



Solstice Nurseries

'Growing People and Plants'

Annual Report

October 2020 – October 2021

Participants

After having experienced a very unusual AGM, swiftly followed by Christmas we closed again for the 2nd COVID lockdown on 22nd December 2020 and did not welcome the participants back until 7th April 2021.

This 2nd lockdown proved to be a lot harder for the Participants with the cold weather and dark nights on top of not having been able to meet up with family and friends during the Christmas and New Year period.

We reopened on 7th April 2021 and have been busy in the nursery ever since.

Board Activities

Solstice continues to thank our volunteer board of directors for all their hard work. Their efforts and contributions are important to the running of Solstice and they are valued members of the team as are so many others who continue to help, support and assist us especially though these latest tough times.

Susan Kirkwood resigned last year from the Board, she will be sorely missed, however we still have all her contact details. We wish Susan all the very best and would love to see her any time she is up in Aberdeen.

Staff

There are currently 2 full time members of staff George and Jackie and 4 part-time, Richie, Bruce, Karen and Jenny.

AGM Membership

The AGM took place in October 2020 very differently. It was originally going to be cancelled however a board decision was taken to hold the meeting virtually. A huge thank you to Susan who assisted with getting the Zoom up and running and for the instructions on how to invite people to join.

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Solstice Year 2020/2021



Settled in for the AGM in 2020 it was sooooo cold!

Events at Solstice / Open Days

Unfortunately, we only had one event this last year and that was at NTS Drum Castle Holly Fest. We were the only company who was invited. It was a real honour and pleasure to be asked to be there. The café was open and I have to say we had the very best hot chocolate ever.

The 2 days there in December weren't too cold thankfully and we achieved good sales, we were helpfully assisted by Graeme, Laura and James, Martin and John.

Christmas 2020

Christmas 2020 was always going to be different. We acquired a portacabin (to say it was distressed is an understatement – however it was free). We stripped out the existing horrid, old and broken flooring, which was a 3-day job in itself. Ritchie repainted the inside and George laid new flooring.

George arranged to have a pitched roof built on top to make it more like a lodge, it now looks great and George acquired some Christmas lights to decorate the outside until we have time to clad it to look like the main building.

The Christmas Shop at Solstice was a huge success despite Covid restrictions. Customers phoned and appointments were made for them to come along and purchase their usual Christmas items and also the not so usual purchases.

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Our Grotto being delivered



On the ground and in place



New pitched roof being fitted

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How the inside looked after 3 days of lifting the horrid, old and broken vinyl.

So much glue left on the floor we were sticking to it!

I think we used every tool in George's workshop but we eventually got there.

The finished cabin all set up and ready to start welcoming customers.



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Fit like Knit and Devenick Designs also helped to stock the shop with their items.

Fit like Knit



Devenick Designs



2020 saw the first production of our very own honey, made from the hives kept on the Solstice Site. These hives belong to George and Alison.

The hives have been located on site for approximately 10 years and it is a treat to be able to sell our own local produce.

The hives have the added benefit of helping to pollinate our plants however some of the participants have not benefited so well during the season when they are working in the direct flight path of the bees with the participants coming off worse!

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Door/Wall hanging



Table Centre



Who'd have thought Dino Decs 2nd year



Beautiful Amaryllis Bulbs

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Nursery

Now a word from Jackie to hear what's been happening in the nursery.

We reopened on 7th April 2021 and have been busy in the nursery ever since.

As last year the nursery never got quiet during the lockdowns as garden designers, landscapers and gardeners were still working though-out.

We are so grateful to all our existing designers and customers for their constant support and loyalty, some of you have been with us for years and we hope to continue seeing you for many years to come. We hope the new designers that have found their way to us will continue to be with us also, welcome to the Solstice family. **THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH**

The nursery continued to be busy into the New Year, however the participants were off till April so Jackie, Richie, Bruce, George along with Rowan and Erica, daughters of one of our designers, did a fantastic job of catering to the clients who still required plants.

Back in 2004 George once said to me, when talking about the journey Solstice had taken to get to where it was, '**Non obstaculo, sed convallescente provocatione**' or '**Semper Invictus**' and the guys had these words '**Not an obstacle merely a challenge**' or '**Never Defeated**' translated from the Latin, on the wall of their tea-room as their Solstice Steering Group motto.

Well, I cannot think of more inspiring words for this year, through these unprecedented times, with the challenges of Covid, Brexit, Haulage Issues, Late Damaging Frosts, Plant/Material Price Increases, Workforce Shortages, etc. However, with the help of everyone (this includes our customers and suppliers) working closely together and supporting each other, we have fared well indeed. So, again a big thanks to everyone in and around Solstice.

Ellon Castle Garden is worth a mention as we have concluded a three-year undertaking where we have supplied plants for their large walled garden, four herbaceous borders, a large rose garden, and a yew memorial walk and more, these are developing/growing nicely, covering all aspects, and include a very wide range of plants from sun lovers to shade lovers and is well worth a visit. It really was a fantastic project to have been involved in, to see the old garden ruins given a new and exciting life from complete dereliction. A big thanks to Stuart, Chris and Richard - directors who collected the plants, Donald, Susan, Katie and Joanne gardeners, designers and planters! I believe this team have recently retired having brought the garden from complete dereliction to being planted up, we wish the new team who will care and maintain this beautiful garden all the very best.

General

George and James managed to get the donated tambour units inside the building and they have now been placed in the Conference Room, general office, George's office and the small front office which does not seem so small any more. The whole building feels bigger and looks so much tidier now that everything can be stored behind a roller door. At the time of bringing the units in and filling them it gave us a bit of time to have a small clear out.

Not only did we have a clear out but also a sort out of the books, vases, some extra Christmas things that don't quite fit in the Christmas cupboard and lots of other treats that we came across!!

Conference Room with new tambour units



Front office now a useable space



Unfortunately, our fabulous granite stone sculpture has been on hold throughout this terrible covid time, we had hoped it would have been completed and installed along with the work on the Memorial Garden. Perhaps we will have it completed for next Summer. Which will be our 16th year here at Drumduan Walled Garden.

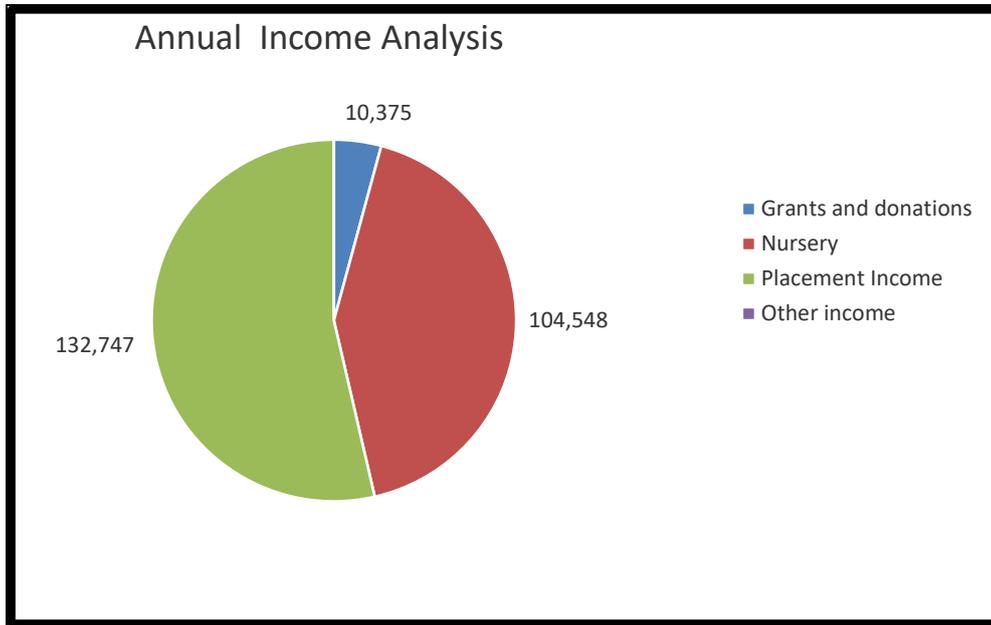


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The Year 1st April 2020 to 31 March 2021



Who's who at Solstice Nurseries

Board of Directors

Chair: Alan Gall

George Parkinson

Jackie Berry

Janice Nicol

Serena Arif

Richard Ward

Jackie Reynard

The Staff Team

Business Manager:

George Parkinson

Nursery Manager

& Head of Nursery:

Jackie Bibby

Nursery Assistants:

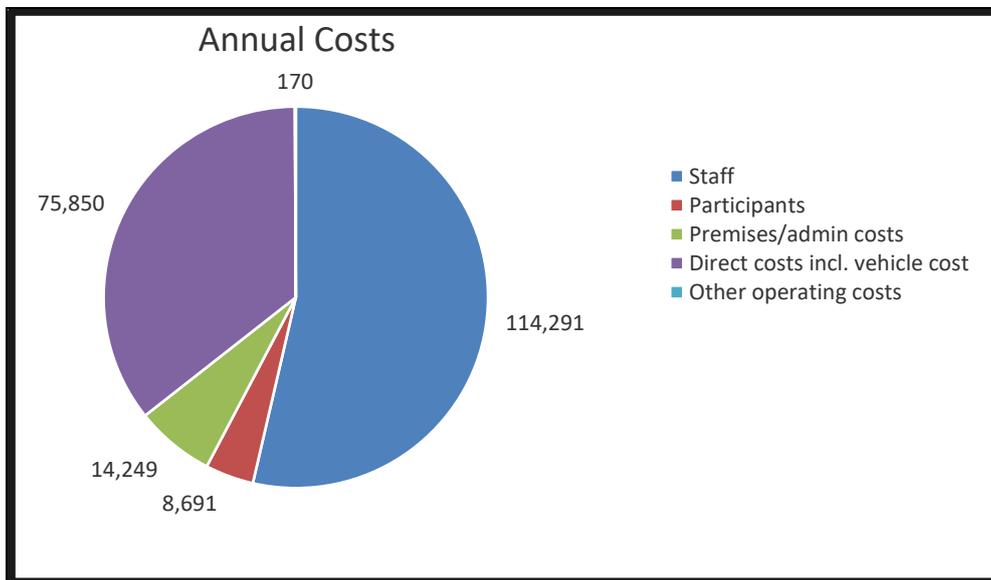
Richie Slapp

Bruce Gilliland

Administration:

Karen Barrack

Jenny Corrigan



Members of:

- Andrew Lees
Horticultural
Scotland
Directory
- The Federation of Small
Businesses
- Social Firms Scotland
- The Hardy Plant Society

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