

Breathing Space Coventry

Annual Report 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:

John Kirkman (chair), Dagmer Dias, Alison Lawn, Ann O'Sullivan, Peter Sidebotham, Andrew Gilham.

OVERVIEW

During 2024 Breathing Space Coventry continued to offer a sacred space open to the public. We are grateful to Chris and Grahame Edmonds who served as resident hosts until March 2024 when they moved to Hampshire to be closer to their family and fresh ventures there. Ellie Rose who had previously served as an artist in residence in 2023 moved in as resident host in April 2024. This has been a joy and a privilege, both for Ellie and for Breathing Space. Ellie has been able to set up her own little art studio in the annexe, and has broadened the vision of Breathing Space to encourage others to explore creativity and spirituality in their use of the place. Ellie has been wonderfully supported by Alison and the other trustees, a number of close friends, our neighbours and the gardening team. We are particularly grateful to her friend, Katherine Pickford, who moved in and kept Breathing Space running during September when Ellie had an important break.

With the changes in resident host, the weekly rhythm has changed. Breathing Space is now open on Thursdays to Saturdays. In addition, Cathy Renken has run a textiles workshop on Tuesday evenings and Ellie has run a painting group on Wednesday mornings. Some additional ad-hoc visitors have been accommodated at other times.

The volunteer gardening team (Chris Hitchcock, Rob Johnson, Dennis and Julie Morgan, together with Ellie) have done an amazing job keeping the garden looking amazing, bright and welcoming. Chris has introduced several new flowers and plants; Dennis and Julie have transformed the vegetable beds and kept several borders looking great; and Rob has been faithfully working hard to keep the garden tidy and has developed a number of creative prayer settings in the garden. Looking ahead, we are pleased to welcome two new members to the gardening team, Graham and Anna Rickets.

The Allesley Festival open gardens in July again welcomed over 150 visitors to the garden. We were also able to welcome Ros, the daughter of Janice, who established the garden here, and a number of others on a guided walk linking the Anderson Garden near the Elms pub and Breathing Space.

During the year, we have been able to welcome nearly 900 visitors to Breathing Space. This includes 602 people visiting in groups (an average of 50 per month) and 115 individuals (average 10 per month) coming for their own individual time. We have a number of individuals and groups who come on a regular basis, including a weekly prayer meeting for churches in the area. Fey Holtum and Nikki Moon both led quiet days at Breathing Space and it was also the venue for a book launch and a three-day aesthetic enquiry art retreat engaging participants from further afield in the UK and Europe. Early in the year, our chair of trustees, John, gave a talk at Hope Coventry which generated further interest and engagement with Breathing Space from new sources. Other than that, we have relied on word of mouth, or bookmarks, and our website. We remain linked to the Quiet Garden Movement and the Retreat Centre Association.

We are grateful to John Kirkman for his service as chair of trustees (and as a trustee since 2022). He is taking a sabbatical from the board of trustees and handing over to Crystal and Anne jointly.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Review of trust policies:

Policy document	Date Reviewed	Next Review
Memorandum of Understanding ¹	November 2024	November 2025
Safeguarding Policy	January 2025	2028
Privacy and Data Protection	October 2022	2025
Risk Assessment	October 2024	October 2025

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

Trustee name	Responsibilities 2025	Start of current term (usually 2 x 3 yrs)	Proposed stand down year
Peter Sidebotham	Treasurer	2024	2027
Crystal Kofie	Joint chair	2025	2031
Alison Lawn		2019	2026
Ann O'Sullivan	Joint chair	2024	2030
Dagmer Dias	Safeguarding lead	2022	2028

Andrew Gilham		2023	2029
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Other Responsibilities

Resident Host:	Ellie Rose
Independent financial examiner:	Andrea Driver
Financial Support and banking:	Richard Lawn
Bank Signatories (2):	Peter Sidebotham, Lois Baldwin
Data Controller:	Ellie Rose
Website:	Ellie Rose, Lois Baldwin
