

Annual Report & Accounts

2021-2022



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Report

Mission

To advance the arts, horticulture and ecology for the public benefit, through the provision for community participation, educational workshops and public displays.

To develop the capacity and skills of local communities to engage with nature through creative design, contribute to environmental regeneration, food sufficiency, wellbeing and employment.

Strategic Aims

Greenaleigh Community Garden

Establishing a base to provide:

- a community resource for growing food, herbs, teas, and flowers
- a nursery for community planting e.g. gardens, local centre entrances/play areas and public green spaces
- an innovative space to experiment with growing and utilising natural materials for construction/design/craft/art works
- education, skills and training - to build on local horticultural/design/construction/art/craft expertise and support school/community education and training
- a development site for producing public art works, research, debate, raising awareness and promoting sustainable, regenerative communities.

Trustees

Adam Atkins - landscape architect and arboriculturist

Simon Bell - writer, publisher, retired senior lecturer at the School of Art and Design, Coventry University

John Little - Grass Roof Company partner, Green Roof Shelters director

Jennifer Parkinson - engineer, Greenaleigh Road Allotment plot holder, experienced food grower

Aimee Postle - business consultant, visiting lecturer at Birmingham City University, University of Wolverhampton

Phil Stokes - ecologist, horticulturist, Greenaleigh Road Allotment plot holder

Garden Open Sessions

Infrastructure



Kevin passes cut timber up to the roof

Completing construction of the poly tunnel was a huge achievement. It has extended the growing season and allowed open sessions and workshops to be held in wet weather. Perseverance in finding an ideal base solution paid off. Attaching the frame to timber on a slab base, raised the height of the poly tunnel and prevents rot. We're also proud of successfully devising a way of collecting rainwater from the poly tunnel and installing two 1,000 litre International Bulk Containers (IBC's) for storage.

Adding green roofs to the sheds allowed a wood storage and water harvesting section to be added to the back of the sheds. Green roofs not only look great, they help replace the green foot print occupied and moderate the temperature inside the sheds - extremely useful for storing vegetables and seeds.

None of this would have been possible without a great team of volunteers. Particular thanks to, Pat Harte who put a crew of plot holders together for the final stages of adding polythene to the poly tunnel, Louise Mitchell for being able to turn her hand to any job required, and the Peck family who did an amazing job of kickstarting the green roof project and helped solve the notoriously tricky poly tunnel water harvesting.



Selecting the best tool for the job



Shed with extended green roof for storage and water butts



Holly passes earth up to Aurora



Aurora and Iggy discuss drill bits and screws

Planting



Harvested pumpkins and gourds

Edibles

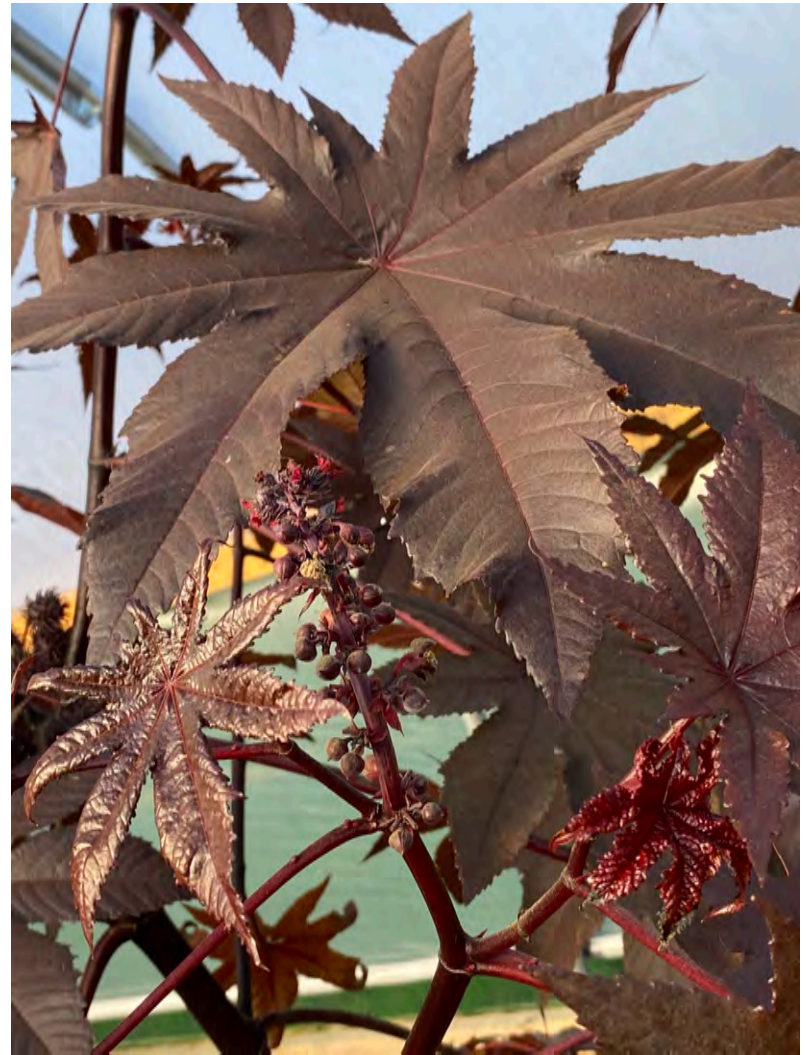
James Phillips took charge of the edibles again this year. Bountiful crops of onions, garlic, beans, pumpkins, sweet corn, potatoes, tomatoes, tomatillo, chard and cavolo nero were available for volunteers to take home or exchange with plot holders. Surplus potatoes, pumpkins and beans were delivered to the local food pantry. Crop rotation, composting and green manures ensured good yields and plenty of flowers for bees. Fruit bushes and trees planted last began to bear fruit.

Border

Additional border planting funded by the Severn Trent Community Fund included twisted hazel (*Corylus avellana*), guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*), sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) and walnut (*Juglans regia*). Supplementing a small self-seeded wooded area, black berries and previously planted dog roses they will provide sustenance for wildlife and humans.



Angels/Devils Trumpet/Thorn apple/
Cornucopia (*Datura meteloides*)



Castor Oil/Bean (*Ricinus communis*)

Features

Larger than life structural planting adds a wow factor of any garden. Amongst many others, Horticulturist Phil Stokes supplied angels trumpets and castor oil/bean plants from his own collection. They were both planted inside and outside the poly tunnel within view of each other so that their growth could be compared. They flourished in both locations but the ones inside the poly tunnel had a far longer season. Globe thistles also made a striking display.

Living Art Works and Art Materials

R&D Fledgling Programme funding from the Arts Council National Lottery Projects Grant, to explore living art works and art materials, started with planting:

- mallow and hazel - grown for their stems,
- Bangladeshi bottle gourds - for their potential to hold water when dry,
- tomatillo to add to the collection of wild and other ornate seed heads, and
- a trip to the National Herb Garden to combine sourcing herbs with plants used for dyes and inks.

Dye plants purchased include woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), dyer's chamomile (*Anthemis tinctoria*), dyer's tickseed (*Coreopsis tinctoria*), dyer's weld (*reseda Luteola*) and madder (*Rubia tinctorum*).

Fledgling Programme

Workshops



Hazel with her completed wild flow chandelier

Thanks to funding from the Art Council National Lottery Project Grants we were able to host our first run of arts/craft/nature workshops. Five workshops, ten sessions, took place over the summer holidays. Initially the numbers were restricted to 25 places per workshop due to limited tool/material supplies but as the sessions progressed families and young people asked if they could bring other family members and friends. The roughly hewn space with hurriedly assembled pallet tables and straw bale seating, surrounded by vegetables and areas of untamed wild growth, received much enthusiasm for engendering a sense of enjoyment and freedom. Combined with the activities and home baked refreshments we received tremendous overall feedback.



Plant finding mission

Many of the workshops started with a plant finding mission that allowed participants to explore the garden and unclaimed parts of the allotment site.

The photos below illustrate the engagement and wonderful work created during the workshops. Thanks to all the photographers who shared their work so generously.

Wildflower Chandeliers



Albi attaches a teasel



Siena and Lou selecting copper wire to secure poppy heads



Hazel's chandelier - hazel, pumpkin flowers, globe thistle, honesty, cotoneaster

Natural Dyes



Flower pounding and leaf bashing transfer of natural pigments to cloth



Rolling plants and fabric between newspaper to transfer pigment to cloth



Pigments transferred to cloth



Pumpkin, poppy and bindweed (*Convolvulus*) flowers

Allotment Combing for Curiosities



Natural and found objects - collected, displayed and examined under vintage enlarger lenses.



Recycled jars make excellent display containers



Perfect subjects for close-up/macro and time lapse photography



Collection of found and natural objects



Airborne seeds, extinguished flight



Rocket Pig/Dog - sculpture - unearthened tools, dried seed heads, string, wire

Cyanotypes



Leena and Jo use their phones to time the development process



Sienna and friend go it alone, confidence in the colour changes and process make timers redundant

Workshops were accompanied by factsheets and examples of works by artists using similar techniques. The cyanotype workshops also included a brief history due the importance of the process in the development of photography. Sessions were designed to include all levels of access and interest so that participants could follow up references and explore the techniques introduced at home.

Cyanotype paper is sensitive to UVA radiation, a limited near ultraviolet and blue light spectrum, strongest in bright sunlight. Adjusting exposure times for a mix of cloud and sun became part of the fun. Arrangements were made on similar sized dummy paper before being swiftly transferred to exposed cyanotype paper. After timing the exposure it was transferred to a black bag and carried to the poly tunnel for development and washing.



Freddie arranges petals and leaves on preprepared cyanotype paper

Preprepared lightweight cyanotype paper was used to familiarise the process, before progressing to more costly handmade watercolour paper, prepared with Ferric Ammonium Citrate and Potassium Ferricyanide. Despite the difference in exposure and development times, there were far fewer accidental over exposures.

Both papers resulted in stunning images, the preprepared lightweight paper lent a delicacy to the images, the heavier handmade paper produced rich tones with good definition and an attractive texture. It was a tough decision to choose a print for the Summer Exhibition & Barbecue poster.



Small preprepared cyanotype paper used for initial prints



Isla Hall - Cyanotype on handmade paper, selected for the Summer Exhibition & Barbecue poster

Scoring Supporting Structures



Geodesic Dome using two different lengths of bamboo, made up of six pentagons and ten triangles, ready for wire sound scores

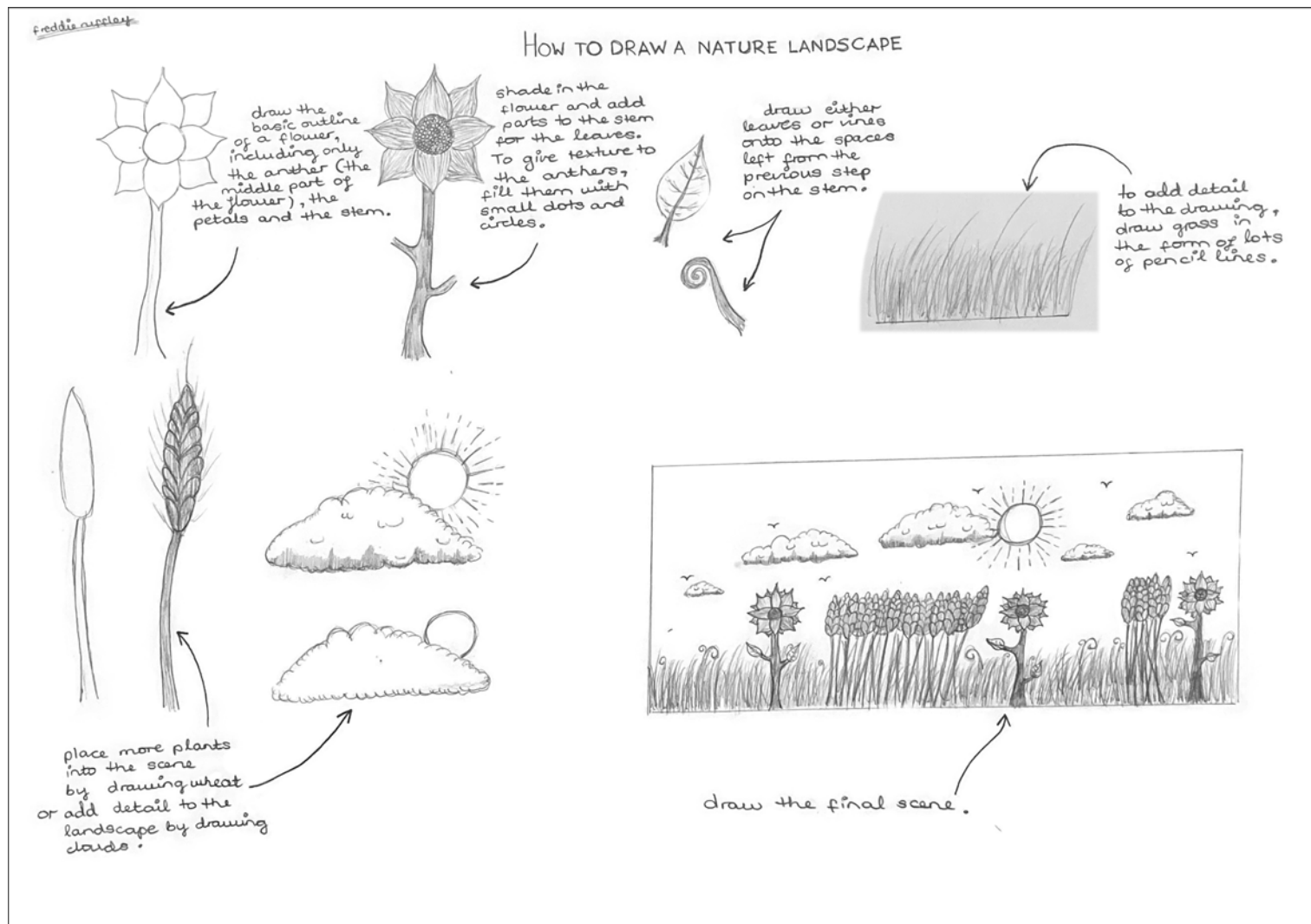
Summer Exhibition and Barbecue



Great food, exhibits, botanical drawing activities, glorious weather and a steady stream of visitors made it a relaxing celebratory occasion



An opportunity connect with local MP, Steve McCabe and Severn Trent Community Fund Officer, Sue Hayes



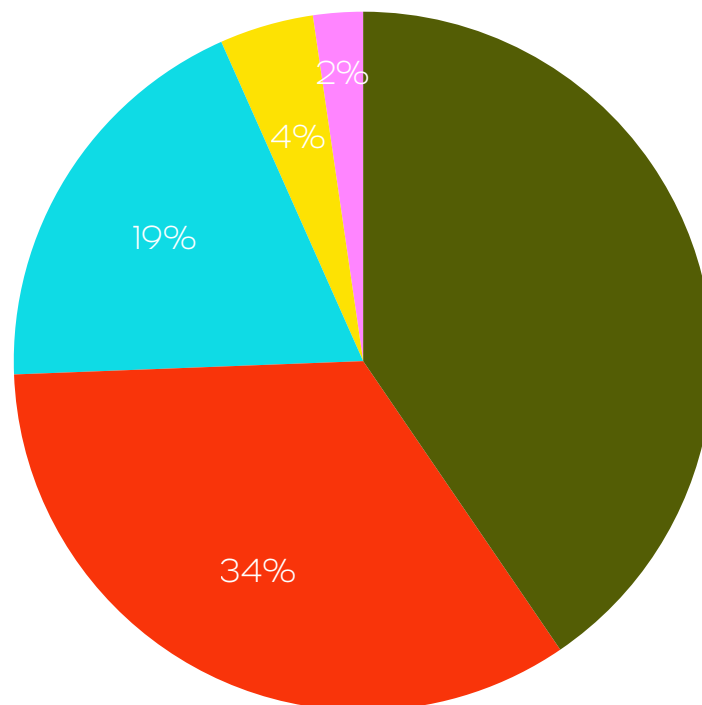
Freddie Ruffley - one of the children's instructions featured in the book

Drawing on associated artists and workshop creatives, commissions for the dO iT book are underway. A digital and handmade book will be made of the collated instructions for making art/performance with nature and will be available October 22.

Do It books have a global community following and radical history. The first book, a revolutionary call for protest and social change, produced by Jerry Rubins, late 1960's, was followed by a popular swell of artists books including Yoko Ono's subversive, whimsical book of instructions for art and life. In 1993, Hans-Ulrich Obrist (current artistic director at the Serpentine Galleries, London) and fellow artists instigated the idea of an exhibition of do-it-yourself descriptions and procedural instructions, mixing contributors of different generations and backgrounds, and at the same time reducing the carbon footprint of transporting exhibits. The instructions are, of course, tongue-in-cheek but like others our book aims to be an inspiring all inclusive collection to redress values and encourage creative work with nature.

Engagement

● Open Sessions ● Workshops ● Event ● Visitors ● Commissions



Volunteer/participant attendance

Open sessions ran Thursdays 10.30am-2.30pm and Saturdays 11.00-3.00pm for 40 sessions throughout the year. Volunteers clocked up a total of 316 attended sessions; they applied and honed their skills, contributing to sustainable infrastructure and planting. More than half the volunteers attended five or more sessions.

Workshops held over the summer holidays were attended by 265 participants. Two thirds of the families and young people attending came to four or more sessions.

The Summer Exhibition & Barbecue following the workshops had an attendance of 148. Three quarters of the people who came attended the workshops, a quarter responded to posters, social media posts or were invited due to their interest/involvement as local community organisations and funders.

34 people who didn't attend other events visited the garden due to local/shared interest/future collaboration.

One part time project manager, one part time horticulturist, 15 of the 22 Fledgling Programme artist/creative commissions and a child support worker were commissioned over the year.

Website and social media visits increased, our highest Facebook page reached 1,400 visits.

The demographic backgrounds of volunteers/participants/visitors varied widely. Shared interests, home education, acquiring new skills, mental health, well-being, fresh produce and great company were given as reasons for being involved.

Grants

- Birmingham Municipal Charities - budget carried over £176

Project title - Greenaleigh Community Garden

Funding - for two small potting sheds (sourced locally from Earlswood Garden & Landscape Centre), pond, volunteer refreshments. Received January 2020, spending from April 2020.

Duration - unspecified

Budget - reserved

Status - pond outstanding otherwise complete.

Remaining budget held in reserve until the best site, functionality, design and additional funds can be raised.

- Severn Trent Community Fund - budget carried over £7,823

Project title - Greenaleigh Community Garden - Water Harvesting and Infrastructure

Funding - for part-time Creative Project Manager and Horticulturalist, volunteer open sessions and training, polytunnel guttering, water storage, seating, raised beds, green shed roofs with integrated workshop cover and water harvesting features, border planting

Duration - 12th October 2020 - 11th October 2021

Budget - reserved.

Status - project complete

- Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant - £14,409 (initial payment £12,923, second payment £1,486)

Project title - The Fledgling Programme, includes:

- Pilot Project Workshops, Event and dO iT Book Production

- R&D 1, Growing Living Art/Materials

- R&D 2, Developing Interactive Web Content

Duration - 14th June 2021 - 30th October 2022

Budget - reserved

Status - project ongoing

Accounts

Summary

6th April 2020 - 5th April 2021

Full accounts are available on request, play.ground@mail.com

Running Costs/ Project	Opening Balance	Income	Spend Items £250 +	Total Spend	Closing Balance
PlayGround (running costs - unrestricted)	180			46	134
Birmingham Municipal Charities (grant restricted)	177			(Reserved for pond - awaiting location and additional funds)	177
Severn Trent (grant restricted)	7,823		4,458 Project Manager, Horticulturist 489 shed green roof lining, outlet, underlay, overlay 300 mitre saw	7,501	322
Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant (grant restricted)		12,923	4,778 Artists, Project Manager, Access Support	5,800	7,123
	£ 8,180	£ 12,923		£ 13,347	£ 7,756

Date 18/01/2023

Signed on behalf of all trustees 