



HEREFORDSHIRE GROWING POINT

Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ending

31st May 2016



(Charity No. 100625)

PATRON: The Baroness Masham of Ilton **PRESIDENT:** Dr Heather Barrett-Mold
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**HEREFORDSHIRE GROWING POINT
(Charity No. 1006625)**

Annual Report for the Year ending 31st May 2016

The Trustees present their report for the year ended 31st May 2016.

The Members of the Committee during the year were:

Chairman:	Laura Hone	Co-ordinator:	Julian Reeves
Treasurer:	Andrew Huntley	Publicity:	Sally Rodgers
Events:	Julie Cohn & Mary Knight		
Transport/Minutes Secretary:	Janet Parry		

Trustees: Laura Hone, Andrew Huntley, Sally Rodgers, Janet Parry, Julie Cohn, Mary Knight, Fiona Paterson, Shelagh Wynn, Caroline Lechmere, Jeanie Falconer, and Rachel Huntley.

The Charity was established in 1990 with, as its original governing instrument, a Constitution adopted on 29th April 1991. This Constitution was revised in 2014 and an updated Constitution was adopted on 17th November 2014 at the 2014 AGM. Officers and Members of the Committee are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting held in November.

The Aim and Objectives of Herefordshire Growing Point

The aim of Herefordshire Growing Point is to enable vulnerable and disabled people of all ages to enjoy the social and therapeutic benefits of horticultural activities.

The objectives of Herefordshire Growing Point are:

- The provision of horticultural therapy. The benefits are that people with a wide range of disabilities can meet up socially as part of a group and gain a real sense of achievement through a range of gardening activities.
- The provision and maintenance of a demonstration garden at the Holme Lacy Campus for horticultural therapy sessions as well as training courses. Also to enable people to think of ideas for their own gardens.
- To provide training, guidance and advice;
- To employ suitably qualified and experienced horticultural instructors;
- To raise funds to finance the objectives of the Charity.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2015-16

The Trustees can report that there have been no serious incidents over the past year.

Everyone at the Holme Lacy Campus has continued to be very supportive of Herefordshire Growing Point, especially in terms of parking and room hire when we have events. There has also been practical, external help, for example some of the garden tools were repaired by the student blacksmiths.

Julian Reeves, the new Co-ordinator, has done much good work in reorganising the timetable meaning that the tutors can work more efficiently. He has also made contact

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with, and added several new groups, so a new tutor, Izzy Darbshire has now joined the team to take on some of this additional work. Julian has also undertaken a programme of overdue maintenance tasks which is greatly improving the look of the Demonstration Garden. Some tutors have gained further qualifications and been on training courses which has meant that this extra knowledge has been passed on to the groups, as well as shared among other tutors. In addition, Julian Reeves has gained a Distinction with Commendation in Horticulture and Garden Design (Level Four) at Pershore College.

We were very fortunate to be able to have the annual garden outing at Hellens, in Much Marcle. The weather was glorious and everyone at Hellens was immensely helpful over the catering arrangements, so all the gardeners had a very special afternoon. This was followed a fortnight later with the annual barbecue for all gardeners, volunteers, tutors, trustees, plus families. This was held on one of the hottest days of the year, but Bryn Margerison and Woody Blagg very nobly carried on with the cooking and everyone enjoyed themselves. As this was Sue Eaton's last week at Herefordshire Growing Point, she was given a presentation as a token of appreciation for all the work and effort she had put into the charity over the years, so there was a note of sadness at this always enjoyable occasion.

The Autumn Show was judged by the Mayor of Hereford, Councillor Charles Nicholls and the Mayoress, Mrs Jenny Tawn. The Mayor was a very enthusiastic judge and this was appreciated by all the Growing Point gardeners. The entries displayed great skill and imagination and the 2015 Gardener of the Year was Jane Simpson of the Over 60s group. The Mayor has been a great supporter of the charity and was kind enough to arrange for a load of compost to be delivered to Holme Lacy; the gardeners have produced some excellent results on it.

In February, the Co-ordinator planned and hosted a joint session of trustees and tutors to discuss aspects of working with the widely different Growing Point gardeners. Attendees brainstormed ideas for developing the charity further; there were two presentations on Outcome measures and also a presentation on a training day at Thrive that tutor Alex Yorke attended. This looked at how to support those with certain neurological conditions. We intend to hold further planning days at least annually.

The principal fundraising event of the year was the third Gardeners' Question Time evening. Sir Roy Strong CH, very kindly chaired the event and Duncan Coombs (RHS identification expert and adviser, ex Pershore College); Mark Harwood-Browne (Horticultural Department, Hartpury College) and Tamsin Westhorpe (former Editor at Large, The English Garden Magazine, now freelance gardening writer) generously agreed to appear as panelists. There was an excellent turn-out with questions that proved useful to the whole community. A raffle was held with prizes donated by Carr's Organic Products, the Castle House Hotel, the Paunton Court Winery and Wyevale Garden Centres. The catering was done by the committee, so the evening raised over £3000 which was a wonderful total and our grateful thanks are due to everyone involved.

In March, a rota of Trustees repainted the inside of the Garden House which looked much brighter and fresher afterwards. The gardeners really appreciated this when they started back at the beginning of the gardening year. The seating in the polytunnel has also improved by the purchase of some new, brightly coloured chairs.

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The following policies have been voted on and are now updated on a regular basis: Conflict of Interest; Equal Opportunities; Finance Management; Health and Safety; Honorary Appointments; Membership; Recruitment; Reimbursement of Trustees; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Standing Orders for Charity Meetings and Volunteers. All policies have a named trustee responsible for reviewing and updating content, in accordance with changes in charity practice, or in line with statutory guidance or legislation.

A copy of all policies is kept by the Co-ordinator, and all are available for electronic viewing by trustees via the Herefordshire Growing Point Dropbox facility.

New tutors and trustees are expected to read the charity's policies when taking up their position. Volunteers will be expected to read those policies relevant to their role. Thanks are due to Shelagh Wynn and Fiona Paterson for keeping the HGP policies under review, updating and adding new policies where necessary.

Representatives from Herefordshire Growing Point continue to attend events and seminars around the county highlighting the achievements of the disabled and showcasing what help and support is available. Herefordshire Disability United always runs interesting seminars on a range of disabilities and the Co-ordinator attends when he can.

Following last year's AGM, a sub group was set up to examine and report back on some of the evaluation/outcome measures available. Discussions were held to decide what might be feasible, recognizing the challenges of time, money and availability (or not) of appropriate tools. The group recommended the setting up of two pilots to trial forms of outcome measures and investigate what is required in the way of additional tutor time and thus costs. The protocols for the two pilots have now been written and individuals have been identified to initiate this mental well-being scale pilot. Consent forms have been produced and it is hoped to start the trials shortly. However, the goal assessments with one group are taking slightly longer than anticipated, so liaison is currently underway between the tutor and the group involved.

Herefordshire Growing Point is currently in discussion with a web designer with a view to re-designing the website. More detailed specifications are being set out and the site could include Mail Chimp – a more efficient way of co-ordinating emails. The designer could also host the website, and provide maintenance of the site (e.g. maintain the software and ensure protection is kept up-to-date. The in-putting of information/content will be made easier as there will be a wider range of permitted individuals to access the re-designed site. This is an on-going project.

Herefordshire Growing Point continues to work with the Herefordshire Activities Together group. HAT is a network of local providers who are working together to increase choice for people in Herefordshire. The booklet is still available in libraries, health centres and other relevant venues. The charity works with other HAT members to improve its service.

Herefordshire Growing Point is an evolving charity with a mix of gardening groups. We now work with more than 200 gardeners over the year, some of whom come to sessions once a month; others once a week. These sessions are held either at the Holme Lacy Campus or as part of the outreach programme to care homes and day centres around the county.

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Over the past year, we have given talks about the charity to the Alzheimer's Society, Great Western Court and Mansel Lacy and Grosmont Garden Clubs. We are continuing with this programme of talks and visits to other gardening clubs and societies around Herefordshire, which helps to promote the charity, encourages more volunteers to come forward and to attract new service-users. We have also received visits from the Christian Ecology Group and the Stroke Group; both organisations were kind enough to give donations.

The following charitable trusts, individuals and organisations have supported Herefordshire Growing Point over the past year and we are most grateful to them: The Jordan Foundation; the Alan Cadbury Charitable Trust; the Prynse's Holme Lacy Charity; the Hawthorne Charitable Trust; Marion and Chris Rowlatt; the Sam Morley Charitable Trust; Stanley House Care Home (with some match funding from Barclays Bank); the Linda Hone Charitable Trust; the Hereford Round Table; the E F Bulmer Benevolent Fund; Putley PCC and the Peterchurch and District Gardening Club together with two generous, anonymous donors. The collecting boxes sited at various outlets and organisations around the county continue to produce donations and we are grateful to all these hosts for their on-going support.

The introduction of on-line giving, using the Donate Now button installed on our website, and linked to MyDonate, has greatly facilitated donations at fund raising events.

Herefordshire Growing Point wouldn't function without the support and help of all the volunteers who do so much. Whether helping out at events, or working one to one with gardeners at the Demonstration Garden, the charity's thanks are due to each and every one of them.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 May 2016

Total monetary assets held at 31 May 2016 were £35,102.17 and the income for the year from 'charitable activities' was £32,009.61. Annual expenditure for the year was £41,497.15.

SUMMARY

There was a deficit for 2015-2016 of £8702.70 with total income of £32,788.45 (made up of all receipts from charitable activities plus interest from the Charities Deposit Fund) and expenditure of £41,497.15. In February 2016, £3,000 was transferred from the Charities Deposit Fund to the current account to keep this account in credit.

1. Income

Donations were £5796.24, up from £2742.85 in 2014-2015. This increase was unexpected and encouraging. It shows that Herefordshire Growing Point is widely regarded as providing a worthwhile service to the community. As well as generous contributions from individuals, these included donations from Wormbridge St Devereux PCC and Putley PCC, the Stanley House Summer Fete (with a matched donation from Barclays Bank) and the Peterchurch and District Garden Club, who generously donated their remaining funds when the club closed. There were also donations through our collecting boxes.

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Charitable Funds (recorded as Appeal Donations). The funding provided was £19,750. As the charity receives no external funding, everyone at Herefordshire Growing Point is most grateful for this support.

Expenses

Courses expenditure. This is the biggest cost for the charity. The cost was £24,473.26, up from £18,832.84 for 2014-2015. This reflects the cost of provision of tutors and group activities. The actual number of tutor hours recorded for the year was 680, up from 537.5 hours for 2014-2015. This is a useful statistic because it shows that the actual cost per tutor hour was £36 in 2015-2016 compared with £35 per tutor hour in 2014-2015.

A significant charge is the cost of client travel which was £4805.60, up from £3515.51 for 2014-2015. We view the provision of transport as a vital part of our service. Without transport, it would not be possible for some of our clients to benefit from the sessions which are so important for their social wellbeing. However, we continue to monitor the cost. In addition, there was a review of the mileage allowance paid to tutors. This allowance was set at 35p per mile in 2008. It was agreed to increase the allowance to 40p per mile from April 2016 to bring it more into line with standard practice.

Capital Equipment. The main items were a lap top for the Co-ordinator and a new bench for the garden, both of which were funded.

Co-ordinator. The PAYE/NIC costs have increased significantly. In 2014-2015, the quarterly cost was £117. In 2015-2016, the quarterly cost has increased to £304. From April 2016, payroll is now administered by the Treasurer. In future, the associated cost will be the cost of the payroll software.

Office expenses. There was a decrease over the previous year which included a 'one off' payment for an advert for the Co-ordinator's post. Thanks to advice from HVOSS (Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service), our insurance cover was transferred to a new broker with a cost saving.

2. Financial Reserves

Herefordshire Growing Point holds £30,258 in a COIF Charities Deposit Fund for the year ending 31 May 2016. Our policy is to maintain a reserve equal to at least one year's expenditure to provide some security against a shortfall in our annual income. In view of this year's deficit, we are identifying ways to increase our income. The charity aims to retain unrestricted funds, other than those held in tangible fixed assets, sufficient to provide adequate working capital to fund the costs of its core activities for at least 12 months, plus any known future commitments, and including a cushion to take into account future risks.

The accounts have been examined independently by Mr Neil Brambell (our thanks are due to him) and will be sent to the Charity Commission by March 2017.

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CONCLUSION

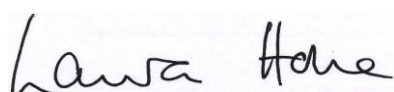
Herefordshire Growing Point is not only about small groups enjoying the opportunity of meeting together and gardening, but also to share knowledge, take pride in achievement and to grow in confidence. This was shown to great effect at the recent Autumn Show, with many hugely impressive and imaginative entries.

New groups and individuals which have joined over the past year, including Crossroads, Care Affinity and Whitegates Nursing Home have been welcomed and are making a great contribution. Izzy Darbshire, the new tutor, has completed her induction and is now fully occupied in taking sessions. All the tutors work well together, and share their experiences. However, horticultural knowledge between gardeners and tutors works both ways. Some of the more experienced gardeners, who sadly are no longer able to work in their own gardens, have a wealth of horticultural knowledge which they share with others in the groups and also with the tutors. This pool of experience is a truly valuable resource and is put to good use.

The charity is very fortunate to have such energetic and hard-working Trustees and also with such committed volunteers who, in particular, make all the difference to the individuals and groups they work with. Thanks are due to all of them. The tutors always show great empathy with the Growing Point gardeners and this life-enhancing work can be transformative. There have been some very rewarding comments made after sessions which really confirms how important the work of Herefordshire Growing Point is.

Finally, we also remember gardeners who have died over the past year, in particular, Roy Cooper who was a stalwart member for many years. We miss his humour and respect his courage - not just in old age but as a D Day veteran.

On behalf of the Trustees



Laura Hone –
Chairman, Hereford Growing Point.

Date: 20th October 2016