

BALLYMENA GARDEN CLUB

Northern Ireland Charity Number: 103451

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Contact address

Mr Hugh Keery
30 Ballygarvey Road Ballymena
Co Antrim
BT43 7HB

Charity trustees

Mrs Elizabeth Boyd, Mrs Adeline Cherry, Mrs Irene Cumming BEM, Mr Hugh Keery, Mrs Elma Holdstock, Miss Linda Crawford, Mrs Paddy Loughridge, Mrs Rosslind McGookin, Mrs Anne Orr, Mrs Judith Orr, Mr Cecil Quinn (Chairman), Mrs Pamela Reade, Mr Ian Scroggy, Mrs Gladys Smyth OBE.

Trustees have had regard to the Commission's Public Benefit requirement statutory guidance when devising a programme of activities which have helped to achieve the Club's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

Governing document

The Club is governed by its Constitution as adopted on 2nd February 2009 by members in Annual General Meeting.

Purposes

The Club is established to:

1. Advance education and good practice in horticulture in Ballymena and the surrounding area (hereafter called the 'the area of benefit') and to promote the improvement of horticulture by the holding of horticultural shows, competitions and meetings, lectures, discussions and demonstrations; and
2. To provide facilities in the area of benefit to individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.

Main activities in support of the Club's purposes

February: Annual General Meeting followed by horticultural quiz designed to help members to get to know each other.

March: "Organic Gardening"; a talk by Norman Rowe from Limavady where he works a small organic smallholding.

April: 93rd Annual Spring Show in Broughshane Community Centre. This is the Club's major event of the year, open to members and the public for exhibiting and for viewing. There is an outreach to Women's Institutes and Schools who are encouraged to exhibit. The Show acts as an educational and promotional vehicle for the Club.

May: Afternoon/evening visit to Drenagh Estate, Limavady. Drenagh House sits within an old 1,000-acre estate, surrounded by beautiful gardens and parkland, in the valley of the river Roe.

July: Afternoon/evening visit to Beechmount House Garden near Ballyclare, a large country garden on all sides of the house with herbaceous plants, mixed shrub borders and trees. Lawns and a large elevated rockery offer stunning views of the surrounding Co. Antrim countryside.

August: Day Tour by coach to Visit Tattykeel House Garden, Omagh, a country garden of approximately 1½ acres created over a 30-year period, planted with conifers, shrubs, roses and perennials.

October: "Antrim Castle Gardens"; a talk by Caroline Cushenan, a club member, who works in the gardens. After outlining the history of the estate, Caroline described how the gardens were restored to their present state.

November: "Flower Farming"; a talk by Angharad Maxwell who gave up a career as a NHS physiotherapist to establish Hilltop Flowers which grows cut flowers organically for sale directly to the public and to florists,

December: Christmas social event held in Ballymena Bowling Club premises. A light supper was followed by entertainment provided by Colin Urwin, storyteller and singer from Glenarm.

Operation and activities of the Club post COVID-19

Given the age profile of the membership, it transpired that we lost a few senior members during this period through death or age-related problems. However, since opening up fully in July 2022 membership has increased to pre-COVID-19 numbers.

How activities have provided a benefit to its beneficiaries

(The beneficiaries are members of the Club and their friends, together with members of the general public who attend, read or hear about the Club's public events such as flower shows and public lectures.)

The varied programme of activities has provided a range of educational and social benefits to members, their friends and the general public.

The programme of talks has enhanced members' horticultural knowledge which hopefully will translate into general environmental improvements in private and public spaces. Non-members may attend talks on payment of a small charge.

Meetings and garden visits enable members to socialise with each other and with the public. This is especially important in a Club where the majority of members are seniors, some of whom have mobility problems or who are socially isolated through lack of public transport or inability to drive.

Publicity for the Club's events obtained through the local press, radio announcements and Facebook help to raise the public profile of the Club.

Club members utilise their horticultural knowledge to contribute as members or officials of local community groups.

Club members occasionally are invited to speak on horticultural topics to community groups.

The Club is represented on the Broughshane and District Community Association's committee through which it can interact with the other 34 affiliated groups in the catchment area. It also participates along with other affiliated groups in community initiatives and events.

Private benefit incidental to public benefit

There has been no private benefit incidental to the provision of public benefit.

Review of the Club's financial position as at 31st December 2023

As Club's accounts for the period demonstrate, sufficient reserves exist to meet anticipated regular expenditure. No funds held by Ballymena Garden Club were materially in deficit at the end of the year.

Signed

Cecil Quinn

Cecil Quinn (Chairman)

Date

14/02/2024

Hugh Keery

Hugh Keery (Treasurer)

14/02/2024
