



Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024

Reports for small non-company charities

Charity Name: Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens

Date when we adopted current legal status: 23/06/2022

Registration number: 199433

Address: Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens, Plas Grounds, Machynlleth, SY20 8ER

Trustees: Eleanor Larmour, Sally Richards, Mike Williams¹.

Committee members: Katherine Hudson; Tom Brown; Jeanette Gray; Anna Fisher; Fern Towers

Structure and details of how managed including how it recruits Trustees

The charity is managed by the Trustee team of 3 Trustees, 4 committee members and two paid staff. Monthly committee meetings are held to agree priorities and progress actions. Regular communications and smaller decisions are discussed over email.

Trustees are recruited by approaching all interested parties to advertise the role and via online adverts on social media channels. Potential Trustees are initially invited to attend some committee meetings and are later asked to become a Trustee if they are a suitable fit. A wider network of 22 people who provide ad hoc or specialist assistance with particular jobs.

Activities and objectives in the year

Continuation of core drop-in service

- These sessions ran on Tuesdays between 10:30am – 4pm, taking only 2 weeks off over the Christmas period.
- These informal sessions provided wellbeing support through the chance for attendees to socialise and engage in rewarding nature-based activity. These attendees bring diverse expertise in horticulture, crafts, biodiversity, and forest gardening, which enriches the entire project.
- 21 individuals attended drop-in sessions in total. We had 32 referrals and enquires – not all of which materialised into regular attendance, but good to show we are in referral networks. Referrals came from: the local psychiatric nurse, Trwydd Iach; Kaleidoscope; Cyfle Newydd and local social media networks.
- Funded by a mix of sources: Bro Dyfi Renewables grant, D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and private donations.

¹ This report was finalised in October 2024. Mike Williams sadly passed away in August 2024, but he was an active trustee between 2023-2024, and so is included in this report.



Herbs for Healing group

- We launched our National Lottery funded project ‘Herbs for Healing’ on Tuesday 11th April 2023, which lasted for 12 months and consisted of 27 sessions lead by a variety of expert workshop leaders (25 of these sessions occurred during the time of this report).
- These sessions were hugely popular, attracting a new group of interest in the gardens. 60 predominantly female members signed up, aged between 20 and 80. One attendee shared *“I always came away feeling inspired and generally much cheerier than when I arrived! Thanks for being so welcoming and inclusive, I really appreciated being able to come along with the kids”*.
- A community of interest is being sustained by an active WhatsApp group chat, and the conducting of an evaluative Masters research project by attendee and committee member Kat Hudson.

BioBlitz festival

- Second time we ran this large public event, another great success, bringing together enthusiastic locals and passionate visitors (some from as far as south Wales!).
- Funded by Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust’s Nextdoor Nature project.
- A series of walks and talks highlighting the rich biodiversity of this town. Highlights include juvenile spotted flycatchers and blackcaps, pregnant woodmice, baby newts, a dazzling array of beetles and 95 species of moth (including some that are rare in the area, like the Hemp Agrimony Plume Moth). 349 species were counted in total, with approximately 100 visitors attending.
- Stalls were present to highlight local biodiversity issues of the area, including the Welsh Beaver Project, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, the Dyfi Biosphere Swift Project and a selection of local projects.

Developing the site

- Grant received from Powys Local Places for Nature Scheme. To develop our forest-garden food growing opportunities and our wider accessibility.
- This grant of £3,787.70 allowed us to: Create a visually attractive forest garden; Install 5 new information signs to educate visitors about our wildlife-friendly approach; and fit 3 new durable, vandal-proof benches.
- Installation of final sculpture as part of Ashley Family Foundation grant in September 2023 – along with mushroom cultivation workshop (all led by James Davies).

Piloting community volunteer days

- Recognising that attendees of therapeutic sessions are not always able to contribute to demanding physical jobs which need done in the gardens, we piloted weekend community volunteer days to attract a wider range of attendees and share the sense of stewardship towards the gardens.
- We did 2 highly successful sessions, with 17 attendees helping to put up new information signs. Lots of positive conversation about how more days like this were wanted.



Developing relationship with Cyfle Newydd day centre

- In November 2023 we began dialogue with staff of the Cyfle Newydd day centre in Machynlleth, to develop ideas for sessions we could run for their service users (who have a variety of learning and physical disabilities).
- We conducted taster sessions for them between November 2023 and April 2024, with approximately 20 of their service users. This developed into a regular, weekly session on Tuesday afternoons. Cyfle Newydd's manager Duncan Oliver praised our sessions for fostering community connections and addressing diverse needs: *"I really do love the opportunity my service users have, to meet likeminded individuals in their community. They are diagnosed with learning disabilities and some physical disabilities. They, like anybody else, have social, physical, and other stimulatory needs which includes making friends, talking about interesting topics, going out, feeling sunshine on their skin, etc. I love that even though reaching out to others can be tricky, you are actively creating a safe space for them to come and do some activities"*.
- These sessions have helped us to achieve our goals of providing therapeutic sessions for the community, and their goals of getting service users out into the community, rather than attending activities in day centre only.

Conducting community consultation

- As part of our fundraising efforts, we began extensive community consultation in January 2023 – which included sharing a survey, attending public and organisational networking events, and a range of informal conversations with visitors.
- Our survey received 92 submissions. Feedback underscored the significant value of the space to the community. For instance, one person remarked that *"I don't really have the right type of body/energy to contribute as a volunteer but I love the community gardens so much and want to be able to visit and sit somewhere comfortably and enjoy it in all weathers. It's a really important part of what makes Mach wonderful, I want it to keep going and growing and becoming more wonderful!"*. 88.5% of respondents said that visiting to enjoy the gardens is important to them.
- Others remarked how much this space was a vital part of their daily lives: *"This place is such a gift...I've been coming here for years and love it"*. A lot of feedback highlighted the importance of accommodating individuals who do not attend weekday sessions either due to their work schedule, lack of unmet wellbeing needs, or simply their desire to enjoy the gardens and participate in the community in other ways.
- What people want more of: Art and craft workshops: 70.3%; Structured sessions to promote wellbeing: 61.7%; Wildlife workshops: 69.1%; Community events: 65.4%; Children's activities: 49.3%
- Challenges identified: 14% of respondents would like more shelter, plus many more mentions of this anecdotally!; Better paths – prevent flood damage; More seating; Better signage; Better advertising to avoid missing sessions.



- 22% of community members surveyed consider themselves to have a disability. Our consultation underscored the lack of consistent nature-based therapy/social prescribing options within Machynlleth, with other available activities being sporadically funded and short-term, while requiring travel to remote areas.

Achievements and performance including reporting on its public benefit

Public benefit:

- *Drop-in sessions* continued weekly, attended by 22 people in total (with varying degrees of regularity). A big achievement to have continued delivering this regular offering, without any large grants.
- *Volunteers* gave approximately 371 hours of time to the project this year.
- *The garden space:* Open 24/7, the gardens continued to mature with a variety of engaging habitats and spaces to showcase wildlife gardening, drawing 88.5% of surveyed visitors who simply come to enjoy the beauty of this space. Approximately 80 visitors came to the gardens each day, being incredibly popular with dog walkers and those seeking a quiet space to be. Lots of positive feedback received about how the space is cherished as a community resource.
- *Our environmental credentials:* We again received the Green Flag Award from Keep Wales Tidy this year.
- *Herbs for Healing:* Group growing of 60 people on the mailing list keeping up to date with the group, with each session having between 8-14 attendees.
- *Other community groups making use of the site:* Junior Herbalists Club, Dyfi Samba, Cubs and Scouts and Coed Lleol.
- *Site developments:* container continues to provide space and resources for community groups to use and is being gradually developed as we add more facilities to it.

The Local Places for Nature grant has enhanced the forest garden and overall accessibility of the site, evidenced by lots of conversational feedback with visitors. 13 volunteers contributed 45 hours to this project.

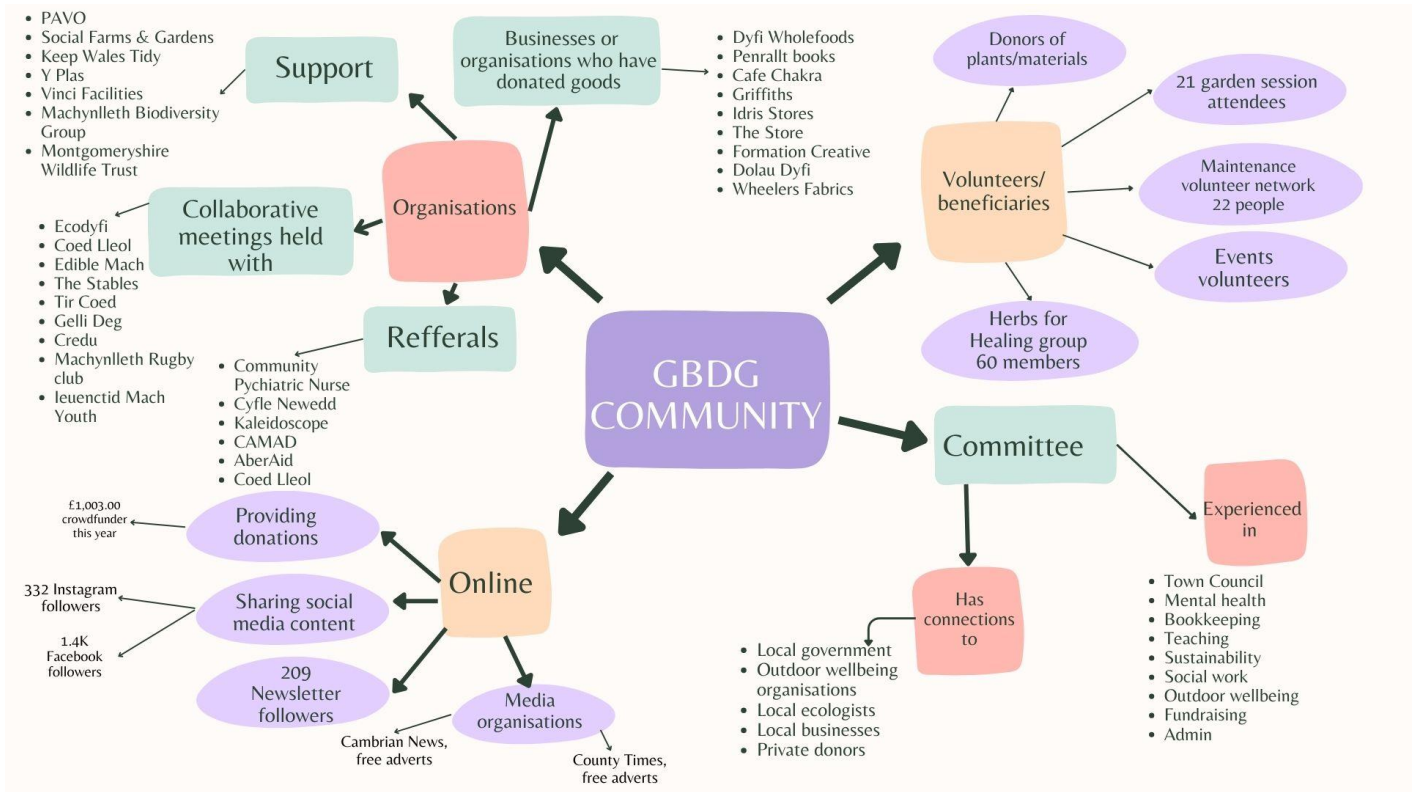
- *Wide catchment of benefit:* our consultation revealed a large engagement catchment beyond Machynlleth itself, encompassing: Abercegir, Abergynolwyn, Aberhosan, Aberystwyth, Borth, Bow Street, Cemmaes, Commins Coch, Corris, Cwrt, Derwenlas, Eglwys Fach, Forge, Garth, Glantwymyn, Llangurig, Llanbryn-mair, Melin-Byrhedyn, Pantperthog, Penegoes, Pennal, Tal-y-Bont, Taliesin, Trawsfynydd, Tre'r Ddol and Tywyn.

Networking

- Building links with local organisations: Credu, Cyfle Newydd, George McIndoe Allotment Association; Coed Lleol, Edible Mach, Ecodyfi, Tir Coed, Gelli Deg, Blwm.
- Participation in Coed Lleol's outdoor health feasibility study, along with other local wellbeing organisations. Agreement that having a social prescribing coordinator would be enormously useful to coordinate all outdoor health referrals in area.
- In November 2023 we began dialogue with the George McIndoe Allotment Association and reached an agreement that a sheltered growing space would be designated for us in their secure allotment site, as part of their Gerddi Y Plas project.



- Our online presence further extends our community, with 209 newsletter subscribers, 1.4K Facebook followers, and 332 Instagram followers contributing remotely through donations, content sharing, and idea suggestions
- Network of 22 volunteers who provide ad hoc maintenance support.
- Lots of community donations – e.g., of plants, tools, raffle prizes or money.



Finance

- Developed new fundraising strategy, encouraging a wider range of income sources. Successfully attracted more private donations this year, reducing dependency on grants alone.
- Community fundraising: successful Crowdfunder for Save our Oak raised over £1,000 from 53 individuals to support maintenance work on a beloved oak tree.

Details of Core income and expenditure (non-project related)

<i>Income</i>	
Donations	1,987.73
Site/Gazebo Hire	120.00
Scything Course	128.08
Powys Training Health Board	1,004.67
Oak Tree Fundraiser	987.12
Other	259.45
	4,487.05



<i>Expenditure</i>	
Gardeners	6,661.50
Accountancy and payroll fees	694.00
IT and Website	484.87
Y Plas Rent	293.75
Tree Maintenance	1,100.00
Other Exps	995.16
	10,229.28

Details of Project Income and Expenditure 2023/2024

	Income	Expenditure
Ashley Foundation Grant		1,750.00
PTHB Summer Project	1,887.50	
Therapeutic Gardening Role	3,136.00	3,136.00
Montgomery WT - Bioblitz	1,020.00	725.03
Herbs for Healing Project		8,692.78
Local Places for Nature Grant	4,159.44	3,746.25
The D'oyly Fund Grant	3,500.00	364.00
Total	18,189.99	28,643.34

Financial review including any debt and details of reserves policy (if applicable)

No debt.

Details of any funds held as a custodian Trustee

None