

Bohemia Walled Garden Association

Management Committee Report

For the year ended 31st December 2014

Background

The Bohemia Walled Garden Association was formed in 2009 in order to bring the Victorian Walled Garden in Summerfields back into active use for horticulture and associated educational and cultural activities.

The Management Committee submit their annual report and financial statement for the Bohemia Walled Garden Association (BWGA) for the year ended 31st December 2014.

The garden is owned by Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and is located within the Summerfields Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Structure, Governance and Management

The members of the Management Committee are responsible for ensuring that the BWGA has an appropriate system of financial controls. They are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the Association; for safeguarding the assets of the Association and for taking reasonable steps to detect and prevent any financial irregularities.

They endeavour to ensure that all requirements in the lease from HBC are met.

The Committee are also responsible for the health and safety of plot holders, members and volunteers working in the garden as well as visitors to the garden and ensuring that the Association complies with relevant statutory legislation.

The Committee are responsible for developing projects and events for the benefit of the members and the wider community.

Plot holders, members and interested volunteers are kept informed of activities and events through the website and other social media.

Members of the BWGA committee 2014

Bob Hart chair

Secretary Susan Thomson

Treasurer Christine M'baye

Events Mary Dawson

Minutes Sally Hick

Carolyn Eaves

Darren Windley health and Safety

Gerry Harris

Sub group Fund Raising Chris Stovold Christine Mary and Carolyn

Guy Loder Ranger HBC attends meetings when possible

2014 Plots

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

Two schools still have plots within the walled garden and members of the walled garden have assisted in keeping these up to scratch, when the schools are not able to visit.

Half of St. Paul's School plot has been allocated to the Home Education Group in St. Leonards. (HEDGE)

A vacant area along the east wall has been allocated for use by the younger member of the walled garden as a natural play area. The corner plot allocated for the bee-hives has changed hands and will double in size to accommodate the new hives.

The plot fees will remain at £1/square metre as decided at the AGM in 2014 and the fees will be discussed at the AGM in 2015 for 2016.

Committee members and other members endeavour to ensure that the garden was open every Wednesday and Sunday in the mornings to welcome visitors and encourage members to get involved in the activities and events of the garden.

Maintenance

Day to day maintenance of paths and grassed areas is carried out by members and occasional working parties have carried out clearance of wood and undergrowth from outside the garden in the immediate surroundings. This has been done with the help of the Ranger in Summerfields Woods.

Methods of achieving more support for regular maintenance requirements is an ongoing project.

Improvements to garden

We have installed a waterless toilet for use in the garden and this was mainly funded by a grant of £10,000 received from Big Lottery Awards.

We have also purchased a large, easily erected marquee for use in the garden and at outside events we may be involved in and this was mainly funded by a grant of £1,000 received from Sussex Garden's Trust.

These two purchases will enable us to make even better use of the garden for events in the future.

Donations

As well as donations from individuals at events throughout the year we received donations from Sainsbury, Paul Rummery's book fayre, school donation and a donation from a descendant from the Brisco Family, who visited us from America.

These donations are all paid into the savings account to assist with developments at the garden.

Events

The first event of the year was a Bush craft event for children held in February. This was so popular that it was repeated again in April.

The Easter event for families with young children took place in April and was also very well received.

The Open Day in June hosted a variety of activities to include music, story-telling, plant and craft sales and a raffle as well as home-made cakes and refreshments.

Other Bush craft events were held for the home education group (HEDGE) and for members of the BWGA and families.

The Heritage Open Day was held in September and talks were given on the history of the garden and estate. There were Victorian games on offer as well as a display of penny farthings cycles, music and willow weaving. Homemade cakes and refreshments were also available.

In October, an AfriKàBa event, as part of the Black History month, took place in the garden, followed by a walk through the woods linking in with other events at the museum. The garden was the venue for a story/drama adventure which encouraged audience participation. There were refreshments at this event also and young people from Pestalozzi International Village were involved in the event.

The Pumpkin event took place in October, despite rats trying to sabotage the event by eating lots of the pumpkins we had grown! Pumpkin carving took place as well as leaf printing and pumpkin soup was served.

In December we held our Christmas celebration – inviting all interested parties to celebrate the year with us – especially the installation of the waterless toilet and the purchase of the new marquee.

Other events include – visit by Ben Fairlight Edwards who taught us about herbs and their uses; a picnic in the garden by parents and children as part of the Children Centre's play day in the woods; Treasure Tots toddler group met twice a month during the summer months to play in the garden; a visit by two hundred children and staff from St. Mary's Star of the Sea School; a drama story group put on by St. Paul's School for pupils as well as member's using the garden for picnics and practising yoga.

In addition to events held at the Bohemia Walled Garden, we attended two outside events advertising the garden and offering activities for children to learn about bees. These events took place in Alexandra Park in June and at the St. Leonard's Festival in July.

These events have been organised and delivered by a dedicated team of BWGA members and thanks go to each one.

PLANS FOR 2015

The BWGA is in the process of becoming registered as a charity, members are working on a revised constitution to suit charity status. This is being done with the support of Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) and the Charity Commission.

The BWGA Business ACTION PLAN has been reviewed for the past year it will be available at the AGM.

There will be a discussion at the March AGM about future events and ideas from members.

The sub group FUND Raising are currently working on the Heritage Lottery grant application. If successful the grant will cover the wall restoration, better accessibility paths and notice boards and HERITAGE Open Days.

There will be a discussion at the March AGM about futures events and ideas from members.

The BWGA Management committee would like to thank all BWGA members, volunteers and partners for their support in 2014

Report has been compiled by the Management committee

Signatures DATE

Chair: Bob Hart _____

Secretary Susan Thomson _____

Treasurer Christine M'baye _____