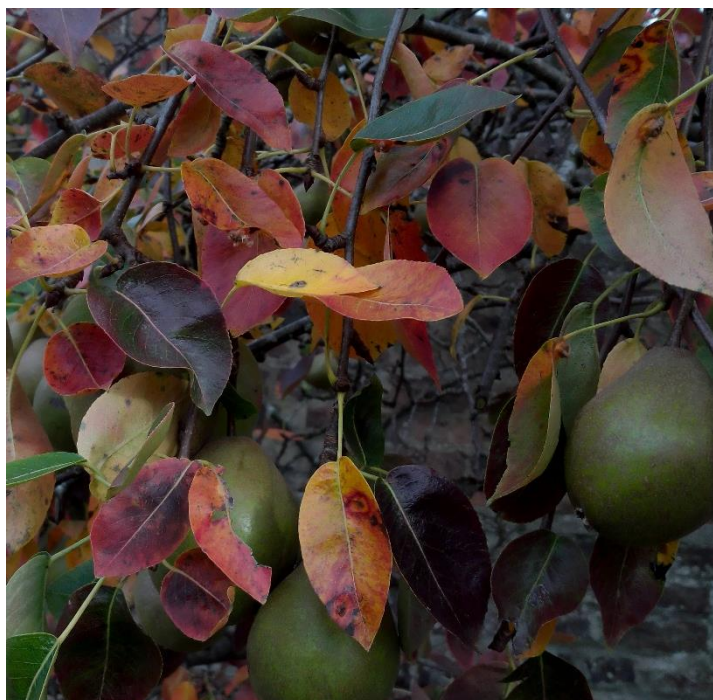


# **Friends of Old Durham Gardens**

**Registered Charity no: 1164516**



## **Annual Report 2022**

**Approved by Trustee Members**

**7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**



## **1. Introduction**

This twelfth Annual Report is an account of the activities of the Friends of Old Durham Gardens for the calendar year 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Old Durham Gardens is an historic 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 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 covers our first full year of opening since the pandemic began, and it has been a great delight to welcome visitors and volunteers to the gardens once more, with much less restrictions. Our team of volunteers is flourishing, and we have been able to hold several events in 2022, although our February Wassail was cancelled due to covid among the trustees. The gardens were available all year as an outdoor space to enjoy exercise, fresh air and nature; visitors enjoyed the lower garden all day and every day, and the upper walled garden was open as usual on Thursday and Sunday afternoons 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.
- The local organisations and businesses who have provided us with physical help over the years, including students and staff of Durham University.
- 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 twelfth Annual Report, and hope that you find it interesting.

2022 saw the Gardens return to its full programme of gardening, volunteering and several events: it was a fruitful year in every sense of the word, with bumper crops of apples, pears, damsons and, for the first time, medlars; some of these were 'bletted' (left until they were soft and squashy) and made into jelly by one of our trustees. Very many local visitors came to pick the fruit, and we were able to take some of the excess apples to a local care home, where they were much enjoyed.



Our band of volunteers has continued to grow, so that we have been able to give attention to all parts of the gardens; several visitors have commented that they have never looked better. In 2021 we laid the groundwork for a wildflower meadow along the north wall in the lower garden. The painstaking work of removing swathes of weeds and nettles, and grubbing out their roots, was rewarded in 2022 with a beautiful display of colour from native wildflowers. More work is needed on this area, as creeping buttercups are already making their presence felt: we hope to keep a balance of plants so that no 'thugs' take over. Having many hands also allowed us to prune the fruit trees in the winter (apples and pears) and summer (stone fruits) to increase their health.

The gardens have continued to provide a local, outdoor public space for the community to exercise and enjoy nature throughout the year. Our visitor numbers returned to pre pandemic levels, helped by our programme of events, including successful Music in the Gardens and Shakespeare in the Gardens; Heritage Open Days in September; and hosting a number of gardening/heritage group visits.

Let's hope that the 2023 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 2022**

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 9<sup>th</sup> 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. We also make arrangements to open the walled garden to the public, and to encourage visitors and inform them about the gardens and their history.

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 2022, but have continued to invest in metal edging to the walled garden borders, and in bulbs and plants. We have also bought a specialist, stable ladder for maintaining the orchard trees, and some additional tools which have been needed as our team of volunteers has grown, and to replace some which had become worn out. Our income during 2022 has come from Friends’ subscriptions, events and donations, all of which are much appreciated. Income for 2022 has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

During 2022 we have considered our future needs for capital funding, and hope to bid for funds during 2023 to replace the two rotting seats on the lower garden terrace, as these are heavily used by visitors who want or need to sit down in the lower gardens. This will also involve renewing the seat bases. We are in discussions with the Council about improving access to this terrace by providing a ramp/platform. We also hope to raise funds for improvements to the gazebo interior, including some display space, and for some improved signage.

### **4.3 Membership and communication**

The Friends Group, who each donate an annual subscription to support work in the gardens, currently stands at 136 Friends. We have taken the decision to increase the suggested annual donation for new members of the Friends Group from £5 to £7 in 2023.

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**

In February 2022, Storm Arwen caused havoc in the **orchard**, blowing down six of our long-established greengage trees in one night. Council staff cleared up and shredded the trees, providing useful mulch for other plants. We decided to replace the fallen trees with new greengages, as these are popular; grow well in the area; and add to the diversity of fruit. Three of these trees were paid for through a kind donation. The twelve new apple trees planted in 2022, including varieties new to the gardens (Margaret, Foxwhelp, Harvey, Joaneting and Winter Pearmain) are becoming established. We are nurturing these carefully, and look forward to their fruit in years to come. We were able to prune most of the fruit trees in the orchard during 2022, and are continuing this programme in 2023. Some of the larger trees require restorative pruning.

After a poor year in 2021, we were glad to see a bumper crop of fruit in 2022. There was plenty for the many local visitors who came to pick, and the wide variety of fruit gave us a chance to talk about historic varieties and their various culinary uses.

A highlight of the year was the creation of a **wildflower meadow** along the North wall, building on the weed-clearing work done by volunteers in 2021. After much discussion

of soil types and seed mixes, an appropriate mix of native wildflower seed was planted in the Spring, and made a beautiful display during the Summer. One of our tasks for 2023 is to keep an eye on the mix of plants in this area, to avoid nettle recurrence or the domination of the area by any species.

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 maintenance of the **long terrace border** at the top of the lower walled garden, but need to do more replanting of this area during 2023 to enable more representation of historically accurate plants.

### Lower walled garden: the new meadow flowers



#### 4.4.2 Upper walled garden



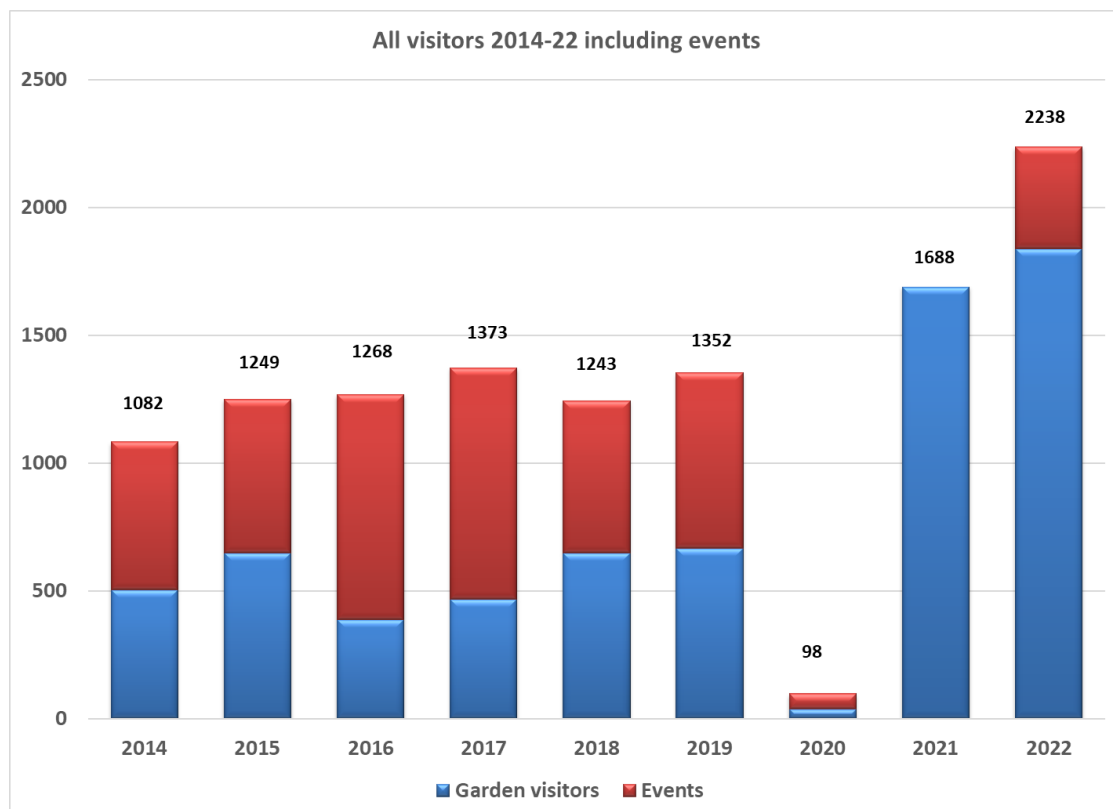
The upper walled garden was in good shape in 2022 due to plenty of input from volunteers. The walls protected the blossom, and we had good crops of greengages, plums, apples and pears, which visitors were happy to see and pick. Our newest additions to the walled garden fruit, the two espaliered **Nottingham medlars** on the south wall, produced many beautiful, large white blossoms followed by a huge crop of fruit. The medlars were a great talking point with visitors, many of whom had never seen these fruits before.

We continued our programme of installing **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 2023. The **herbaceous plants** in our external parterre squares have thrived, and we once again enjoyed a magnificent display of old flowers in the summer. Our **hollies** are now well established and bore many berries in the Autumn. We made good use of the metal pruning frames we bought in 2022, and all the **yews** in the parterre were successfully pruned, bouncing back well where the pruning was very 'thorough'.

## 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 continued to be a tremendous asset to local people in 2022.

The table below shows our garden visitors in blue, and those who attended events in red. The increase in 'blue' visitors from 2021 is due to our beginning to include lower walled garden visitors for the first time in that year, to give a more accurate representation of garden use; these were counted on the days when the upper walled garden was open (Thursday 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 from 2021 are not consistent with those of previous years. No events ('red' visitors) were held in 2021 due to Covid, so it is pleasing to see event visitor numbers growing again in 2022.



Our Music in the Gardens event in July was planned as a smaller event as we returned to normal in 2022, and attracted over 200 visitors despite a rather overcast summer's day. We had many positive comments about the varied programme of acoustic music and clog dancing, and people also enjoyed the plant stall, refreshments, beer and Prosecco. Around 50 visitors enjoyed the performance of Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors in August, against the background of the fruit trees. A flavour of the events is given in the photographs below.



## 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 and other organisations interested in volunteering. During 2022 we have had particularly strong support from student volunteers from Durham University, several of whom have joined our regular team of volunteers. We have good relationships with community groups promoting gardening and heritage, and in 2022 we also hosted the University of the Third Age.

Old Durham Gardens is one of the organisations supporting the Northern Saints Trails, and is on the route of the Way of Love (see the Northern Saints Trail website for details including a video showing Old Durham Gardens.

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

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 2023.

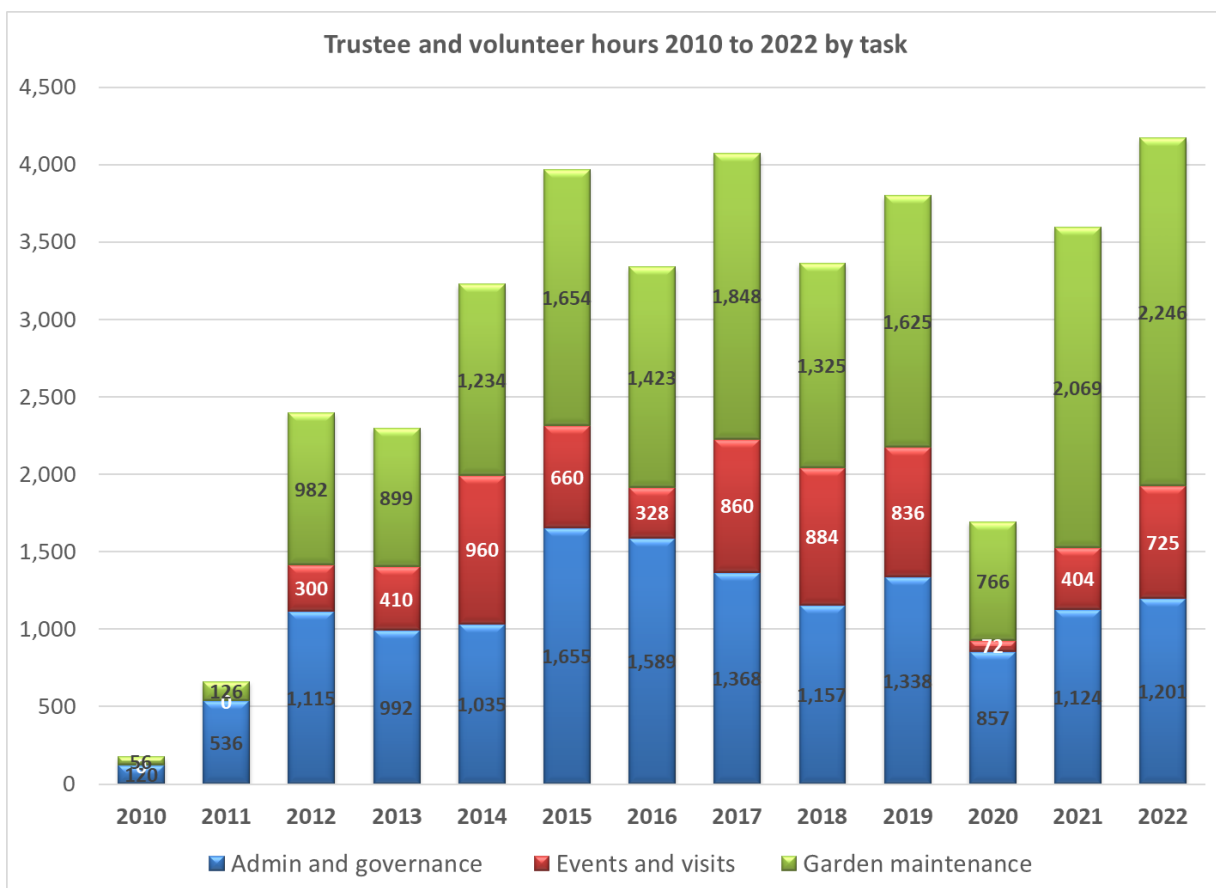


*Staff and student volunteers from Durham University*

## 4.7 Public Benefit

The trustees believe that the activities undertaken in 2022 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 2022 at £73,719.

As the chart below shows, 2022 has been our best ever year for volunteer gardening- thank you to all our volunteers for their efforts!



## 5. Financial Statement

Financial Statement for the period 1st January to 31st December 2022

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 2022

| <b>Receipts</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>2022</b>  | <b>2021</b>  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Donations                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1260         | 2181         |
| Membership Subscriptions                                                                                                                                                                                   | 923          | 695          |
| Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 0            | 0            |
| Events                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 987          | 0            |
| Repayments                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 199          | 0            |
| Gift Aid                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 498          | 423          |
| Insurance Claim                                                                                                                                                                                            | 0            | 1255         |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>3867</b>  | <b>4554</b>  |
| <b>Payments</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |              |
| Plants and Maintenance                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1260         | 1773         |
| Tools and Machinery                                                                                                                                                                                        | 600          | 1882         |
| Administration                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1015         | 1305         |
| Bank Charges                                                                                                                                                                                               | 72           | 72           |
| Events                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 533          | 16           |
| Infrastructure Projects                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1499         | 1897         |
| Capital Items                                                                                                                                                                                              | 699          | 0            |
| Electricity                                                                                                                                                                                                | 175          | 96           |
| <b>Total Payments</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>5853</b>  | <b>7041</b>  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |              |
| <b>Net Receipts/Payments</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>-1986</b> | <b>-2487</b> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |              |
| Bank and Cash at start of period                                                                                                                                                                           | 8728         | 11215        |
| Bank and Cash at end of period                                                                                                                                                                             | 6742         | 8728         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |              |
| <b>Statement of Assets and Liabilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                 |              |              |
| <b>Cash Assets</b>                                                                                                                                                                                         |              |              |
| Current Account                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>6742</b>  | <b>8728</b>  |
| <b>Other Assets</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        |              |              |
| Tools and equipment purchased since Sept 2010**                                                                                                                                                            | 13229        | 12530        |
| <b>Liabilities***</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>0</b>     | <b>0</b>     |
| <b>Net Assets/Liabilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>6742</b>  | <b>8728</b>  |
| <p>** the second-hand net realisable value of the sheds, tools, equipment, ladders and gazebos is deemed negligible at £2,500.</p> <p>*** the trustees are not aware of any liabilities at 31/12/2022.</p> |              |              |

## **Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2022**

### **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 paid in and readily withdrawn to pay for debts as they become due.

### **3 Grants, Donations, Subscriptions and Gift Aid**

- a) Grants were not sought nor received during 2022 as we were able to undertake minor improvements to the gardens using our own resources.
- b) Specific donations were received for plants and trees, and from visitor groups, our Friends, plus general gazebo visitors.
- c) Annual membership subscriptions total increased slightly due to more people becoming Friends, which is welcome news.
- d) Gift aid (GA) and Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme on valid donations were claimed during 2022. A claim for 2022 calendar year is underway for receipt in 2023.
- e) A SumUp card reader was purchased so that credit and debit cards, and mobile phone payments may be transacted to our FODG account.
- f) From October to December 2022, we received £199.00 from the government's electricity support grant via our supplier. This is more than our actual spend and the monies received are recorded in the accounts as credits.

### **4 Administration**

This includes: Insurance, web-site name and hosting, Dropbox subscription, fuel, stamps, volunteer refreshments, new door keys and examiner fees, etc.

### **5 Events**

In 2022 the January Wassailing was cancelled due to trustee Covid illness. However, there was a welcome back of MIG and Shakespeare events which were held successfully, as were Heritage Weekend activities. We hope to have a full series of events in 2023.

## **6 Payments**

Trees, plants, miscellaneous equipment, and additional metal edging for the parterre inner borders were all purchased in 2022.

## **7 Capital Items**

A tall, safe, Henchman ladder for tree pruning and fruit picking was purchased.

## **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 2022 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**

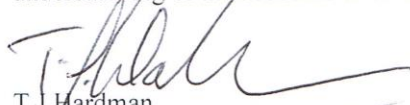
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

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  
13 February 2023

## 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 were five serving trustees and one co-opted committee member on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. We are allowed 15 maximum, and are keen to recruit new Trustees and committee members to spread the load of our activities; we are happy to note that three of our volunteers have agreed to become co-opted members of committee from January 2023.
- 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.

| <b><i>Current Trustees (Dec 2022)</i></b> | <b>Date Joined Trustees</b> | <b>Re-election Date</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Joy Brindle (Chair)                       | July 2016                   | 2025                    |
| Angela Lee (Membership Secretary)         | September 2011              | 2023                    |
| Chris Lee (Treasurer)                     | September 2011              | 2023                    |
| Martin Roberts                            | January 2012                | 2025                    |
| Christine Wiecek (Secretary)              | June 2014                   | 2025                    |

### ***Co-opted committee member (2022)***

Chris Mallia.

## **7. Principal Office**

The address for postal communication purposes is:

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

Old Durham Gardens physical location is:

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

(Please do not send any mail to this address as there is no postbox).

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

Email: [olddurhamgardens@gmail.com](mailto: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 2022 as agreed by Trustees in March 2023.

Joy Brindle  
Chair, Friends of Old Durham Gardens.