SUSSEX GARDENS TRUST
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Sussex Gardens Trust, a registered charity, was incorporated in January 1996 as a company limited by guarantee.

Registered Company number 03149760 (England and Wales)	**Registered Charity number** 1052734
Registered Office 47 Denmans Lane, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2JN	**Independent examiner** S. Faulkner 2 Overhill Way, Brighton, BN1 8WP
Bankers Lloyds Bank, Haywards Heath Branch PO Box 1000, BX1 1LT	

Membership of Council of Management and Other Roles

The Trustees (The Council of Management) who held office during the year were as follows:

Penny Vasey	Chair and Safeguarding Officer
Marcus Batty	(Resigned October 2022)
Julie O'Hara	Secretary
Jenny Howard	Treasurer
Sally Ingram	Website/social media
Pat Dauncey	(Resigned July 2022)
Virginia Hinze	Chair Small Grants Panel and Research Group
Jennie Starr	Research Group
Jim Stockwell	Conservation Committee

The Charity Trustees are the current Directors of the limited company.

Since the AGM 2022 there has been a vacancy for a Vice Chairman.

Other Roles (non-Trustee)

Paul Tosey	Website Editor
John Dorkings	Joint membership secretary
Jackie Dorkings	Joint membership secretary
Dr Barbara Simms	Journal Editor

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REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Introduction

2022 has seen Sussex Gardens Trust benefit from the unexpected outcome of being deprived of in-person meetings and visits during the Covid pandemic. Both Council and our various groups have been able to function with a mixture of online and physical meetings. This has proved to be efficient and significantly more convenient for our volunteer members. We are used to driving the considerable distances that Sussex sometimes requires for garden visits, and the excellent programme for 2022 has made every journey worthwhile. However, one cannot underestimate the convenience and saving in time afforded by holding shorter meetings online. Nowhere was this more evident than in preparation for the launch of our new website in May; countless hours were spent by the members involved, and removing the need to travel so much was invaluable.

The various groups working behind the scenes to carry forward the aims of SGT have been busy throughout the year. 2022 has been fruitful in strengthening links with bodies across Sussex enabling us to achieve our aims, particularly in the area of Research and Recording.

Applications for funding are reviewed by our Small Grants panel who take the trouble to signpost applicants to more appropriate organisations when requests do not meet SGT criteria.

Although the numbers coming to garden visits are lower than before the Covid pandemic, every visit was greatly enjoyed, not only for the special opportunities of garden tours with owners or head gardeners but also for the chance to meet other members. I should particularly like to highlight our visit to Sedgwick Park where we were welcomed by SGT member Clare Davison. After a tour of this historic garden, we enjoyed a fine cake iced to depict and celebrate the visit in August 1928 of the Bicycle Boys.

As if the launch of our website had not been sufficient achievement for 2022, November saw the publication of the first edition of the new SGT journal. It has been much admired both for its content and style. We owe this success to its editor Barbara Simms, her small band of helpers and an eclectic mix of contributors.

It is encouraging that we had a greater number of new members in 2022 than the previous year. Their first contact was with our joint membership secretaries John and Jackie Dorkings, who are stepping down from the role; we thank them for their work over the last few years. Hopefully the raised awareness of the importance of historic gardens, public parks and open spaces brought about by the Covid pandemic will prompt more people to join the Trust and take part in our various activities.

Conservation Committee

The Gardens Trust (GT) is a statutory consultee regarding planning applications affecting historic parks and gardens included on the register maintained by Historic England (HE). A weekly list of applications notified to the GT is circulated to county garden trusts and, where these relate to Sussex, they are reviewed by the SGT Conservation Committee led by Jim Stockwell, with assistance from other members of the Trust. The Committee also looks at issues when we learn of them from Local Planning Authorities direct, SGT members or other sources.

During the Covid19 pandemic, we found the committee could work effectively without formal meetings by using e-mail communications and this pattern of working has continued since then. During 2022 we responded to some fourteen planning applications (thirty-one in 2021) and our comments are submitted to Local Planning Authorities and also made available to the general public via the SGT website (see https://www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk/conservation/planning-case-work-log/)

Examples of cases considered during 2022 included:

- Prior to preparing a planning application, the National Trust (NT) consulted us regarding changes at Sheffield Park. SGT representatives visited the site and discussed the plans in detail with the designer and NT staff. SGT was pleased to be involved at an early stage and, in addition to commenting on these plans, we also took the opportunity to highlight our earlier concerns about parking arrangements.
- Wakehurst Place is owned by the National Trust but is used and managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The site includes a large historic walled garden which is not open to the public because it is currently used as a nursery and includes a number of large glasshouses dating back to the 1970s. A major planning application was submitted for the construction of a range of new energy efficient glasshouses and redevelopment of the Havelock range of farm buildings as part of Kew's as part of Kew's vision "*to become a national centre of excellence in conservation science and practice, seed research and landscape ecology*". SGT representatives visited the site and subsequently a letter of support was submitted pointing out the potential longer-term benefits of restoring the walled garden could further strengthen the case.
- The owners of Borde Hill Gardens are planning to submit a grant application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund for financial support for "Engaging a wider audience with nature" and "Contributing to Borde Hill's long-term sustainability. The proposals were shared with SGT and the Trust was pleased to support the application and assist with the development and refinement of the plans.

Research and Recording

The research group met both on site and for indoor training sessions during the year but on fewer occasions than originally planned due to poor weather and other commitments. However individual researchers continued to complete their reports on coastal sites. There are currently eleven site reports waiting for final editing and sign off for the HER and SGT website; two in final stages of drafting and two still to be allocated to a researcher.

We are in the process of putting fifteen completed reports onto the website. Please do take a look at these: they contain fascinating facts on the genesis of these often 'taken for granted' local parks as well as an up-to-date overview of their current state and links to many wonderful illustrations.

We will continue to work in our now well-established partnerships with the Historic Environment Officers across Sussex to ensure that reports from past projects such as the significant gardens of local interest in Wealden (completed as a commission from WDC to SGT in 2004/5) and Public Parks in Crawley (a similar commission from the Borough) can also be added to both the HERs and our SGT website. We are most grateful to the HER officers for their support.

As we approach completing our Sussex Coastal Parks and Gardens project we are preparing to move into new research territory and are currently reviewing potential options. These could include a theme-based approach, looking for example at gardens with literary and artistic associations, or perhaps focusing on a specific historical period. This is a particularly good time to look at a new area of research as we were pleased to welcome some new researchers to the group at the end of 2022.

Small Grants Panel

Following on from 2021's more positive climate for getting work done in our local parks and gardens, the trend is continuing for expressions of interest to our Small Grant Scheme (SGS) to come from Friends groups.

Our main recipients in 2022 were the Friends of Meads Parks and Gardens who have worked so hard and so long to rejuvenate the Italian Gardens which were laid out in the 1920s by unemployed labour for Eastbourne Borough Council. The Friends led the campaign, persuading EBC to undertake the repairs to the built structures (pavilion and pergolas) then approached SGT as there were no funds for the last - but most important touch - replanting the structures with their climbing

roses. The SGS was able to offer the Friends £480.00 for purchasing and planting 24 roses. The work will be undertaken in spring 2023.

Two further inquiries were received, firstly from Fishbourne Roman Palace (a property of the Sussex Archaeological Society) for help towards interpreting their replanted 'Roman' garden with a leaflet and plant labelling. Further information on this is awaited from the site director.

Secondly, the Friends of Preston Park made an inquiry about funding towards replanting the extensive rose garden at the south end of the park, laid out by the Superintendent of Parks, Bertie Hubbard MacLaren in 1928. This is potentially a huge job with many issues to resolve such as overcoming rose sickness in the soil, the robustness of roses to climate change – and therefore the possibility of a new approach to the planting - and the available resources from Brighton and Hove City Council for maintenance. The SGS is supportive in principle and will be continuing dialogue with the Friends in 2023.

Hastings Borough Council continues to offer no response to our offer of potential grant to help repair their picturesque 'Roman' bath-house in Summerfields Woods; it sadly remains fenced off for safety reasons for another year…

SGT will continue to promote its grant scheme through as wide a range of media as we can, including on our social media. Members can play their part by passing on the fact that we can help financially (albeit in a small way) any site or organisation which might be eligible for a grant, in any part of Sussex (see our website for details).

Visits and Events

In April and May we arranged visits to two of the gardens showcased in the 'Unforgettable Gardens' online talks given by Caroline Holmes and organised by SGT and the Gardens Trust. We visited Borde Hill in April and had a presentation from Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke about Borde Hill's outstanding tree collection. The archivist Julia Foster then shared some of the fascinating archive material linking Borde Hill to the stories of the founding of the collection. In May we went to Highdown Gardens to see the chalk gardens established by the Stern family. In her winter lectures for SGT Caroline Holmes talked about the gardens in her book 'Where the Wildness Pleases'. We visited two of these in June, Wych Warren in the Ashdown Forest and Twyford House. We were warmly welcomed at both. In July we visited a further three gardens that Caroline talked to us about: Luctons and the Priest House at West Hoathly in July and High Beeches Woodland and Water garden in August. At High Beeches it was particularly interesting to be given an insight into the effects of the unusually hot weather on the planting. In September we were welcomed to Sedgwick Park which tied in with the Royal Horticultural Society focus in 2022 on the 'Bicycle Boys', Loyal Johnson and Sam Brewster, who visited Sedgwick Park on their journey. We ended our visits in the far west of the county at Uppark and Sennicotts.

This year we tried a different approach to booking. If we had two unrelated visits in a morning and afternoon, we offered the opportunity to have both visits at a slight discount or each visit separately. This seemed to suit some people. In total eighty-three members and five guests came to one or more of our visits. We would like to thank all the garden owners who made us so welcome as well as the volunteers who organised each session. It is our general policy to cover our costs on visits, not to make a profit, and this we achieved.

In December we met for a lecture by Caroline Holmes 'Sussex Weed to Westminster Hall', thus ending the year with a further focus on Wealden. Our winter lecture series were again held on line and we would like to thank Caroline Ikin and David Marsh for their stimulating presentations.

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Communications

In the first half of 2022 a small group of volunteers, led by Pat Dauncey, gave much of their time and energy to completely update our website. Working with a professional developer, the website was redesigned to be welcoming, easy to navigate, and to appeal to a wide audience. There are several new features, including an interactive county map, devised by Paul Tosey, which highlights many of the parks and gardens across Sussex, with useful information for the visitor. News items and information about SGT events are posted regularly on the website and the Notebook section has a collection of stimulating and varied articles around different themes or topics, contributed each month by SGT members or guest writers.

The refreshed website presented an opportune moment for a new logo, and with the help of a graphic designer we chose the organic shape of a tree, to suggest harmony and balance, and to reflect the diversity of historic green spaces in Sussex. We felt that an abstract shape would be distinct from other CGTs, some of whom use a representational tree, and that it would not lock us into a particular period in history. To develop this modern style, we also selected a new typeface and colour palette to use online and in our printed materials.

As well as print communication we are aware that technology moves on. By using social media, we can raise awareness of the Trust's work and reach a large audience from different backgrounds. We have a growing number of followers who engage with our postings on Twitter, including other County Gardens Trusts, and this year a new SGT volunteer has set up Instagram, which will feature inspiring photos of our events and garden visits. We are pleased to be taking part in a new social media project in the spring, organised by the national Gardens Trust.

Writing in-depth research studies is very much a strength of SGT, and the first edition of the Journal, edited by Dr Barbara Simms and published in November, has been an outstanding success. This academic publication brought together findings of new and ongoing research and other Sussex-related topics relevant to gardens and landscapes in the county.

We welcome suggestions for research articles, or writing on a range of topics and themes, or if you would like to join an editorial team and help to commission features, either for the Journal or the Notebook, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Membership

During the year we welcomed 19 new members (7 individuals and 6 couples), higher than the previous year when 14 joined. Nevertheless, we lost rather more existing members, mainly due to the ageing of our membership, and at the year-end we had 203 Members, made up of 6 Corporate or Association Members, 99 as individuals and 98 as joint members compared with some 209 members at the end of 2021. Members can now join on-line and we continue to encourage members to renew by Standing Order of online bank transfer.

Financial Review

The year started off well with our Winter lectures, which took place on Zoom, raising over £1,700.00. Our winter talk/tea in December raised almost £160.00 from the raffle.

Our main project this year has been the re-development of our website at a cost of just over £5,000.00. This was intended to make the Sussex Gardens Trust more accessible to members and non-members, in the hope they would join us. We still are making small additions/alterations to the site. Events can be booked and publications purchased through the site by linking to our Bookwhen page, which is proving very successful. Each payment is forwarded to us within two or three days and the commission deducted is very reasonable. However, members can still book direct with the organiser if they are unhappy using this online method. More and more members are making payments online and all SGT payments are now made online with a second authorisation. We will continue to provide facilities for cheque payment for those members who prefer that method and will provide help and support where needed.

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The production costs associated with the first edition of the SGT Journal in 2022 was £2012, while in the previous year, which was affected by the Covid pandemic, we published two editions of the shorter Newsletter at a cost of £1,010 (these items are both reflected in the accounts under "Production of Newsletter").

Thanks go to volunteers who gave talks to local organisations, adding £343 to miscellaneous income. Gift Aid on membership subscriptions for the tax year 2021-22 raised £667.83. Thank you to all members who have signed a Gift Aid declaration.

We have received several requests for contributions from our Small Grants Fund this year, one or two of which will be granted early 2023. We donated our Christmas raffle takings to the Fund, giving us a total balance at the end of the year of £2,160.94. We continue to actively seek new ways in which this fund could be used in order to forward our charitable objectives.

Our cash flow remains strong with members paying in advance for membership and events. Although the re-vamping of our website has reduced our bank balance somewhat, we end the year with a healthy bank balance, a continued loyal membership (thank you) including several new members, and sound reserves to take us forward to a better year in 2023.

Safeguarding

In December 2017, the Government published guidance on safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees, applicable in England and Wales. In line with other organisations, SGT Council considered the guidance where relevant to our activities and produced a document entitled 'Safeguarding Adults - Sussex Gardens Trust policy and procedures'. The document was accepted by Council in November 2019 and is available to all members on request.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on 7th March 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

CHAIRMAN	**SECRETARY**
P Vasey	J O'Hara

SUSSEX GARDENS TRUST
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022

SUSSEX GARDENS TRUST
Charity no 1052734 **Registered Company 03149760**

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Year to 31/12/21	Year to 31/12/22
INCOME		
Membership Subscriptions	3,478.84	£ 3,504.06
Event Income	3,406.14	£ 4,081.17
AGM Income	-	£ -
Winter Lectures	1,317.57	£ 1,769.32
Gift Aid	690.36	£ 667.83
Publication sales	2,058.05	£ 374.35
Interest COIF	1.58	£ 65.48
Miscellaneous Income	480.19	£ 712.45
Total Income	**£ 11,432.73**	**£ 11,174.66**
EXPENDITURE		
Event Costs	3,829.04	£ 3,494.34
AGM Costs	100.00	£ 118.00
Winter lectures	100.00	£ -
Production of Newsletter	1,010.00	£ 2,012.00
Postage and stationery	585.06	£ 743.29
Advertising and Promotion	172.00	£ -
Subscriptions and Donations	338.00	£ 335.50
Insurance	260.00	£ 278.00
Research	24.00	£ 98.75
Website Costs	61.74	£ 5,067.71
Publication costs	5,037.00	£ -
Miscellaneous expenditure	109.40	£ 456.88
Total Expenditure	**£ 11,626.24**	**£ 12,604.47**
Surplus income/(expenditure)	-193.51	(1,429.81)
Accumulated fund brought forward	22,965.64	22,772.13
Accumulated fund carried forward	**£22,772.13**	**£21,342.32**

I have examined the balance sheet, income and expenditure account and associated vouchers relating to the year ended 31 December 2022 and found them to be correct.

Examiner signature **Date**



18/1/2023

Sue Faulkner, Examiner

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SUSSEX GARDENS TRUST

Charity no. 1052734 **Registered Company 03149760**

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 DECEMBER 2022

	31/12/2021	31/12/2022
Current Assets		
Bank Balances	20,400.30	18,964.36
Charities Ethical Investment Fund	5,000.00	5,000.00
Debtors	-	-
Total Current Assets	25,400.30	23,964.36
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	645.16	461.10
Net Current Assets	24,755.14	23,503.26
Total Net Assets	**£24,755.14**	**£23,503.26**
Represented by		
Accumulated fund	22,772.13	21,342.32
Small Grants Scheme	1,983.01	2,160.94
	£24,755.14	**£23,503.26**

Notes on Small Grants Scheme

Balance as at 31 December 2021	1,983.01
Credit to fund of Christmas raffle takings, etc	177.93
Balance as at 31 December 2022	**£2,160.94**

The market value of the Investment in Charities Ethical Investment Fund at 31st December 2022 was estimated at £5,256.24.

For the year ending 31 December 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476,

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

CHAIRMAN **SECRETARY**

P Vasey J O'Hara

date date