

# The Walled Garden

Newsletter of the Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden



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## A Warmer Winter

Welcome to the winter issue and as the title suggests, it has been an unusually warm and wet winter this year. Our volunteers have continued to help develop the garden despite the soggy conditions which have proved a challenge at times. Thank goodness for the shelter offered by our shed, polytunnel and greenhouse. After some successful grant applications however, we are looking forward to being able to provide more shelters for the hotter sunny conditions to come. Read on for more information.

We have had another successful run of fund-raising events over the festive season which has brought in welcome income to be reinvested in the garden. Our thanks to all our volunteers and participants who made it possible.

Membership renewal reminders were sent out in January but anyone can join throughout the year. We are also always happy to recruit more volunteers. More details inside.

Happy reading. We welcome feedback on the newsletter and our social media sites so please get in touch to tell us what you would like to read. Contact details are on the back page.

# Festive Fund-raising

*We were delighted to be able to run our wreath-making workshops and craft fayres again in December. These events are great fun and continue to generate valuable funds for the garden.*

## Wreath Making Workshops



*Wreath-making participants in action.*

Once again, we were able to run a series of Christmas wreath making workshops over two weekends in December. It was a lot of work but our volunteers are becoming a well-oiled machine and despite a problem with the heating on the first weekend, they ran like clockwork. Many of the participants were returners from last year but we saw many new faces too. Everyone seemed to enjoy the sessions and we received excellent feedback from participants.

We held eight sessions over two weekends; morning and afternoon Saturday and Sunday, with around 16 participants at each one. Every session was tutored by at least 2 volunteers with other helpers taking registration, providing refreshments, assisting with the wreath making itself and tidying up afterwards.



Preparation in the days and weeks leading up to the workshops involved just about everyone volunteering for the Walled Garden. Plant material had to be gathered, equipment and decorations found or bought and the venue laid out.

The events raised around £2,500 in total for the Walled Garden project, another fantastic achievement.

## More Festive Fundraising



*Above: Workshop tutors and runners.*

We would like to extend our huge thanks to everyone who contributed and made this venture such a success. To our participants, thank you for coming, the funds raised by these events really help us keep the garden going. Thanks also to Aneurin Bevan University Health Board for permission to use the Recreation Hall at Llanfrecfa Grange.

### Craft fayres

A number of Christmas craft fairs were held outside the main entrance to Grange University Hospital during December. All the items sold were hand made by our gardening volunteers and included Christmas decorations, gift sets, soft cuddly toys, and jams and chutneys. Hand knitted scarecrows were among the prize items in our 'On the day' raffles which helped to boost the funds raised.



Altogether the craft stalls raised approx £950. A big thankyou to all our crafters for their hard work and to everyone who supported us.

## Christmas Tree on the Lawn

We have triumphed again applying the principles of Reuse, Recycle and Reduce, as our Christmas tree this year came from a volunteer's back garden. It started life as a small indoor family tree, then got replanted outside. Having outgrown its space, it was felled and brought to the Walled Garden where we anchored it down in the centre of the lawn. We decorated it with donated baubles and some new lights which we hope were visible from the wards of the Grange University Hospital which overlooks the garden.

The tree survived the whole of the festive period remarkably well but has now, for its final chapter, been chopped up for firewood and shredded for topping up paths.

So next Christmas if anyone out there has another outside tree in their back garden they would like to donate, please do get in touch.



*Mike, Binca and Iestyn with their donated tree.*

# Torfaen Community Resilience Fund

**We are delighted to have been successful in this grant award which will provide improved seating and shade in the garden**

We have just been awarded a significant grant from the Torfaen Community Resilience Fund to improve the provision of seating and shade in the garden and to undertake some repairs on a small corner building. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.



Four bespoke metal benches have been commissioned from Bollard Street, a Wigan based specialist street furniture company. Over the winter volunteers have enjoyed designing the benches and deciding where they will be sited. The final designs depict flowers from the four seasons; snowdrops for winter, daffodils for spring, roses for summer, and asters for autumn. Concrete bases to support them were also set in place on rare dry days through January and February.

Looking forward to summer, the grant has also funded three large parasols to provide much needed shade from the sun. These won’t be put in place until the weather improves, but we did have fun putting them together and testing out how they work.

Hefty weights will replace the volunteers standing on the bases to ensure the brollies don’t take off in the wind!

We hope you like our seating and shade improvements and will call in frequently to admire the garden and to rest a while in our newly commissioned comfort.



*Left: after galvanising.*

*Below: Two benches in situ.*



Funded by  
UK Government  
Wedi ei ariannu gan  
Llywodraeth y DU



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

TORFAEN  
COUNTY  
BOROUGH



BWRDEISTREF  
SIROL  
TORFAEN

# Torfaen Community Resilience Fund



The grant has also funded remedial work on a little building in the corner of the garden that has a leaky roof and sticking doors. These repairs, undertaken by local builder A. P. Waters, will enable us to renovate the interior later in the year. We are planning to provide a much-needed toilet and small kitchenette for our volunteers.

We are grateful to both Bollard Street and A.P. Waters for working with us and fitting these commissions into their busy work schedules.

Our greatest thanks are of course due to Torfaen County Borough Council and the UK Government for approving our application and thus enabling these major improvements in the garden.

*Utility block, some of the repairs being made.*



## Visitor Opening Hours

The garden is open to the public every day while volunteers are working in the garden. Access is via the wrought iron gates at the north end (Grange Hospital side) and south end (Llanfrechfa Grange side).

Core opening hours are 10 a.m. to 1.30 pm, but often the garden is open either side of these times, depending on the numbers of volunteers in, which varies throughout the week.

Group visits can be accommodated by prior arrangement. Our contact details can be found on the back page.



# Volunteering News

*Our volunteers work so hard in the garden throughout the year, it was nice to be able to down tools for a while and enjoy some social get togethers over the festive season.*

## Diwali festival of lights

According to Hindu legends the Festival of Lights celebrates the demise of evil demon King Naraksura, who was killed by Lord Krishna.

The Walled Garden gang joined in the celebration organised by Sundari and Suchitra which was held in the Recreation Hall at Llanfrechfa Grange. Over 22 volunteers attended and the ladies were helped to dress in saris. Everyone was treated to a feast of samosa chaat, channa masala, aloo bonda and two desserts of kheer and karanji.

Celebrations ended with sparklers, instead of fireworks!



## Christmas party

The other key social event for volunteers was our annual Christmas lunch and quiz. Mulled apple juice on arrival was followed by a choice of soups made from veg grown in the Walled Garden accompanied by homemade bread and followed by mince pies and Welsh cakes. After the results for the quiz, Jan led a toast with a glass of fizz to thank everybody for another great year and best wishes for the year ahead.



## Become a Volunteer

Whether you have just a few hours to spare or can offer regular attendance, new volunteers over the age of 18 are welcome to join us in the garden at any time of year.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life and are a friendly bunch. A very warm welcome to our newest recruits; Doug, Robert, Judith and Mike.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering with us, please contact us at: [info.lgh.garden@gmail.com](mailto:info.lgh.garden@gmail.com)



# Membership Update

**Associate membership of the Walled Garden enables people to support the project and stay in touch with the garden's development from anywhere in the country. Joining is easy.**

## New Members Welcome

We are always open to receiving new associate members any time of year. Membership provides a regular and useful income stream for supporting the garden and is a great way to keep people informed and up to date. We currently have over 90 associate members, many of whom are already regular volunteers. However, our members come from all walks of life and from across the UK and beyond.

The annual fee is £5, renewable on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Members receive our quarterly newsletter and early bird invitations to events. They also have access to a Members Only part of our website, see below for more details.

Pick up an application form from the Walled Garden or use this link for the online version: <https://lanfrechfawalledgarden.wordpress.com/supporting-us/online-associate-membership-application-form/>



## Membership Renewals

Reminders have been sent to all our existing members. Many thanks to everyone who has responded so far. Any members not renewed by the end of January are deemed expired. If you forgot to renew and still want to be involved, please contact the Membership Secretary, Bobinca Wilson at [info.lgh.garden@gmail.com](mailto:info.lgh.garden@gmail.com) in order to be reinstated.

## Members' Portal – Keeping in Touch

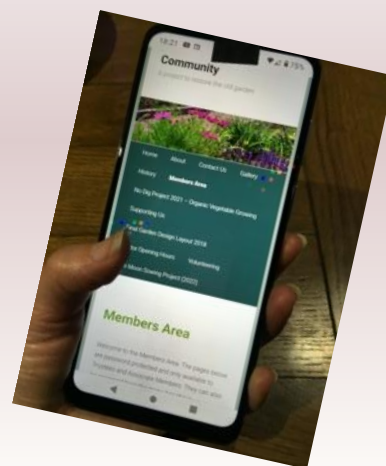
A great way for our members to stay in touch is by visiting the Members section on our main website at this link:

<https://lanfrechfawalledgarden.wordpress.com/members-area/>

Access requires a password which is sent out with the new members and renewals welcome letters. Use the Members' Portal for:

- Approved Minutes of the quarterly Trustees' meetings
- Highlight reports on what has been achieved in the last quarter and what's planned for the next period.
- Notes from garden design and planning workshops
- Learning resources such as lessons on No Dig gardening.
- Archive Minutes from original Steering group 2013-18.

If a member can't find the password information, please contact Bobinca at [info.lgh.garden@gmail.com](mailto:info.lgh.garden@gmail.com) to request a reminder.



# Local Places for Nature Award



We continue to receive a lot of support from Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) for which we are very grateful. The latest contribution was a bundle provided through their 'Local Places for Nature' scheme. It included some really useful gardening tools, a wheelbarrow, watering can, a couple of sturdy garden benches made of recycled plastic and a collection of heritage variety fruit trees. For now, the benches have been installed on the upper terrace of the south-east quadrant behind the Mediterranean garden. The fruit trees, which include apples, pears, a cherry and a plum, have been planted out in the grounds.

We have also received a top up package consisting of another bench and four pairs of bypass secateurs. Our thanks are extended to KWT.

## Contact Us

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