



HEREFORDSHIRE GROWING POINT

Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ending

31st May 2017



(Charity No. 100625)

PATRON: The Baroness Masham of Ilton **PRESIDENT:** Dr Heather Barrett-Mold OBE
c/o Holme Lacy Campus, Holme Lacy, Hereford HR2 6LL
Telephone: 07816 257983 **Email:** hgrowingpoint@yahoo.co.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE GROWING POINT
(Charity No. 1006625)

Annual Report for the Year ending 31st May 2017

The Trustees present their report for the year ended 31st May 2017.

The Members of the Committee during the year were:

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

Trustees: Heather Barrett-Mold OBE, 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 2016-17

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

In April 2017, following the Chairman's wish to cut back her work load, the Trustees agreed that the Co-ordinator should take on more tasks and increase his working hours to three days a week. In view of this enhanced role, the job title has been changed from Part Time Co-ordinator to Part Time Charity Manager.

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The charity has continued to have the support of staff at the Holme Lacy Campus, both in terms of outdoor work and also with parking and room hire for events.

Herefordshire Growing Point was lucky enough to be invited to nominate a volunteer to attend the Patron's Lunch in the Mall in celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday. Dawn Palmer, who volunteers on a Thursday, went to London with her husband and although it poured with rain to start with, the weather eventually cleared, the sun came out and they had a very special day. Andy and Judy Hallett very generously invited the Growing Point gardeners to look round and have tea at their beautiful garden at The Old Rectory, Thrupton. Although there was a certain amount of dodging the showers, the gardeners enjoyed being shown round the garden by the Halletts and everyone was got under cover over tea.

Tutor Jo Rigney arranged for long-standing gardener, Gordon Barrington, to link up with Canon Pyon store to sell some of Herefordshire Growing Point's plants and produce, and this initiative was a great success. Very unfortunately it couldn't be repeated this year because in April, Gordon had a terrible accident in Hereford and was only saved by a very quick-thinking member of the public. Mercifully Gordon has made a good recovery and is now back with the charity.

The annual barbecue for gardeners, tutors and their families was a lovely event. As an experiment, it was held earlier in the day and this proved to be a popular innovation.

The Manager, Julian Reeves, introduced a Summer Club to be held once a week for all the groups attending Holme Lacy. This was to fill the gap in the courses held at the Demonstration Garden over the summer due to the school holiday commitments of the tutors working there. He introduced a rota of tutors and volunteers to help run the sessions which were hugely popular and it was planned to extend this idea in the future as not only did this keep the continuity for the gardeners, but it also meant that the garden was properly maintained over the summer and the produce didn't go to waste.

Herefordshire Growing Point was lucky enough to be one of the benefitting charities from the Fabulous Clothes Sale in the Shirehall. This was organised by Rosanna Bulmer, plus a team of volunteers and their support was very much appreciated.

The Autumn Show was held in Autumn sunshine. The original judge was meant to have been the Mayor of Hereford, but he couldn't make the event at the last minute, so he asked Cllr Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes to take his place. Cllr Lloyd-Hayes, along with the Rev. Sharon Elsom were splendid judges, engaging with all the gardeners and presented the Gardener of the Year cup to Nina Coupé – a worthy winner.

Another innovation introduced by Julian was an annual Christmas party. This brought all the different gardening groups together, rather than each group having their own, smaller parties and was held at the Holme Lacy Campus. The tutors and volunteers decorated the room and organised food, as well as arranging party games. Although Father Christmas was unable to come along, a horse, ridden by one of the gardeners who also attends RDA sessions, put in an appearance instead.

Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, the Herefordshire Growing Point President was awarded the OBE in the 2017 New Year's honours and so many congratulations were passed on for this richly-deserved award.

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In January we met the organisers of Link Nurseries in Malvern who have set up a project and we were able to give them some useful advice and guidance as well as sharing ideas. Our advice was also sought for a project in Clytha near Raglan. It's encouraging that our experience can be used to further the cause of horticultural therapy.

In February, following the success of last year's joint session with tutors and trustees, chaired by the Manager, the second Development Day session was held just before the gardeners were due to start back in early March. This was another useful and informative gathering, and this year was slanted towards new tutors. There were presentations of the importance of record keeping and risk assessment and Wendy Lane gave a presentation on her course at the Star College, Cheltenham.

In March, some of HGP's trustees and volunteers, carried out painting and maintenance work on the buildings in the Demonstration Garden; this project was made possible by a grant from the Screwfix Foundation.

Towards the end of April, the Manager attended the Mayor of Hereford's Thanksgiving Service. This service is a way for the Mayor to bring together all the organisations visited during the year and is a really enjoyable occasion.

In May one of the HGP tutors, Ursula Ashworth, who is also the Activities Co-ordinator at Leadon Bank Retirement Centre in Ledbury arranged a very successful fundraising concert by some members of the Malvern Male Voice Choir. The choir sang a wide range of songs and then refreshments were provided afterwards. The evening was very entertaining and was the first of the 2017 fundraising events.

Sadly, long-standing tutor Wendy Lane has left to take up a position as a horticultural therapist in a local school, helping children with behavioural problems. Herefordshire Growing Point contributed towards the cost of her qualification from the Star College on the understanding that if she left within three years, the money would be refunded on a sliding scale. The necessary reimbursement has been achieved by Wendy not submitting any invoices over a period of months. She has also given a training presentation at the Development Day meeting in February.

Alex Yorke attended a Thrive training day in January which gave her useful insights into working with those suffering from epilepsy, which she shared at the development day.

Over the past year, the Trustees have reviewed and updated the charity's policies covering Safeguarding; Health and Safety; Complaints; Equal Opportunities; Conflicts of Interest; Honorary Appointments; Trustee Safeguarding; Tutor Safeguarding and Risk Management. This is an on-going process and the charity's Policies and Procedures are under continuous review.

Following assessments, a pilot scheme is currently in place to see if Outcome measures are the most effective way to monitor HGP gardeners' progress. As this is still in the early stages, the Trustees will report back again in the months to come.

The Manager has continued to attend relevant groups and seminars round the county and is an active partner in the new 'WISH' initiative which provides information and signposting for children and adults in the county.

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One of the great strengths of Herefordshire Growing Point is the variety and mix of its gardening groups. We support some 250 gardeners a month either at the Holme Lacy Campus or as part of the outreach programme to care homes and day centres round the county. New groups and individuals have joined over the past year, and new outreach sessions have started in Bromyard and Leominster. We also now work with a substance misuse charity.

We welcomed two new tutors; Pippa Genner and Izzy Darbshire who have proved excellent additions to our team. Sadly, financial restrictions at Livability meant that Richard Williams who had provided outreach sessions for them for some years, had to finish and has ceased to work as a tutor.

The Manager gave a talk to the Grosmont Gardening Club, and another is planned for Sutton St Nicholas. We are always delighted to be asked to talk at gardening clubs and societies around Herefordshire, to promote the charity, attract new service-users, and encourage more volunteers to contribute to our various activities.

Transport continues to be a challenge for the charity and we are indebted to Community Wheels for the level of care, concern and support the gardeners receive without which many of them could not come to Holme Lacy.

The following charitable trusts, individuals and organisations have supported Herefordshire Growing Point over the past year and we are most grateful to them: Heineken (as part of a new initiative Heineken has launched together with Neighbourly, a social platform that connects charities and community groups with businesses); the E F Bulmer Benevolent Fund gave the charity a grant towards transport costs; the Screwfix Foundation gave a grant towards new plant staging and the refurbishment of the Demonstration Garden buildings and the Henry Sale Foundation gave a grant towards new composting equipment (which had an educational as well as a practical purpose) and the grant also enabled repairs to be done to the fabric of the Demonstration Garden buildings and surrounding area. There was also support from the Jordan Foundation, the Alan Cadbury Charitable Trust, the Prynse's Holme Lacy Charity, the Hawthorne Charitable Trust, the Monday Charitable Trust, Marion and Chris Rowlatt, the Sam Morley Charitable Trust, plus two generous, anonymous donors. The charity was also the beneficiary of a donation collected at a funeral. The collecting boxes sited at outlets and organisations round the county continue to produce donations and we are grateful to all these hosts for their on-going support.

Finally, 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 all of them.

Financial report for year ending 31 May 2017

Total monetary assets held at 31 May 2017 were £39,802.85. The income for the year from 'charitable activities' was £49,775.24. Annual expenditure for the year was £45,191.78.

This report on the accounts is broken down as follows:

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1. Income.

The four main sources of our income are money paid for our courses, donations, fundraising and donations from charitable trusts (recorded as appeal donations).

- Course income. This was £8,081.94 up from £3,506 in 2015-2016. This is entirely due to the work of Julian Reeves, the HGP manager, who has kept a vigilant eye on the payment of course fees.
- Donations. These were £2,465.41, down from £5,796 in 2015-2016. As well as generous contributions from individuals, we are grateful to two organisations which supported us financially. These are Neighbourly Ltd and The Great Western Court Tenants Association in Ross on Wye. In their letter, Great Western Court wrote “the sessions are much enjoyed by all who attend and do much to inspire and motivate members”.
- Fundraising. £2,333 was raised from donations and sales to the Fabulous Clothes Sale in Hereford and £373 was raised at the Leadon Bank Concert in Ledbury. Our thanks go to Rosanna Bulmer and Ursula Ashworth who organised these events.
- Charitable Trusts (recorded as Appeal Donations). The donations were £34,750.00. This included a ‘one off’ donation of £10,000. We are grateful to the many Charitable Trusts which have supported us over the year; it would not be possible for this charity to operate without this level of support.

2. Expenses.

- Courses expenditure. This is the biggest cost for the charity. The cost was £26,882.71, up from £24,473.26 for 2015-2016. The tutor costs for lecturing have increased from £13,118 to £15,024. The number of tutor hours worked in the year was 732.5 (680 for 2015-2016). The increase in materials and travel reflects the increase in the mileage allowance for tutors to 40p per mile (from 35p) in April 2016.
The actual cost taken per tutor hour for courses expenditure, was £36.70 compared with £36 for 2015-2016.
- The Manager. From 1st May 2017, to recognise the additional responsibilities of this job role, the job title has been changed from Course Co-ordinator to Charity Manager. The number of hours worked has increased from 75 to 90 hours per month. This has meant the Manager’s gross annual salary has increased to £16,776 (£12,532.58 for 2016-2017). In addition, a work place pension scheme has been set up for the Manager effective from 1st February 2017. HGP as the employer, will make an annual forecast contribution of £326.88.
- Allocated to Capital Equipment were the cost of gardening tools, a new bench and a ‘Hotbox’ composter for use at the Demonstration Garden. These items were funded.
- Office expenses. There was a decrease over 2015-2016 chiefly because stamp costs were £220, down from £405 in the previous year.

3. Financial Reserves.

Herefordshire Growing Point held £30,376.01 in a COIF Charities deposit fund for year ending 31st May 2017. The charity has no liabilities; however, there has been a forecast increase in our expenditure. This is due to the increased hours worked by tutors and the salary increase for the Manager. Because of this, our policy on reserves has been reviewed. The trustees have agreed that reserves equivalent to six months expenditure are reasonable for this charity. The aim is to provide some financial protection against a shortfall in our annual income.

Conclusion

Over the past year, Julian Reeves, the Charity Manager, has continued to build on his work streamlining the timetable, introducing new groups and courses as well as recruiting new tutors.

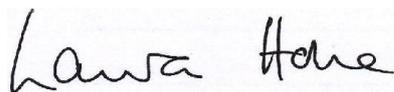
He has also followed up the project started last year to integrate more of the groups with each other, starting with the Summer Club programme and then with the Christmas party. Like the barbecue, this is an opportunity not only for the different groups of gardeners to meet and mingle, but also for the tutors, volunteers, trustees and their families.

Herefordshire Growing Point seeks to encourage those taking part in its courses who show other skills as well as gardening. For example, a young gardener with cerebral palsy and autism has shown an aptitude and enthusiasm for “handyman” work. He has proved himself very useful (under supervision) for helping with repairs and maintenance in the Demonstration Garden. Where possible, group members also help and support each other with a range of tasks and activities.

The increased costs over the past year, partly to do with complying with new legislation and also with a rise in the cost of running the courses, have to an extent, been offset by a gradual increase in course fees. But everyone at Herefordshire Growing Point is also extremely grateful for the invaluable generosity of the Trusts and organisations which have supported the charity.

Many of the people taking part in the Growing Point activities are not able to live independently or to have a job. Despite the challenge of increasing costs, Herefordshire Growing Point does provide a valuable and welcome service to people who can be regarded as being ‘under the radar’ in terms of the opportunity to lead more fulfilling lives. However, none of the charity’s work would be possible without the imagination and dedication of the tutors, volunteers and trustees who all work so hard to manage and carry out the charity’s valuable work.

On behalf of the Trustees



Laura Hone –
Chairman, Hereford Growing Point.

Date: 25 October 2017

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