

Blaise Community Garden

Chair's Report on Activity at the Garden from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

Adopted as Trustees Annual Report

General Information

The garden has continued to run as a completely volunteer led project with minimal funds.

It has been open every Wednesday and Saturday from 10 til 2 and on a Monday during the spring/summer/early autumn. It was open for volunteer work sessions and for members of the public.

Horticultural activities

Facilitators were appointed for different areas of the garden and growing groups set up to help ensure a co-ordinated and sustainable approach to growing was taken. The facilitators took responsibility for overseeing their particular area and managing what was grown, following the process of crop rotation. A large variety of fruit, vegetables and plants was grown and shared out amongst the volunteers.

Restoration and Maintenance of Historical Features and Buildings

The main work in this area has been on greenhouse 5 by a small team of 3 – Tim Parkinson, John Wyatt and Hazel Moy.

Avon Gardens Trust gave the sum of £700 for the cost of making 9 bottom rails needed for the side opening windows and John Wyatt produced these.

A quote for two replacement side windows for £425 has been submitted by John Wyatt and is held pending funds.

All the new timber and existing rails have been primed and painted by Hazel Moy.

A quote of £2750 for long term scaffolding platform to enable work on the upper structure has been received and awaits funds.

The southern half of greenhouse is covered with the large tarpaulin which blew off the large greenhouse next to the Cabin

Required next steps

Step	Description	By
1	Obtain professional assessment of structural integrity of greenhouse.	Tim
5	Refurbish (strip, prime & paint) 18 side windows, reglaze as needed and refit	Tim and Hazel
6	Assessment of apex timber and roof windows and quote for replacement where necessary	Tim & John
7	Free up window opening mechanisms	? volunteer

10	Fit new glazing bars once scaffolding platform in place	Volunteers instructed by John
11	Obtain quote for reglazing including 50% new glass	Tim
12		

Wildlife and Biodiversity

The ponds are now well established and continue to provide a habitat for frogs, toads and newts as well as lots of insects, including dragonflies. The 3 beehives are also doing well and the specially planted bee garden is providing lots of flowers for them to collect nectar from.

Conversations have taken place amongst the volunteers about neat and tidy spaces versus less tidy spaces that encourage wildlife. Volunteers have been asked to be mindful of this so that we can support and sustain various creatures.

Events

The events team met regularly throughout the year to plan and deliver a series of events to help promote community engagement and to meet some of the aims and objectives of the charity. Some events were for volunteers only and others open to all members of the public. Some were also planned and delivered in collaboration with other organisations and events, including Bristol Open Doors, Get Growing, Food Connections and Bristol City Council. The main events were:

- Various Crafternoons – including ‘Get Ready for Christmas’ and ‘Easter’.
- Get Growing Trail
- Food Connections
- Festival of Archaeology
- Bristol Open Doors
- Bonfire Night
- Christmas Market
- Christmas Wreath Making Workshop

The turn-out for each event varied but generally they were well-attended. Unfortunately though, due to problems with the roof and concerns over health and safety, we had to stop using the big greenhouse, which made the running of some things more difficult due to a lack of indoor space being available. However, feedback from visitors has always been very positive and the events have introduced lots of new people to the garden and have been a great way to publicise what we do.

Café

The café has become a regular feature at events, with a number of volunteers baking and donating cakes for it and it now runs very smoothly. The selection of goods on offer is always very impressive and the decision was made to use reusable mugs and plates whenever possible and to only use disposable (but compostable) ones when necessary. This has been when the café has been extremely busy. Thank you to Vegware for providing these free of charge. The café made a good profit at most events.

Plant Sales

The sale of plants took place during regular sessions and at events and has raised a good profit for the garden over the year. There was a good range of high quality plants available at very reasonable prices.

Volunteers

There has been a core group of very dedicated volunteers who have put immense effort into the restoration and running of the garden, plus lots of other volunteers who have helped on more of an ad-hoc basis. As there has been lots of different things going on in the garden, volunteers have been able to choose which aspect of it they want to work on, allowing people to follow their interests and make best use of their knowledge, skills and expertise. Everyone's help in whatever way is extremely valued.

Social Media

We continued to advertise and promote the garden through use of the website, Facebook and Twitter and social media has been one of the ways we have tried to keep people informed and up to date. This is an area that we could improve on though.

Funding and Finance

See separate report.

Application to Bristol City Council for a 25 year lease

We were successful in getting agreement from Bristol City Council for a 25 year lease. This included the use of additional buildings adjacent to the garden that have been left empty for a number of years. The lease will help secure the overall viability of the project and enable the charity to secure longer term funding and build stronger relationships with other community organisations. Plans for the additional buildings have been discussed by the charity Trustees and members and include, although not finalised, event space and a café.

Whilst agreement has been given, the lease is yet to be in place and we are waiting for Bristol City Council to issue it to us. Much chasing of this has been done on our part.

Summary

The garden has continued to develop over the past year, with more and more space being made usable for growing and more restoration work taking place. Through various methods of advertising and events, more people are getting to know about the garden and are visiting during volunteer days and at events. People who come tend to love it and many are wowed by the beauty of it. It is a very special place indeed and I would like to thank everybody for all their time and hard work, in whatever capacity this has been.

Michelle Smith
Chair of Trustees, Blaise Community Garden
November 2019

BLAISE COMMUNITY GARDEN FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2018/2019

INCOME	2018/19	2017/18
Grants	4465.00	3917.25
Donations	958.79	799.04
Plant Sales	1560.10	1161.93
Events	2346.35	1783.69
Miscellaneous	0.00	<u>162.54</u>
Total for year	9330.24	7824.05

EXPENDITURE 2018/19

Buildings	4309.67	3827.36 Buildings and equipment not split.
Equipment	1961.34	0.00
Plants/Seeds	589.98	625.72
Compost etc	1146.20	1937.51
Catering	720.80	498.78
Electricity	516.22	0.00
Insurance	232.16	164.40
Miscellaneous	<u>1162.62</u>	<u>571.46</u>
Total for year	10638.99	7625.23

BALANCE SHEET 2018/19

Surplus/(Deficit)	(1308.75)	198.82
Brought forward	<u>5650.70</u>	<u>5462.49</u>
Carried forward	4341.95	5661.31