

Annual Review 2015

the friends
of Westonbirt
Arboretum



Welcome to the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum Annual Review for 2015. The aim of this review is to enable you, our members, to be able to understand the charity's financial position at a glance, as well as reflecting on what we achieved with your support.

Of course, if you want to find out more, you can always read the full Annual Report and Accounts of the charity which are available at fowa.org.uk.

Much of what the Friends has achieved to date couldn't have happened without the generous support of our members. Since 1985 our members and supporters have helped us to contribute over £8m to the National Arboretum at Westonbirt – a really fantastic achievement. I would also like to recognise the significant contribution of trustees and the sound leadership of Stephen Segar

OBE. However we can't afford to be complacent; it is likely that the arboretum will need increasing support from the charity in the future. To support the Forestry Commission at Westonbirt to strengthen the arboretum's sustainability, we look forward to growing our membership and further developing our fundraising capacity. Through your continuing support, the charity will build on its ability to contribute to Westonbirt and remain a true friend of our National Arboretum.

Thank you
Mike Mintram
Chair of Trustees

£1.595m

Total income

£809k

MEMBERSHIP

OUR MEMBERSHIP INCREASED TO OVER 27,700 FRIENDS

£125k

OTHER INCOME

THIS INCLUDES £56K FROM GREAT OAK HALL LETTINGS AND OVER £30K FROM TREE AND BENCH ADOPTIONS

£31k

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

WE RECEIVED A FURTHER INSTALMENT OF THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE STIHL TREETOP WALKWAY

£630k

DONATIONS

WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE DONATIONS WE RECEIVED. THANK YOU! AND WE WERE ABLE TO CLAIM OVER £150K IN GIFT AID THANKS TO THOSE SUPPORTERS WHO 'TICKED THE BOX'



2015 was a busy year for the project, with the fundraising target of £1.9m achieved for The Wolfson Tree Management Centre, the Mess Building and the STIHL Treetop Walkway, thanks to support from trusts, grant-making organisations, corporate sponsors and individual donors.

Construction for the three Phase 2 structures got underway. 2015 saw The Wolfson Tree Management Centre, the Mess Building and the STIHL Treetop Walkway begin to take shape. All 57 timber legs of the walkway were positioned, creating the silhouette for the new addition to Westonbirt.

Whilst building works got underway, we also continued with Phase I delivery, including the longer-term elements funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund:

£1.774m Total expenditure

£994k

WESTONBIRT PROJECT
THE FRIENDS GIFTED THIS MONEY TO THE WESTONBIRT PROJECT THROUGH ITS FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY AND FROM OUR OWN FINANCIAL RESOURCES
(Including funds received in previous years)

£85k

WESTONBIRT MAGAZINE
WE CONTINUED TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AND INFORM OUR MEMBERS THROUGH OUR QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

£378k

ARBORETUM SUPPORT
WE WERE ABLE TO SUPPORT WORK INCLUDING: TREE MANAGEMENT, LEARNING & INTERPRETATION, VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND VISITOR SERVICES

£317k

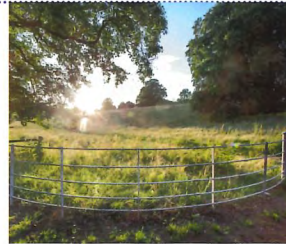
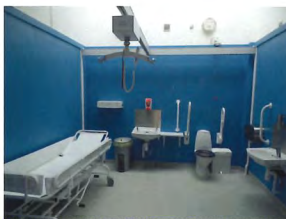
OTHER OPERATING COSTS
THESE INCLUDE STAFF SALARIES, GREAT OAK HALL COSTS, GOVERNANCE AND OTHER RUNNING COSTS, INCLUDING FUNDRAISING COSTS

The income and expenditure figures were extracted from the full audited and unqualified accounts for the year ended December 31st 2015. Copies of the accounts can be obtained from fowa.org.uk or by applying to the Friends' office. The annual accounts have been submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House.



The newly developed TreeQuest App was launched to provide an exciting way for technophiles to engage with trees and undertake a series of challenges, reaching over 1000 downloads in its first few months.

A 'Changing Places' toilet/changing room was created to improve facilities for disabled visitors. The new facility has already received great feedback about the positive difference it is making.



Restoration of the Grade I listed Downs area continued, with work being undertaken to restore the boundaries (ha has and iron railings) to their original Victorian glory, as well as encouraging biodiversity on the Downs themselves.

A wide range of community inclusion activities took place on and off site. This enabled a greater number of people from under-represented groups to experience the arboretum and connect with trees. Since the start of 2014 we have engaged with over 100 young people, vulnerable adults and older people.

A flavour of what we achieved in 2015 – with your support!

An army of volunteers

The Friends' support enabled **248** volunteers to provide over **23,000** hours of support to the arboretum in almost every area of activity. Volunteers helped to: lead around **270** guided walks for **2,800** visitors; propagate **4,000** seeds, cuttings, saplings and plants; engage with almost **35,000** participants through school visits and family activities; take **66%** of membership subscriptions at the welcome desk. Most of the volunteers are also members. **Thank you!**

Learning something new every day

Funding from the Friends helped to pay for the family events, seasonal trail leaflets, guided walks and site interpretation. All these elements improve the visitor experience and help people to learn more about the important role trees play in our climate. The Friends contributed **£72k** to learning and interpretation in 2015.

Tomorrow's arboretum

Approximately **300** trees were planted at Westonbirt in 2014/15 planting season – all home-grown here at the arboretum by our skilled and experienced propagator – ensuring that in the years to come the Westonbirt landscape will be as beautiful, diverse and unique as it is today. The Friends provided **£84k** of funding for the Tree Team in 2015.

Tomorrow's arborists

Further Friends' funding of **£16k** supports a new student arborist each year, who works alongside Westonbirt's experienced Tree Team. This ensures that knowledge and expertise is passed on to the next generation of arborists who will look after the nation's natural heritage.

International partnerships

£5k funding from the Friends enabled a member of the Tree Team to undertake a seed collection trip to the West Coast of the USA in 2015, in partnership with staff from Oxford University (Harcourt Arboretum) and Bedgebury, The National Pinetum. The aim of the trip was to collect wild seeds from key species, including some rare and endangered species, in their natural habitat to propagate here at the arboretum, as well as contributing to the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place. These activities enhance the biodiversity of the collection at Westonbirt and also contribute to global scientific research.

Nature: restored

Funding for the Westonbirt Project contributed to the restoration of part of the Grade I listed Downs, providing a haven for wildlife. The 2015 survey of the Downs recorded **60** species of flora and fauna, and a threefold increase in the number of species found in any given area since the 2012 survey.

The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum

The charity was set up in 1985 by a small group of friends who were passionate to do more for the arboretum. Their ethos is at the heart of what we do today through our wider community of members, volunteers and supporters. The charity gives financial and practical support to the management and development of Westonbirt, The National Arboretum.

With your continued support, we can do so much more...

Whether volunteering, giving financial or other support or simply renewing your membership, you can be part of ensuring that Westonbirt's local, national and international significance as a truly remarkable collection of trees is assured for the future.


the friends
of Westonbirt
Arboretum
Registered Charity 293190

Patron HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum
Westonbirt, The National Arboretum
Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QS

Registered Charity 293190.
Registered Company 4965522.

fowa.org.uk



Forestry Commission woodlands have been certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council®

