

Friends of Old Durham Gardens

Registered Charity no: 1164516



Annual Report 2021

Approved by Trustee Members

8th February 2022



1. Introduction

This eleventh Annual Report is an account of the activities of the Friends of Old Durham Gardens for the calendar year 1st January to 31st December 2021. Old Durham Gardens is an historic 17th and 18th century walled garden and orchard. Originally restored by Durham City Council, it is now owned by Durham County Council and is listed on Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens (Grade II). Since the formation of the Friends of Old Durham Gardens in 2010, regular maintenance and replacement planting have transformed the gardens. Although much work is still needed, our many visitors have praised the efforts of trustees, volunteers and local groups in maintaining and developing the gardens for public enjoyment, including as a venue for enjoying live music events and plays with refreshments.

This Annual Report reflects a second year of the COVID pandemic, which once again curtailed our events, although we were delighted to resume a full programme of garden volunteering, and to welcome several new volunteers to our team. The gardens were once again available all year as an outdoor space to enjoy exercise, fresh air and nature, and we were also able to welcome visitors to the walled garden throughout the season.

2. Acknowledgements

As ever, the work of Friends of Old Durham Gardens would not be possible without the significant support and work of many people. We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to:

- The Trustees and other volunteers, whose physical and administrative tasks have kept the maintenance and development of the gardens on track, and helped increase accessibility and use of the gardens by the public.
- Durham County Council staff, who continue to support us in our efforts. We particularly appreciate the tree work done around the lower walled garden this year.
- The local organisations and businesses who have provided us with physical help over the years, including this year Balfour Beatty and Durham University students and staff.
- All our neighbours for their continued support, which is much appreciated.
- Lastly, but certainly not least, we would like to express appreciation for the time and support given by our members, friends, volunteers, local organisations, funders and all the members of the public who have enjoyed the gardens and given us encouragement. Whether these efforts were offered in the form of administrative support, gardening and labour, financial contributions or simply promoting the group – we thank you.

3. Chair's Report

The Friends of Old Durham Gardens welcome you to our eleventh Annual Report, and hope that you find it interesting.

2021 saw the Covid pandemic continue, and the Old Durham Gardens year was once again shaped by a requirement to keep Government guidance constantly in mind, changing our risk assessment and practices in line with developments. The main negative impact of this was on our communal events programme; this has once again impacted on our income and countable visitor numbers.

However, despite this (or perhaps even because of it), 2021 has been a fantastic year for volunteering. We have almost doubled our band of gardening volunteers, who come together regularly to enjoy working together in the open air. This means that the gardens have never looked better. We have been able to repaint all of the garden metalwork, and to remedy the overgrowth in the lower walled garden caused by limited gardening due to Covid restrictions in 2020. We are also in the process of opening up more of the lower walled garden by removing swathes of nettles and weeds, with many hands occupied in painstakingly grubbing out roots. In this we have been ably helped by Council staff who did significant tree work around the periphery of the lower walled garden. 'Before' and 'after' photographs are included later in this report. We very sadly had our lawnmower stolen in 2021, and have increased security measures in the gardens as a result.

The gardens have continued to provide a local, outdoor public space for the community to exercise and enjoy nature throughout the year, something which has continued to be very important during 2021. The majority of the gardens are always open, and in 2021 the upper walled garden was open throughout the season, staffed by trustees. We were able to host tours for a number of other gardening groups this year, including the Northumbria and Yorkshire Gardens Trusts and a group from Perthshire who are working to create a community field. We were also pleased to become part of the route of the Way of Love, one of five new pilgrimages created in the North East, and to welcome the Bishop of Durham to the gardens.

Let's hope that the 2022 season will enable the gardens to flourish, to be beautiful and fruitful, and to enhance the lives of visitors and volunteers.

Thank you,

Joy Brindle (Chair, Friends of Old Durham Gardens).

4. Review of 2021

As a registered charity, Friends of Old Durham Garden CIO has a Constitution which sets out our “charitable objects” as follows:

To promote for the benefit of the public generally, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or political, religious or other opinions, any charitable purpose, within the area known as Old Durham Gardens in Durham City (herein after known as the area of benefit), connected with the enhancement and improvement, maintenance and protection of the environment and landscape. Nothing in this constitution shall authorise an application of the property of the CIO for the purposes which are not charitable in accordance with [section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005] and [section 2 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008]

4.1 Friends Group Infrastructure

On the 9th June 2017, a Self-Management Agreement was agreed and signed by the Friends of Old Durham Gardens (FODG) trustees and Durham County Council (DCC). This sets out the role of both parties in relation to the gardens. In summary, DCC continues to own the property and provide infrastructure maintenance, while FODG provides all ‘soft’ maintenance for all of the gardens except the bulk grass cutting in the lower walled garden.

An associated joint Conservation Management Plan for the gardens is nearing completion; the key area to be completed is the addition of the planned Durham County Council conservation works which were completed in 2020.

4.2 Funding

We have not sought any specific capital grants during 2021, but have made some further investments in metal edging to the walled garden borders, and in bulbs and plants. Friends’ subscriptions and donations are much appreciated and have provided some income during 2021, as were donations from visiting gardening groups, and a generous donation to purchase some historically appropriate furniture and china for the gazebo. Income for 2021 is once again lower than in non-pandemic years due to the curtailment of events, a major source of income for the gardens.

The accounts clearly show this position; although the income position is better than that of 2020, income is still not at pre-pandemic levels.

4.3 Membership and communication

The Friends Group, who each donate an annual subscription of £5 to support work in the gardens, currently stands at 136 Friends. We also have a wider group of contacts, all of whom have registered with us for updates on the gardens, including events. Our current register stands at over 1000.

We communicate with our Friends and contacts via newsletters, email and our website and Facebook page.

4.4 Gardening

4.4.1 Lower Garden

Due to donations, we were able to plant **twelve apple trees** in the orchard, including varieties new to the gardens (Margaret, Foxwhelp, Harvey, Joaneting and Winter Pearmain). We are nurturing these carefully, and look forward to their fruit in years to come. After the bumper crops of 2020, 2021 was a very disappointing year for fruit, with not a damson to be seen and very few apples and pears in the lower walled garden. We had to attribute this to the weather patterns at blossom time, and hope that 2022 will be kinder.

The lower walled garden suffered from lack of attention in 2020, but this was put right in 2021. Durham County Council carried out **surgery to some of the large trees** surrounding the orchard, including some old pear trees which were falling down. Volunteers removed perennial weeds along the walls and in the jetty area, creating much better access and structure. We plan to build on this by maintaining the area in a more cultivated way, including some planting of local varieties of meadow flowers.

We aim to cut the **meadow grass** in and around the orchard every Autumn, and this was done again in 2021. The **rectangular borders** of fruit and rose bushes in the lower walled garden received plenty of attention from regular volunteer and University groups, restoring them to an excellent state.

We have also carried out extensive maintenance of the **long border** at the top of the lower walled garden, and hope to carry out some replanting during 2022 to enable more representation of historically accurate plants.

Lower walled garden: before and after



2020: Overgrown trees, grass and weeds



2021: Cleared wall and path through orchard towards jetty

4.4.2 Upper walled garden



The upper walled garden was in good shape in 2021 due to plenty of input from volunteers. The walls protected the blossom, and we had good crops of greengages, plums, apples and pears, which visitors were happy to see and pick.

We have installed more **metal edging** to the lawn to improve the appearance of the upper walled garden and to enable easier mowing; we hope to add more during 2022. We also invested in some metal cones to allow the parterre yews to be consistently pruned, and look forward to using them in the Spring of 2022. The herbaceous plants in our external parterre squares have thrived, and we once again enjoyed a magnificent display of old flowers in the summer. We were able to propagate some of these perennials to fill gaps, and to sell some surplus ones to visitors.

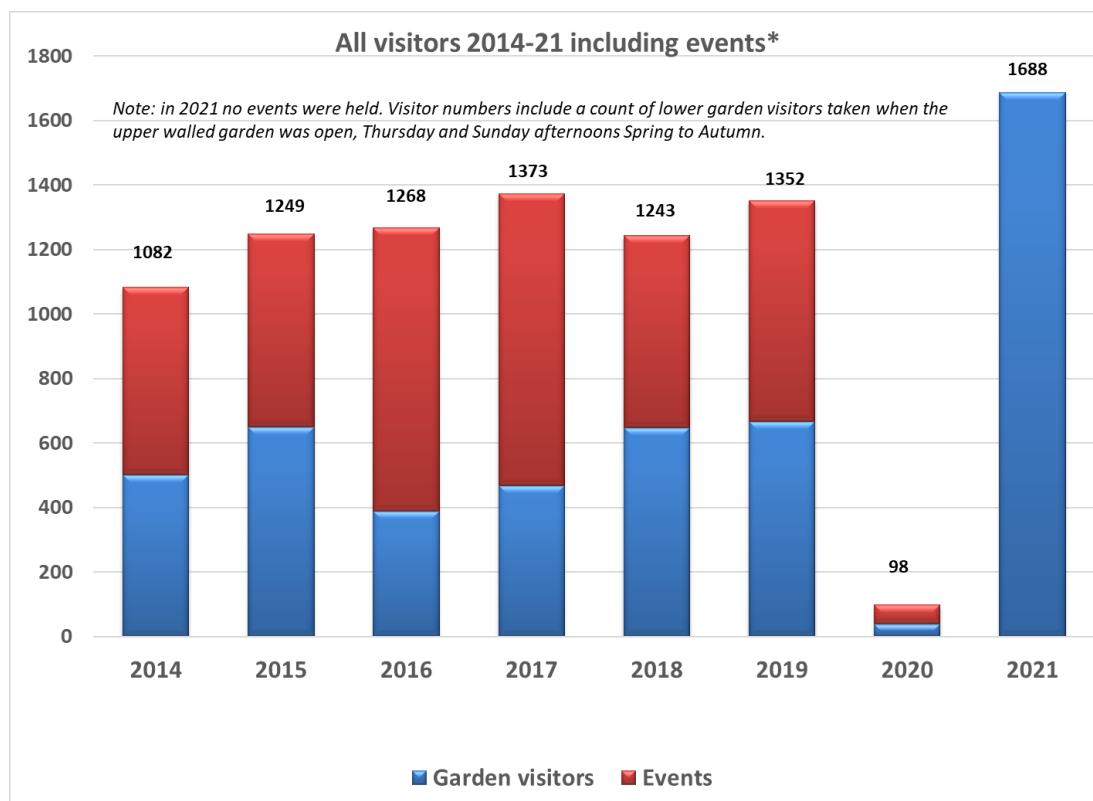
The **gazebo** has been enhanced through a donation of historically appropriate furniture and china, which was much appreciated.



4.5 Open days, events and visitors

Old Durham Gardens lower walled garden and orchard are enjoyed by the community all year round, and we saw many people enjoying them this year, making use of the open space to take their exercise and enjoy nature. We believe through observation and anecdotal evidence that the gardens were a tremendous asset to local people during the Covid year of 2021. Our upper walled garden visitor numbers recovered during 2021, as we were able to open for the whole season. During 2021 we included lower walled garden visitors for the first time, to give a more accurate representation of garden use; these were counted on the days when the upper walled garden was open (Tuesday and Sunday afternoons from Spring to Autumn), when volunteers were present to do the count. This gives a more accurate idea of visitors on those days, but clearly excludes all visitors at other times. The change in methodology also means that the figures for 2021 are not consistent with those of previous years.

In terms of events, Covid regulations during 2021 meant that our programme was once again severely curtailed, although we were also able to welcome a number of gardening groups for tours of the gardens. The impact of the reduced events programme is shown in the visitor numbers below, as well as in our financial position.





Some of our visiting groups during 2021.

Top to bottom:

*Way of Love pilgrims;
Yorkshire Gardens Trust;
Perthshire gardeners.*



4.6 Relationships

The Friends Group has established good links with the Friends of Pelaw Wood, the Friends of Flass Vale, Durham Wildlife Trust, East Durham College Houghall Campus, local schools, community centres, Durham University, Northumbrian Water, the Department for Work and Pensions, Durham Passport Office, Balfour Beatty and other organisations interested in volunteering. We have good relationships with community groups promoting gardening, and in 2021 we engaged with the coordinator of the new Northern Saints Trails, one of which, the Way of Love, passes right next to Old Durham Gardens (see the Northern Saints Trail website for details including a video showing Old Durham Gardens.

<https://www.thisisdurham.com/northernsaints/trails/the-way-of-love-p1054061>).

We hope that many pilgrims enjoy passing our way in the coming years.

These relationships are essential in maintaining the gardens for the community, and in providing a wide range of people with the opportunity to make a difference and enjoy themselves by volunteering, and we look forward to working with partners again in 2022.



Balfour Beatty and student volunteers

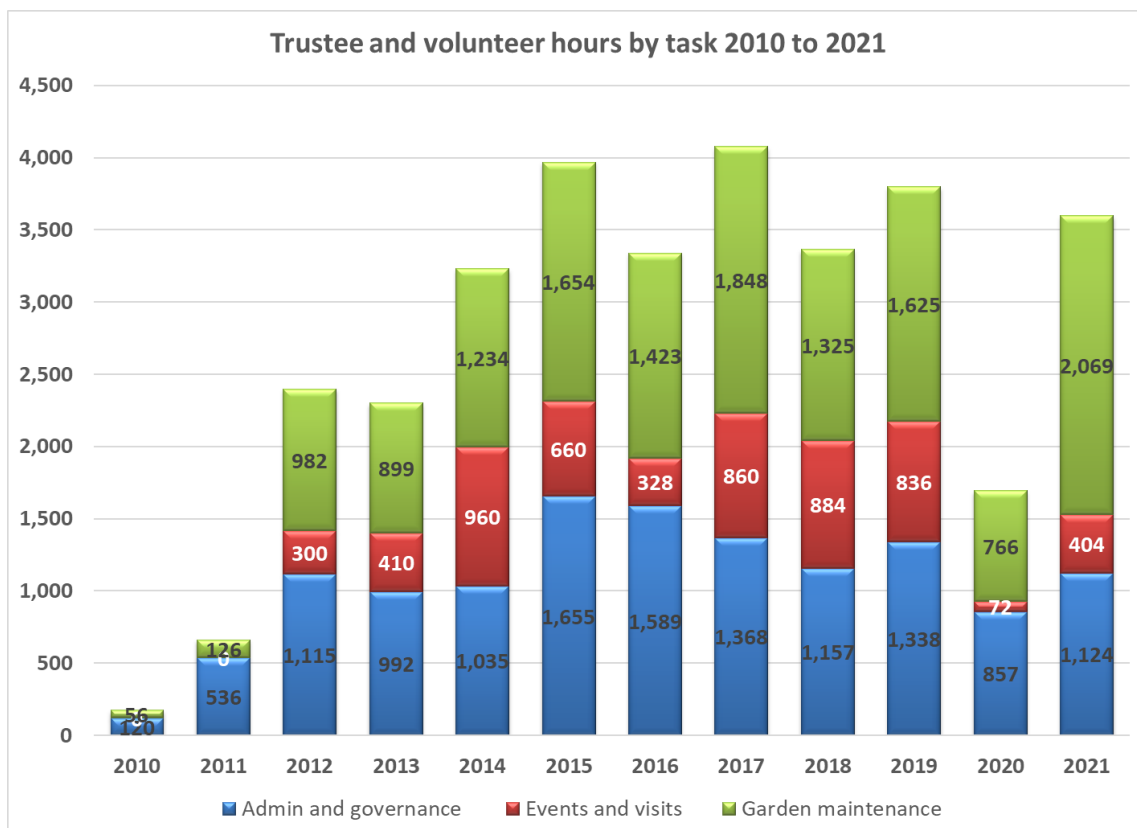
4.7 Public Benefit

The trustees believe that the activities undertaken in 2021 are within their powers and duties, and fully support the Objects of the Friends of Old Durham Gardens, thereby increasing public benefit. Using Heritage Lottery Fund guidelines which assign values to different tasks, we estimate the financial value of our volunteering in 2021 at £57,814.

Despite our events being curtailed, volunteers have worked hard to keep everything going, as the chart below shows. 2021 has been our best ever year for volunteer gardening- thank you to all our volunteers for their efforts!



'Thank you' picnic for volunteers.



5. Financial Statement

Friends of Old Durham Gardens

Financial Statement for the period 1st January to 31st December 2021

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 2021

Receipts	2021	2020
Donations	2181	317
Membership Subscriptions	695	720
Grants	0	0
Events	0	34
Repayments	0	0
Gift Aid	423	406
Insurance claim	1255	0
Total Receipts	4554	1477
Payments		
Plants and Maintenance	1773	579
Tools and machinery	1882	263
Administration	1305	483
Bank Charges	72	72
GASDS return	0	1219
Events	16	141
Infrastructure projects	1897	653
Capital Items	0	0
Electricity	96	109
Total Payments	7041	3519
Net Receipts/Payments	-2487	-2042
Bank and Cash at start of period	11215	13257
Bank and Cash at end of period	8728	11215
Statement of Assets and Liabilities		
Cash Assets		
Current Account	8728	11215
Other Assets		
Tools and equipment purchased since Sept 2010**	13630	12530
Liabilities***		
HMRC overpayment return	0	0
Net Assets/Liabilities	8728	11215
** The second-hand net realisable value of sheds, tools, equipment and gazebos is deemed negligible at £2,100. *** The trustees are not aware of any liabilities at 31/12/21.		

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021

1. Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful for the support given by our members through their annual subscriptions and their generous donations. We gratefully acknowledge the many hours of voluntary work provided by so many different people and organisations, without which the ongoing maintenance and development of the gardens could not be achieved.

2. Receipts and Payments Account

The receipts and payments account summarises the movement of cash into and out of the Friends Group during the financial year. In this context "cash" means the bank account where cash can be readily withdrawn to pay for debts as they become due.

3. Grants and Donations

- a) Grants were not sought nor received during 2021 as we were able to carry out the improvements we had planned using our own resources.
- b) Specific donations were received for plants and trees, and from Houghall Horticultural Society plus limited general gazebo visitors.
- c) Annual membership subscriptions reduced slightly due to people relocating.
- d) Gift aid (GA) and Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme on valid donations were claimed during 2021. A claim for 2021 calendar year is underway for receipt in 2022.
- e) An insurance claim was submitted to replace a stolen mower and wheelbarrow. A payment of £1,255 was received from Zurich Insurance.

4. Administration

This includes: Insurance, website name and hosting, Dropbox subscription, fuel, stamps, volunteer refreshments, new door keys and examiner fees, etc. The 2021 administration figure also includes reimbursement of the 2020 insurance payment which was not submitted and therefore not included in the 2020 financial report.

5. Events

Due to Covid there were no events in 2021; Wassailing, Music in the Gardens and Shakespeare events were not held, we did open on the Sunday of Heritage Open Days.

6. Payments

Trees, plants, replacement mowers, yew frames and additional metal edging for the parterre outer borders were all purchased in 2021.

7. Capital Items

None in 2021.

8. Bank

Unity Trust Bank Plc, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham B1 2HB.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THE FRIENDS OF OLD DURHAM GARDENS, DURHAM**

I report on the accounts of the Friends of Old Durham Gardens for the year ended 31 December 2021 which are as set out on the attached pages.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The Charities Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charities Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act;
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


T. J. Hardman
CTA

7 Elvet Waterside
Durham DH1 3DA
3 February 2022

6. Friends Group Trustees

- The Trustees of the Friends of Old Durham Gardens form the Management Group. They attend monthly meetings and ensure that the business of the Friends Group is conducted to meet the aims of the group in a responsible manner. There are five serving trustees and one coopted committee member on 31st December 2021; we are allowed 15 maximum, and are keen to recruit new Trustees to spread the load of our activities.
- Under our constitution as a CIO, all Members of the Management Committee shall retire from office by three year rotation at the end of the applicable annual general meeting, but they may be re-elected or reappointed. Trustees may resign at any time.
- Trustees may be appointed following a review of their application form by the other trustees or by invitation of the trustees as agreed at a meeting of the trustees.
- All trustees are given a copy of our constitution and the Charity Commission document CC3, The Essential Trustee, which details the duties of a trustee so that they fully understand their obligations.
- The new trustees sign the minute book at the meeting they were appointed at, confirming that they have received, read and understand the requirements of being a trustee. Trustees sign the Trustee Declaration of Eligibility and Responsibility Form.
- Trustees are the 'members' of the CIO and have monthly meetings plus other meetings and communications to undertake all CIO activities.

<i>Current Trustees (Dec 2021)</i>	Date Joined Trustees	Re-election
Date		
Joy Brindle (Chair)	July 2016	2022
Angela Lee (Membership Secretary)	September 2011	2023
Chris Lee (Treasurer)	September 2011	2023
Martin Roberts	January 2012	2022
Christine Wiecek (Secretary)	June 2014	2022

Resigned (2021)

Anne Davies.

Co-opted committee member (2021)

Chris Mallia.

7. Principal Office

The prime address for postal communication purposes is:

Old Durham Gardens
c/o 10 Durham Moor Crescent
Durham
DH1 5AW

Old Durham Gardens physical address is:

Old Durham Gardens
Old Durham
Bent House Lane
Durham
DH1 2RY

Website: <http://olddurhamgardens.co.uk/>

Email: olddurhamgardens@gmail.com

8. Approval Of This Report

On behalf of the Trustees of the Friends of Old Durham Gardens, this Trustees Annual Report is approved for submission to the Charity Commission as a fair reflection of the charity's activities for the year 2021 as agreed at our Monthly Meeting on 8th February 2022.

Joy Brindle
Chair, Friends of Old Durham Gardens.