thank HBC for their continued cooperation in this joint effort.

This report and the action plan show how the BWGA continues to meet the Charity Objects.

This report has been compiled and approved by the following trustees in post during 2022.

Sue Jirbandey _____ / /2023

Beryl Lovett _____ / /2023

Lesley Bruce _____ / /2023

Nigel Sinden _____ / /2023