



Serpentine Community Garden Society CIO
Serpentine Walks, off-Burlington Road, Buxton, SK17 9AR

Report of the Trustees 18 February 2020 - 5 April 2021

Registered Charity number - 1188016

Registered office - c/o 39 Park Road, Buxton, SK17 6SQ

Date of registration as a charity - 18 February 2020

Trustees

Anne Holloway	resigned	01/04/20	to	15/11/2020
Margot Ferris	resigned	01/04/20	to	15/11/2020
Madeline Hall	re-elected	01/04/20	to	31/03/2021
Simon Fussell	re-elected	01/04/20	to	31/03/2021
Pete Brown	elected	15/11/20	to	31/03/2021
Carole Garner	elected	15/11/20	to	31/03/2021

Solicitors

Brooke-Taylor Solicitors
4 The Quadrant, Buxton, SK17 6AW

Bankers

Cooperative Bank

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1. Structure, Governance and Management

The Board currently comprises four trustees, all of whom take an active role in organisational development. Further trustees - to a maximum of eleven - will be recruited to the Board in response to a recognised skill or capacity need. Recruitment is done via advertising the role with a description of the key skills, knowledge or experiences being sought and an overview of the role and responsibilities of a trustee. SCGS's own networks and communication channels are used. Selection is through dialogue with other trustees.

Under the terms of the constitution agreed when registering as a charity, trustees might serve on the Board for up to 3 years with a third of trustees required to stand down each year. Whilst these provisions encourage freshness and dynamism, they could create unhelpful churn. Members considered the issue at the AGM in November 2020 and again at a special meeting on 31 January 2021 to confirm the decision to amend provisions. The term of office for trustees is now three years, renewable for a further three year term. After a break of a year trustees may stand for election for a return to office. For each of the first three years the longest serving trustee will resign, but may stand for a second term's appointment.

Response to the Covid-19 crisis has included rapid development of IT capabilities and use for meetings. As lockdown measures are eased, we will continue to work with trustees to improve how we exchange and share information.

The Board of Trustees has sustained practice from its precursor Board of Directors of Serpentine Community Farm CIC, meeting every six to eight weeks to review finance, projects and activity and to discuss long-term strategy and direction. The business plan approved in January 2020 is under thorough review, informed by appraisal from a financial consultant engaged with support from the Heritage Fund for Culture Recovery.

2. Objectives and Activities

The object of the CIO is to advance the education of the public in the subject of horticulture and horticultural practices.

In addition we aim to:

- teach and learn about sustainable growing practices in the High Peak climate;
- share knowledge with our volunteers and visitors;
- introduce initiatives and practices that support the aim of long term food security;
- build and maintain an environment where all people are welcome, enjoying what they are doing and having social interaction with others.

Planned activities were adapted in a rapid response to the need for precautionary measures against Covid-19 transmission. Activities included:

February 2020: Registration as a Charity. Ash tree suffering die back felled by HPBC arborist team. Seedy Saturday - 300+ packs shared. Introductory workshop on Principles of Organic Gardening. War and Peas published in paperback. Stocked in Scriveners, Poole's

Cavern and the Pump Room. The first picking of salad was made and enjoyed to everyone's satisfaction.

March 2020 – Seeds shared from foyer of Pavilion Gardens until required to close by nationwide lockdown. Presentation to 30 GPs on well-being project for social prescribing. Covid-19 pandemic declared. Serpentine Community Garden Society Detached established in growers' home garden. SCG closed to visitors. Volunteer team established to maintain site and sustain the growing cycle. Wednesday workshop programme postponed.

April 2020 – Rota for essential growing work covers four days a week – to allow physical distance of workers when on site. 184 volunteer hours onsite – compared to 309 in April 2019.)

May 2020 – Weekly cover continued. 194 hours logged onsite. (471 in May 2019). Maximum of six volunteers on site together. Some groups chose to work with lower numbers. Hours contributed in growers' home gardens and studio (for production of signs and posters) not formally captured. Contribution of salad bags to food parcels for families in need.

June 2020 – Weekly cover continued. 177 hours logged onsite. (452 in June 2019.)

July 2020 – Weekly cover continued with slight easing of group size – maximum of ten volunteers on site. 221 hours logged. (397 in July 2019.) Old garage condemned as unsafe by DCC contractors. Emptied, locked and surrounded with security fence pending demolition. Fringe event postponed to 2021, replaced with Secret Garden event – booked tours for groups, maximum 6 per group.

August 2020 – Booked tours for groups well-received.

September 2020 – Old garage demolished by DCC contractors. Cost met by High Peak Borough Council.

October 2020 – Successful application for Cadent award – £10,000 for Give Peas a Chance Saturday programme 2021-2022.

November 2020 – Successful application for Heritage Fund award – £21,120. Successful application for Family Zone award - £1,000.

December 2020 – Appointment of part-time Garden Manager. Transition Buxton talk - online and recorded with link on website. Website developers identified.

January 2021

Application submitted for planning permission to erect polytunnel on concrete base of demolished garage. Lease negotiations continue.

Well-attended and popular fortnightly Zoom meetings established. Zoom subscription taken out.

Growing Plans discussed, developed and shared electronically and in hard copy on whiteboards. Appointment of part-time social media support worker.

Website training for webmasters and editors.

February 2021

Finance report commissioned.

Agreed partnership with Buxton Junior School for Give Peas a Chance courses.

Zoom meetings - special interest groups, online workshops.

Gardens Update padlet notice board set-up to complement whiteboards and noticeboards on site.

Additional WhatsApp group set up for coordination of herb growing. Four volunteers training as editors of new website.

March 2021

New website launched.

Successful completion of Culture Recovery Fund (Heritage Fund) project.

Planning approval secured for third polytunnel: 16 letters of support including one from Stewart Medical Centre GPs.

Science Week - soil analysis project in partnership with Transition Buxton, funded by British Science Association, engaged 63 families.

Probus Buxton and District talk online.

Commissioned aerial footage of Buxton icons for introductory section of video showcasing the Community Garden's place in the town and community. Big dig working parties for polytunnel groundwork preparation.

Serpentine Community Garden Society - Volunteer Hours on site

	2019-2020	2020-2021
April	309	184.5
May	471	194
June	452	177.5
July	397.5	220.75
August	244.5	230
September	331	209
October	421	226
November	242	240.25
December	218	153
January	294	111.25
February	212	140.5
March	172	304.5
Total	3764	2391.25

3. Achievement and performance 2020/ 2021

Volunteers contributed 2391 (3764 in 2019-2020) hours over the year in registered attendance on site. In addition unregistered, but highly appreciated, hours were invested off site on administration, publicity, planning and practical gardening enriching cultivation of a range of produce. We thank our team of volunteers for their ongoing commitment. Many go well beyond what is asked of them: supporting events, creating posters and labels, growing at home on windowsills, investing time and thought in the garden and the organisation and always going the extra mile with the work they do to support our community in Buxton and the High Peak.

Education

We advance education in the science, art and practice of horticulture. The teaching and learning is not externally accredited but has its foundation in the authoritative gardening and horticultural advice provided by the Royal Horticultural Society. There is a particular focus on organic gardening methods based on the principles of organic gardening promoted by Garden Organic (previously the Henry Doubleday Research Association). In an informal setting, we work with volunteers to identify the skills they bring and the knowledge and skills they wish to develop. More formally, we offer regular training workshops and courses to consolidate and extend learning. All ages are covered with interventions modified to meet age and experience and to take in to account such factors as learning or social disabilities.

We promote active use of our facilities by local educational and therapeutic providers. Our briefing session for social prescribing was attended by thirty local GPs. The planned well-being course, overseen by a qualified Person Centred Counsellor working alongside horticulturalists, has been postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis but will be rescheduled as circumstances allow.

Children and Young People

Formalising the relationship with our partners who work directly with young people (children's nurseries, child minder groups, schools and colleges) through the provision of a range of services and experiences enables the charity to introduce more young people to the site, allowing them to experience not only food growing, cooking and crafts, and all the associated benefits, but being part of a community space that they can feel a part of. Whilst onsite activity in this area has been constrained, work has continued with online initiatives and with planning for return of groups to the garden. (A new Saturday programme launched on 1 May 2021.)

Culture

Art and culture is a developing strand of SCG volunteer interest. We work with locally based voluntary organisations and individual artists. The site is valued by artists as inspiration and a welcoming host for direct interaction with communities. The site has the potential to play a significant role in delivery of a thriving cultural life in the town as a space where the public and creatives can interact and collaborate on joint projects, often bringing more investment in arts and culture to the local area in the process. We are already recognised as an excellent informal performance space and a great setting for external art-

works. As lockdown provision ease, the benefits of a venue in the open air are being widely recognised.

Organisation

Acceptance of our application for registration as a charity was a big step for the organisation. Alongside that recognition, work on securing the future of the project on its current site has progressed. Our landlords, High Peak Borough Council, approved in principle the terms of a 25 year lease, subject to detailed negotiation with council officers. Discussions over the status of near derelict buildings on the site have proved complex and have been frozen as other essential services were prioritised following the national lockdown. Hopes for resolution before the end of 2020 were not realised but we work towards signing the final documents before the end of 2021.

Local press and social media were used effectively for a re-branding exercise following registration as a charity. The new name is reflected in a new website domain name, a new organisational email account, an updated facebook page and updated twitter feed. We also launched an Instagram feed in January 2021. Weekly working notes are circulated to all members and volunteers. Each month an update is circulated to all supporters.

In March 2020 we set up a daily blog on the website, detailing gardening activity of our chief growers as they worked with us but at distance as they shielded from the pandemic. The blog was maintained for 100 entries between April and November 2021. Its wealth of information and interest was transferred in full to the new website, preserving an invaluable resource.

We reviewed procedures for health and safety and for volunteers and developed action plans to address improvement points. Risk assessments for Covid-19 were drawn up and reviewed regularly. Individual reviews with all active volunteers were completed.

Our organisational resilience was stress tested from the start of the reporting year. As noted above, our chief growers, along with three skilled and knowledgeable horticulturist members of the team were confined to home and their own gardens, as was our resident artist. Other core volunteers conducted personal risk assessments and decided against exposure to groups of other volunteers. The structure for sustaining growing on site and respecting individuals' needs and personal boundaries whilst maintaining contact was swiftly established and has proved robust. Links with other community groups have been strengthened as ventures arising in response to the Covid-19 crisis have brought the importance of community mutual aid into sharp relief.

4. Financial review

Income for the first full year as a charity plus six weeks of the previous year when we changed status year totalled £28,501, made up of £25,085 in grant awards and £3,416 in donations and sales. (This figure is more than the comparable income in 2019-2020 of £3097: remarkable stability in an extraordinary period.)

Expenditure has been modest outside of financial commitments in completing contracts, allowing an additional £2,581 to be carried forward in cash reserves. This provides a cushion.

ion against the anticipated additional costs - rental and service charges - incurred once a lease is on force.

Prospects for significant grant funding in future are good. £10,000 is pledged to be released when our new lease is signed and discussion have been initiated with major funding bodies about potential support.

5. Risk management

As Trustees, we are responsible for overseeing the charity's risk management activities. The Trustee Board manages and monitors SCGS's risks through a Strategic Risk Register which is incorporated in the Annual Business Plan. Strategic Risks are identified following the Annual General Meeting of members, drawing on response to the annual Future Strategy briefing paper.

Risk management of high-level risks that could prevent SCGS from meeting its objectives and of more routine operational matters are kept under regular review. The new risks associated with a national pandemic required a focused review in 2020-2021. Engagement of trustees and a committed volunteer cadre and membership supports on-going review which is both sensitive and robust.

6. Future Plans

Our plans for 2021/2022 involve building on the foundations laid during 2019-2020 and the experience of working through the challenges, and unexpected opportunities, of response to the global pandemic, to sustain our focus on growing plants and growing people.

We believe that the Serpentine Community Garden can become a centre for sustainability and community development in Buxton, with regional reach and national recognition. The site will provide multiple benefits to the town through the services it provides, contributing to learning and helping to raise the profile of the town and its heritage.

We will continue to develop our profile and external-facing activities; improve our internal systems and processes; reappraise organisational risk and plan to grasp opportunities to extend our community reach.

Trustees
Simon Fussell (Chair)
Madeline Hall (Treasurer)
Pete Brown
Carole Garner

	Operational costs					£25,920.65		
	Gross Profit / (Loss)					£1,243.72		
	Net Profit					£0.00		
	Interest Receivable					£0.00		
	Tax on Profit on Ordinary Activities					£0.00		
	Profit for the Financial Period					£0.00		
	Fixed Assets							
	Apple Presses (2017-2019)					£200.00		
	Total					£200.00		
	Current Assets							
	Cash at bank and in hand					£6,910.27		
	Total Current Assets					£7,110.27		
	Current Liabilities / Credit carried forward					-£642.00		
	Total assets less current liabilities					£6468.27		
	Capital and reserves							
	Surplus for year					£0.00		
	Total capital and reserves					£6468.27		
	For the period ending 05/04/2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.							

	The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.						
	The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.						
	These financial statements have been approved for issue by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by						
	M A Hall						
	Trustee / Treasurer						
4	Notes and Accounting Policies						
	Period from 18 February 2020 to 5 April 2021						
	1 Accounting Policies						
	(a) Basis of preparation						
	The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)						
	(b) Turnover						
	Turnover represents the fair value of consideration receivable in the ordinary course of business for services provided.						
	(c) Fixed Assets						
	All fixed assets are initially recorded at cost.						
	(d) Depreciation						
	Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:						
	Polytunnels/scaffolding boards (2016-2017)			20% straight line			
	Tables and Chairs (2016-2017)			20% straight line			
	Apple Presses (2017-2018)			20% straight line			

	2 Company limited by guarantee							
	The company is limited by guarantee and therefore has no share capital. The liability of the trustees upon winding up the company is limited to £1.							
	3 Administrative expenses							
		Insurance		£264.90				
		Sundry expenses		£406.65				
		Admin expenses		£1,072.11				
		Depreciation		£0.00				
		Total		£1,743.66				
	4 Other operating income							
		Donations		£3,140.30				
		Membership		£241.00				
		Grants		£25,085.01				
		Sales		£35.07				
		Total		£28,501.38				
	5 Commitments carried forward to 2021-2022							
		Balance of Heritage Fund award			£2100.00			
		Balance of first instalment of Cadent award			-£2742.00			
		Total			-£642.00			
	6 Tangible Fixed Assets							
				Cost	Depreciation		Net Book	
					20-21		Value	
	Polytunnels/scaffolding boards (15-16)		£1,500.00				£0.00	
	Polytunnels/scaffolding boards (16-17)		£1,500.00		£300.00		£0.00	
	Tables and Chairs (2016-2017)		£450.00		£90.00		£0.00	
	Apple Presses (2017-2018)		£1,000.00		£200.00		£200.00	
	Total		£4,450.00		£590.00		£200.00	

Table 1

		Budget	Spent Dec 2020	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Balance / Excess	Maintenance
CRF 2020	Website	£4200.00	£2928.00	£1680.00			-£408.00	contract - Cadent
	Garden Manager	£6780.00	£412.50	£2129.16	£2129.16	£2129.16	-£19.98	Met by SCGS
	Social Media	£4500.00	£480.00	£800.00	£1600.00	£1600.00	£20.00	
	Video	£1500.00				£1500.00	£0.00	
	Skips	£500.00				£500.00	£0.00	
	Legal Fees	£720.00				£720.00	£0.00	
	Finance Consultancy	£3000.00				£3000.00	£0.00	
	Total	£21200.00	£3820.50	£4609.16	£3729.16	£9449.16	-£407.98	10% retention released in 2021-2022
Cadent	Polytunnel	£1700.00				£1700.00	£0.00	
	Coordinator	£4200.00				£150.00	£4050.00	
	Tablets	£1000.00					£1000.00	
	Food	£750.00					£750.00	
	Tools and PPE	£250.00					£250.00	
	cooking utensils	£1000.00					£1000.00	
	Website	£1000.00				£408.00	£592.00	
	Materials	£100.00					£100.00	
	Total	£10000.00				£2258.00	£7742.00	Commitment of £5000 - £2258 carried forward

Audit Statement

	For the period ending 05/04/2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.					
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	The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.					
	These financial statements have been approved for issue by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by					
	M A Hall					
	Trustee / Treasurer					

