

Breathing Space Coventry

Annual Report for March 2023 – Feb 2024

The objects of the Charity are:

To benefit the public in Coventry and the surrounding areas, in particular but not exclusively through the holding of day retreats, and by providing opportunities for growth in contemplative prayer for those wishing to worship and/or explore the Christian faith.

Trustees:

Lois Baldwin, Dagmer Dias, John Kirkman, Crystal Kofie (chair), Alison Lawn, Ann O’Sullivan, Peter Sidebotham (till 09/23), Andrew Gilham (from August 2024).

OVERVIEW

During 2023 Breathing Space Coventry was again able to offer a continuous sacred space open to the public. Word of mouth and the website presence continue to do their task of bringing to this space those in need of refreshment and quiet. Over the summer having Ellie Rose as artist-in-residence meant that a completely new group of users visited on several creative days and then later in the year for creative retreats. From September residential retreats were no longer offered, given other uses of the upstairs single room.

Breathing Space Coventry welcomed new host – wardens, Chris and Grahame Edmonds in September 2023 and farewelled Peter and Lois at the beginning of October. The transition went smoothly with kind support of trustees, especially Alison and Ann. Trustees and Peter and Lois are very grateful for the Edmonds interest and engagement with Breathing Space and wish them well in their retirement from April 2024.

Donations come regularly from users, many giving generously through the website so as to attract Gift Aid additions, and from standing order commitments of Friends of Breathing Space. From September, a QR code has been available at Grahame’s initiative.

We again welcomed around 200 local people for the Allesley Festival Garden Walks in early July. Rob has been a regular garden helper through the year and later in the year. Chris Hitchcock and Julie & Dennis (all near neighbours) started helping – and since October these four have been responsible for all of the garden tasks, with Chris H giving valuable expert oversight. Attention has been required to boundary hedges and trees, and a new fence constructed on the western boundary.

We greatly appreciate the two years that Crystal has served as chair and wish her well in the coming year. Thank you to John Kirkman, now chair of trustees. We were glad to welcome

a new trustee during the year: Andrew Gilham, who had been using BSC personally for some months and his experience nicely complements the current trustee group. Lissy has been on a year's leave from the trust; Ann O'Sullivan is on leave from December through to late 2024.

ACTIVITY DURING 2023

Total number of visits to Breathing Space in 2023: 777 (2022: 830)

Quiet days / Workshops (just 2 in November in 2022)

21 April 2023	Making Bread	Lois
27 May	Creative workshop	Ellie and Lois
28 June	Trees – quiet day	Chris Edmonds
15 July	Creative Play quiet day	Marie Calvert
10 August	Creative workshop	Ellie
16 August	Creativity and SA	Ellie
22 August	Creative Families	Lois / Ellie
21 Oct 23	Harvest Art Retreat	Ellie
18 Nov	Creative day	Ellie and Ann
8 Dec	Advent Creative day	Emma Alpha, Ellie and Ann
11 Dec	Creative Christmas	Alison Lawn

Groups attending regularly: none in 2023

Total group visitors: av. 38 per mth (2022 – 51 / mth)

Total personal retreats – indivs: av 27 / mth (2022 – 10 / mth)

Residential retreats: av 6/ mth (2022 – 3 / month)

Retreat in Daily Life 8 Jan 2023 – 19 Feb 2023 15 pilgrims

Website: This is refreshed regularly with a short front page 'post', by either Ellie or Lois.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Review of trust policies:

Policy document	Date Reviewed	Next Review
Memorandum of Understanding ¹	May 2023	May 2024
Safeguarding Policy	July 2022	2025
Privacy and Data Protection	October 2022	2025
Risk Assessment	January 2023	March 2024

¹ MOU: A memorandum of understanding between the Trustees and the owners of the property at 123B Birmingham Road, Allesley CV5 9GR (Peter Sidebotham and Lois Baldwin) was drawn up and agreed in September 2019. To be reviewed annually. The use of the property has been provided rent-free. The Charity pays 50% of Council tax, insurance and utility bills.

Note:

The Charity does not have any paid staff and relies on volunteers. A cleaner and a gardener receive hourly wages for 2 hours each per week.

Trustees for March 2024 to Feb 2025

John Kirkman (Chair)

Alison Lawn

Dagmer Dias

Andrew Gilham

Lois Baldwin

Peter Sidebotham (on leave from Sept 2023)

Crystal Kofie (stand down year March 2023 – Feb 2024)

Ann O'Sullivan (on leave for most of 2024)

Trustee name	Start of current term : (usually 2 x 3 yrs)	Proposed stand down year
<i>Lois Baldwin</i>	2021	<i>Taken 2020/ now on leave</i>
<i>Peter Sidebotham</i>	2022	<i>Taken 2021 /now on leave</i>
Crystal Kofie	End 2017	2024
Alison Lawn	Mid 2019	2025 (earlier requested)
Ann O'Sullivan	End 2021	Taken 2024 / due 2026
John Kirkman	mid- 2022	2027
Dagmer Dias	Mid 2022	2028
Andrew Gilham	Mid 2023	2029

Treasurer:

Peter Sidebotham / Grahame Edmonds

Independent financial examiner:

Andrea Driver

Financial Support and banking:
Bank Signatories (2):

Richard Lawn
2022: Richard Lawn; Peter Sidebotham; Lois Baldwin
2023: Grahame Edmonds after September.

Safeguarding Lead:

Peter Sidebotham / Dagmer Dias after September

Data Controller:

Lois Baldwin / Chris Edmonds after September

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