



Scotland's  
**GARDENS**  
Scheme  
OPEN FOR CHARITY

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2020**





# TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees of the charity present their report and the accounts of Scotland's Gardens Scheme for the year 1 January to 31 December 2020.

## OUR MISSION

Scotland's Gardens Scheme's mission is to raise funds for charity by encouraging, promoting and supporting garden openings, whilst making the experience inspiring, rewarding and enjoyable for all.

## OBJECTIVES

**Ensure we have a strong District Volunteer Structure with a solid base of gardens of all types and sizes. We will achieve this by:**

- Providing support to our District Volunteers through guidance, training and appreciation.
- Equipping and supporting Garden Openers to manage their visitor experience and achieve a successful and enjoyable day for all.

**Raise awareness of Scotland's Gardens Scheme and our beneficial impact with a strong marketing presence and good visibility.**

- Connect with and develop existing and new partnerships with organisations which are aligned with, and can support, our vision, including beneficiaries, charities, partner organisations and our community.
- Ensure good governance and financial sustainability with an active and effective governing body.

**Increase understanding of our impact and reach:**

- Improve our understanding of the impact of our charitable donations.
- Improve our understanding of our key audiences and their motivations to visit and support our gardens.

# OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

Scotland's Gardens Scheme was established in 1931 to raise funds for the Queen's Nursing Institute of Scotland, supporting pensions and training opportunities for district nurses, prior to the formation of the NHS. Over the years, the charity expanded its portfolio of core beneficiaries to include the National Trust for Scotland for many years. In addition to QNIS, the charity today supports Perennial and Maggie's with a core donation each year.

Since 2018, 60% of garden gate takings have been designated for a charity nominated by the Garden Owner and are distributed directly by the local branch of the Scheme, with the remaining 40% returning to Head Office to support core costs of the charity and our main beneficiary charities. These charities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain aligned with our core values, supporting wellbeing and horticulture.

The charity has a small staff of 3.8 full time equivalent, working to support our 23 Districts and some 200 regular volunteers to develop, promote and support our annual programme of garden openings. Each year, our programme includes approximately 500 listings and we distribute funds to around 250 charities.

In August 2020, Terrill Dobson retired from her role as Director of Scotland's Gardens Scheme, after nearly five years at the helm of the charity. During her tenure, she delivered a number of major projects, including the creation of a powerful new database and website, underpinning the charity's garden opening operations. She also successfully evolved the charity's branding and marketing and during her last months with the charity, steered the organisation through the early stages of the pandemic, whilst working to ensure a smooth handover to her replacement. Liz Stewart took over from Terrill in August 2020, bringing a background in charity management and Scottish horticulture and Trustees welcomed her to the charity.

Through Autumn and Winter 2020, staff continued to work with our District Volunteers to continue the work of the charity and to encourage garden openings for 2021, with impressive results despite the continuing Covid situation. The dedication and support of our Volunteers around Scotland cannot be underestimated and the Trustees and Staff are admiring and grateful for all they have done and continue to do.



Terrill retired in August 2020 after five years, having delivered a series of major projects for the charity





## 2020 ACTIVITY

### **Impact of Covid-19**

Despite a good season planned at the start of 2020, with early garden openings underway, like the rest of the world, our work was curtailed in March when the country went into lockdown, with two of the charity's four staff immediately furloughed and no further openings until July. Staff remained on flexible furlough until the beginning of November, almost entirely working from home throughout the period.

### **Online Engagement**

We created a Virtual Tours programme with videos submitted by Garden Owners who were unable to open their gardens, creating a YouTube channel for the first time which quickly garnered hundreds of video clips which we compiled and shared on our website and social media, sharing our tours with virtual visitors around the UK and beyond. This initiative was successful in keeping the charity in the public eye during very challenging times, raising funds to support a number of our charities and providing a way to involve and engage our community of garden owners during lockdown.





# RE-OPENING GARDENS

## Garden Openings & Cancellations

When lockdown was relaxed in July 2020, we were able to open some gardens again, although many remained closed for the rest of the year. This gave us an important insight into how we could open gardens safely with our pioneering Garden Owners testing the way, enabling us to give confidence by creating supporting documentation on garden opening, to support our registration of gardens for the 2021 season.

We know that the gardens that did manage to open brought great joy to visitors, with the opportunity to do something 'normal', while the increased interest in gardening through lockdown, encouraged new garden visitors.

Of the planned 499 garden openings for 2020, 369 were cancelled with 129 going ahead through the year (including those that opened in the early part of 2020), representing 106 individual gardens. Some districts elected not to open at all, while others changed their pattern of opening, for instance, many of these opened 'By Arrangement' instead of their planned 'Specific Date' opening, and with reduced publicity, funds raised were less than usual. However, these kinds of openings provided reassurance to Garden Owners who wished to have a more relaxed kind of opening.





# CHARITABLE BENEFIT

## Volunteer support given during 2020

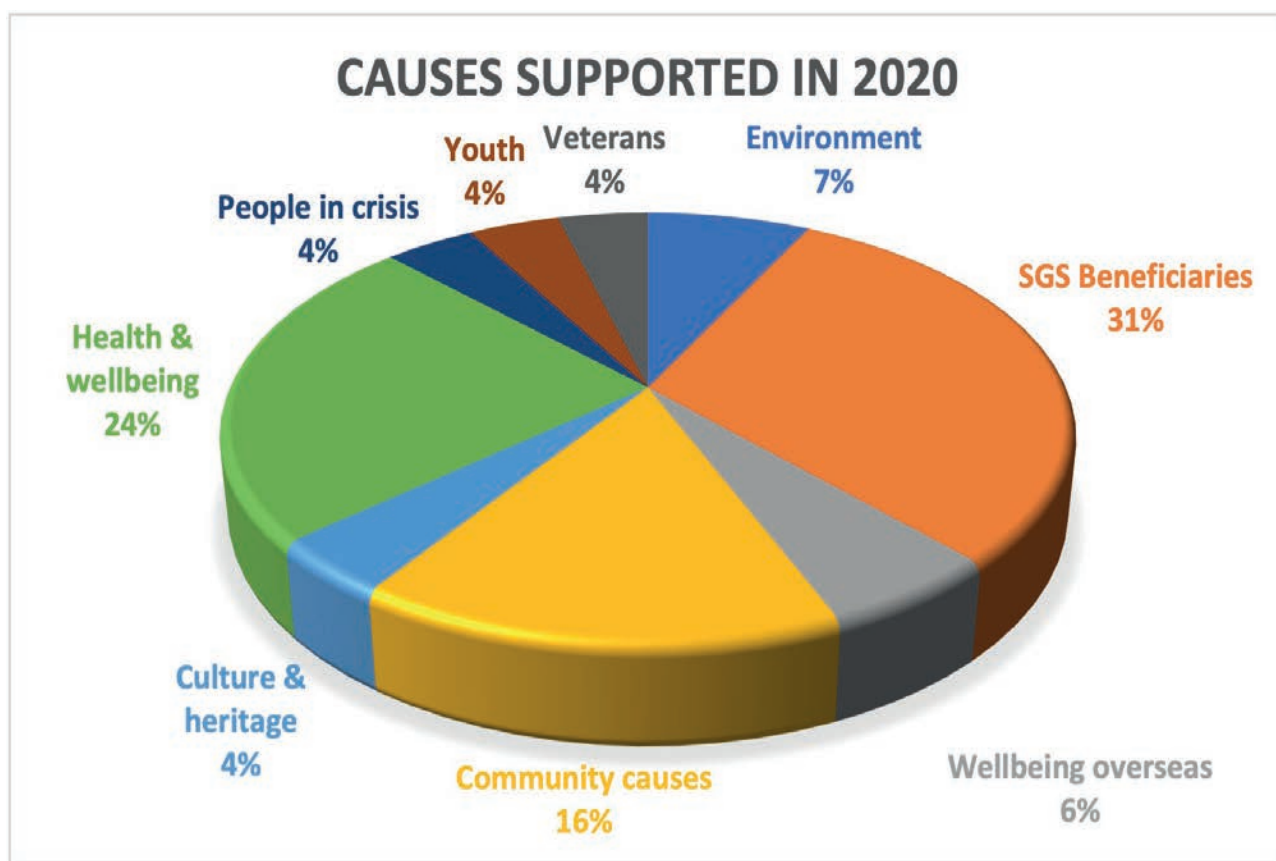
Operating virtually provided the need and opportunity to communicate with our audiences and stakeholders in a different way and we were able to make use of video conferencing and YouTube in a number of different ways, all of which we will continue to use in the future. For example, we delivered:

- Zoom sessions to network with our District teams Scotland-wide to support forward planning.
- Online training opportunities, both live and recorded, to support volunteers to use our database for garden registration and financial reporting.
- Creation of a new strand of online horticultural workshops for volunteers, to provide a means for networking and engagement through winter lockdown. This resulted in the creation of a new 'Gardening Club'.
- Sharing of messaging videos, such as our Chairman's Thank You message in the autumn and a video Christmas card.

The purpose of these activities was to help people feel engaged and connected during a period when many were isolated, but provided the additional positive benefits of ease of communication and the ability to bring people together to share information, more frequently than has been possible in the past.

This increased engagement helped our District Volunteers to remain motivated and enthusiastic, despite Covid, resulting in an excellent uptake of gardens through the Annual Registration process for 2021.





### Breakdown of charitable causes supported

Despite the significantly reduced number of garden openings, we were pleased to still have been able to generate funds for a wide range of charitable causes through those gardens that did open.

Nearly £49,000 was raised at the garden gate with £21,000 distributed directly to charitable causes from a range of sectors, as outlined in the chart above. In 2020, we saw a higher than usual proportion of donations made directly to Scotland's Gardens Scheme and core beneficiaries, due to the commitment of our Garden Openers to support the charity during this difficult time.

In July 2020, we honoured our planned 2019 donations of £14,000 to each of our core beneficiaries, The Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland, Maggie's and Perennial, totalling £42,000.



# PROMOTION & PARTNERSHIP





## Promotion

Throughout the 2020 lockdowns and beyond, the team worked to engage our external audiences with online content to promote our gardens and encourage visits for when they were able to reopen. Outputs included:

- Significant social media growth across all existing channels.
- New YouTube channel created with garden videos and fundraising campaign, developing into an engaging and purposeful channel for the charity and now with over 150 videos, nearly all user-generated content; 359 subscribers and over 52,000 views.
- Ongoing PR activity, including press release on gardens re-opening and new National Organiser, as well as a call to action across media and social media channels for new gardens to open in 2021.
- Secured press and TV coverage, including a series of features in Borders Life TV programme, focussing on the charity's 90th birthday, screened in early 2021.
- Regular e-news distributed to our public audiences of around 7.5k subscribers and increased communication with our 'internal' community of volunteers and garden openers, just under 1,000 subscribers.

## Partnerships

The turbulence caused by Covid was an opportunity to review our charity partnerships, Perennial, Maggie's and the Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland. Although in 2020, opportunities for active engagement were limited, Perennial provided excellent advice on the pros and cons of merchandising and selling online.

We have also developed our relationship with Discover Scottish Gardens, through participation in the Scottish Snowdrop Festival (although sadly unable to proceed due to early 2021 lockdown) and reciprocal advertising, enabling Scotland's Gardens Scheme to have a free advertisement in their 2021 map, with a print run of 100,000 and distribution nationwide.

To raise awareness about new garden recruitment for future participation in the scheme, we distributed a news item to potential partners such as the Scottish Gardeners Forum, Flowers from the Farm and the Chartered Institute of Horticulture Scotland and we will aim to do more of this in summer 2021, focussing on garden designers.

We have developed our relationship with the National Garden Scheme, who generously invited us to participate in their Great British Garden Party and have provided advice on a number of issues through the difficult Covid period. We also worked to deepen our relationship with Investec, enhancing their branding on the annual Guidebook and exploring other opportunities for mutual support, such as providing online content for their private clients.





# FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### Performance

The bare figures laid out in the financial statistics for 2020 make grim reading. However, the Trustees were reassured at how in the face of Covid-19, the charity and its community managed to limit the loss through their hard work, commitment and inventiveness.

For 2020, our expenditure, excluding charitable donations and volunteer support, exceeded our income by £28,962 (2019 surplus £241,490) while our investment portfolio produced gains of £6,896 (2019 £89,975). Donations to garden owners' charities amounted to £21,193 (2019 £193,219). Given the uncertain financial climate, we suspended payments in relation to the horticultural training grant and our guest charity, while agreeing to distribute £6,000 (2019 £42,000) among our three core beneficiaries. Although our impact on communities across Scotland has inevitably fallen during the year, we will do our best in 2021 to return it to something approaching previous levels.

Garden gate income in 2020, both actual and virtual, fell to £48,947 (2019 - £366,792), a level last seen in 1979 and to achieve even that result was highly encouraging under the circumstances. Our other income arises from sponsorship from Investec, to whom we are extremely grateful, our guidebook sales and advertising, donations and investment income and totalled £46,515. Covid-19 support from Government, both national and local, amounted to £31,227. The bulk of our costs are fixed, but the Director/National Organiser pared other expenditure back to the practical minimum. The financial statements lay out in detail the expenditure headings and the areas to which they are allocated which we hope is found to be useful.





### **Legacy Funds and Investment Policy.**

In previous years, the charity has been fortunate to have received a number of generous bequests from our supporters – most notably from Gordon Bowes and the Cattanach Bequest. These have been consolidated into one designated Legacy Fund and have been invested in a mixture of quoted investments and cash deposits with all income being treated as distributable. Such funds were vital in supporting the charity through this difficult period, making it possible for us to continue to support volunteers and plan for 2021 openings.

The prudence in previous years to retain a cushion of long-term capital against severe financial jolts, such as served up by the pandemic, was vital in supporting the charity through this difficult period. The aim of the legacy fund is to sustain the charity and its nationwide network and our hope is that we can encourage others to enhance the fund in the future.

The invested funds are managed by Adam & Company Investment Management Limited on a discretionary basis as set out in the agreed Statement of investment Principles with the objective of maximising income growth and capital gain within a medium risk profile. The Trustees receive quarterly reports and have an annual meeting with the management team within Adam & Co. The Trustees are pleased to report that the portfolio produced a total positive return of 3.53% in 2020, compared to a total negative return of 11.32% by the benchmark.

### **Reserves Policy**

As noted above, the prudent reserves policy operated by the charity enabled it to survive the impact of Covid-19 and be in a strong position to move forward into 2021. The Trustees consider that the financial position of the charity at 31 December 2020 is such that it will have sufficient assets to meet its forthcoming obligations.

*Picture: Dalswinton Mill, opened August 2020*



## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Charity Constitution**

Scotland's Gardens Scheme is governed by its Constitution, a Deed of Trust, and Rules under the Constitution, amended in 2014 and 2017. Members of Scotland's Gardens Scheme are the Trustees of the charity and the Trustees are its Members. The Rules stipulate that there will be between 9 and 11 Trustees. The Trustees have a duty to ensure that the Charity is managed responsibly, for strategic planning and implementation of policy, all financial matters including all statutory accounting and reporting, maintaining good lines of communication with its beneficiaries and agreeing the basis and amount of donations to charity. The Trustees meet at least 3 times a year including the Annual General Meeting, all of which were undertaken virtually in 2020.

As noted in the 2019 Report, Scotland's Gardens Scheme SCIO (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) was approved by OSCR on 16 January 2020. It was hoped that the current charity would move across to the SCIO in 2020 but due to the pandemic and the intransigence of our bank, this was not possible. The SCIO has now moved banks and we have agreed with OSCR that the transfer will be complete by 31 March 2021.

### **Recruitment and appointment of Trustees**

The Trustees are appointed for terms of 3 years, after which they will retire by rotation but may offer themselves for re-election. The Chair is elected for 5 years, after which he/she must stand down as a Trustee for at least one calendar year. A Board skills matrix is operated by the Charity and is used to drive the recruitment process for new Trustees.

### **Risk Management**

The Trustees continue to keep the Charity's activities under review, particularly with regard to any major strategic business and operational risks that may arise from time to time and ensure that procedures are in place to mitigate those risks.

### **Policy Review**

The Trustees, in support of good governance and best practice, implemented and completed a full policy review in the following areas: Beneficiaries, Board Recruitment, Conflicts of Interest, Data Protection, Finance, Investments, Risk Management, Volunteers and Whistle Blowing. In the coming year further work is planned around Equal Opportunities, Home Working, Legacies and Sustainability.





## Forward Planning

As well as our 'business as usual' work, we are planning a number of projects for 2021: Planning for new trustee recruitment – we are seeking to expand the number of Trustees and skillset of our Board starting in early 2021 and are fully engaged in succession planning for the current Chairman, David Mitchell.

Charity engagement – we plan to develop a plan to work more closely with the many charities supported by garden openings to:

- more proactively promote garden openings via charity partners
- evaluate the impact of those donations to charities and individuals
- share the stories behind those donations to our garden owners, our volunteers and our visitors
- develop our Legacy programme to support our charitable work
- Audience Development – analysing our communications channels to learn more about our visitors and audiences.



# 2020 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>					
Donations and legacies	2	60,424	-	60,424	373,547
Other trading activities	3	25,706	-	25,706	28,101
Investment income	4	9,332	-	9,332	13,486
Other income		31,227	-	31,227	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>126,689</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>126,689</b>	<b>415,134</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>					
Raising funds	5	19,486	-	19,486	18,594
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Garden openings		41,125	-	41,125	-
Gardener Training Grants		-	-	-	7,500
Distributions to Charities		27,193	-	27,193	240,219
Volunteer Support		32,301	-	32,301	27,583
Garden opening		-	-	-	60,094
Marketing and Publicity		52,904	-	52,904	48,871
Management and admin		42,136	-	42,136	46,085
<b>Total</b>		<b>215,145</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>215,145</b>	<b>448,946</b>
Net gains on investments		6,896	-	6,896	89,975
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		<b>(81,560)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(81,560)</b>	<b>56,163</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>687,243</b>	<b>5,205</b>	<b>692,448</b>	<b>636,285</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>605,683</b>	<b>5,205</b>	<b>610,888</b>	<b>692,448</b>

## CONTINUING OPERATIONS

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

Picture: Dowhill, opening for the last time in 2020. Picture Camelia Hudema



# BALANCE SHEET

## 31 December 2020

	Notes	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	10	2,435	4,608
Investments	11	502,023	548,559
		<u>504,458</u>	<u>553,167</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	12	5,217	4,783
Cash at bank		113,821	190,081
		<u>119,038</u>	<u>194,864</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	13	(12,608)	(55,583)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>106,430</u>	<u>139,281</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>610,888</u>	<u>692,448</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>610,888</u>	<u>692,448</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>	15		
Unrestricted funds:			
General fund		108,222	124,025
Designated: The Legacy Fund		497,461	563,218
		<u>605,683</u>	<u>687,243</u>
Restricted funds:			
Archive Review		2,269	2,269
Kirsty Maxwell Stuart Legacy		2,936	2,936
		<u>5,205</u>	<u>5,205</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<u>610,888</u>	<u>692,448</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 18/03/2021 and were signed on its behalf by:

*David R Mitchell*  
D R Mitchell - Trustee





# FEEDBACK

*"Thank you so much for opening some gardens again! I spent a delightful afternoon with friends at the glorious Willowhill garden ( Newport, Fife ) - a real tonic in these difficult times. The arrangements for compliance with Covid regulations were superb: everything was clearly marked to ensure visitors were always at a safe distance, there was no physical exchange of cash, plenty of hand sanitiser was available, and we felt very safe and able to enjoy this beautiful garden."*

**Garden Visitor, July 2020**

*"In the last few years, our garden at Whitewin House, Girvan, has been part of SGS Ayrshire/Arran summer openings. This now gives us the opportunity to expand our charity work annually, in supporting the SGS Beneficiaries 100%. Looking forward to continued openings, and welcoming new and old visitors for years to come."*

**Linda Finnie, Garden Owner, Whitewin House, Spring 2021**





# ABOUT OUR CHARITY

## President

HRH The Duchess of Rothesay

## Trustees

David Mitchell	Chairman
Sarah Landale	Deputy Chairman
Peter Yellowlees	Honorary Treasurer
Charlotte Hunt	Honorary Vice-President
David Buchanan-Cook	
Jonathan Cobb	
Stephen McCallum	
Emily Stair	

## Staff

Terrill Dobson	Director (to July 2020)
Liz Stewart	National Organiser (from August 2020)
Daria Piskorz-Pronobis	Marketing Manager
Julie Golding	Volunteer Manager
Hazel Reid	Office Manager

## Head Office

### Phone

23 Castle Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DN

### Email

0131 226 3714

### Website

info@scotlandsgardens.org

scotlandsgardens.org

## Registered Charity No

SC011337 (SC049866 from March 2021)

## Independent Examiner

Douglas Home & Co Ltd  
Chartered Accountants  
47-49 The Square, Kelso, TD5 7HW

## Bankers

## Solicitors

## Investment Managers

Handelsbanken, 18 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4DF  
J & H Mitchell WS, 51 Atholl Road, Pitlochry, PH16 5BU  
Adam & Company Investment Management Ltd  
25 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, EH2 1AF





# Scotland's **GARDENS** Scheme

OPEN FOR CHARITY

**Thank you to everyone who  
supported us through 2020**

**Scotland's Gardens Scheme SCIO**

23 Castle Street  
Edinburgh EH2 3DN  
Scottish Charity No: SC049866  
[info@scotlandsgardens.org](mailto:info@scotlandsgardens.org)  
0131 226 3714  
[scotlandsgardens.org](http://scotlandsgardens.org)

 **Investec**

