

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Wednesday 1 October 2025**

**Annual Report & Statement of Accounts  
For year to  
31 August 2025**

Charity No. NIC104814

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Antrim Castle Grounds And Clotworthy House, Randalstown Road, Antrim BT41 4LH



## **The Trustees' Annual Report - Year Ending 31 August 2025**

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 August 2025.

### **Structure, governance and management**

The charity is a voluntary association. It is governed by a constitution and managed by a Management Committee, who are also the charity's Trustees.

The Trustees have had regard to guidance issued by the Charities Commission of Northern Ireland on public benefit in carrying out their statutory duties in the governance of the charity. The Trustees govern the activities of the charity in line with the objectives set out in the charity's constitution.

### **The Trustees**

The Trustees who served the charity throughout the period are:

- Chairperson – Anne McAuley
- Vice Chair & Coordinator – Steve Humphrey
- Secretary & Fundraiser – Marie Bradley
- Vice Secretary & Coordinator – Rodney Gillen
- Treasurer – Diane Greenwood
- Vice Treasurer – Irwin McLaughlin
- Events' Organiser & Coordinator – Eileen Black
- Coordinator – Hugh King
- Donation Hub Coordinator- Irene Moran
- Scarecrow Planner - Gary McMullan

### **Trustees' responsibilities**

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

They are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

They are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy at all times, the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the law. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **The Management Committee**

The Committee carries out its governance role throughout the year by way of monthly meetings. These meetings enable review of the performance of the charity and make decisions regarding the charity's financial and operational matters.

The charity is registered with HMRC for tax purposes.

## **Objectives and activities**

The objectives of the charity are:

- To advance education in horticulture and gardening; and
- To promote conservation and protection of the environment of Antrim Castle Gardens for the public benefit in Antrim and surrounding districts.

The charity carries out its activities on a 'not for profit' basis.

The strategies employed to assist the charity to meet these objectives include the following:

1. Encouraging, fostering and creating an interest in horticulture, good gardening, horticulture heritage, conservation and other related areas through maintenance of the courtyard gardens within Antrim Castle Gardens and Clotworthy House.
2. Providing an opportunity for members of the charity and the public to participate in organised visits to other gardens, enhancing their knowledge of horticulture and providing an opportunity to foster friendships.

An overview of the Charity's activities from September 2024 to August 2025

## **Volunteers**

A massive thanks to all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication  
Currently are 33 volunteers

- 13 females & 20 males
- Ages range from 24 - 85 yrs

During the year:

- 8 new volunteers joined and 4 left
- There were 10 'Graduates'

Sessions held

- 4 sessions per week
- Mon – Thurs 9:30 – 12:30
- Held 193 sessions
- Each session - managed by a Coordinator:

Saturday watering rota (March – August)

## **Gardening activities**

- Maintained the flower beds, feeding, planting, watering and replacing soil
- Added bark, grit, pebbles and logs
- Dead headed, divided plants and collected seeds
- Made hanging baskets
- Potted plants for the donation hub for the public
- Painted fences and gates
- Brushed and tidied
- Stripped, sanded & repainted tables
- Cleaned the greenhouse inside and out
- Cleaned and sharpened tools
- Thinned, cut back and removed grasses
- Created 2 more alpine beds
- Erected bird boxes
- Revamped the lavender beds with new lavender plants
- Remodelled the sensory area into the new pollinator plaza
- Planted and harvested fruit and vegetables
- Painted a photo booth
- Dried rose petals and lavender
- Dressed the scarecrows – Halloween, Christmas, Valentine, St Patricks, Easter and Volunteers
- Helped the council with planting
- Weeded

## **Administration activities**

- 11 Management Committee meetings
- 2 Planning meetings for the gardens & upcoming events
- Accounting
- Volunteer packs
- Posters, Notices, Signage
- WhatsApp communication
- Funding applications
- Award applications
- Events organisation
- Social media posts – plant of the month
- Charity Commission and HRMC returns, Insurance renewals

**Events, outings, speakers, fundraising activities**

Oct	AGM – Dunsilly Hotel
Oct	Visit to Willow and Greene Gardens
Oct	Scarecrow selfies (fundraiser)
Nov	Christmas wreath workshop (fundraiser)
Nov	Volunteers' wreath and table centre decorations
Dec	Christmas dinner – Dunsilly Hotel
Jan	Rangers talk on pollinators
Feb	Willow and Greene window box workshop
Feb	Anne's award celebration
Feb	Visit to Willow and Greene for vegetable planting talk
Mar	Dobbies propagation talk
Mar	Mothers' Day Planters' with the Ladies Shed (fundraiser)
Apr	David Donmoney talk in The Old Court House
May	Visit to Maureen's garden and train
Jun	Garden Fete and official opening of the Pollinator Plaza (fundraiser)
Jun	Volunteer week dinner in Mulligans
Jun	Garden Show Ireland - 3 days (fundraiser)
Jun	Visit to Diane's garden
Jun	Visit to Bangor Castle's walled gardens
July	Fireside Quiz (fundraiser)
Aug	Visit to Wicklow – 3 gardens
Aug	Treasure Hunt (fundraiser)
Aug	Visit to Bangor Castle – Green Flag award

A grand total of total volunteering hours, gardening, admin and events = 5,102 hours

### **Awards received**

- Anne won the UK 'Best of the Best' award 2024
- We achieved the Green Flag Community Award

### **Purchases and expenditure**

- Plants, bulbs, seeds, vegetables
- Tools, stones, paints
- Uniforms, gloves, name badges
- Insurance
- NICVA membership
- Mobile phone
- Laptop security
- Microsoft office package
- Events/Outings/Transport
- Catering
- Invited speakers
- Stationery, labels

### **Sponsors, supporters and links with other organisations**

- The Ladies Shed Antrim
- Tesco Antrim
- Enkalon Foundation
- Dunsilly Hotel
- Live Here, Love Here
- Asda Antrim
- Willow and Greene
- Mann's Café
- NHSCT – Day Opportunities
- Action Mental Health
- Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Devine Design
- Drop Inn Charity Shop
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Public Health Agency

### **Future plans**

- Increase sustainability through propagation, recycling and waste reduction

- Encourage volunteers to participate in courses which will enhance skills and knowledge
- Continue to enhance our involvement at Garden Show Ireland and other relevant events
- Continue to recruit new volunteers and increase sessions
- Continue to seek funding and hold fundraising events
- Invite inspirational speakers and visits to other gardens
- Increase our social media coverage
- Work closely with other voluntary/statutory organisations

The Committee will continue to govern the charity in line with the constitution to achieve the objectives listed above.

The Trustees are satisfied that the performance of the charity during the year, in terms of both financial matters and operational activities, is in line with the charity's constitution and key objectives.

### **Financial review**

The net income for the year is detailed in X1 and X2. The surplus for the year will be added to capital reserves brought forward.

### **Trustees' responsibilities**

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

They are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy at all times, the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the law. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The accounts have been prepared on an Income and Expenditure basis.

Signed by order of the Committee on their behalf

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Diane Greenwood Treasurer

Dated 1 October 2025

## **Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Friends of Antrim Gardens**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 August 2024, which are set out on pages X1 and X2.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Name: Ian Lindsay Retired Chartered Accountant

Address: 5 Marmont Park , Belfast, BT4 2GR

Date: 1 October 2025



**Friends of Antrim Castle  
Gardens**

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended			31/08/2025	31/08/2024
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
<b>Income</b>				
Donations	1,849.16		1,849.16	3,120.43
Antrim and Newtownabbey BC Christmas Dinner	0.00	500.00	500.00	490.00
Antrim and Newtownabbey BC Insurance	0.00	988.95	988.95	747.04
Clothing	91.30		91.30	93.40
Enkalon	0.00		0.00	1,000.00
Lottery	0.00		0.00	6,900.00
Radius Housing	0.00		0.00	2,680.00
Asda	900.00		900.00	
Developing Healthy	908.00		908.00	
Enventbrite				
Operations	215.76		215.76	
John Moores Foundation	1,250.00		1,250.00	
Advisory Income	150.00		150.00	
Keep NI				
Beautigul	1,487.82		1,487.82	
Funday	763.74		763.74	
Garden Show				
Ireland	254.05		254.05	0.00
Quiz and Treasure Hunt	828.07		828.07	1,676.61
Dividends	133.11		133.11	149.12
	<u>8,831.01</u>	<u>1,488.95</u>	<u>10,319.96</u>	<u>16,856.60</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Fees Teresa	0.00		0.00	-34.50
Fees Caroline	0.00		0.00	-548.96
Watering				
Payments	-345.00		-345.00	-105.00
Plants and garden materials	-2,159.46		-2,159.46	-1,566.74
Uniforms and clothing	-1,696.24		-1,696.24	-1,891.39
Tools Repairs Small items	-2,725.68		-2,725.68	-748.69
Website design	0.00		0.00	-810.90
Wreathwork	-448.69		-448.69	
Insurance	38.47	-988.95	-950.48	-747.04
Speakers	-581.00		-581.00	
Radius Housing Expenditure	0.00		0.00	-2680
Telephone	-129.89		-129.89	-98.82
AGM Expenses	-738.00		-738.00	-435.00
Christmas				
Dinner	-73.05	-500.00	-573.05	-754.75
Volunteer Dinner and outings	-923.26	-2,922.28	-3,845.54	-1,025.75
Sundries	-981.37		-981.37	-502.03
Change in valuation of M&G Charibond				
Units	0.00		0.00	134.53
Depreciation	-683.00		-683.00	-967.00
	<u>-11,446.17</u>	<u>-4,411.23</u>	<u>-15,857.40</u>	<u>-12,782.04</u>

<b>Net movement in funds</b>		-2,615.16	-2,922.28	-5,537.44	4,074.56
<b>Fund balances at 31/08/2024</b>		<u>21,666.60</u>	<u>6,504.00</u>	<u>28,170.60</u>	<u>24,096.04</u>
<b>Fund balances at 31/08/2025</b>		<u>19,051.44</u>	<u>3,581.72</u>	<u>22,633.16</u>	<u>28,170.60</u>

**Balance Sheet as at**

		<b>31/08/2025</b>	<b>31/08/2024</b>	
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	Note 2	4,097.01	4,780.01	
<b>Current Assets</b>				
M&G Charibond Charities Fixed Interest Units		3,567.55	3,567.55	
Bank		14,968.60	19,978.35	
Debtors		<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	
		18,536.15	23,545.90	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Creditors		<u>0.00</u>	<u>-155.31</u>	23,390.59
		<u>22,633.16</u>	<u>28,170.60</u>	
<b>Income Funds</b>				
Restricted		3,581.72	6,504.00	3581.72
Unrestricted		<u>19,051.44</u>	<u>21,666.60</u>	0.00
		<u>22,633.16</u>	<u>28,170.60</u>	

Approved by the trustees on the 01/10/2025

**Anne McAuley**      **Chair**

**Diane Greenwood Treasurer**

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**Friends of Antrim Castle Gardens**

**Notes to the Financial statements for the year ended**

**31/08/2025**

**1 Accounting Policies**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and under the historic cost convention.

Depreciation is provided on tangible assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value. Over their expected useful life as follows:

Shed	20% of cost
Computer equipment	20% of cost
Hub	10% of cost

## 2 Fixed Assets

		Leasehold Shed	Hub	Fixtures and Computer	Total
<b>Cost</b>					
As at	31/08/24	950	6,829	470	8,249
Additions					0
As at	31/08/25	950	6,829	470	8,249
<b>Depreciation</b>					
As at	31/08/24	950	2,049	470	3,469
Charge for period			683		683
As at	31/08/25	950	2,732	470	4,152
<b>Net book value</b>					
As at	31/08/24	0	4,780	0	4,780
As at	31/08/25	0	4,097	0	4,097