



Annual Report of the  
Trustees  
2015

## 1. Lindengate ... Our objectives and activities

Lindengate is a Buckinghamshire-based registered charity that offers specialised gardening activities to help those with mental health needs in their continuing recovery. **Social & Therapeutic Horticulture (STH)** is increasingly recognised as a successful method to promote health and well-being, facilitate social inclusion and offer participants access to pathways that can help them gain in self-confidence and self-esteem. By getting people out of their homes and mixing with others in an outdoor, fresh-air environment it is a catalyst to breakdown their social isolation and encourages the recovery process.

We operate from a 5-acre site adjacent to the Wyevale Garden Centre at Worlds End in Wendover, easily reached from within Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire, offering gardening/horticulture activities that enable users to spend time in a managed and calm environment, either singly or in small groups, working towards their recovery.

### Our Objective

To offer therapeutic horticultural and gardening activities to help those with mental and physical health needs to change their lives.

UK-based research shows a strong correlation between structured outdoor horticultural activities and successful rehabilitation for a wide range of mental health issues (Bibliography available). Being outdoors, in the fresh air with exercise and structured and supportive practical activities encourages recovery. Recent research from MIND and quoted in the quality national press highlights that poor mental health is expensive to society. The cost of mental health issues to the economy just in England alone is estimated to be £105 billion per year (Source: *Feel better outside, feel better inside: Ecotherapy for mental wellbeing, resilience and recovery*, MIND, 2013) and there is now a national focus on addressing mental health needs and to put these on the same footing as those given to physical health needs.

Evidence of our growing success is also reflected in the wider role Lindengate is playing in the community. We were a key note speaker at the Autism Bucks Conference 2015 and sit on three Buckinghamshire County Social Care Partnership Boards for Dementia, Mental Health and Autism.

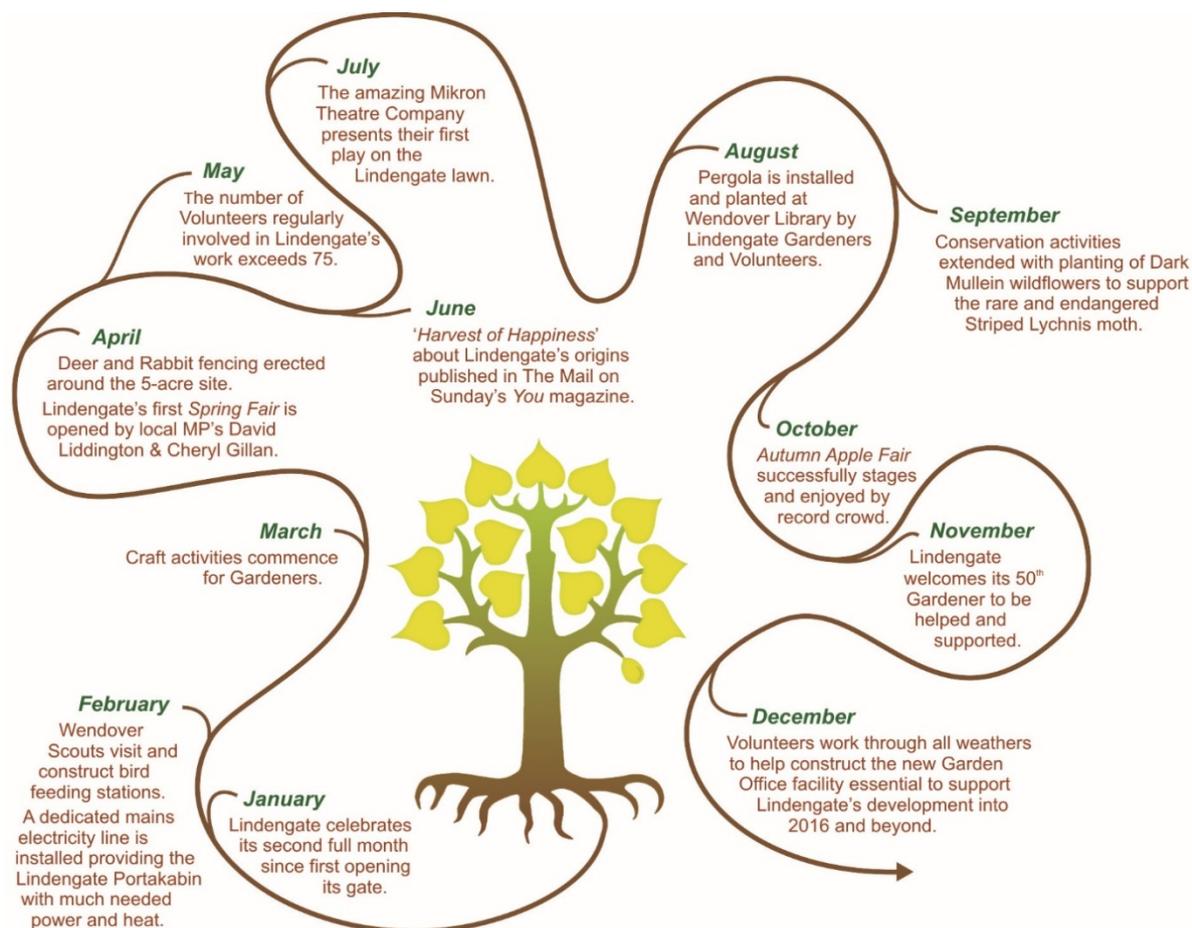
### Activities & Events

2015 has been our establishment year; a year during which the aims and objectives of the charity were launched within the community and our services and capabilities have been offered to potential service users, whom we refer to as our *Gardeners*.

During this first year of operation, Lindengate's Trustees and Management Team have sought to convert the passion and interests that founded the charity into a set of competencies that are both understood and accepted within the communities we serve so that we can attract into our care those with the mental health needs that ecotherapy can best assist. This first year has been busy, fulfilling and filled with activity during which we have learnt many lessons about what works best in

supporting our *Gardeners* and also about how to communicate and broadcast our services to the regions healthcare providers and potential client referrers.

A potted summary of 2015 is indicated below.



The range of activities that have engaged our *Gardeners* increased steadily throughout the year ...

- ♣ constructing practical objects from wood for use around the site, for example bird boxes, living wall planting displays, signage, bug hotels etc.
- ♣ allotment design, construction, planting, maintaining, harvesting and recycling;
- ♣ group activities that are structured to offer group members variable levels of co-operative working, based on their level of confidence and social awareness;
- ♣ cultivating, picking and subsequently cooking vegetables in our kitchen to be shared with others staff/volunteers/*gardeners* at a shared lunch;
- ♣ arts and craft activities ... mosaics, pottery, paper-making, sewing, knitting, collage etc.
- ♣ planting hedges as windbreaks; growing multiple varieties of potatoes; collecting seeds and growing a wild-flower meadow.

## 2. Achievements and performance - supporting our *Gardeners*

Below are set out the key achievements of 2015, showing how they benefit the individual *Gardeners*, as well as contributing to the wider benefit of society.

During 2015 Lindengate helped 54 *Gardeners*, with over 30 attending regularly from the time of their initial registration. The profile of our initial service users varies greatly: age ranging between 17 & mid-70's; conditions include neurological disabilities resulting from head injury, mental health problems (bipolar disorders, loneliness, depression, anxieties) and some with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We

have also started to receive those dealing with dementia.

### Case Study

“Simon has been attending Lindengate since November 2014. We have noticed such a positive change in him, he looks forward to coming to Lindengate. In his own words “It’s like another world”. He has shown such enthusiasm and he has had great encouragement.

It’s wonderful to see all the plans and hard work going on, with such a variety of things to do and it’s lovely environment to work in.

Alongside caring, compassionate staff and volunteers who have the *Gardener’s* best interests at heart. To be patient, kind and listen and have someone to talk to in return, and want to bring out the best potential in each individual.

To sum it up – Lindengate has the complete package, we would strongly recommend you to anyone.”

The impact of Lindengate on our *Gardeners’* lives is already becoming evident ...

♠ the parents of one young man, Simon, (see *Case Study*), who had a head injury at an early age, have told us just how delighted they are at the change in him, which extends into their home life and how much he looks forward to coming to Lindengate.

♠ Meg, a 46 year old with a bipolar disorder comments that her engagement with Lindengate volunteers and other *Gardeners* has “helped me focus on a positive, constructive activity” that has “greatly boosted my confidence and self-esteem”.

Each *Gardener* is initially assessed using the *Warwick and Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale* (WEMWBS) following which individual goals are set and tailored activities are planned by our STH advisor team. *Gardeners* are reassessed using WEMWBS every 3 months to enable progress to be recorded and to inform and adjust their individualised activities.

Our focus on *Gardener well-being*, instead of concentrating upon a medical diagnosis, distinguishes our services and fills a gap in mental health support that is evident in our target regions.

Discussions with local agencies involved with health, welfare, social need and education indicates that there is a very strong local support for our services and, in

consequence, we have seen a steady increase in referrals from GP's and other healthcare bodies as the year has progressed and our presence and impact within the community has become more noticeable.

We have also found that the whole sector of 'Carers' can benefit from coming to Lindengate, either as a form of respite care (*Caring* can create significant stress and social isolation for the Carer) or in bringing the person for whom they care to us.

**Access policy**

Users over the age of 16 are offered daily or half-day sessions between 9.30am and 4.15pm, working either in a small group or on a one-to-one basis, depending upon need. There is no time limit on attendance. There is a fee charged for each session, though bursaries may be available to support those who may otherwise have difficulty in attending.

**Volunteers**

Lindengate has attracted volunteers from across Buckinghamshire as well as some living in Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire.



By the close of the year, the number of formally registered volunteers topped the 100 mark. As an indication of just how big an impact our volunteers make during 2015 they dedicated over 10,000 hours – equal to 6 full-time members of staff!

Lindengate volunteers typically opt to provide their time and commitment into one or more of the following categories of contribution:

- ♣ Gardener Supporters - working with our *Gardeners* on either an individual or group basis supporting their structured sessions at Lindengate that are planned in advance by our STH specialists;
- ♣ Site volunteers - assisting our horticultural experts to develop and improve the growing environments on the Lindengate site and helping prepare produce for display at planned events;
- ♣ Specialist volunteers - supporting the charity with a variety of skills that include carpentry, construction techniques, training and skills development, commercial expertise, to name but a few.

Other volunteers connect with Lindengate through their participation with other volunteering groups and corporate bodies. During the year we have been grateful to receive practical help to maintain and develop our site from such groupings including:

- ♣ Vale Countryside Volunteers
- ♣ Wyevale Garden Centres Group
- ♣ The Chiltern Society
- ♣ Buckinghamshire County Council
- ♣ Talkback
- ♣ Local Rotary groups

We are deeply grateful for the friendly dedication of our many volunteers, some committing considerable amounts of their free time to support us, without whom it would be impossible to provide the level of service that we deliver.

**Supporters**

We are fortunate to have received valuable and tangible support from a number of sources that have greatly assisted the charity to establish its services and have enabled the Trustees and Management team to make and realise a number of development plans during the course of the year. Lindengate’s growth is currently dependent upon the philanthropic generosity of our supporters whom we acknowledge and thank for their interest and enthusiasm in our work.



During the year we have received support in a number of formats:

- ♣ monetary donations;
- ♣ gifts-in-kind;
- ♣ time, effort and expertise from volunteers;
- ♣ commercial advice.

Towards the end of 2015, we launched a *Supporters’* programme to enable us to access support from a broader cross-section of the local community. Though still in

***Become a Lindengate Supporter today!***

At Lindengate we support our Gardeners to manage their mental health needs through the gift of horticulture and we are blessed with a 5 acre site in Wendover where we are creating a diverse range of gardens and growing areas which is encouraging our Gardeners to blossom.

Please consider helping us and our Gardeners by becoming a *Lindengate Supporter* and making an annual donation to support our work.

**Feel connected ...**

Because we want our *Supporters* to feel a close bond to our cause and our Garden, you will receive a periodic Newsletter filled with information and pictures about Lindengate and the developments on the site. This will include our own *Top Tips* prepared by Lindengate’s Horticulturists to help you apply that professional touch to your own plants and growing spaces. As a *Supporter* you will have a special attachment to the work we are doing and, most importantly, you’ll know that your subscription is directly helping a Gardener to benefit from the therapeutic effects of nature and gardening.



Become a *Lindengate Supporter* for only **£2** per month

**Since we opened our Garden in November 2014, we have achieved a great deal. With your support, we can achieve so much more.**

For more information, please contact a member of our team or email us at [info@lindengate.org.uk](mailto:info@lindengate.org.uk)



**LINDENGATE**  
[www.lindengate.org.uk](http://www.lindengate.org.uk)  
 Registered Charity No. 1153868

its infancy, the ***Lindengate Supporter*** scheme allows us to maintain a flow of news and information about our work and progress to our supporters in exchange for a small and regular donation.

We will promote the *Supporters* programme at public events that we attend throughout the calendar year and also

through our website.

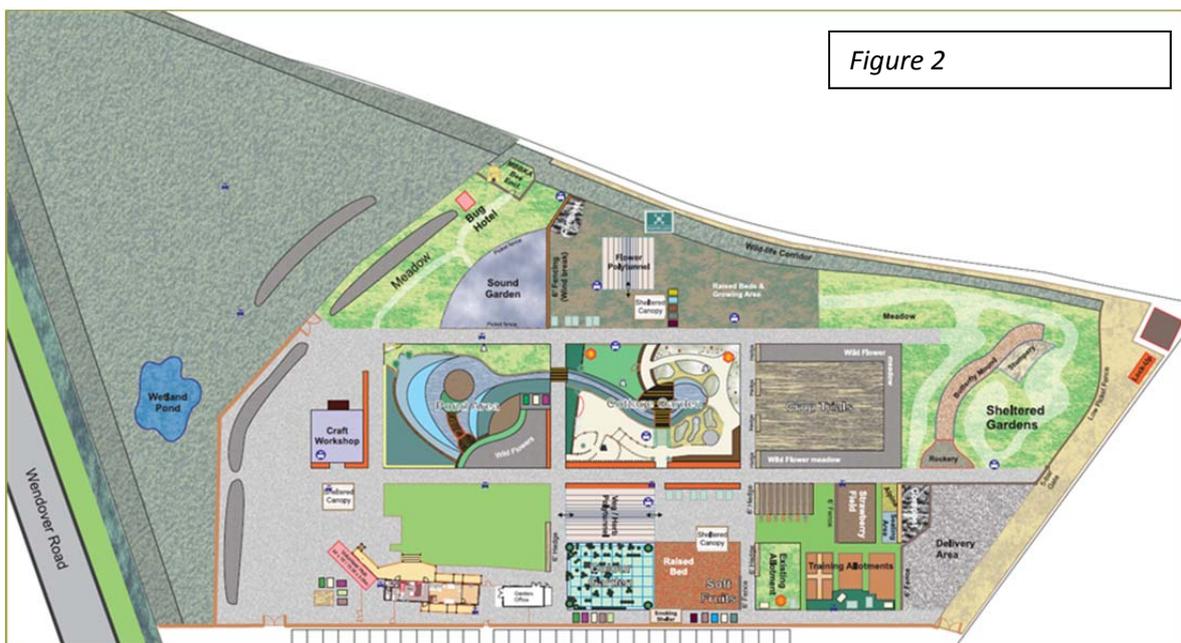
We owe special acknowledgement to our growing body of corporate supporters whose practical expertise and resources have enabled us to make significant step changes to our site facilities and operational processes.

## Forward focus and development

Starting in 2014 with the acquisition of a lease on our 5 acre site at Worlds End near Wendover, the early focus of our Trustees and Management team was towards the establishment of a safe and appropriate place within which our Social and Therapeutic services could be realised. The initial tasks of clearing the site of shoulder high weeds, zoning and fencing the area, establishing basic welfare and operational facilities were all-consuming.



The Wendover site is now largely fit for purpose and whilst we have exciting and ambitious plans for its further development (see *figure 2*), we are now ready to evolve the emphasis from creation of a facility towards the fulfilment of a mission. This means that priority will be given towards initiatives and projects that are directly beneficial to the needs of *Gardeners* providing them with the opportunity to take on responsibilities, and see the results of their input. This *Gardener*-centric approach will see our work range from the provision of horticultural based activities tailored to our clients' needs through to the delivery of our ***Through the Gate*** programme with structured educational support for *Gardeners* in the final stages of their recovery that can lead to paid employment and increased independence and well-being.



our plans and aspirations for projects in 2016 include:

- **Wheelchair-friendly pathways ...**

This is a major challenge and is now an urgent requirement if we are to extend our reach towards those most in need of our services, for example those dealing with dementia or those with neurological conditions.

- **Irrigation channels ...**

During our first year of operation, our horticultural teams made use of a rudimentary water distribution network that operated at a low water pressure and was intolerant to shared water usage. Consequently, we were obliged to spend many hours through the last summer watering our plants by hand.

We have now secured a dedicated water mains supply and must dig channels and lay a new irrigation network with stand pipes before the next warm spell arrives.

- **Special garden zones ...**

Our site development plan (see *figure 2*) calls for the establishment of tailored garden environments that can stimulate the senses, pond area; soft fruits and raised beds.

- **Soil improvement ...**

The Worlds End site is 'blessed' with a heavy clay surface that complicates drainage and quality growing. The planned construction in 2016 of our pond area will go some way towards relieving the accumulation of water during the wet seasons; however, we recognise that the purchase and distribution of quality top-soil is essential.

## **Communications**

A new website was developed and implemented and due thanks go to Matt Phillips for his tireless work in making it much crisper and user-friendly.

A significant amount of publicity was gained through a four-page article in the 'Sunday Mail' colour supplement about our Co-founders and their vision for Lindengate.

An article about Lindengate appeared in the magazine of 'Thrive' the national umbrella charity for Social & Therapeutic Horticulture in the UK.

## **Health, safety and welfare**

There were no reportable accidents during the year. All minor incidents and welfare issues were handled appropriately and in line with procedures. The Trustees compliment the staff on their handling of such sensitive issues.

## **Managing risk**

There are appropriate policies and procedures in place and the free assessment services of Markel, our insurer, were used to good effect.

### 3. Financial Review

The financial year is a calendar year. The Charity Commission's appropriate 'Statement of Recommended Practice' (SORP) is adopted and used in conjunction with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102).

Income for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 was £95,189. Expenditure in the same period was £105,377. No funds were held as reserves.

Fee income from 'Gardeners was £24,446. Bursary funds were used to support Gardeners in difficult financial circumstances and these totalled £3,112 in the year.

#### Reserves Policy

When financing allows it is the policy of the Trustees to build up reserves and hold funds equivalent to three months of operating costs.

#### Fund-raising and Grant Awards

A total of £66,604 was raised from grant awards and donations.

Significant income was raised in the year with grant awards from:

- ♣ Wendover Parish Council
- ♣ Lionel Abel-Smith Trust
- ♣ Geoff & Fiona Squire Foundation
- ♣ King/Cullimore Trust
- ♣ Heart of Bucks
- ♣ Rothschild Foundation
- ♣ Nordson UK
- ♣ Community Leaders Fund
- ♣ Paradigm Foundation

In addition, significant donations were made by:

St Mary's Wendover, St Nicholas's, Chearsley, Rotary Club of Aylesbury, Womens Institute, Aylesbury Lions, Loaf and Larder and iLECSYS, a local electrical business, making a generous monthly donation.

### 4. Structure, governance and management

#### Trustees

At the beginning of 2015 the Trustees were:

- Phil Chattle (Chair)
- Angela Cattermole
- Michael Chattle
- Peter Louis
- David Medcalf.

During the year **Anton Wellenreiter**, **Bill Oldridge** and **Alex Noall** joined as Trustees, adding private sector, social care and accounting experience respectively. All Trustees gave of their time freely and no remuneration or expenses were paid.

The Trustees are responsible for the overall management and control of Lindengate. They meet regularly throughout the year, with a minimum of two meetings a year.

The Trustees require a range and depth of experience when carrying out their role.

Lindengate recruits locally, through community groups and provider organisations as well as local advertising. Though passion is the primary requirement the Trustees look for the following skills and experience:

- ♣ Social care experience
- ♣ Horticulture experience
- ♣ Education experience
- ♣ Disability needs experience
- ♣ Senior business experience
- ♣ Financial/accounting experience.

There is the expectation that there will be gender mix as well as of age. The current age range is 26 – 70+.

### **Management Committee**

The work of implementing policy was undertaken through the Management Committee of Lindengate.

This comprised of the Trustees plus employees and met regularly throughout the year.

### **Training**

Training is provided to all volunteers, employees and Trustees appropriate to the need.

Significant training of volunteers and staff was undertaken in 2015, reflecting the sensitivity, confidentiality and the personal needs of Gardeners. This was run at two levels, with 'Tier 1' training for all volunteers and 'Tier 2' for those volunteers working directly with our 'Gardeners'. DBS checks are undertaken for all employees and volunteers.

### **Employees**

During the year a further two part-time posts were created, giving a total of five, plus one voluntary post:

- Charlie Powell (Co-founder & Site and Horticultural Manager)
- Siân Chattle (Co-founder & Service User Manager)
- Diane Kolonko (Volunteer Co-ordinator)
- Jane Gellatly (Administration Manager)
- Chloe Sastry (STH Co-ordinator)
- Alix Morgan/nee Daly (Specialist/OT advisor).

The average monthly headcount was 6 staff and the average number of full-time equivalent employees was 2.59.

In addition we benefitted from a 12-week Occupational Therapy student placement from Oxford Brookes University.

### **Patron and key supporters**

As our Patron, The Bishop of Buckingham, The Right Reverend Dr. Alan Wilson continued his sterling support, including hosting (with his wife Lucy's strong support) our successful annual Garden Party thanking our volunteers and supporters plus his 'behind the scenes' support.

The continuing support of local MPs' David Lidington (Aylesbury) and Cheryl Gillan (Amersham) proved to be of invaluable help.

## **5. Reference & administrative details**

Name:	Lindengate
Address:	The Old Allotment Site, next to Wyevale Garden Centre, Aylesbury Road, Wendover, Buckinghamshire HP22 6BF
Reg. address:	15, Boddington Road, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6HY
Telephone:	01296 622 443
Email:	<a href="mailto:info@lindengate.org.uk">info@lindengate.org.uk</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.lindengate.org.uk">www.lindengate.org.uk</a>
Social media	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/lindengategardening">www.facebook.com/lindengategardening</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/Lindengate">https://twitter.com/Lindengate</a> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/lindengate">www.linkedin.com/company/lindengate</a>
Legal status:	Registered as a CIO charity No. 1153868
Constitution:	Constitution dated 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2013
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank, Market Square, Aylesbury
Insurers:	Markel (UK) Ltd.

## **Summary**

The Trustees consider 2015 to have been an outstanding success and pay tribute to all the hard work and dedication of the staff, volunteers and supporters.

Lindengate is now recognised as a professionally-run organisation able to provide much-needed services for those with mental health needs and with expanding capabilities and innovative ideas for the future.

Lindengate will be a major player in STH in the UK in the years ahead.

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Phil Chattle

Chair of Trustees