

True Harvest Seeds
Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Purposes and aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's memorandum of association.

- 1) (a) Promote for the benefit of the community and future generations the conservation, protection and improvement of biodiversity through the provision of a botanical garden, a seed bank and repatriation of lost plant species, to protect endangered species in accordance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

(b) Source viable Irish native and naturalised seed.
- 2) Advance the education of the public so as to increase their knowledge, understanding, appreciation and awareness of:
 - a) vegetable and other appropriate seeds, their value and the benefits arising from their conservation;
 - b) the principles and practice of maintaining seed biodiversity and sustainable development;
 - c) the design and application of seed conservation projects in the community;
 - d) educating trainers and teachers and developing training aids for schools to tie in with their curriculum;
 - e) the benefits arising from the maintenance of organic principles.
- 3) Provide and promote information and interpretive material about vegetable seeds.
- 4) Promote, foster and carry on study and research into the principles and practice of seed saving and to publish the useful results of such research.

We would like at this point to acknowledge and remember Gill Start who passed on 24th April 2024. Gill loved life and we miss her contribution in work but most of all her unwavering positive attitude and absolute love of life. Gill donated her funeral donation in lieu of flowers money to us. In her memory we bought a garden bench with a commemorative plaque.

True Harvest Seeds

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Our main activities undertaken to further our aims

- Maintaining and further development of headquarters at Kilclief Seed Centre we have had many challenges in continuing our conservation of Ireland's native-origin flora.

The new year started as 2023 ended, with ongoing communications with the planning department regarding our planning application to build a purpose-built building to house works for True Harvest Seeds. The final substantiation document sent in July is in ANNEXE 1 of this document. It outlines the activities that could be held at THS going forward.

Administration of charitable duties was addressed with our accountant Jennifer of McGrady's. We were helped greatly with her suggestion to start and use an online version of Sage. Debbie had prior experience using Sage from 2008 and with Jennifer's help got the 2023 accounts and also the 2024 accounts up to date by end of July 2024. This will greatly reduce the yearly burden and also the accounts should be ready earlier in the year at a lesser cost.

Continuing funding from the CRESI, Covid Recovery Employment Skills Initiative from the Department for Communities administered by Heritage Lottery Fund:

In March, after a prolonged illness, our Marketing Coordinator resigned effective 12th April 2024. THS obtained external HR advice and joined the Federation of Small Businesses to ensure fairness throughout.

We re-created the role under the title Marketing Officer and employed Emily Osborne starting 1st July. Emily had previous marketing experience and wished to expand her capabilities in a small organisation that would allow her to see and understand a greater overall picture of how marketing benefits - and in what places, in terms of an organisation as a whole. Emily's achievements have been and continue to be an enormous benefit to the charity. We signed a contract to take us to the end of the CRESI funding.

Emily stayed until 24th December 2024. We wish her every success in her new home and her career, and thank Emily for her hard work and lasting results for the charity.

Unfortunately trustee Mike Thompson had to resign for personal business commitments. Giving us 3 months notice, to 30th June 2024, was highly beneficial and to take his place Joanne Murray came on board. Mike handed over his responsibilities over this period making the transition as smooth as it could be. Mike's appointment terminated on 8th July 2024.

We would take this opportunity to thank Mike for the fabulous achievements throughout his 4 year tenure and wish him every success in his business ventures.

Joanne joined THS officially on 4th April 2024. Joanne was instrumental in helping the charity advertise and recruit the new CRESI appointment. Joanne has extensive teaching, HR and recruitment experience and brings naturally an enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm.

Joanne was also instrumental in the recruitment of Sebastian as Nursery Assistant via the JobStart scheme. We were able to secure a 9 month placement for Sebastian starting 15th January 2024 and lasting until 23rd September, when he had secured a permanent job working on boats to service wind farms. We were very pleased as this was the point of the JobStart scheme.

- Debbie continued as CEO contributing vision throughout paid and voluntary hours much the same as previous years.

- She continued to lay the ground work for the imminent creation of a permanent purpose-built seed bank for our island's flora through:

- Ongoing training with Clare to look after customers both in person and via the online shop.

This includes product development and population of items through continuing website development. Content is carefully selected for the advancement of people, nature and sustainability, all proceeds go to keeping core costs met and new projects emerging. Seed packing of all seed.

- Completion of training with Sebastian for the Nursery Assistant role and also external training. The training started with a power boat course that was to enable an island Seed Collection Project across the islands of Strangford Lough. The Seed Collection Project had to remain on hold due to planning uncertainties, so Sebastian continued in the boat theme and received more training that would enable him to apply for jobs by the end of his time with THS.

- Ongoing training for all staff

- Overseeing and managing the HR for all staff.

- Writing quotes for various seed requests, outings and training.

- Overseeing the growing and harvesting, cleaning and storing of seed.

- Seed bank maintenance.

- Kilclief maintenance of machinery and equipment.

True Harvest Seeds

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- Coordinating the work of our staff and volunteers, including training.
- Maintaining governance issues, accounts and payroll. Assisted by Rebecca Knight Treasurer and accountant Jennifer Murphy of McGrady's Accountants.
- Developing and looking after conservation projects.
- Making seed collections

- Debbie continues as a committee member of ENSPA and BNFC.
- "Working as CEO of THS is certainly challenging and at times tiring, but a lot can be said for living a life with an altruistic purpose, which seems to lend its own kind of energy to the project and of course attracts help from all kinds of very kind and wonderful people, to whom I am entirely grateful.

The greatest lessons learnt by me as CEO in 2024 is that of time management. As a small and specialised charity, we have welcomed temporary staff, who so often bring energy and ideas. They also require training and we are learning how to manage that time commitment in such a way that it benefits all." Debbie

- Joanne now provides management structure for the CRESI Marketing Coordinator post and Debbie provides the working environment. Trustee Katie has supported Joanne in this role as necessary.

- The Live Here Love Here (LHLH) subsidy to schools and community groups for their wild flower seed purchases continues to be availed of. There are still funds available which are carried forward to use in 2025.

- The Google Not for Profits programme continues to provide \$10,000p/month in free advertising and access to Google Workspace for document sharing and storage, how to best utilise these funds are under constant review.

- Our team of volunteers comprises Mike, Sue, Fergus, Marian and Philip. Each regularly and reliably brought and shared different skills and talents.

Mike our longest standing volunteer has the greatest all round experience and handles seed collecting and cleaning with skill.

Sue is our best plants' woman particularly skilled in nursery plant production.

Fergus grows our vegetables, onions, shallots and garlic for direct sale as well as tending the results of germination tests. He also helps greatly with harvesting.

Marian is a professional herbalist and under her guidance we have begun to develop our Medicinal plants capabilities. In spring Marian wrote a book on herbal medicines for THS and on her instruction we started a medicinal section of the website. In the latter part of the year we applied for a grant to develop a community physic garden, designed by Marian and maintained by all.

Last but by no means least Philip continues to help us with site maintenance. Looking after the grass cutting, hedge maintenance for site lines, composting and general upkeep.

We also welcome our SERC students volunteering, from their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering ranging from digging, to seed collecting to washing pots for recycling, our students bring with them youthful energy and fun.

We also welcome occasional volunteering activities from industry, In 2024 this came from CDE, a large engineering company <https://www.cdegroup.com/>. A group joined us in June and helped us plant out Marram, Lyme and Sand couch plants with the Strangford Lough and Lecale and Council partnership, to help alleviate coastal erosion at Tyrella beach.

Report on the fulfilment of charity's purposes:

Purpose 1a: Provision of a seed bank.

- The seed bank continues to be maintained by Debbie. Funded by voluntary hours and money generated by the online shop sales.

As of December 2024 the seed bank continues to maintain its collections.

Purpose 1a, 2 (a) (b): To protect endangered species.

- We worked with DAERA and Karl Hamilton to locate and collect further Schedule 8 plant populations which live at Binevenagh. We attempted, yet again, collection of *Saxifraga oppositifolia*. We were expediently given permission by DAERA, but to no avail, again, distance and availability of everyone to attend together was not successful. Despite this we will continue to try in 2025.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- The four *Crambe maritima* plants in the raised beds are now 3 in number however conditions during the year were such that none set flower so no seed could be collected.

Purpose 1b: Source viable Irish native seed.

- Contributions of *Rhinanthus minor*, yellow rattle were made to THS by Michael and Rachel of Ardtole and also Greer and Maureen of Slievemoyle. Both generously allowed Debbie and team to harvest yellow rattle free of charge and use it as a funding income for the charity. Both sites are naturally occurring populations.

- In August Debbie attended the LIFE of Machair project in Co Mayo, meeting with Caitriona and Mark who led a group to learn how to make seed collections of native Marram and how to plant them out. Debbie spent 2 days with the team in person and the team can follow up with questions they later may have.

Purpose 2: Advance the education of the public.

- Debbie continues to give talks and presentations.

- The website for SOS8 is kept up but was not added to in 2024, despite the list for Schedule 8 plants increasing to include 121 species, up from 88 previously. Payment is still made for it to stay live using unreserved funds raised by the shop.

- Volunteers changed throughout 2024.

- Our SERC students, led by Joanne and Joe, came from SERC Downpatrick campus, we are delighted and honoured to continue to host the students. Their volunteering gives THS a much needed work boost every fortnight and gives the students practical experience which adds to the quality of their portfolios. The students have helped with sowing seeds, plant care and site maintenance.

The students can also now count volunteering hours to their Duke of Edinburgh portfolios.

Everyone at THS have really taken to all of the students, we have got to know them as individuals, they brighten up our week and we very much appreciate their regular and valuable contribution.

- In March, as a continuation of our work with local Dublin artist Rachel Doolin. Rachel came to visit THS. We discussed ideas for the project and fund raising options as partners with Rachel being the lead partner.

You can access a talk here: <https://www.racheldoolin.com/debbie-gillies>

- We held one training day on "Seed Conservation Techniques" in August, educating 7 participants. A great day was had by all.

- In late August training was delivered to 10 participants of the above mentioned LIFE on Machair project.

- In early September we were delighted to receive the group from the GAIA Seed Training course, to our Kilclief site. The aim of their visit was to demonstrate and inform participants how we do what we do in terms of seed handling.

- Late September saw Debbie travel to Glenveagh National Park in Donegal to deliver training to staff on making collections of woodland species on their site and investigate how to grow them on in their nursery.

Purpose 2 (a): Vegetable and other appropriate seeds, their value and the benefits arising from their conservation; and
(b) the principles and practice of maintaining seed biodiversity and sustainable development;

- We continue to source the best quality organic and often Demeter standard, open pollinated vegetable seed from reputable seed houses across Europe. For each variety we hold we give as much information as we can on the webpage for each.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

We stock seed that does well in Ireland. With the invaluable help of volunteer Fergus, we continue to grow out samples of many of the seed lots, this helps us with descriptions, photographs and forms a large part of the germination testing that we do ourselves.

By supplying only open pollinated varieties people are empowered to save their own seed and use them next season. By actually doing the seed saving, people are learning how to manage seeds themselves. This has many benefits and we are seeing the opening of various amateur seed saving and seed swap events across the country.

In an ever increasingly uncertain future, seed knowledge is a vital part of sustainability on any island.

- We have added to our range with the help of volunteer Marian and her expertise on Medicinal plants and design of the new THS Community Physic Garden. From here we intend to provide natural remedies and advice for the general public.

Purpose 2 (c): Design and application of seed conservation projects in the community.

- We continue to grow and supply grasses for the restoration of the fore dunes at Tryella beach for 2025. By using seed from our raised beds at Kilclief we continuing to furnish a contract from Newry Mourne and Down Council's Darren Rice. Our raised beds were originally populated by previous collections made from the local area. On principle we believe that it is important to use local seed. To avoid inbreeding depression we made collections from several different locations over a 15 mile stretch of coast.

Species are: *Ammophila arenaria*, *Leymus arenarius* and *Elytrigia juncea*. Marram, Lyme and Sand couch resp..

The contract covers the period 2024 and 2025, the plants being available for collection each spring. Debbie and team will be helping plant out the plugs and pots.

Planting took place in June 2024. Monitoring has shown very positive results. We continue to grow the same amount of plants for planting out in the final planting of Phase 1, due in 2025.

- We applied to LHLH for funding for the below projects:-

1. Building the Physic Garden.
2. Installation of a Pond for Biodiversity.

Neither attempts to secure funding were successful.

Purpose 2 (e): Organic principles.

- We have maintained our organic status in cooperation with the Soil Association:

- 1, Growing at Kilclief and
2. For selling bought in organic seed, (which we were already certified for).

Debbie looks after inspections and certification.

- We have an onsite apiary run by Debbie in her spare time which did greatly assist in the pollination of the wild flowers throughout the year.

- Mark continues to help maintain the field's weeding by tractor.

- Debbie concentrates on site maintenance, using the tractor.

This year Sebastian helped greatly with the removal of Schedule 9 weeds.

Philip helped with putting out the bins, general tidiness. Cleaning of all facilities and maintenance of cleaning rotas and has taken over the maintenance of the site around the buildings, mowing, cleaning, cutting back and general tidying which is much appreciated.

Both Sebastian and Philip helped maintain site visibility along the road which was vastly improved in spring time with the help of David Thompson who very kindly brought his hedging experience, knowledge and chainsaw over 2 days voluntarily.

Purpose 3: Provide and promote information and interpretive material about vegetable seeds.

True Harvest Seeds

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- Maintenance and improvement of the website. The decision to continue, enhance, promote and increase stock on the online shop has increased sales, providing our customers with greater choice and information in particular the new product ranges in Medicinal seed, plant food and cleaning materials. The idea is that everything you buy from THS is guaranteed to meet with organic and our own high standard of environmental principles.
- This continues to provide unrestricted funds for the charity, which helps cover core costs.
- With the shop expansion brought recognition that the old website was out of date and Emily took on the huge task of revamping the website. This in particular enables our website to function much more easily over mobile phones and tablets. It also ironed out several other practical problems e.g. with postage and unclear donation/subscription/membership options.

Purpose 4: Making our information and knowledge available to the public.

- The collections are a source of native Irish-origin plant material and most are available to the public upon request. This is excepting the endangered species which will require special permission to administer.

- Information about the collections is currently on the website. We published a list of collections from 2015 - 2018 on our website www.trueharvestseeds.org from data collected at the seed collections. The list is in need of updating to show new collections.

We are still holding open our project to put a dynamic database of the collections online. This is a matter for fundraising either from core funding or raised. A dynamic database would enable easier updating of the online record and provide paid staff hours.

- Through our work we have generally raised public awareness of the plight of our native plants by engaging with botanists, land owners and volunteers while delivering training courses and open days.

The work Emily did on the shop we hoped to pay dividends. She put up many gift ideas, combinations of gift sets and many items from Debbie's Farm marketed professionally and the proceeds divided equally between Debbie and the charity.

The websites remain as shop.trueharvestseeds.org and the main conservation website trueharvestseeds.org.

- THS had permission from DAERA for wildlife licences for endangered plants and permission from NIEA for working on Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs).

- The monthly email newsletter also saw regeneration from July by Emily.

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Purposes and aims

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Our main activities undertaken to further all our aims

- Maintaining and further development of headquarters at Kilclief Seed Centre we have had many challenges in continuing our conservation of Ireland's native-origin flora.

The new year started as 2023 ended, with ongoing communications with the planning department regarding our planning application to build a purpose-built building to house works for True Harvest Seeds. The final substantiation document sent in July is in ANNEXE 1 of this document. It outlines the activities that could be held at THS going forward.

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Emily stayed until 24th December 2024, her reason for leaving was needing more time to move house. We wish her every success in her new home and her career, and thank Emily for her hard work and lasting results for the charity.

True Harvest Seeds

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Unfortunately trustee Mike Thompson had to resign for personal business commitments. Giving us 3 months notice, to 30th June 2024, was highly beneficial and to take his place Joanne Murray came on board. Mike handed over his responsibilities over this period making the transition as smooth as it could be. Mike's appointment terminated on 8th July 2024.

We would take this opportunity to thank Mike for the fabulous achievements throughout his 4 year tenure and wish him every success in his business ventures.

Joanne joined THS officially on 4th April 2024. Joanne was instrumental in helping the charity advertise and recruit the new CRESI appointment. Joanne has extensive teaching, HR and recruitment experience and brings naturally an enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm.

Other employment:

Joanne was also instrumental in the recruitment of Sebastian as Nursery Assistant via the JobStart scheme. We were able to secure a 9 month placement for Sebastian starting 15th January 2024 and lasting until 23rd Sept, when he had secured a permanent job working on boats to service wind farms. We were very pleased as this was the point of the JobStart scheme.

- Debbie continued as CEO contributing vision throughout paid and voluntary hours much the same as previous years.
- Continuing laying the ground work for the imminent creation of a permanent purpose-built seed bank for our island's flora through:
 - Ongoing training with Clare to look after customers both in person and via the online shop. This includes product development and population of items through continuing website development. Content is carefully selected for the advancement of people, nature and sustainability, all proceeds go to keeping core costs met and new projects emerging. Seed packing of all seed.
 - Completion of training with Sebastian for the Nursery Assistant role and also external training. The training started with a power boat course that was to enable an island Seed Collection Project across the islands of Strangford Lough. The Seed Collection Project had to remain on hold due to planning uncertainties, so Sebastian continued in the boat theme and received more training that would enable him to apply for jobs by the end of his time with THS.
- Ongoing training for Emily in the work of THS. Integration of Emily's ideas for example regular weekly staff meetings on Mondays.
- Overseeing and managing the HR for all staff.
- Writing quotes for various seed requests, outings and training.
- Overseeing the growing and harvesting, cleaning and storing of seed.
- Seed bank maintenance.
- Kilclief maintenance of machinery and equipment.
- Coordinating the work of our staff and volunteers, including training.
- Maintaining governance issues, accounts and payroll. Assisted by Becky Knight Treasurer and accountant Jennifer Murphy of McGrady's Accountants.
- Developing and looking after conservation projects.
- Last, and in the case of 2024, making the seed collections, least.

- Debbie continues as a committee member of ENSPA and BNFC.
-

"Working as CEO of THS is certainly challenging and at times tiring, but a lot can be said for living a life with an altruistic purpose, which seems to lend its own kind of energy to the project and of course attracts help from all kinds of very kind and wonderful people, to whom I am entirely grateful.

The greatest lessons learnt by your CEO in 2024 is that of time management. It is relatively easy to take things on in the hope that they will lighten one's burden, only to discover they do the opposite. Through the fault of no particular person, I was required to engage in staff training x 3. 2 of those staff we knew were on temporary contracts, but needed time none the less. Recruiting temporary staff into such a small and specialised charity brought with it many unpaid training hours. We had successfully secured the funding to cover trainee staff wages, but had not secured funding to recover the full economic cost and therefore paid the price." Debbie

- Joanne now provides management structure for the CRESI Marketing Coordinator post and Debbie provides the working environment. Trustee Katie supports Joanne in this role as necessary.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- The Live Here Love Here subsidy to schools and community groups for their wild flower seed purchases continues to be availed of. There are still funds available which are carried forward to use in 2025.

- The Google Not for Profits programme continues, previously looked after by Emily, it has been somewhat under utilised, but continues to provide \$10,000p/month in free advertising and access to Google Workspace for document sharing and storage.

- Our team of volunteers comprises Mike, Sue, Fergus, Marian and Philip. Each regularly and reliably brought and shared different skills and talents.

Mike our longest standing volunteer has the greatest all round experience and handles seed collecting and cleaning with skill.

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Marian is a professional herbalist and under her guidance we have begun to develop our Medicinal plants capabilities. In spring Marian wrote a book on herbal medicines for THS and on her instruction we started a medicinal section of the website. In the latter part of the year we applied for a grant to develop a community physic garden, designed by Marian and maintained by all.

Last but by no means least Philip continues to help us with site maintenance. Looking after the grass cutting, hedge maintenance for site lines, composting and general upkeep, Philip's contribution keeps us looking respectable.

We also welcome our SERC students volunteering, from their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering ranging from digging, to seed collecting to washing pots for recycling, our students bring with them youthful energy and fun.

We also welcome occasional volunteering activities from industry, In 2024 this came from CDE, a large engineering company <https://www.cdegroupp.com/>. A group joined us in June and helped us plant out Marram, Lyme and Sand couch plants with the Strangford Lough and Lecale and Council partnership, to help alleviate coastal erosion at Tyrella beach.

Report on the fulfilment of charity's purposes:

Purpose 1a: Provision of a seed bank.

- The seed bank continues to be maintained by Debbie. Funded by voluntary hours and money generated by the online shop sales.

As of December 2024 the seed bank continues to maintain its collections.

Purpose 1a, 2 (a) (b): To protect endangered species.

- We worked with DAERA and Karl Hamilton to locate and collect further Schedule 8 plant populations which live at Binevenagh. We attempted, yet again, collection of *Saxifraga oppositifolia*. We were expediently given permission by DAERA, but to no avail, again, distance and availability of everyone to attend together was not successful. Despite this we will continue to try in 2025.

- The four *Crambe maritima* plants in the raised beds are now 3 in number. They did so badly none set flower so no seed could be collected.

Purpose 1b: Source viable Irish native seed.

- Contributions of *Rhinanthus minor*, yellow rattle were made to THS by Michael and Rachel of Ardtole and also Greer and Maureen of Slievemoyile. Both generously allowed Debbie and team to harvest yellow rattle free of charge and use it as a funding income for the charity. Both sites are naturally occurring populations.

- In August Debbie attended the LIFE of Machair project in Co Mayo, meeting with Caitriona and Mark who led a group to learn how to make seed collections of native Marram and how to plant them out. Debbie spent 2 days with the team in person and the team can follow up with questions they later may have.

Purpose 2: Advance the education of the public.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- Debbie continues to give talks and now we request payment.

- The website for SOS8 is kept up but was not added to in 2024, despite the list for Schedule 8 plants increasing to include 121 species, up from 88 previously. Payment is still made for it to stay live using unreserved funds raised by the shop.

- Volunteers changed a fair bit in 2024. An observation that an increase in staff has led to a decrease in volunteers, due to the time it takes to train new people, only so many can be catered for at this point, This is mainly because the training has to be done by Debbie.

- Our SERC students, led by Joanne and Joe, came from SERC Downpatrick campus, we are delighted and honoured to continue to host the students. Their volunteering gives THS a much needed work boost every fortnight and gives the students practical experience which adds to the quality of their portfolios. The students have helped with sowing seeds, plant care and site maintenance.

The students can also now count volunteering hours to their Duke of Edinburgh portfolios.

Everyone at THS have really taken to all of the students, we have got to know them as individuals, they brighten up our week and we very much appreciate their regular and valuable contribution.

- In March, as a continuation of our work with local Dublin artist Rachel Doolin. Rachel came to visit THS. We discussed ideas for the project and fund raising options as partners with Rachel being the lead partner. You can access a talk here: <https://www.racheldoolin.com/debbie-gillies>

- We held one training day on "Seed Conservation Techniques" in August, educating 7 participants. A great day was had by all.

- In late August training was delivered to 10 participants of the above mentioned LIFE on Machair project.

- In early September we were delighted to receive the group from the GAIA Seed Training course, to our Kilclief site. The aim of their visit was to demonstrate and inform participants how we do what we do in terms of seed handling.

- Late September saw Debbie travel to Glenveagh National Park in Donegal to deliver training to staff on making collections of woodland species on their site and investigate how to grow them on in their nursery.

Purpose 2 (a): Vegetable and other appropriate seeds, their value and the benefits arising from their conservation; and
(b) the principles and practice of maintaining seed biodiversity and sustainable development;

- We continue to source the best quality organic and often Demeter standard, open pollinated vegetable seed from reputable seed houses across Europe. For each variety we hold we give as much information as we can on the webpage for each.

We stock seed that does well in Ireland. With the invaluable help of volunteer Fergus, we continue to grow out samples of many of the seed lots, this helps us with descriptions, photographs and forms a large part of the germination testing that we do ourselves.

By supplying only open pollinated varieties people are empowered to save their own seed and use them next season. By actually doing the seed saving, people are learning how to manage seeds themselves. This has many benefits and we are seeing the opening of various amateur seed saving and seed swap events across the country.

In an ever increasingly uncertain future, seed knowledge is a vital part of sustainability on any island.

- We have added to our range with the help of volunteer Marian and her expertise on Medicinal plants and design of the new THS Community Physic Garden. From here we intend to provide natural remedies and advice for the general public.

Purpose 2 (c): Design and application of seed conservation projects in the community.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- We continue to grow and supply grasses for the restoration of the fore dunes at Tryella beach for 2025. By using seed from our raised beds at Kilclief we continuing to furnish a contract from Newry Mourne and Down Council's Darren Rice. Our raised beds were originally populated by previous collections made from the local area. On principle we believe that it is important to use local seed. To avoid inbreeding depression we made collections from several different locations over a 15 mile stretch of coast.

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The contract covers the period 2024 and 2025, the plants being available for collection each spring. Debbie and team will be helping plant out the plugs and pots.

Planting took place in June 2024. Monitoring has shown very positive results. We continue to grow the same amount of plants for planting out in the final planting of Phase 1, due in 2025.

- We applied to LHLH for funding for the below projects:-

1. Building the Physic Garden.
2. Installation of a Pond for Biodiversity.

Neither attempts to secure funding were successful.

Purpose 2 (e): Organic principles.

- We have maintained our organic status in cooperation with the Soil Association:

1. Growing at Kilclief and
2. For selling bought in organic seed, (which we were already certified for).

Debbie looks after inspections and certification.

- We have an onsite apiary run by Debbie in her spare time which did greatly assist in the pollination of the wild flowers throughout the year.

- Mark continues to help maintain the field's weeding by tractor.

- Debbie concentrates on site maintenance, using the tractor.

This year Sebastian helped greatly with the removal of Schedule 9 weeds.

Philip helped with putting out the bins, general tidiness. Cleaning of all facilities and maintenance of cleaning rotas and has taken over the maintenance of the site around the buildings, mowing, cleaning, cutting back and general tidying which is much appreciated.

Both Sebastian and Philip helped maintain site visibility along the road which was vastly improved in spring time with the help of David Thompson who very kindly brought his hedging experience, knowledge and chainsaw over 2 days voluntarily.

Purpose 3: Provide and promote information and interpretive material about vegetable seeds.

- Maintenance and improvement of the website. The decision to continue, enhance, promote and increase stock on the online shop has increased sales, providing our customers with greater choice and information in particular the new product ranges in Medicinal seed, plant food and cleaning materials. The idea is that everything you buy from THS is guaranteed to meet with organic and our own high standard of environmental principles.

- This continues to provide unrestricted funds for the charity, which helps cover core costs. In this way the charity continues to function.

- With the shop expansion brought recognition that the old website was clunky and Emily took on the huge task of revamping the website. This in particular enables our website to function much more easily over mobile phones and tablets. It also ironed out problems with postage, the ongoing website costs and unclear donation/subscription/membership options.

Purpose 4: Making our information and knowledge available to the public.

- The collections are a source of native Irish-origin plant material and most are available to the public upon request. This is excepting the endangered species which will require special permission to administer.