

Breathing Space Coventry

Annual Report 2025

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:

Ann O'Sullivan (co-chair), Crystal Kofie (co-chair), Alison Lawn, Andrew Gillham, Dagmer Dias, Gemma Curran, Peter Sidebotham.

Overview

During 2025 Breathing Space Coventry continued to offer a sacred space open to the public. We are grateful to Ellie who continues to be our resident host. The space has settled into a good rhythm (it is still open Thursday to Saturday) with a continuous flow of guests.

As in previous years, we have relied on word of mouth, bookmarks, and our website to help people find us. This approach has worked well, keeping visitor numbers at a manageable level. We also continue to maintain our links with the Quiet Garden Movement and the Retreat Centre Association.

Ellie has been wonderfully supported by Alison, 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 whilst Ellie was away. Katherine did an excellent job looking after BSC, accommodating various groups and overnight guests as well as galvanising the gardening team to complete the preparations for the Open Gardens event. This is an annual event held by the Allesley Village Festival, whereby visitors are allowed to explore various private residential gardens, offering creativity and inspiration for planting.

Ann reported the Open Gardens to be a great success - 157 people attended, approximately 25 of those being new visitors to BSC and 10 children. A particular highlight was the labyrinth which now features a mosaic centrepiece depicting the four seasons.

We are extremely grateful to the gardening volunteers - Chris Hitchcock, Rob Johnson, Dennis and Julie Morgan and Graham and Anna Rickets who were instrumental in supporting the Open Gardens. The volunteer gardeners meet every week. We are grateful for their enthusiasm and innovation which keeps our garden looking beautiful all year round.

A new feature was added to the garden by Rob – a prayer den. This area consists of a cross with hooks for prayers to be attached, a beautifully designed bench with crosses inlaid with an attached stand for the prayer cards and pens.

During the year, we have been able to welcome over 1100 visitors to Breathing Space. This includes 774 people visiting in groups (an average of 64 per month) and 109 individuals (average 9 per month) coming for their own individual time.

We have a number of individuals and groups who come on a regular basis, including a painting group on Wednesday mornings, a textiles workshop on Wednesday evenings and Allesley and Eastern Green Prayer meeting on Thursday mornings.

Subject to availability, a range of ad hoc visits took place including personal day retreats for vicars, a church away day and All Saints Youth alpha with 12 young people.

In October, a paper and bookbinding day retreat led by Ellie and Sue Ashby was held, attended by eight participants, half of whom were new visitors.

Visitor demographics have continued to broaden, encompassing groups from the Chinese church, members of the African community, couples, individuals across a wide age range, and families with young children. We have also welcomed several Coventry-based charities supporting people affected by homelessness, addiction, abuse, and older age, alongside Hope Coventry, and continue to host away days for a broad range of church denominations

In May we welcomed Gemma Curran as a trustee. Gemma has many talents in the digital arena, and we are already reaping the benefits of her experience, with a new branding package.

In July Andrew kindly agreed to take on the role of secretary. He is doing a great job of making sure that everything is running smoothly behind the scenes.

Sadly, Alison decided to step down from the board of trustees at the end of 2025. We are grateful for Alison's service. We give thanks for her constant support to Ellie and her encouragement, especially in reaching out to Graham and Anna (our latest volunteer gardeners). We wish Alison the best of luck as she concentrates on other volunteering opportunities.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Subject	Last review	Next scheduled review
Risk Assessment – Garden Power Tools	Jan 2026	Oct 2026
Risk Assessment – Garden Hand Tools	Jan 2026	Oct 2026
Risk Assessment – Garden Tripod Ladder	Jan 2026	Oct 2026
Risk Assessment – Workshop Power Tools	Jan 2026	Oct 2026
Risk Assessment – House and Surroundings	Oct 2025	Oct 2026
Memorandum of Understanding ¹	Nov 2024	Jan 2027
Safeguarding Policy	Jan 2025	Jan 2028
Decision-making Guidelines	Jan 2026	Jan 2028
Privacy & Data Protection Policy	May 2025	May 2028

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.

Trustee Terms

Name	Current Term Start	Proposed stand down year	Current Role	Comments
Gemma Curran	2025	2031		First term
Dagmer Dias	2022	2028	Safeguarding Lead	
Andrew Gilham	2023	2029	Secretary	First term
Crystal Kofie	2025	2031	Co-Chair	
Ann O'Sullivan	2024	2030	Co-Chair	
Peter Sidbotham	2024	2030	Treasurer	

Other Responsibilities

Resident Host:

Independent financial examiner:

Financial Support and banking:

Bank Signatories (2):

Data Controller:

Website:

Ellie Rose

Andrea Driver

Richard Lawn

Peter Sidebotham, Crystal Kofie

Ellie Rose

Ellie Rose, Lois Baldwin, Gemma Curran