



# Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date			Period end date				
From	6	April	2020	To	5	April	2021

## Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

Charity's principal address   
  
  
 Postcode

### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Dr Andrew Salisbury	Chair	April - November	
2	Marc Carlton	Hon Treasurer	April - November	
3	Adrian Thomas		April - November	
4	Judith Conroy		All Year	
5	Dr David Perkins		All Year	
6	Johan Ingles-le Nobel		All Year	
7	Mary Jackson		All Year	
8	Karen Murphy	Hon Secretary	All Year	
9	Dr Stephen Head	(Chair from November)	All Year	
10	Helen Bostock	Vice Chair	November onwards	
11	Dr Mark Goddard		November onwards	
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### Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year


**Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)**

Type of adviser	Name	Address

**Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)**

None

**Section B Structure, governance and management**

**Description of the charity's trusts**

Type of governing document <i>(eg. trust deed, constitution)</i>	Constitution
How the charity is constituted <i>(eg. trust, association, company)</i>	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods <i>(eg. appointed by, elected by)</i>	Appointed by existing Trustees

**Additional governance issues (Optional information)**

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

The charity has policies and procedures on the skill needs, recruitment and induction of Trustees. In 2020/21 the roles and responsibilities of Trustees was reviewed and updated in response to Trustees rotating off the board and new Trustees inducted. Procedures are in place to regularly review governance and risks. The Advisory Group of experts in wildlife gardening who advise the Trustees has been strengthened.

The charity is a volunteer-operated organisation with no employees. The charity corresponds with a large number of other not-for-profit organisations and is a member of Wildlife and Countryside LINK.

The Trustees continued to review the strategy of the forum and identified the future direction. A five-year Forward Plan was agreed by the trustees and after consultation with Advisors was published and implemented in March 2020

**Section C Objectives and activities**

**Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document**

- a) To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of gardens and their biological diversity.
- b) To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment and biodiversity of gardens and the consequent human health and well-being benefits.

Gardens are diverse and important habitats for our declining wildlife and where the great majority of children find their first direct contact with nature. Nearly 90% of UK households have gardens and so our work can benefit a very large proportion of the public who wish to manage their gardens sustainably and with wildlife in mind. In planning and executing our work, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular to its public benefit guidance on advancing education and on conservation of the environment.

Object a) Promoting conservation, protection and improvement ...

The Wildlife Gardening Forum furthers this object through issuing four newsletters per year summarising new research and best practice findings. In addition, we normally hold public conferences and events in partnership with other charities. We maintain a large website to provide access to evidence-based information on the science of wildlife gardening and on garden organisms, including practical guidance. We seek to inform the work of the many charities and other organisations within our membership and contacts. We influence decision makers through working with other charities and disseminating evidence. The influence of the Forum on social media has grown remarkably on its Facebook group and on Twitter.

Our conferences are based on academic studies, backed up with examples of successful applications and best practice and are very popular with research students for networking and gaining experience in communicating their work. Conference costs are kept close to break-even, and concessions are made on request. Conference proceedings are written up and made available to all Forum correspondents and are freely available as pdf files on our website.

Our website has been considerably enlarged and pages updated. It contains extensive background information in garden and wildlife science and planting for wildlife, reviewing information largely unavailable to a general reader. By March 2020 the site contained over 250 pages of information and a further 120 downloadable documents. It constitutes the largest compendium of freely available information about garden biodiversity anywhere on the web.

The Forum's Manifesto, available in English and Welsh on the website, provides a simple introduction to decision makers about the policy changes we would like to see to improve the status of gardens for wildlife and people. Our membership of the umbrella organisation Wildlife and Countryside Link is allowing the Forum to contribute its voice alongside other charities in environmental issues.

Object b) To advance the education of the public....

This object is addressed through public conferences, creation of publications and newsletters, work with the media, provision of

**Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)**

professional guidance and training for teachers and practitioners and maintaining a website to provide access for everyone to evidence-based information and advice.

The Trustees ensure a powerful educational outcome by insisting on testing all statements and guidance in our material and on our website against established and published fact, giving attribution so that those who wish can have access to original work. We identify and point out areas where evidence is inadequate and have succeeded in starting research projects (such as the RHS-run "Plants for Bugs Project" investigating the relative value of native and non-native garden plants) where a major deficiency of evidence has let myths and assumptions stay unchallenged.

While most of our focus is on biodiversity, our education objective is also concerned with the role of gardens and urban green space on human mental and physical health, and the cohesion and better function of communities. This is another relatively new field of research that has not yet become widely known among the public and decision makers but is of increasing importance as Britain becomes steadily more urban. There is great synergy between this aspect of gardens, and biodiversity conservation, and we see our role as helping to make the health research findings accessible to everyone alongside the biodiversity, and with the same standards of rigour.

#### **Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)**

The Wildlife Gardening Forum is not yet in a position routinely to disperse grants and does not manage investments.

The Wildlife Gardening Forum does not have any paid employees, so all its activities are managed and executed through volunteer action.

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

**Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year**

The seventh year of operation of the Wildlife Gardening Forum as a registered charity has been deeply influenced by the Covid 19 pandemic. The first national lockdown came into force on 26<sup>th</sup> March, and after some relaxation, a second was implemented on 31<sup>st</sup> October, and a third on 6<sup>th</sup> January. The necessary precautions completely prevented holding two public events planned for the year, and all Trustee meetings moved to being held remotely on Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Similar limitations have applied through 2021 to date.

The absence of any public engagements meant that no conference income was generated in the year, and only minimal income from donations. Fortunately, with no employees and relatively small expenditure on communication and web hosting, this has not caused any difficulties for the charity.

The periods of lockdown made many people in Britain much more aware of the importance of green space and semi-natural conditions in managing their anxiety and mental health. The awareness of garden wildlife appears to have been raised by this enforced experience. Partly because of this, the Trustees commissioned an exceptional expenditure on a You Gov Omnibus Survey into public attitudes towards gardening for wildlife. This was conducted over 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020, involving over 2,000 randomly selected adults. The results after analysis will be released in 2021, but headline findings include that over 90% of people consider gardens important for wildlife while ~~■~~ nearly half do “a fair amount” to help their wildlife. *HS*

In mitigation of the lack of conference contact, our Facebook social media impact has quadrupled to over 41,000 people during 2020 (and continuing into 2021). Social media and our website have helped to recruit new contacts for the Wildlife Gardening Forum, and our mailing list is now 2,200 people, affiliated with about 300 organisations.

Lockdowns have freed up more time for compiling new web-based educational material. Major new sections on our website include completion of the pages on the insects and pages are in preparation on other arthropods in gardens and the molluscs and “worms”. Other pages in preparation include the pervasive myths about garden wildlife and wildlife gardening in many published books. We are also writing and compiling a major new section on garden wild plants, and a set of 50 simple practical “How-to” guides.

## Section E

## Financial review

### Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The Wildlife Gardening Forum has general funds, currently approximately equal to one (normal) year's operating costs, which the Trustees consider prudent to maintain the charity's core activities. There are no designated funds. It had one long-term Restricted Fund, of monies received from the Patsy Wood Trust, for the development of the Charity, extending its reach and influence. This restricted fund was closed when it was exhausted in part payment for the You Gov attitude survey.

### Details of any funds materially in deficit

Nil

### Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The Charity's main core funds have come from its charitable activities of holding conferences, where the delegate charges are at approximately break-even level. The Charity is beginning to attract small donations.

Annual expenditure was minimal this year because of the limitations arising from the pandemic, however charitable output was maintained through social media and website developments.

The Charity's future fundraising activity will be tailored to the goals of its development plan. It is the Trustees' current intention to keep the charity modest in size and to achieve its aims in partnership rather than creating a substantial infrastructure.

## Section F

## Other optional information

## Section G

## Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

Full name(s)

Helen Bostock

Dr Stephen Head

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)

Chair

Trustee

Date

10/10/21