



Trustee Report 2020 Dilston Physic Garden

Trustees 2021: Charles Beaumont (CB; business trustee), Margot Bromley (MB; volunteer trustee), Elizabeth Devonport (LD; development trustee), Davina Hopkinson (DH; education and medical herbalist trustee), Ross Menzies (RM; medical herbalist trustee), Elaine Perry (EP; neuroscientist trustee), Nicolette Perry (NP; pharmacognosist trustee), Helen Stephenson (HS; marketing trustee).

This is the DPG Trustee Report for financial year 01 December 2019 to 30 November 2020.

The aim of this report is to list the charity's activities, developments, concerns, and finances over the 2020 year. (Please note this does not contain any inputs, developments, or finances from December 2020 onwards). This report contains a list of ITEMS along with a list of ongoing ACTIONS.

TRUSTEE REPORT 2020

The year was successful in meeting our educational aims through the further development of our educational facilities and offerings, which in turn increased visitor numbers and public engagement.

Our income doubled from a gross income of £28.05k 18/19 to £59.99k 19/20. Our expenditure was kept relatively low in comparison to previous years (please refer to summary tables of income and spend at the end of this document for more detail).

The activities undertaken during the year were curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, after a year of uncertainty because of the impact of COVID-19, the balance sheets show that we are in a positive position.

- Admissions tally recorded was 888 people (equating to £3,200), although the total number including children, groups, workshop, and course attendees is approximately 1,700. A similar number was recorded for our online database signups and social media followings.
- The reserve for year-end November 2020 was £19,560. This was up from a £8.5K reserve year-end November 2019 (*which was blip in upward trend*) and £15K year-end November-2018.

The 2020 reserve of £19,560 includes £15,000 in restricted funds, a £5K grant for the clinical trial +£10K contingency (which we aim to raise to £15K in 2021). Leaving DPG -£1,250 before donations/grants, an increase of approximately -£8K before donations on previous year.

- Admissions, Physic Garden Shop sales and online sales income increased significantly to approximately £14k (excluding online transfers). This is a considerable increase in comparison to an approx. income from these outlets of £2k the previous year.
- Venue hire activity has been substantially affected due to the restrictions imposed during the pandemic, with most bookings needing to be postponed. Many of these bookings have been rescheduled and will, it is hoped, be able to be accommodated some time in 2021.

ITEMS

An **online 'Physic Shop'** was developed and launched in March 2020, coinciding with first covid-19 lockdown. The online store proved to be extremely fruitful for the garden during the first and following lockdowns, generating an income of £5,370 (excl. shipping £660) from online sales by year end November 2020.

The **Foundation in Plant Medicine** 2020 course was booked up early and ran with 10 socially distanced students over 4 seasonal weekend courses (with one course covid postponed). Moving forward the Foundation Course will now **only** run as a seasonal course (10 days over 4 weekends May to October). We shall no longer be running a 'Midsummer block course' due to a lack of subscriptions.

Feedback received from the course attendees was overall very good and any comments received were considered and have/will be acted upon where feasible. One improvement made for our course and workshop attendees was the upgrade and replacement of our current seating within our Herbology House classroom (*NB: bought before the pandemic and no more were purchased*).

The second **clinical trial** remains underway, though delayed due to the impact covid-19 has had on the phytochemical analysis at Kew and volunteer recruitment here at DPG. The restricted funds, 90% of the £5K restricted trial grant from the Ridley Family Charity remains.

We currently have enough participants, with a significant amount from South-East Northumberland, unfortunately though not quite the 50% as required for grant. The recruitment process is ongoing with further promotion via social media platforms and outlets local to SE Northumberland in the hope that we can increase participant numbers from this area.

The new Plant Medicine is currently being tested by Melanie at Kew. It is a Sage, Rosemary and Blueberry tincture, phytochemical analysis is still in kind from Make My Day Better & the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Our **Botanical Tea** project, established thanks to a donation in 2019 to assist in making DPG a more sustainable business has progressed greatly over the year and continues to flourish. DPG Teas are designed and developed by NP for the physic garden, our wonderful volunteers then harvest, dry, process and pack the teas (using as many organic herbs as possible from DPG or purchasing from OHTC). The teas are rooted in the science of what they do, they not only serve as a 'product' but they also aim to increase awareness of the science behind plant medicine. We now have a range of eight botanical teas, *Sleep, Happy, Memory, Calm, Inspire, Immune,*

Protect and Physic, with a Menopause and Digest Tea under development. They are sold in branded packaging with carefully curated 'Did you Know' caution labels which have been designed to raise the awareness of:

- a) that plants can be medicinal and
- b) that there is a medicinal level that is efficacious and
- c) that it is important to consult when taking a plant medicine at a medicinal level if pregnant, taking medication or with medical condition.

The tea range sells extremely well from the Physic Shop, with different teas selling well at alternate times.

They are also selling at two trade outlets:

- 1) Being Earnest, alongside a range of our other DPG products.
- 2) Matthias Winter.

With a further 2 outlets pending.

The development of our Immune Tea coincided with covid however our Protect Tea was developed in response to the pandemic. Both of these teas have proved popular in the current climate.

Tinctures, spirits, glycerites and other products made from DPG herbs, developed to help build a sustainable income continue to be grown, tried and tested. Our current range of medicinal products includes Vitality Spirit, Digest Tincture, Rosemary Shot, Echinacea & Honey, Herb Pillows, DPG Smudge Sticks, Creams, Happy Spray, Lavender Calm, Sour Cherry shot and Turmeric shot, all are proving popular!

For the first time we increased by a small percentage the cost to **hire our Herbology House and/or garden** for workshops or events. Our aim is to increase this income stream over the next two years via marketing and development of our current facilities. Rental overall was down for the year end 2020 due to the pandemic, which was to be expected, it is now increasing post lockdowns.

Hot water, insulation for winter hire and adequate space for school groups continue to be an ongoing issue pending funding.

We currently use Instagram and Facebook as DPG's predominant **social media** platforms alongside our annual newsletter to 1700 contacts. The addition of a new team member in August has enabled us to share information on the garden in more regularly regular posts, this in turn has helped to increase online shop sales, visitor numbers and venue hire, as well as raising education by increasing the number of posts and newsletters shared containing information on plants for health and medicine. Reaching schools/education through this means is not so far successful.

Footfall increased overall in comparison to 2019, even though there were very few visitors during lockdowns and all group visits were cancelled with no more booked.

Numbers have been much greater overall moving forward into 2021 post lockdown.

Only one **school** visit in 2020, although this is to be expected due to the implications of the pandemic. However, this number needs to increase to achieve our aim of education. We are greatly in need of a trustee or contact who can help to grow our school contacts, marketing outreach.

Children's Potion Club continued to prove popular and was run successfully by Davina Hopkinson as and when possible in accordance with covid-19 restrictions.

Gift Aid was applied for with a total of £2,153 received.

A Northumberland County Council Government business **covid grant** was received in October 2020 totalling £10K.

The **grant application** compiled by *Paul Able* proved to take a considerable amount of time and was unfortunately unsuccessful. However, this process did encompass developing and completing a *Wellbeing Survey*, which we are sure will prove extremely useful for future applications. The *wellbeing survey* has already been utilised by a volunteer to successfully obtain more volunteers.

The **donation** received in 2019 to assist in the future development of our Tea Project has greatly assisted its us in developing and growing an independent and sustainable income source.

Volunteer recruitment; Our current volunteers continue to do an excellent job and play a key role in the future growth and development of the garden.

As always new volunteers are much needed in the following roles:

- To assist with gardening/horticulture where a lack of volunteers at times this year has meant areas of the garden are neglected and left in need.
- To help within the Physic Garden Shop (of which there were none during lockdowns).

If we were able to find volunteers for several other fundamental roles such as

- *School visit communications and management.*
- *Social media communications & marketing.*
- *Photography and videography.*
- *Fundraising Volunteers.*

This would make a considerable difference to the current management pressures on DPG, now that we are expanding in other areas in a bid to make the garden sustainable.

Declarations; The Physic Shop sells products from trustee Ross Menzies brand 'Heavenly Herbs', alongside trustee Nicolette Perrys brand 'BrainBalms'.

Trustee NP as pharmacognosist and managing director is employed full time on a consultancy basis (£19,300 for year end 2020).

Managing director NP continues to manage both the administration and execution of the physic garden, encompassing the physic shop, volunteers, website, book-keeping, accounts, charity governance, health & safety, residencies, FPM course and trial management. This does not include voluntary hours.

Consultancy paid for over the year was for the managing director, gardening, assistant manager (starting august), maintenance work (Hugh) and arborist (Jordon) amounting to £26,190.

In August a **new assistant manager** was appointed, Holly Hopkinson, to work 1-2 days per week and assist with customer service, marketing, physic shop, online sales, charity governance, health & safety, grant applications, events/workshops and volunteer management. This role is employed on a consultancy basis, total £2,700 for year-end November 2020.

NOTE: The Physic Garden relies heavily on volunteers which is apparent in the following which shows the time/work completed by volunteers that would otherwise be an additional outgoing cost to the garden

- gardening (16 hrs per week, though requires volunteering of full time equivalent)
- curating and gardening (10 hours per week)
- harvesting and botanical preparation (9 hours per week)
- shop (1 hour per week)
- scientific research and development / presentations (3hr/wk)

Business development: Our aim is to become sustainable by diversifying our income streams to help enable future sustainability beyond relying on donations. We plan to continue to work towards this in 2021 by continuing to develop our 'Tea Project', expanding our product range and increased marketing to target visitor numbers and venue hire.

The need for funding for a full-time gardener continues.

Marketing trustee Helen Stephenson will be leaving as she is moving from the area. We will greatly miss her input.

Governance; Our annual Trustee meeting was not held this last year (see actions).

Our Policies & Procedures + Health & Safety documents were kept up to date throughout the year and all necessary legislative changes were implemented.

Health and Safety of our team, volunteers and customers was paramount during the pandemic with all of the government guidelines being strictly adhered to.

Risk assessments were completed annually for venue hire, school visits, visitors and volunteers.

Emails were collected for our Database from forms located in the physic shop and on our website. Information collected was stored according to data protection, is used for 6-12 newsletters a year and stored on the software Sendinblue.

An External Examiner's report was obtained as required by the charity commission by CI Accountancy for £870. An issue remains and is ongoing regarding lane access from the top-up car-park to the physic garden.

ACTIONS

DPG new area: one acre purchase agreed in 2010 **remains to be finalised**. This is pending action by trustee CB and relates to sustaining DPG and immediate applications to for funding and/or grants.

Trustee meeting to be scheduled. To be prioritised at this meeting; updating, raising items and addressing roles (given new requirements for accountability in terms of individual roles input).

The following DPG **amenities, space and facilities** continue to be an issue, unfortunately the current lack of space, limited amenities and basic facilities limits and impacts our current reach.

- Only 1 WC with no disabled facilities
- Small classroom space with limited capacity
- Carpark, lane access and grass/muddy paths
- We are still dependent on DMH for electricity, water and WIFI

We need to increase our current **marketing** to assist in growing visitor numbers, although this at times is cost prohibitive. Our 2021 flyer needs to be updated to reflect our new opening times which are currently and have been variable, this has meant that we have printed our own flyers so that we can regularly update and amend information. We shall target further areas with our flyers with the assistance of volunteers to distribute. We need to increase our current income streams, such as venue hire and admissions via marketing.

Marketing trustee will need to be appointed with the resignation of Helen Stephenson.

Booking keeping trustee; records and consequently report analysis could be significantly aided by a volunteer or trustee who would allow for productive analysis of revenue streams and costs.

There is a continued need across all areas for **Volunteers**.

Writing and working on relevant Grant/fund proposals is ongoing. All proposals incorporate the issues highlighted above and below and aim to help achieve our mission of education by increased public and educational reach. See below for details*.

Admission charges will increase spring 2021: Adult - £4 to £6 , Child - £3 to £4 – along with the cost of our Season Passes. Open days to be increased and trialled; day of week vs volunteer availability and staff costs.

Weatherproof **shelter** to be utilised by school group visits, commenced work end 2020 to be completed 2021.

Clinical Trial research continues. Memory Tincture to complete final analysis of tincture ingredients.

Recruitment of participants from South East Northumberland is ongoing.

We hope to commence work on our Tea Trial in early 2021.

Sleep | Dreaming | Altered states of consciousness Pilot Studies continue.

We hope to recruit a qualified horticultural **Volunteer** and Botanist to replace the sad loss of one who has helped with plant identification over the last few years.

We aim to **engage further and with more** community groups such as drug rehabilitation groups, autism groups, other mental health groups, asylum seekers and of course schools.

Grant funding for a 6-day integrated course/awareness on safe plants for mental health (including addiction) and wellbeing.

Garden itself continues to receive much positive and kind **feedback**. We have received a few comments regarding the items in the plant beds and those that are worn, which is being addressed.

An idea of a celebration event to mark 20 years since DPG gained charity status and opened to the public in 2003 is worth pursuing well ahead of 2023 (RB suggest).

****Ongoing grant funding items:***

- 1. Improve visitor facilities 2x WC incl. wheelchair access next to HH and weatherproof/light current WC.*
- 2. Carpark - streamlining use of Top-up Carpark (shared with Dilston Scouts) – with its flat (as opposed to steep incline) for all event/workshop visitors (due to confusion access for workshop) and potentially all parking. Surface underfoot.*
- 3. Access lane down private scout lane is still hindered by Philip in the cottage on the lane.*
- 4. Current visitor carpark and lane surface hogging - currently impassable in heavy rain.*
- 5. Paths replace all garden grass and gravel paths to enable safe all-weather surface underfoot .*
- 6. Pathways expanded to allow wheelchair access to most areas*
- 7. Amenities: transfer of all amenities to enable independence as a charity from DMH (see below); would require significant cost to separate supplies.*
- 8. Signage - end lanes / garden entrance signs need updating. Brown signs on road - a significant number of visitors (25%) are getting lost and arriving frustrated!*
- 9. Children's area and items and information signboards*
- 10. Educational outreach: combined with increasing in-house education, aim to find funding to increase reach to schools/groups unable to visit to DPG with program of innovative interactive practical information of plants for health and medicine to schools (diet/ health awareness plus collaborator).*

Financial Summary

Dilston Physic Garden

Year ended 30th November 2020

Financial Performance Summary

		2019-20
Revenue		
Admission & Shop Sales	£	33,618.36
Hire (Garden & Herbology House)	£	3,452.00
Botanical Brain Balm Talks	£	67.00
Donations (including gift aid & grants)	£	20,791.81
Foundation Course	£	2,057.83
Total Revenue	£	59,987.00
Cost (Direct and operating)		
Consultancy	£	26,187.00
IT	£	830.00
Accounts	£	13.00
Signage	£	1,137.96
Office	£	416.80
Development Items	£	1,547.72
Shop Stock	£	665.91
Shop Stock for DPG Product Making	£	4,025.99
Clinical Trial	£	4,086.95
Foundation Course	£	1,360.87
Miscellaneous Items	£	150.80
Total Direct & Operating Costs	£	40,423.00
Gross Profit	£	19,564.00

Reconciliation of Funds

Total funds brought forward at 1 December 2019	£	9,123.00
Total funds carried forward at 30 November 2020	£	28,103.08