

Trustees' annual report for the period,

From: 1st February 2023, period start date, to: 31st January 2024, period end date.

Charity name: Oldway Gardens Group

Charity registration number: 1196635

Charities registered address: 18 Cecil Avenue, Preston, Paignton, TQ3 1LW

Charities activities address: Oldway Gardens, Oldway Road, Paignton, Devon

Names of charity trustees who manage the charity:

Tim Eley, Chairperson

Peter Welsby, Vice chair

Susan Saunders, Treasurer

Joanne Jones, Secretary

Summary of purposes

The conservation and preservation of the flora and fauna and natural environment of Oldway Mansion Gardens for the benefit of the public including the advancement of education of the public to celebrate the history and traditions of the gardens to connect the community to its heritage and to develop interest and skills in proficient gardening and estate management.

Summary of main activities in relation to above

Education/training/arts/culture/heritage/science/environment/ conservation/heritage/recreation

The Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group took over and has looked after the maintenance of Oldway Mansion Gardens, since September 2019, after the council which owns the site, ran out of money. The site consists of 17 acres of grade 2 listed gardens and is a public park, completely open to the general public 365 days of the year, there are no gates. The main garden design was by Achille Duchene, completed in 1902, and consists of grassed parkland, two distinctive parterres, herbaceous borders, terraces, flower beds, sub tropical areas, a pond and stream, water plants and wooded areas. There are many birds, small animals, insects and amphibious creatures that inhabit the gardens. We have a programme of sustainability for the future, whilst preserving the past.

We have kept in mind the guidance from the charity commission to ensure that we are entirely independent of the local council, are free to make our own decisions on administration, finances and legal matters, we have our own management plan and policies. Our own committee which meets regularly and we meet with council officials to advise them on what we are doing and wish to do in the future.

We are completely inclusive with sixty active volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, we do not discriminate. We have volunteers with physical disabilities, with mental health disabilities, with learning difficulties who come with carers. We have groups of community payback persons with their supervisors, young American missionaries from The Church of latter day saints, and we have groups of children from the local primary school with their class teachers and helpers, and also young persons doing their Duke of Edinburgh awards. All are welcome.

We actively encourage all our volunteers to share with others the skills that they have, whilst developing skills in those who wish to learn, in their knowledge of plants and wildlife and their gardening skills. Others, who prefer to use their hospitality skills, look after our plant stall, providing a selection of plants donated or grown by ourselves, or look after our small tea hut, providing refreshments to all the visitors to the gardens. Other volunteers with skills in building and maintenance mend gardening equipment, build benches, make planters, bird boxes and related wooden items for the gardens and sale to visitors, from our gardeners' yard and its related buildings. We grow our own plants mainly from cuttings and believe in sustainability. We provide tours of the gardens to any visitors that want them. We have developed popular family garden trails to encourage visitors, and do our own administration.

We keep a register and between 17th November 2021 when we became a charity and 31st January 2024, our volunteers logged up just over 22,000 hours of recorded voluntary work. Unrecorded work goes on behind the scenes continually as well. We estimate that at an average wage of £12 per hour, we should be able to match fund if bidding for a grant, of £266, 000

The groups trustees look after the day to day running of the group, overall gardening management, supervision, administration, accounts, running the web site, social media and marketing, we also have a full committee of 12, whose personnel are delegated to look after the newer volunteers, to understand their previous gardening skills, training needs, plus projects and areas that they might prefer to work on, and also to design and run a rota system for the plant stall and tea hut. The trustees disseminate information to the committee at regular meetings where everyone's advice, thoughts and idea are welcomed, minutes are published and talked through with all volunteers.

The group has a management system in place, which includes full risk assessments, health and safety, training procedures and policies.

The group has a good relationship with Torbay Council who owns the Oldway Estate and their company SWISCo now collect our garden waste that we were disposing of ourselves and they also mow the two large fields on the estate with large tractor mowers, which we were mowing with small hand petrol mowers, at no charge to the group.

The Group has developed a really good relationship with the local ministry of justice department, who provide us with teams of Community Payback personnel, and supervisors, every week, who work on projects that we set them, overseen by our Vice Chair.

We support persons from the Church of latter day saints, who send us two of their visiting young person missionaries from USA to work as volunteer gardeners for several months each year, as well as young persons working on their Duke of Edinburgh awards, and several persons with disabilities, who attend with their carers and enablers.

The group has established a good relationship with The Oldway primary school that has its back gate opening to the gardens. The school children use the gardens for nature studies and we have involved them in a pollinating project, giving and opening a bed for them to sow wild seeds into and tend them.

The group's chairman is involved with the Royal Horticultural Society and locally with South West in Bloom, part of Britain in Bloom, as a judge. The Oldway Gardens Group is actively encouraged to participate in the yearly competition for the, "In your neighbourhood award".

The group's treasurer is a qualified tour guide and provides guided tours of the gardens including the history of the Singer family who established the estate.

The group's secretary, as well as administration, looks after our social media content. We have a web site, www.oldwaygardens.co.uk, which links to everything.

The group has a good relationship with the Paignton and Preston Community Partnership, the main Torbay Community Partnership cover the insurance for all volunteer groups in Torbay. All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefits, only legitimate expenses.

In planning our activities for the year we kept in mind the Charity Commissions guidance on public benefit at our trustee meetings, where everything is minuted.

With our changing climate, one of our goals has always been sustainability. In our sub tropical climate area, where we have many different ferns, shrubs and trees, our rockery is thriving with heathers, rock plants, and echiums, also our pond is flourishing with donated water lilies, irises, grasses, bull rushes, and around the pond, persicaria, primroses, cowslips and lavender, attracting, bees, dragonflies, butterflies, and many different birds, and other wildlife. We began a plan of coppicing and clearing many of the overgrown and self seeding trees and bushes that have taken over the gardens in the last 100 years, opening up the views and providing a safer environment for visitors.

During the season from February to October, our plant stall is open 5 days a week, manned by volunteers, providing an income to enable the group to purchase equipment and plants, as well as growing them, for the gardens. Our tea hut is open 7 days a week, manned by volunteers, providing refreshments to visitors, as well as where our garden trails begin and end. Again, all proceeds go into sustaining the work of the charity. Heritage and Garden Tours take place and provide a wealth of information about the history of the Singer Family. One of the old grass tennis courts is hired out to provide a safe place for dog training sessions.

February 23 - The first of many benches have been repaired, and restored in the gardens. We Contacted the Burma Star Association regarding renewal of the roses in their memorial patch. The committee discussed the possibility of getting electricity into tea hut rather than using calor gas. Primroses purchased for plant stall and gardens. Spring flowers start to make an appearance in the beds. Bird boxes made by local children were put up in the trees along the lime walk. We now have Oldway Gardens Group business cards. The volunteers clear more of the overgrown areas, exposing original views, and walls not seen for years have been rediscovered.

March 23 - The group were given a donation of a large amount of decking wood to make bird boxes and planters for sale. We had a meeting with teachers from Oldway Primary school to discuss Easter poster competition to promote community health and wellbeing of gardening. Volunteers commenced a major tidy up of gardeners yard, including the office in yard refurbished, from a storage room. A visiting heron was spotted along with several regular ducks to the pond.

April 23 - Our tea hut opened for the season, with a family Easter chicken trail organised. There were over 800 children plus adults that took part. The Community Payback persons helped with some of the heavier gardening jobs, such as coppicing. Two of the volunteers produced new work benches and upgraded the workshop in the yard, whilst another couple of the volunteers were looking after the plants in the yard and propagating to give us new ones. Cleaning, weeding and planting continue in the gardens, which are coming to real life after the winter.

May 23 – Trustees met with Simon Bonvoisin, a landscape architect specialising in conservation, and restoration of nationally important landscapes, to talk with us about the Oldway Gardens.

39 members of Surrey County Garden Club, on a Gardens of South Devon Coach Tour, visited our grounds and purchased lots of plants from our plant stall.

The three volunteers that look after the pond and ghetto area waded in to the pond and created a ducking and small fish sanctuary to protect our fishes, newts and ducklings from the gulls, rooks and herons, whilst clearing out the pond weed and cutting back.

The tulip bulbs planted in the parterre matured into a wonderful display.

June 23 - We were really excited by a visit by the BBC Spotlight crew, who filmed and interviewed some of our volunteers about volunteering and sustainable plants. This month saw the start of replacing old worn out beams in the garden yard buildings to bring them back into use.

Three local Preston councillors visited Oldway to walk around the grounds, meet the volunteers and pledge their support.

We purchased two stand alone flags and banners to place in front of plant stall and tea hut to help promote us.

SWISCo mowed the two large lawn areas for us, and after the maintenance of donated petrol mowers, we continued to mow the other areas ourselves.

The children from Oldway Primary School, received seeds from King Charles 3, which they scattered and planted in a new pollinator patch dug by community payback team

We had some very generous plant and planter donations from the community to sell on our plant stall.

We had a visit by a person from Torbay Hospitality who recorded a Podcast about the gardens with our Secretary Jo Jones

Six of our volunteers received training from SWISCo on maintaining the old 100 year old Ram pump that helps provide water to the pond. This is essential to keep the pond topped up.

July and August 23 – Our maintenance volunteers continued to refurbish and paint the garden benches throughout the site.

Both the plant stall and the tea hut were really busy, both opening six days a week. We now have a couple of volunteers that enjoy knitting, making bees, ladybirds and others small creatures to sell on the tea hut, and our owl trail keeps the children busy.

Plenty of weeding, grass mowing, trimming of hedges and borders, watering the plants, maintaining and repairing garden machinery. We have persons from the Community Payback on site weekly now, helping with the heavier work.

The group played host to the Judges from South West in Bloom, who were judging Paignton in Bloom along with our gardens in the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Category' awards.

We had a visit from our local M.P. Kevin Foster and his wife Hazel, who were interested in seeing the work of our volunteers.

Sept 23 – Visit by coach party from Wellington came for a tour of gardens with refreshments at our tea hut.

The participants in the annual "Great Global Greyhound Walk", decided to have a meeting at Oldway, followed by Tea and refreshments at the Tea Hut.

We had a real splurge on tackling and clearing the area to the west of the site which has been overgrown with Ivy and brambles for many years, opening up the views, and making it safer for visitors.

We had a fund raising BBQ amongst the volunteers, family and friends in the gardeners yard to raise funds for a defibrillator to be placed in the gardens.

We continue to receive donations of plants from the community and this month had a large donation of garden tools. We have quite a few petrol mowers now, usually they come in not working, but we have volunteers that are able to get them going again.

All the general gardening tasks continued, but we had a really big tidy up of all the areas on the site, before autumn and winter sets in.

Oct 23 -

The Tea Hut team launched two new Autumn half term Ghost Trails, to help fund raising for the defibrillator for the gardens.

The community payback persons were working weekdays and weekends to clear overgrown areas and clear up leaves for composting, throughout the site.

The plant stall continued to open when the weather was fine. We closed it at the end of October, but visitors were still able to purchase plants and planters from the gardeners' yard where we are building a good stock of plants from propagating, potting up and donations.

With the support of SWISCo, OGG organised a recycling bin for waste pumpkins, advertising the bin on facebook.

We received a donation of 4000 Crocus Bulbs from the Paignton Rotary Club, as part of the Rotary National Purple4Polio campaign, and planted them on the bank of the East Lawn.

Oldway Gardens Volunteers were awarded another Outstanding grade in the 'In your neighbourhood' category, from South West in Bloom, and were presented with their Certificate at an awards ceremony.

Nov 23 – The tea hut closed for the winter.

The volunteers planted hundreds of daffodil bulbs in the beds around the grounds

We received a generous donation of mixed bulbs from our local Morrison's supermarket, which were also planted.

Historic England - Oldway Mansion was added, as one of 43 historic buildings and sites, to the 2023 South West Register of at risk buildings, which helps the gardens to be in the public eye

Huge effort by volunteers in the lower gardens collecting and recycling fallen autumn leaves

Two dumpy bags of topsoil delivered & unloaded by Volunteers for adding to the Parterre. Big team effort tidying and weeding.

We started the annual trimming of the 29 coned Yew trees.

Dec 23 –

The High Sheriff of Devon presented the Oldway Gardens Group with an award for 'Great and Valuable Services to the Community'. A presentation gathering and Christmas social event was held in the Gardeners Yard.

The Community Payback persons, were given the task of tidying and pruning the Lime Walk as well as lifting the canopy to establish new views.

Our maintenance, builder volunteers continued the major task of repairing and rebuilding the main units/sheds in the gardeners yard, including replacing a 7.2ft main roof beam.

The local free paper, Torbay Weekly wrote an article about the mansion buildings demise, and gave praise for our tireless volunteers who have taken over, looked after and revitalised, Oldway Mansion Gardens since Torbay Council dropped its upkeep in September 2019

Jan 24 –

The program for bench repairs is ongoing

The Community Payback persons continued to clear overgrown areas, help with composting and general gardening maintenance work

Our two retired engineer/electrician volunteers that look after the maintenance finished restoring the second derelict unit in the yard bringing it back into use. These volunteers also repaired and serviced a donated petrol mower and electric trolley.

Both of them also helped to make planters and bird boxes using recycled wood, along with making a sturdy bench for servicing our garden machinery.

We hosted an event in the lower memorial gardens for Holocaust Memorial Day

Work continues, with the help of the Community Payback persons, on the Rockery, pond general gardens and woodland areas, including planting yet more bulbs.

A heavy storm caused a large Phoenix Palm tree to fall in the knot garden, we don't know at this stage whether it may be saved.

Our potting up volunteers were propagating/tidying plants in the yard ready for Spring.

Financial Review

Bank: business account with National Westminster, Bristol City Centre, branch, with cash in bank at 31st January 2024 of £32,408 of unrestricted funds.

Our main source of income has been from plant and hand made wooden planter sales, tea hut sales, donations and income from tours and our family trails.

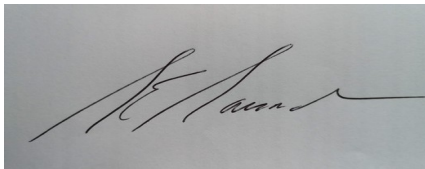
Future plans

To continue to build on what we have achieved.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Saunders', written on a light-colored background.

Mrs Susan Elizabeth Saunders

Trustee, treasurer

9th August 2024



Receipts and payments account

For the period from	01/02/23	To
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts			
	-	-	-
Plant stall income	7,451	-	-
Tea hut income	5,908	-	-
Other income	1,201	-	-
Donations	2,547	-	-
Interest	286	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	17,393	-	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).			
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-
Total receipts	17,393	-	-
A3 Payments			
	-	-	-
Plant stall expenses	994	-	-
Tea hut expenses	2,061	-	-
Garden expenses	4,460	-	-
Administrative expenses	572	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
Sub total	8,086	-	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)			
	-	-	-
Garden equipment	591	-	-
Sub total	591	-	-

Total payments	8,677	-	-
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Net of receipts/(payments)	8,715	-	-
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A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-
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A6 Cash funds last year end	23,693	-	-
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Cash funds this year end	32,408	-	-
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Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at bank	32,345
	Cash in hand	63
		-
	Total cash funds	32,408
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-
		-
		-
		-
		-
		-

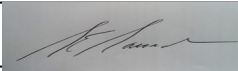
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs
B3 Investment assets		

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Garden equipment	

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name
	Susan E Smith

196635	CC16a
ounts	
31/01/24	

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Total funds	Last year
to the nearest £	to the nearest £

-	-
7,451	8,701
5,908	4,072
1,201	1,364
2,547	4,652
286	32
-	-
-	-
17,393	18,821

-	
-	-
-	-

17,393	18,821
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-	-
994	1,859
2,061	949
4,460	4,619
572	959
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
8,086	8,386

-	
591	316
591	316

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8,677	8,702
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8,715	10,119
-	-
23,693	13,574
32,408	23,693

the period

Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
OK	OK

Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
-	-
-	-
-	-

-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
-	
-	
-	
-	
-	

Name	Date of approval
saunders	4/22/2024