

ELFORD HALL GARDEN PROJECT

It's been another good year for the project – well supported by our willing volunteers, Friends of the Walled Garden and all those who visit throughout the year. A big thank you to everyone who made donations to the Project. This income enables us to meet everyday expenses and keep the gardens freely open to all who want to visit.

One of the biggest challenges achieved over the past 12 months has been the restoration of the 19th century farm wagon which was used at Home Farm up until around 1950. By the time it came to the garden in 2011, it no longer rolled due to serious weather damage and looked to be in such a sad state, that it was beyond repair. Thanks to the efforts of Dave Watton and his supporting volunteers, it is now fully restored and is due for its first outing at the Howard School for the May Queen celebrations on 17th May this year. Just by chance, this is exactly 100 years since the first celebration was held, possibly using the same wagon.

All the allotments are let to people both from the village and nearby and continue to provide a plentiful supply of organic fruit and vegetables – much appreciated during these times of unprecedented food price increases. Surplus produce from the volunteer's allotments continues to be sold from the produce table in return for a donation to the project.

The annual cider production from the apples and pears grown in the orchard has now become a well-established ritual and again, sales provide a healthy income for the project. We have had many favourable comments on its taste and alcoholic strength!

The sensory garden is undergoing a major revamp, following a difficult winter when many of the non-native plant species were lost. You will see the ongoing work by the volunteers next time you visit.

Also in the past year, the British Canoe Union have confirmed the official recognition of our location as a river access point for their waymarked canoe trail.

We're delighted to now have Vicky & Vinney's Harley's truck at the gardens most weekends and Bank holidays. Freshly brewed coffee and teas are available, and they donate 10% of their takings to the project. They have also both generously donated their time to producing a new website for the project, which they maintain and keep updated.

Thanks go to Gavin Cox for the many years he has helped keep the gardens secure overnight. He can now take a well-deserved rest as new electrically operated vehicle gates have been fitted. They operate on a timing system and currently remain open between 8am and 10pm. These times will change throughout the year, according to daylight hours. Pedestrian access is always open.

THE TRUSTEES