

Bohemia Walled Garden Association

Management Committee Report

For the year 2015

AGM March 12th 2016

Background

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

The Management Committee submits its annual report and financial statement for the Bohemia Walled Garden Association (BWGA) for the year ending 31st December 2015.

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

The Committee is 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 is 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, emails and other social media.

Members of the BWGA committee 2015

Chair Mary Dawson

Secretary Susan Thomson

Treasurer Christine M'baye

Minutes Sally Hick (part of 2015)

Health and Safety and IT Darren Windley

Committee member Carolyn Eaves

Committee member Alexander Wilberforce

Sub-group – Fund Raising and Events Chris Stovold, Carolyn Eaves, Christine and Mary

Thanks to Sally Hick who resigned for personal reasons.

Guy Loder HBC Ranger attended the committee meeting for some of 2015, he is no longer working for HBC. Many thanks go to Guy for all the practical help, advice and support he gave the committee and the BWGA. Thanks also to Amy Terry and Terry Drinkwater HBC for support in relation to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant application.

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.

St Mary Star of Sea school continues to cultivate on their plot. HEDGE the home education group now also have a plot. Treasure Tots continue to visit the garden and use the 'mud area' for play as do older children! Unfortunately the bees and bee hives have been removed by the last owners. This was decided the best option due to safety reasons.

Recently a plot has been allocated to 22 St Peters for the residents to learn more about growing. A special school for young people with emotional behavior difficulties are also requesting a plot. Plot fees were raised to £1 20 from £1 00 a square metre from January 2016 as agreed at the AGM 2015. Susan Thomson has been plot secretary for many years, and we are all grateful for all she has done. Chris Stovold has taken over this role.

Committee members and other members endeavor to ensure that the garden was open most Wednesday and Sunday 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, grassed areas and planting of the borders 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. Mat and Darren Windley cut the grass and organize the water-saving system. We have regular members who help with maintenance but welcome more help especially with weeding!

Improvements to the garden

The waterless toilet has been well used and is working efficiently. The marquee is also a great asset.

A task to weed and re-gravel the paths was carried out in the pouring rain by members with some help from the Community Payback Team (Probation service).

Graffiti was erased from the walls by Carolyn Eaves. A woodshed for bush craft equipment and a table for the urn has been built.

The community borders are looked after by several members including Lesley Bruce and Susan Thomson, and other members are invited to help with these areas.

Our IT expert Darren Windley has introduced Mail Chimp for emails and membership administration.

Donations

As well as donations from individuals at events throughout the year, we also received donations from Paul Rummery's book fayre, from St Mary Star of Sea school and Treasure Tots.

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

Events 2015

The public events began in March with the colourful Tibetan celebration arranged by Tenzin and Alexander Wilberforce and performances by the Pestalozzi students A Basketry workshop by Julie Gurr was held in March.

The Easter event involved chocolate eggs, story and a woodland adventure.

The June Garden party was a glorious day arranged by Chris Stovold with a huge raffle, music and a weaving activity. There was a marvelous turn out of 300 plus people, and it raised almost £900.

The Heritage Open Day arranged by Carolyn Eaves was very wet but choirs sang, children danced and there was a talk about Linseed and its benefits. Also adorable chicks and ducklings were on show and children made mini gardens in trays.

Pumpkin Day was a success especially as we grew a pumpkin bounty. The dads seemed to enjoy the carving as much as the children!

All these events included 'Tea and lovely home made cakes' served by Lesley and crew.

Family and children events:

Several bush craft sessions were held where children learnt fire-lighting, tool use, built shelters, identified bugs and had hot sticky marshmallows! Darren proved a great fire keeper!

August sun shone at the Family Fun event where Wendy and Martin from The Pocket Park and Claire from Treasure Tots helped with fun activities.

Families from Mallydams RSPCA 'Wild Things' project and Fellowship of St Nicolas visited the garden.

One afternoon 100 children from St Paul's school came to listen to stories and do activities in the wood.

The year concluded with a December celebration for members with mulled wine and a lovely warm brazier fire.

Events in total were 13, footfall 1000 and money raised £1,596 before expenses. The garden had a visit from Radio 4 'Garden's Question Time' team and we were on the radio!

Hastings On Line Times(HOT) wrote an article about the garden.

Volunteers

The BWGA is run completely by volunteers and the above events would not happen without a lot of planning and working together! We have made contact with Brighton University (Hastings campus) and are hoping for some volunteers from the Active Student project.

Another member of a project run by a Housing Association has started to volunteer at the garden.

PLANS FOR 2016

The BWGA is proceeding with Charity Status application and hope this will be granted soon.

This is being done with the support of Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA)

The BWGA has submitted a nomination to be included in the HASTINGS LOCAL HERITAGE ASSET LIST. This should be considered by HBC shortly.

The BWGA has resubmitted a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the outcome will be known in April. The project includes restoration of the east wall, construction of a path-way to the garden across the green from the leisure centre, interpretation boards for better signage and information. Various Heritage events and activities in 2016 and 2017.

A separate document outlines the HLF project plans. Part of the plan is to increase the use of the garden to many more and more diverse groups of people. To provide activities to help people in the community to engage with Heritage, natural heritage, history of the garden and the area that includes the wood and the local nature reserve. If this is not successful we will need to consider other options.

The BWGA is in the process of upgrading the web site and we are now using Mail Chimp.

The BWGA has updated the Business Plan which is available to read by members.

The BWGA aims to work with other like minded groups for the benefit of as many people as possible so they can enjoy the environment of this lovely garden and area.

The BWGA Management committee would like to thank all BWGA members, volunteers and partners for their support in 2015

This report has been compiled by the Management committee

Signatures

DATE

Chair: Mary Dawson

Secretary: Susan Thomson

Treasurer: Christine M'baye
