

# **Management Committee Report For the BWGA 2012**

The Management Committee submit their annual report and financial statement for the Bohemia Walled Garden Association (BWGA) for the year ended 31st December 2012.

## **Background**

The Bohemia Walled Garden Association was formed in 2009 and became an unincorporated organisation in order to bring the Victorian Walled Garden at Summerfields back into active use for horticulture and associated cultural and educational activities. The garden is owned by Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and is located within the Summerfields Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) but is not part of the LNR. The project is supported by the Friends of Summerfields Woods Local Nature Reserve. The seven key objectives of the BWGA remain unchanged since the BWGA formation. These are:

- a) To restore and put back into active use the Victorian walled garden within the nature conservation area of Summerfields Wood.
- b) To raise awareness of the site's historical, social, and horticultural value.
- c) To work in sympathy with the Summerfields Wood environment as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- d) To encourage education, training and cultural awareness.
- e) To work in a sustainable manner that encourages recycling, where appropriate.
- f) To demonstrate and offer opportunities for participation in the horticultural craft of growing fruit and vegetables.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Bohemia Walled Garden Association has a Management Committee governed by the constitution adopted on 9th March 2009. Day-to-day management of the Association is vested in the members of the Management Committee, who must be elected and co-opted under the terms of the constitution. The Management Committee work as a team.

## **Management Committee responsibilities**

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 are also responsible for the health and safety of volunteers working in the garden, for the health and safety of visitors to the garden, and for ensuring that the Association complies with relevant statutory legislation. The Committee are responsible for developing projects and events for the benefit of members and the wider community whilst ensuring that the current objectives of the BWGA are developed.

### **Members of the committee during 2012**

Secretary Sue Thomson  
Treasurer Christine M'Bbaye  
Chair Bob Hart  
Minute Sec Sally Hick  
Mary Dawson  
Michell Guille

### **Achievements during 2012.**

All 2011 plot users were invited to renew their plot use for 2012 with a total of 39 users starting the year and 1 new user during the year. At the end of 2012 all available plots are in use and a waiting list is available. The plot fee, agreed at the 2012 AGM, for the use of a plot at the Walled Garden remains at £1 sq metre during 2013.

We continued to encourage the participation of St. Paul's & St. Mary's primary schools within the garden without any charge and during the year use was made of the garden for different activities.

Throughout the summer period a range of cultural events were staged including a Mad Hatters Tea Party that included music and a performance. A private film show for BWGA members only, showing the Wes Andersons an animated film, The Fantastic Mr Fox was shown during the evening. A late afternoon Summer Concert for members was popular. There needs to be special mention of the quality of the posters that were produced to promote events during the year as well as the creation of a social network presence on Facebook & Twitter. There was entertainment and music in the garden when it was opened on a Sunday for Heritage Open Days in September and on that day the Ice House at Horntye was also opened.

During the year the BWGA benefited from a generous donations from each of the events as well as an income from cakes and refreshments. The donations derived from events have allowed improvements to horticultural provision by allowing the installation of increased water storage on all sheds & shelters by the purchase of more plastic water storage tanks providing a water capacity of at least 2000 litres of water. A shingle surface on the lower path was installed as part of a HVA grant and assistance by the park ranger service allowed the import of several cubic metres of wood chip for the other paths.

A safety officer has been appointed to monitor safety issues and has produced risk assessments for the different types of garden uses as well as conducting tool inspections and implementation of regular safety inspections of the site.

A human sundial / compass art feature that was under development in 2011 opposite the Grey Owl shelter was completed and installed during the year and also this year further reductions of trees surrounding the garden were completed by Joc Hare a specialist arboriculturist.

Throughout the year donations collected at the different events in the garden were increased by the generous donation by Paul Rummery derived from the Book Sale at St Peters Church Hall £381.00. Other donations during the year were £220.00 from Heather Grief derived from a percentage of the sale of her book “ Bohemia Farm to Summerfields Estate - A History” and most recently a donation of £100 from St Pauls School.

As a part of our financial management system we adopted online financial records so that it is now possible for any committee member who wishes to be able to see all income and expenditure as soon as it is entered into the system and offers a much more robust system of managing small or large amounts of income and expenditure.

Members of the committee continue to work developing a high quality waterless toilet facility involving meetings with relevant council officers for expert guidance. A site in the garden has now been chosen and more detailed planning is now in progress.

During the year we amended an AGM decision so that a newsletter will be sent out in September & March because it was felt that there would only be enough material and enthusiasm to produce two newsletters each year. We began another update of the BWGA Business plan originally produced in 2009 now requiring updating with existing and new proposals. The garden continued to host “The Garden Philosophers” group, to involve thoughtful analysis and sharing of ideas. The bees continue to use a space in the corner of the garden and the beekeepers report that the bees are happy despite the wet summer and have still been going out when the weather is not too wet and windy but will be settling down for winter soon. We have continued to promote the activities of the Walled Garden on three different web locations as well as on Twitter & Facebook. We continued our support and partnership working with the Friends of Summerfields Wood and provided them access to the garden for for a Bar-B-Q in September.

### **Further work is required on 2012 proposals and forms part of plans for 2013**

- To develop a team of members to obtain grant funding to repair the fallen wall
- To develop a team of members to obtain grant funding for horticulture & health promotion issues.
- Develop systems to demonstrate the effectiveness of waterless closets or composting toilets.
- To develop a periodic common working day to deal with structural & maintenance issues.

### **Plans for 2013**

- A revised BWGA Business Plan has been developed taking into account the developing model of use that has been achieved over the last years and ideas submitted in a current online consultation document.
- **Major Projects** - Rebuilding end wall, composting toilet, accessibility to garden.
- **Maintenance** - Ongoing to grounds and tools, water collection & solar power
- **Education / Community** - Continue working with schools, developing links with other educational groups, encouraging other community groups to volunteer in the garden.
- **Events** - Run educational workshops eg Composting, Growing Herbs, wildlife gardening, income generating community events and open days, cultural and artistic events in line with the garden ethos.

The BWGA Management Committee would like to thank all BWGA members, volunteers and partners for their support during 2012.

This report was approved by the Management Committee on December 2012 and signed on its behalf by:

Chair: **Bob Hart**

Secretary: **Susan Thomson**

Treasurer: **Christine Mbaye**