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# The Walled Garden

Newsletter of the Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden



## Greetings from the Garden

Welcome to the Summer 2024 issue of the Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden newsletter.

The development of the garden continues with further improvements to the paths and borders and two new water features to bring another level of sensory experience. Visitors have also been enjoying welcome shade provided by our new parasols all around the garden. In this issue you can also read about our most recent events and projects.

Join us for our AGM on August 12<sup>th</sup>, which this year includes a guest lecture on growing hydrangeas. Please note the last-minute change of venue. The forecast is unsettled so we have decided to decamp to the Grange University Hospital for our presentation and will return to the garden for refreshments if it is dry. Details are on page 9.

We have continued our new feature on “top tips” and hope readers find these interesting. Please get in contact and let us know what you enjoy reading about.

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## Around the Garden

*Here's a roundup of what's been happening in different parts of the garden, from new water features in the Reflective and Wildlife gardens, to improving access to the kitchen garden and new ways to invite visitors to enjoy the space.*

### The Reflective Garden



At last, the gentle bubbling sound of water falling over stones that was envisaged by the planning group a very, very long time ago, is connected and working in the Reflective Garden.

The fountain and pump were funded with a grant from Croesyceiliog and Llanyravon Community Council. A spur to the planned site was laid in when we did the original excavations for water and electrics around the garden. We then had some very sound advice from a delightful and very helpful chap at the Kenchester Water Gardens shop just outside Hereford, followed by a long wait before we found a suitable rock stack.

We purchased a pump and reservoir with a metal grid. A couple of volunteers dug a very large hole for the reservoir and then electricians from the Health Board wired in the outdoor sockets for us.



The local bird population has already found and approved the set up - hopefully it will also attract some amphibians to help deal with the slugs!



### Garden games on the Lawn

On our 'Have a Grow' day in June we provided a range of games for people to play. These proved very popular, so we have left two of the bigger ones out on the lawn for the summer.

It has been great seeing so many staff and visitors enjoying playing Ladder Golf and Corn Toss, both quite competitive games! These games are both robust and smart, having been made by one of our volunteers from donated and scrap materials.

### The Wildlife Garden

Like that old chestnut about buses coming in threes, we waited ages to get our water feature installed and now we have another! We were delighted to receive this little fountain from the Health Board chaplain which is now installed in the wildlife garden. You can find it, or hear it, tinkling by the southwest wall. Look out for dragonflies coming in for a drink.



## Around the Garden

### The Kitchen Garden



The perimeter path around the veg plots have finally been levelled and top dressed with scalpings. It is now possible to get right round the kitchen garden with a pram or wheelchair and it was all done just in time for our annual 'Have a Grow' day!

The vegetable plots have been slow to get going this season, many crops like beans and peas, just failed to germinate well leaving us with depleted stock and some feeble seedlings. Now the weather has at last warmed up, things are improving and we have more produce to harvest.

We are often asked by visitors, what we do with the produce. Some goes on the barrow to sell to visitors, while some is used for our volunteer social get-togethers, such as salads or sweetcorn for the BBQ. All proceeds go back to supporting the garden.

Unfortunately, we do not produce enough to supply the hospital or sell commercially and the hospital catering is outsourced anyway.

### Time to sow winter salad

Over the last few years, we have had quite successful crops of winter salads, which we grow in the polytunnel. The time to start sowing for this is end of August, early September. We will start our seeds in module trays and when they are a healthy size, transplant them into the growing beds in the polytunnel. There is usually a bit of an overlap with the end of the tomato plants, so this does sometimes require a bit of negotiation!

Good crops to overwinter are 'true' spinach, mustards, salad rocket, lamb's lettuce and oriental greens. We have also had good harvests from 'Marvel of the Seasons' and 'Winter Density' lettuces.



### We're on the Map!

It is surprising how many people walk right past the Walled Garden without realising we're there, even Google didn't recognise us!

We have finally got round to telling Google where we are, so now we can be found on Google Maps.

We have also identified our location on the what3words app. The central circle is soft.blitz.trades. Just put <https://w3w.co/soft.blitz.trades> into your web browser and our location will come up with options to navigate there via Google Maps, Bing Maps or other location finders.



# Have a Grow Day 2024

*Our annual “Have a Grow” open day is part of a UK wide celebration of community gardening with Social Farms and Gardens. This is the second year that the event has also been part of Eden Project’s “Month of Community”.*



Our “Have a Grow’ day is now a standing annual event in the Walled Garden calendar.

This year it took place on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June and once again we were blessed with fine weather and a great turn out of supporters.

As usual we set out stalls selling a range of our wares, grown, crafted or gathered by volunteers, including plants, fruit and veg, crafts and preserves, a book stall, tombola and raffle.

The terrible spring weather meant many seeds had failed to germinate and we had lots of people asking for bean plants, courgettes and other veg they had been unable to get started. Those conditions affected us too so we were short on supply. Our rhubarb had done well though and the harvest flew off the shelf!

There were lots of activities for our visitors too. The Propagation Station provided demonstrations and information on how to grow and propagate plants, with ideas and hands on opportunities for both adults and children.





Children got involved in making shell pictures in sand, pebble painting, colouring in and bug hunting. A new innovation for this year was the provision of a range of traditional games for all the family which we set out on the apron of grass outside the West gate.

In the Reflective Garden, visitors could watch members of the Wales Society of Botanical Illustrators, painting flowers and specimen plants from the garden.



And last but not least, of course we also provided refreshments including lots of homemade cake which always goes down well with visitors.

Our thanks to all the volunteers for their hard work making the day run smoothly.

Thanks also to everyone who came along for the day. We hope you all had a great time, we certainly received lots of lovely compliments during and after the event. We raised about £2,500 which will all go towards the ongoing development and maintenance of the garden.

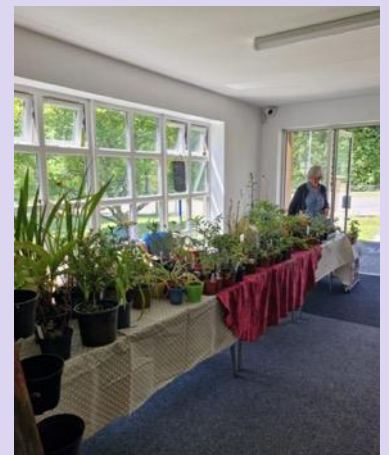
Hope to see you back next year!



## Tasty not Wasty - A New Collaboration

Later in June, we were pleased to support a family fun day held by 'Tasty Not Wasty' (TNW) in the Llanyrafon Methodist Church. We took along plants, produce and craft items which raised more valuable funds for the garden.

TNW is a not-for-profit group that aims to reduce food waste by collecting and redistributing foodstuffs from a variety of sources that would otherwise go to landfill. They also sell fresh produce and cooked meals on a 'pay as you feel' basis through their community fridge and coffee mornings. You can find out more about them at their website: <https://www.tastynotwasty.co.uk/>



## Supporting Us

*The Walled Garden is run as a registered charity and depends on its dedicated volunteers, unpaid charitable trustees and associate members to generate income and keep the garden going. Here's how you can get involved.*

### Volunteers needed

Can you spare some of your time to help us achieve our aims?

- The Garden is open every day 10am to 1.30 pm and often longer.
- Helping in the garden varies from physical work such as digging and planting to more gentle tasks like sowing seeds or making teas and coffees.
- If you can come for a few hours or just one, we can always find something for you to do!
- If you can't come to the Garden, could you help in other ways? e.g. events, fundraising, social media.
- You don't need to have green fingers, just a keen attitude!
- Volunteers get to meet like-minded people and can work individually or in groups and as you can see from these pages, we manage to have lots of fun too.

To find out more, please contact our Volunteering Secretary, Sundari, at email: [info.lgh.garden@gmail.com](mailto:info.lgh.garden@gmail.com) or pop into the garden during opening hours to speak to any of our Trustees or regular volunteers.



### Or Become a Member

Associate members pay an annual fee of £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 where more information, updates and learning resources are shared.

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.

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

### Welcome Newby

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest volunteer Nathan.



## Volunteering News

*Volunteering with us is a great way to get outdoors and meet new people and as we show here, it's not all work and no play, our volunteers enjoy some RnR too.*

### Summer Barbecue plus

Our summer barbecue held in July, is a great way for volunteers to meet each other as many of us come in on different days. Social events also offer an opportunity to relax and enjoy the garden with time to walk around and really see how everything is doing.

This year's event was our biggest yet with around 35 people attending. The usual fare of burgers, sausages and veggie equivalents were accompanied by salad produce from our own kitchen garden. Even the summer pudding used blackcurrants from the garden this year.

The summer barbie and Christmas party are organised by the Trustees but increasingly we are delighted to see groups of volunteers organising additional gatherings themselves. These include birthday celebrations, visits to other gardens (see feature below) and learning activities such as a curry cookery class and *en plein air* art lessons. It's what makes this a Community Garden after all.



### Volunteers Visit to National Botanic Garden of Wales

A number of our volunteers recently organised a trip to the National Botanic Garden of Wales in Carmarthen. The visit inspired them with the many varieties of plants grown there and sparked some ideas for the Walled Garden. In particular, they liked their use of structures made from large branches for climbers and vegetables to give height and also some metal archways used for climbers and vegetables.

Speaking to some of the gardeners on site, they were also interested to discover they print their own plant labels, something that might work for us too.

They also have a Gruffalo trail to encourage children into the garden. Find out more at:

<https://botanicgarden.wales/garden-areas/gruffalo-trail/>



## Top Tips - Save Your Own Seed



Our volunteer Bridget has collected seeds from the Walled Garden over the last couple of years for us to sell and use to replenish our stocks. It's a great way to save money on plants. If you want to have a go, here are some of Bridget's top tips:

1. Don't pick seeds too early, make sure they are well developed and mature.
2. Pick seeds heads on a dry day, ideally following 2/3 days of dry weather.
3. Leave a long stem if possible, this allows the seed head to be placed upside down in a paper bag, so that the seed can drop freely to the bottom. Don't forget to label and date.
4. Keep seed collection bags for at least 2 weeks to allow this to happen. Bags should be kept in a dry and airy place, out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources.
5. Have a supply of glass jars with lids or envelopes to store your seeds, making sure the seeds are completely dry before storing.
6. When the seeds are completely dry, take a large piece of paper and tip the seeds out onto this, removing any debris with tweezers. Then crease the paper into a funnel and tip into your jars or envelopes.
7. Remember to label each seed container with the date of collection as well. Keep out of direct light and store in a cool dry place.
8. If you have any small bags of silica granules, pop one in each container too. This will help absorb any remaining damp in the seeds.



### Keep them clean and sharp

A number of our volunteers recently took part in a couple of tool maintenance workshops run by Thom Board, from Keep Wales Tidy. Participants were shown how to clean and sharpen hoes, spades, secateurs and other garden tools using a host of files, leathers and oil. Thom explained how to use each to achieve best effect and emphasised that regular maintenance extends the life of every tool, and importantly, makes using them in the garden so much easier and more effective. We have subsequently invested in a new tool maintenance kit and expect it to be put to good use!

## GUEST LECTURE & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden* (Charity reg. 1176172)

Monday 12th August 2024, start at 2pm  
Seminar Room 7, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Grange University Hospital,  
Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran, NP44 8YN

### Hydrangeas - a gentle obsession



Guest Speaker – Roger, co-owner of Highfield Farm Garden,  
winner of ‘The Nation’s Favourite Garden in Wales and The  
Marches’

This year we embark on a new initiative for our AGM by offering a free guest lecture for attendees followed by light refreshments. There will also be a range of plants and produce for sale (cash preferred). All proceeds go towards the on-going development and maintenance of the garden.

**All welcome. Free entry.**

## Daily Opening Hours

The Walled Garden is open to the public every day while volunteers are working in the garden.

Our core opening hours are 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 pm but we are often there for longer.

Group visits welcome by prior arrangement. Please contact us via Facebook or email [info.lgh.garden@gmail.com](mailto:info.lgh.garden@gmail.com)



# Green Flag Award 2024



We are delighted that our application for a Green Flag was successful again this year, our 6th in a row!

The Green Flag scheme sets a benchmark for the volunteer management of outdoor green spaces around the world. Administered in Wales by 'Keep Wales Tidy' our application was scrutinised by an independent panel of judges against a number of criteria. These assess if the garden offers a welcoming, healthy, safe and well maintained space, practices good environmental management including composting, recycling, upcycling, and waste reduction, and involves and engages with its local and wider community.

Well done and huge thanks to all our volunteers, visitors and followers. Thanks to you we ticked all the boxes!

Follow this link for more information about the Award: <https://keepwalestidy.cymru/our-work/awards/green-flag-parks/green-flag-community-award/>



## Contact Us

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Website: <https://llanfrechfawalledgarden.wordpress.com/>



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