

**Growing Matters**  
Scottish Charity No.SCIO47568  
**Annual Report 2019/2020**

**Growing Matters** was formally constituted as a charity on 31st July 2017. We have a 25-year lease on the Walled Garden from the Sir David Kinloch Trust. Our financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July each year.

**Our charitable aims** are

- The advancement of education.
- The relief of those in need by reasons of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

We seek to fulfill our charitable aims by

- Providing opportunities for learning horticultural and other traditional skills appropriate to working in a walled garden.
- Encouraging volunteering, particularly amongst groups vulnerable to poor mental health and those who need to keep active.
- Supporting individuals seeking to strengthen their physical and mental health through the practice of gardening.
- Encouraging our volunteers to develop their social, communication and craft skills, and to contribute to the development of therapeutic gardening.



**Trustees:**  
Mel Kinloch  
David Kinloch  
Charlie Jacholke  
June Tainsh  
Di Simcock  
Di Walker

**Volunteers:** Helen Marrocco Jerry Simcock  
John Maule Lawrence Hawkings  
Gary Biggar Susan Moffat  
Anne Hunter Sheryl Davidson  
Jamie Halpin John Chaundler  
Anne Hunter Ruth Alder  
Harald Vox Angela Barnacle  
Caroline Glas Janet Dodson

The main activities through which we met our objectives in 2019/2020 were

- **Regular twice-weekly Volunteer sessions in the walled garden.** A variety of opportunities were provided, including horticultural tasks, coffee breaks, and participation in discussions. During the Coronavirus pandemic advice was provided about social distancing and hand/tool sanitizing.
- **Once-weekly *Peer support Horticultural Therapy* sessions** in which participants could provide feedback about which activities were helpful, and could take a role in shaping the development of courses in the future. Meditation and mindfulness were part of the therapeutic environment, as was the relaxed enjoyment of the garden.
- The **Volunteer Steering Group** managed work in the garden and worked on the design and content of our new website **growingatgilmerton.org**. Contributions from volunteers were valued and incorporated into the design. The Steering Group shared out tasks and organized an Open Day. They communicated with each other between volunteer sessions using Loomio, an online tool for group decision-making and also set up a WhatsApp group.
- The **Open Day held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019** was successful and drew in visitors from the locality, enabling us to spread the word about the work of our charity. We raised £189.27 in donations for plant sales, honey, fruit and vegetables. In 2019/2020 we also received a number of donations in exchange for wreaths, flowers, fruit and vegetables grown in the garden, amounting to £140.00. We used this money to purchase seeds, supplies for the volunteer hut, some tools, shrubs, compost and mulch.
- **On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 we also hosted a tree planting ceremony in memory of Blue Hesse.** This was attended by many friends from Edinburgh, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders. Planting the Medlar tree in the Forest Garden was much appreciated as an opportunity for us all to get together and acknowledge Blue's contribution since becoming a volunteer in 2017.
- **On December 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 we arranged a Saturday tree planting event,** drawing in several volunteers from Haddington. We provided soup and snacks for the volunteers after they had planted six crab apple trees, forming an avenue along the path by the Forest garden.



- **The provision, in February 2020, of a one-day Willow Weaving Workshop so that volunteers could practice craft skills.** We also arranged a **Saturday tree-planting event** . This was organized to be socially distanced, conforming to Coronavirus health and safety guidelines, so that volunteers and their families could plant a circle of six birch trees and a cherry tree in the arboretum area.
- **We developed the Vegetable garden,** increasing the number of plots and establishing some experimental plots, including a wheat trial for the Patchwork Farm Project. We grew salad crops, peas, beans, chard, carrots, brassicas, pumpkins, and courgettes, and well as several varieties of potato.



- **On 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 we contributed an on-line talk for Keep Scotland Beautiful** about our pollinator-friendly gardening and why we got an award from Scottish Natural Heritage in 2019. We also got a grant of money from the Butterfly Conservation Society towards equipment and seeds so that we can develop a meadow area within the garden. We worked towards extending our natural bee keeping activities alongside conventionally managed honey bee hives.

- **We strengthened links with our local community** by entering the East Linton Flower Show and winning a couple of prizes. We provided a quiet setting for East Lothian Quakers to meet in the garden on several occasions during the summer so that they could hold socially distanced Meeting for Worship.

### **Summary:**

Throughout 2019/20 we continued the charity's work in the Walled Garden, providing sessions for volunteers and working together to develop the Forest Garden and Arboretum areas. We extended the Vegetable Garden and participated in the Patchwork Farm project. We arranged a number of events designed to increase biodiversity within the garden by planting trees and shrubs, and to give our volunteers opportunities to meet new folk and feel valued. We set up a new website as a platform for the organization and welcomed several new volunteers.

In March 2020 we were "locked down" due to Covid 19 and just a few volunteers kept things going until conditions were somewhat relaxed. We instituted a socially distanced regime for gardeners, and provided means of sanitizing hands and equipment. Although two volunteers reported they had become ill early on during the pandemic, we are delighted that they both made a good recovery and were able to return to the garden in due course. All other volunteers have remained well. Volunteers report that attending the garden is very beneficial for their mental and emotional well-being, as well as providing an opportunity for physical exercise. We realize that the garden is an important local asset, especially during this recent time of social dislocation due to the global pandemic.

Di Simcock  
November 2020.



