

Chelsea
Physic
Garden

FOUNDED
1673



Impact Report 2022



Welcome

In July 2022 I joined Chelsea Physic Garden as Chair-designate, and I am still learning new facets and making new discoveries. Although small in scale, the Garden touches people's lives daily, and for a number, it has created lasting and meaningful change.

As a green space in the heart of London, many visit simply to enjoy a connection with nature. But in addition to being a green oasis, we play a larger role since our plant collections contributes to urban biodiversity and plant conservation. As we face the uncertainties that the climate crisis brings, this role will become increasingly important.

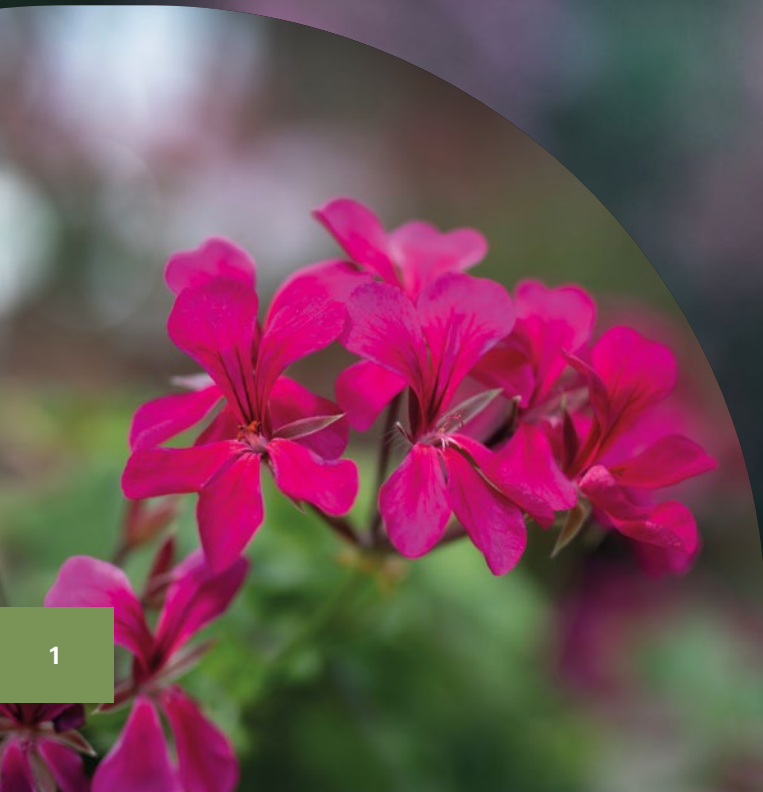
Throughout 350 years of uncertainty and change, the appeal of the Garden has endured. Our mission to demonstrate the power of plants and share plant knowledge has remained constant since 1673, when we were established as a place for teaching and discovery. Today, the vision to share this knowledge more widely, spurs us on.

I hope what follows will illustrate the change that we are making to people's lives to fulfil our mission and vision. This change only happens through the support of our loyal Friends, generous funders, stakeholders, committed staff, volunteers and Trustees.



Paul Thompson

Dr Paul Thompson
Chair



years of plant science

2022 in summary

2022 was a year of industry and inspiration! We worked hard to build back after the pandemic to involve and engage people with the wonder of plants through all the charity's work; as a Grade I listed botanic garden, visitor attraction, learning provider, and community space.

We are delighted to share some of our successes in our first report that focuses on the Garden's impact for people, plants, and place.

As well as our day-to-day activities, our staff and a team of craftspeople and construction workers worked through rain and shine to keep our project to restore the Garden's historic Glasshouses on time and on budget.

Our efforts to 'lower' the Garden's walls and root ourselves in our community are reaping rewards. Our learning team were back in the community, hosting local charities and community organisations in the Garden. These deepening partnerships with a few local organisations such as Dalgarno Trust, Kanlungan and Open Age have welcomed people who might otherwise have little access to green space. With the help of a dedicated cohort of regular volunteers our community growing space is now established and thriving.

It is not only the elderly who feel socially isolated, and we know that young people's wellbeing is at risk and contact with nature can be just as valuable. We have created programmes aimed at younger people and local schools, including Chelsea Academy, to inspire them to connect with the outdoors.

We are also tackling the shortage of skills in horticulture to build the next generation of skilled horticulturalists and gardeners. We reviewed our traineeship to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible to anyone considering a career in horticulture or working with a heritage collection.

As well as job opportunities, we have grown our volunteering group, increasing the breadth of roles so anyone can get involved. In addition to gardening, learning, and guiding we have welcomed volunteers to

support our heritage offer, visitor welcome and shop. These opportunities offer experience for people looking for a route into the sector or who want to volunteer time in other ways.

In preparing for our 350-year anniversary in 2023, we have taken the opportunity to reflect on all that has been achieved by the organisation over its long history. The Garden's survival stems from its ability to adapt and evolve. In climate change, we perhaps face our biggest challenge. In 2023 with our £3.2m restoration of our historic Glasshouses successfully delivered, we are readying ourselves for the next chapter. We are confident that we can continue to transform, to make an impact and create a bright, sustainable future for Chelsea Physic Garden.



Sue Medway

Sue Medway
Director

Growing skills in heritage and horticulture

In 2022, we increased the number of employment and volunteering opportunities to encourage people to consider working as a gardener or to volunteer in a heritage attraction. These and other initiatives were part of a wider skills development programme through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) funded project.

We want to encourage candidates from more diverse backgrounds to consider applying for our horticultural traineeship, now running for fifteen years. We worked with neighbouring partners and schools to reach a broader audience who may not have considered working at the Garden or a career in horticulture. Our new approach to recruitment has been adopted for other roles in the Garden and we regularly hold open days for interested candidates to learn more about the Garden, which breaks down barriers.

We also successfully trialed a six-month paid internship to work across horticulture and learning to join up classroom and gardening activities. In addition to formal training, we hosted workshops for social and community gardeners to share learning and benefit from the Garden's expertise.

The number of opportunities we offer may be limited but each makes an impact in tackling the skills shortage by broadening diversity in horticulture and heritage.



Insight: Horticultural Traineeship

A recent survey of our past Horticultural Trainees shows that the majority are still working within horticulture.

The one-year paid traineeship offers a chance to learn, develop knowledge and gain the foundation for a career in horticulture. Recipients said that the reputation of the Garden, its history and botanical heritage, as well as its broad and diverse collection were appealing, as was the opportunity to study to gain an RHS qualification whilst working.

Horticultural trainees appreciated the opportunity to learn in a Garden with such plant diversity and to care for plants under glass. The weekly plant identifications and placement opportunities, the opportunity to work alongside skilled horticulturalists were factors given.

“Having the opportunity to work in such a historic garden, working alongside some of the best in the business.” – Marcus

Trainees recalled the welcoming atmosphere and friendly team, the variety of the work in relation to the diversity of the plant collection, and the opportunity for daily learning, and to be given responsibility and appropriate challenge.

“Warm and supportive welcome.” – Yidah

“The challenge – doing things that I didn’t think I could...every day!” – John

Trainees told us that by working at the Garden they had been given a platform from which to pursue a career in horticulture, which in some cases were life changing. The course provided people with skills, knowledge, and confidence, and for instance, “a life-long love of Pelargoniums.”

“It changed my life. Honestly.” – Kate

“The traineeship gave me the confidence, skills, and knowledge to enable me to pursue a full-time career in horticulture.” – Louisa

After leaving the Garden, many respondents still work in horticulture and worked for organisations including the National Trust, York Minister, Fulham Palace, Royal Horticultural Society and two continued in full time positions at Chelsea Physic Garden. Others have pursued careers in community gardening, plant nurseries, managing private estates or running their own landscaping businesses.

“I have grown a lot as a person and horticulturalist” – Franziska



Jayyidah, Horticultural Trainee

Time well spent

We have relied on a group of loyal volunteers to help with gardening, visitor enjoyment and across many other functions. As with many organisations, we experienced a drop off in participation following the pandemic.

In 2022, as part of the NLHF-funded project we introduced a new Volunteer Development Manager to develop our volunteer programme. This role has helped to identify what support was needed for existing volunteers and has introduced other opportunities to attract new volunteers. This was enabled by new recruitment avenues, changes to volunteer role profiles and the introduction of flexible 'micro-volunteering' opportunities, which has resulted in many new volunteers joining the Garden.



In 2022 we committed to putting young voices at the centre of our work and enlisted the support of a Youth Panel, as part of our NLHF-funded Glasshouses project. The members meet quarterly and have developed their own terms of reference and supported several initiatives including 'Takeover Days', digital projects, and other ideas to make the Garden more welcoming to young people.

Our new 'Better Impact' online volunteer system has helped us manage our many volunteers, as well as calculate the contribution that volunteers make. As a result, we have also professionalised our communication and contact with our entire cohort.



135
contributed



13,000
hours of time

3 volunteers contributed over 30 years
3 volunteers contributed over 20 years
13 volunteers contributed over 10 years

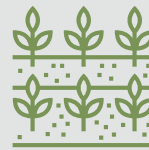
Understanding our plants

The restoration of the Glasshouses has given the horticultural team an opportunity to audit the entire living collections, which fluctuates between 4,500 and 5,000 plants. This knowledge is being used to underpin a robust conservation management plan to inform how we select and grow plants in the future.

The plan is regularly reviewed to ensure that each plant 'earns its place'. Plants will be grown to support a more thematic approach including their past and future use, their importance in environmental change, and contribution to horticultural interest and emotional wellbeing.

In 2022, a total of 150 new plants was added to the Glasshouses' collection principally to improve representation within certain plant families, groups, or regional displays. Over 60 of these new plants are being grown in the Garden for the first time. This is in part a reflection of our changing climate.

The Glasshouses restoration has resulted in new efficiencies and improvements to the environmental controls, which will optimise plant health. For example, we can now capture and store 65 per cent more rainwater from the Glasshouses' roofs to help with the Garden's irrigation needs.



5

different plant taxa grow in every 5m² of green space



150

plants added to the Glasshouses collections



30%

of the plants grown are threatened in the wild



7

plants listed on the IUCN Red List added to our collections



286

plants were added either as live plants or seeds into the collection. Over 50% of these were brand new species, cultivars or hybrids not previously grown.



54

trees were planted

Sharing the power of plants

Visitors will notice a change in the information we share about our collections in 2023. An important part of the restoration project has been the creation of new content which will culminate in the installation of new visitor interpretation and signage.

Over the course of 2022 our in-house team worked with external experts and community partners to review and research our existing content. The result will be much more engaging, relevant, and equitable storytelling that provides visitors with information about the Garden's historical roots, the people and plants connected to its past, and an explanation about the Garden's role today.

The plants and stories within our collection sit at a cross section of horticulture, botany, science and medicine, culture, history, geography, sociology, and art – and we hope to draw out these themes to create more interest in the Garden's rich plant heritage.

Our stories will also acknowledge our colonial legacy, amplify Indigenous voices, and celebrate LGBTQ+ botanical Indigenous history.

Other parts of the Garden's interpretation will be similarly refreshed to celebrate the Garden's anniversary and to replace out of date information.



A mocked-up model of the new interpretation design



Dash of Lavender Trail



Temporary signage in the Glasshouses

Highlights from 2022



50,919
visitors



11,122
learners



8,547
tour participants



119
schools' workshops



286
new plants



1
glasshouse restored

"The Garden has allowed us the space to disconnect from our everyday stress and worries. We are always made to feel welcome" – Kanlungan Charity

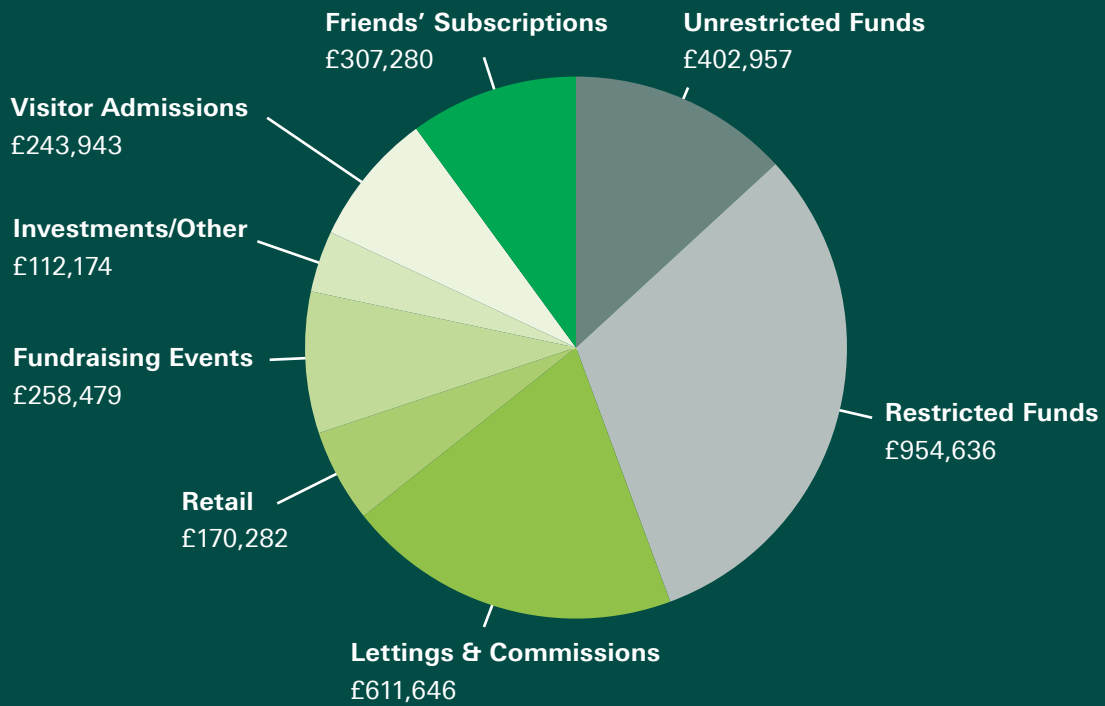
"A true celebration of plants, nature, and the world we live in" – Entelechy Arts

"It gave me a window on life that had been closed for some time" – Programme participant

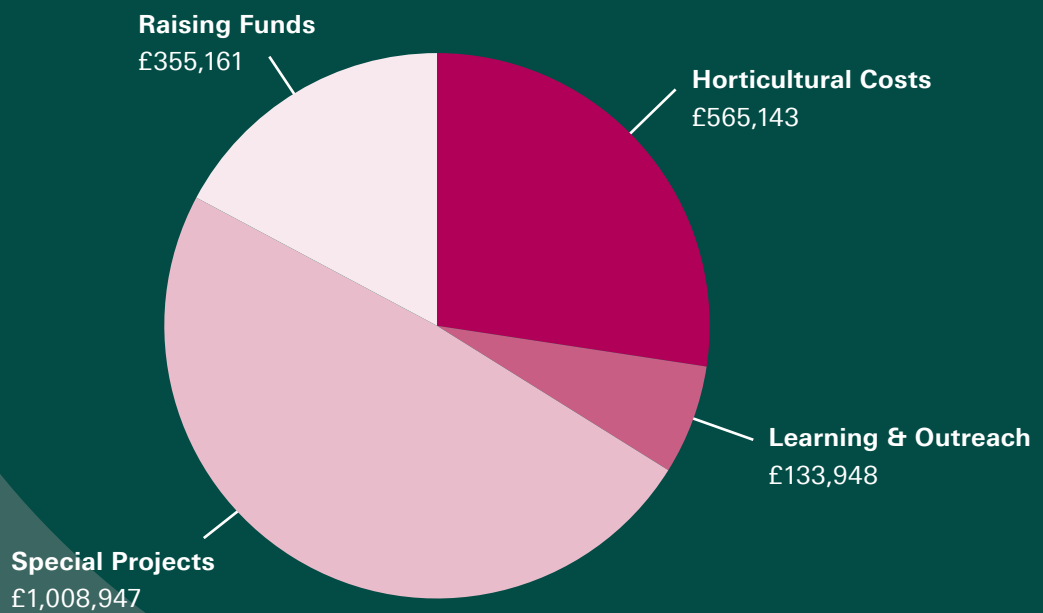


Financial Summary

Total Income: £3,061,397



Total Expenditure: £2,063,199



Looking ahead to 2023

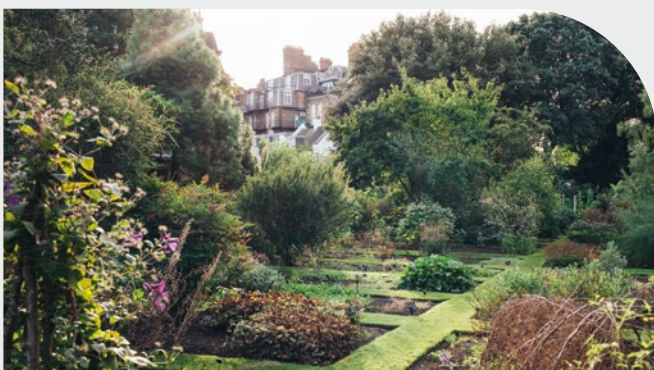


Building ‘A Garden for all’

The Garden is at an exciting moment of renewal, growth, and change. Our focus in 2023 will be to create the right environment and facilities for the Garden, its visitor and learners, staff, and volunteers to flourish.

Whilst the green space is seasonal and visually appealing, our public spaces and visitor facilities are increasingly cramped and inefficient. We are unable to meet the many needs and expectations of our current visitors and beneficiaries and our potential to attract and cater to additional visitors, learners and event attendees is severely limited.

We are planning the redevelopment and regeneration of our existing buildings to create a sustainable future. Our focus is to remain relevant as a physic garden, as a charity, and to become a first-class cultural attraction.



Our place in Chelsea

As well as our own small site, we are working with the neighbouring National Army Museum and Royal Hospital, and in collaboration with Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to establish a ‘Cultural Quarter’. This initiative will promote the Garden, and other ‘hidden assets’ of Chelsea, to new audiences.



Protecting our Collections

Our Glasshouses restoration has left us with a better understanding of our entire plant collections. We can now develop a plan to accurately map, document, list, and label accessioned plant collections as part of our regular plant management plans.

We will be exploring how we can share more of the information from our IrisBG plant records database with the visiting public, on our website and through other channels.



Becoming sustainable

We have had greater impact by becoming more community facing and open, physically, and socially. Now we need to stay relevant and become more environmentally sustainable. A new sustainability plan will start with looking at our whole site – as a ‘permaculture’ – and attempt to address some of the UN Sustainability Goals. This will involve many new initiatives, not least the thoughtful use of natural resources, especially water and irrigation.

The redevelopment of our buildings will be undertaken with a regenerative approach and aim to meet the highest possible standards of sustainability to future proof the Garden.

Major Funders & Governance

Chelsea Physic Garden is fortunate to have the support of a number of charitable trusts and foundations together with many individuals who make donations to help us care for and share the Garden. Our thanks go to all the supporters who make our work possible.

Major Donors included:

BAND Trust
Cadogan Charity
City Bridge Trust
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
Dr Martin Schoernig
Finnis Scott Foundation
Hobson Charity Ltd
James & Shirley Sherwood Foundation
Jill Hood Estate
John Armitage Charitable Trust
John Browne Charitable Trust
John Lyon's Charity
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Olwen McPherson Trust
Rick Mather and David Scrase Foundation
RUB White Charitable Trust
Sloane Stanley LLP
And all of those who donated to our Big Give Christmas Challenge, which raised funds to support the Garden's learning and engagement programmes.

Governance

The Directors and members of the Board (who also act as Trustees for the Charitable Activities of The Chelsea Physic Garden Company) who served during 2022 were:

Colin Chisholm
Alan Dempsey
Paul Gray
Sukie Hemming
Dr Helen Charman
Anna Jobson
Tony Kirkham
The Hon Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd
Todd Longstaffe-Gowan
Simon Major
Michael McGonigle
Quoc-Nghi Nguyen
Michael Prideaux
Dr Philippa Simpson
Sarah Speller
Dr Paul Thompson
Anna Valle
Andrew Woodward
Sue Medway (Company Secretary)

The Garden is supported by a small team of staff and an active growing cohort of volunteers. A list of staff is available at: www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/about/trustees-staff
The contribution to Chelsea Physic Garden by its staff and volunteers is immense. Their enthusiasm, engagement, and active support is greatly appreciated.

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