



The Alnwick Garden Trust

Social Impact Report

April 2024 – March 2025





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Awards and Accolades



2025

Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Award
Lilidorei - New Tourism Business of the Year

North East Tourism Awards
North East Tourism Awards

Bronze
Highly Commended

2024

Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Award
Lilidorei - Judges Choice Award
Community Business of the Year
The Treehouse - Sustainability Excellence
Excellence in SME People Practices

North East Tourism Awards
Regional NE RICS Awards
North East Chamber Awards
The Food Industry Awards
HR&D Awards North East

Gold
Winner
Highly Commended
Winner
Short-listed

2023

Better Health At Work
Food For Life

Better Health At Work
Soil Association

Silver
Bronze

2022

Large Visitor Attraction of The Year
Experience of The Year
Resilience and Innovation
Gold Accolade

North East Tourism Awards
North East Tourism Awards
North East Tourism Awards
VisitEngland

Gold
Gold
Gold
Gold

CEO Welcome

I am delighted to share this year's report, which proudly highlights the impact The Alnwick Garden Trust has made in our community over 2024/25. The Trust is truly unique, not only providing a destination for a great day out, but also as the home of life changing programmes that support those most in need.

This year is especially significant. In 2025, we celebrate 25 years of volunteering at The Alnwick Garden, a milestone made even more remarkable by the seven volunteers who have been with us since the very beginning. Their dedication, along with the commitment of every member of our volunteer family, is an outstanding achievement for which we are deeply grateful. You will see me pictured below with some of these extraordinary people, who continue to inspire what we do.

The achievements you will read about in this report could not happen without our brilliant team of staff and volunteers, whose energy and passion drive the many social and economic benefits the Trust delivers.

I want to thank Her Grace, the Duchess of Northumberland, and our dedicated Trustees, whose vision and inspiration guide our work, and to thank you for taking the time to read this report. I hope you enjoy discovering the difference The Alnwick Garden Trust continues to make.

Mark Brassell CEO The Alnwick Garden Trust



From left to right: Maureen Fortune, Gill Parker, Ann August, Sue Simpson
Mark Brassell, Sylvia Raffell, Ted Raffell, Tom Pattinson

Our Social Purpose



Another year has passed, and The Alnwick Garden Trust has remained committed to working within and for our communities, putting people first. We are proud of our strong and clear social purpose that defines everything we do, from supporting wellbeing and reducing social isolation, to empowering individuals through learning, employment, and community engagement.

Our programmes and initiatives are all developed to provide safe, inclusive, engaging and meaningful activities to a range of community groups with targeted outcomes for some of our more disadvantaged groups:

- ✧ Ageing population – over 55s.
- ✧ Young people with Special Educational Needs. and their families.
- ✧ People with barriers to employment.
- ✧ Families and individuals struggling with the cost of living.
- ✧ People who are socially and rurally isolated.



Our measurable social impacts span across the following areas:

Improving
physical
and mental
wellbeing

Addressing social
isolation and
creating a sense
of belonging

Helping people
learn new skills

Increasing life
expectancy and
quality of life
for our ageing
population

Moving people
into employment

Educating how to
live healthy
lifestyles

Preventing
drug-related
harm

Educating and
addressing
the climate
emergency

Our Social Purpose

The Alnwick Garden Trust is a dedicated community charity committed to making a lasting difference to the lives of those who need it most. Through our innovative and inclusive core programmes, we strive to improve wellbeing, inspire learning, and empower our most vulnerable community members to thrive.



Wellbeing

ELDERBERRIES

Purpose: To address the impact of loneliness and isolation for people aged 55 and over living in Northumberland. The programme aims to support people to age well in our community using NHS England guidance – 5 steps to mental wellbeing, through connecting people, encouraging daily activity, learning new skills, sharing with others, and being mindful.

YOUNG GARDENERS

Purpose: To provide an inclusive learning experience for young people with additional needs and their families, using horticulture to improve confidence, communication and social skills.

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

Purpose: To reduce food wastage whilst providing a positive social space for local visitors and the community.

LILIDOREI FREE FRIDAYS

Purpose: To give the opportunity to all Northumberland primary school children to visit Lilidorei. Imagination and play helps children to develop their cognitive, physical and social skills, improving their emotional wellbeing in a fun and inspiring environment.

Education

LEARNING THROUGH NATURE

Purpose: To educate and inspire our visitors and communities to engage in climate action, demonstrating leadership through the delivery of innovative programmes.

ROOTS AND SHOOTS

Purpose: To reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity through learning about healthy eating and the importance of physical activity.

DRUGS EDUCATION

Purpose: To prevent harmful substance use, allowing young people to make informed choices and consider safer options.

CORE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Purpose: To provide educational and learning opportunities outside of the classroom whilst helping children improve their cognitive, physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Empowerment

SEEDS FOR SUCCESS

Purpose: To provide a platform for people to develop the practical business skills required to start up their own business.

GROWING TOGETHER NORTHUMBERLAND

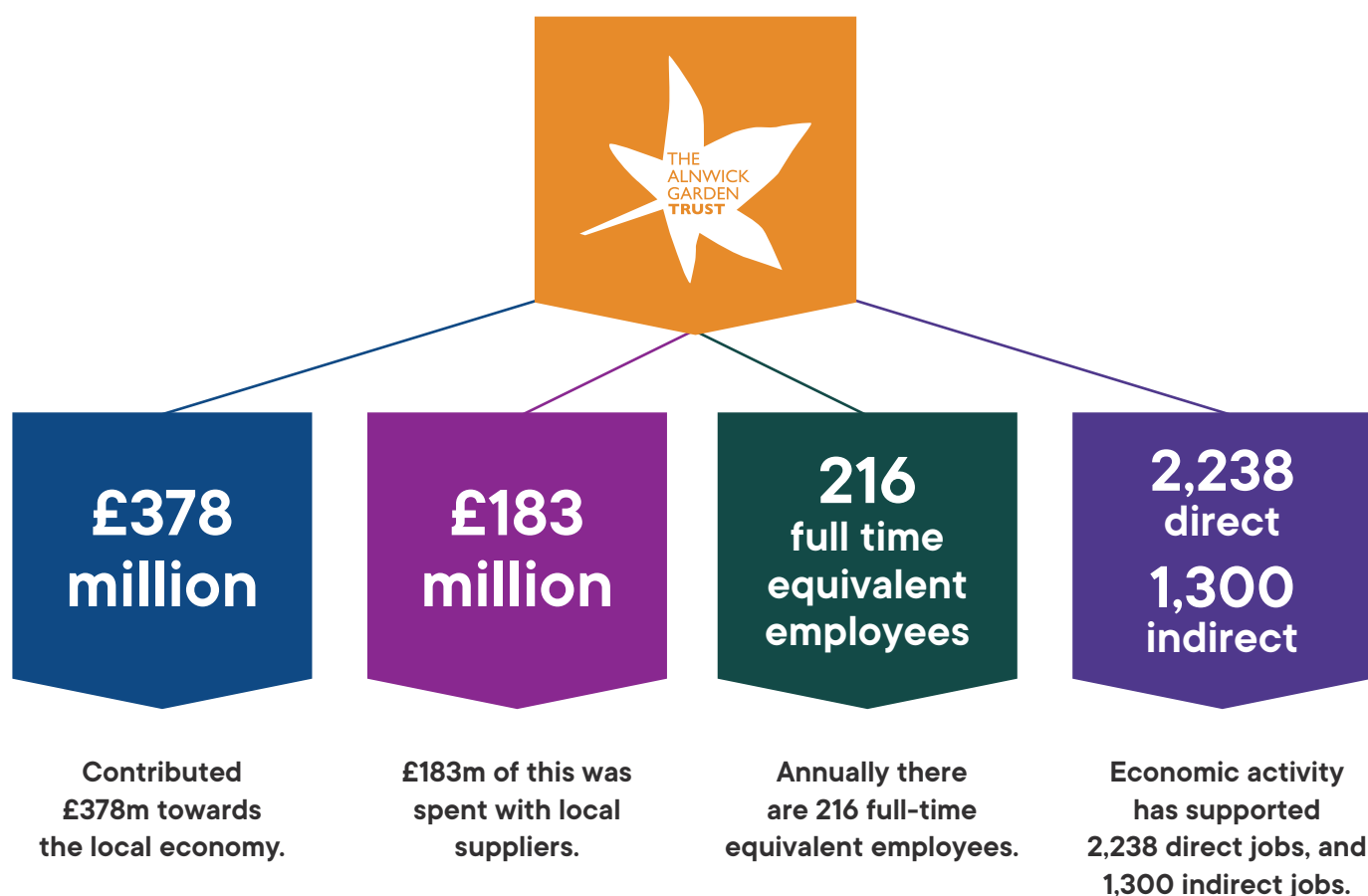
Purpose: To improve wellbeing, cultivate skills, and raise aspirations, enabling participants to take their next steps into training, employment, or volunteering opportunities within their local community.

GROW INTO WORK

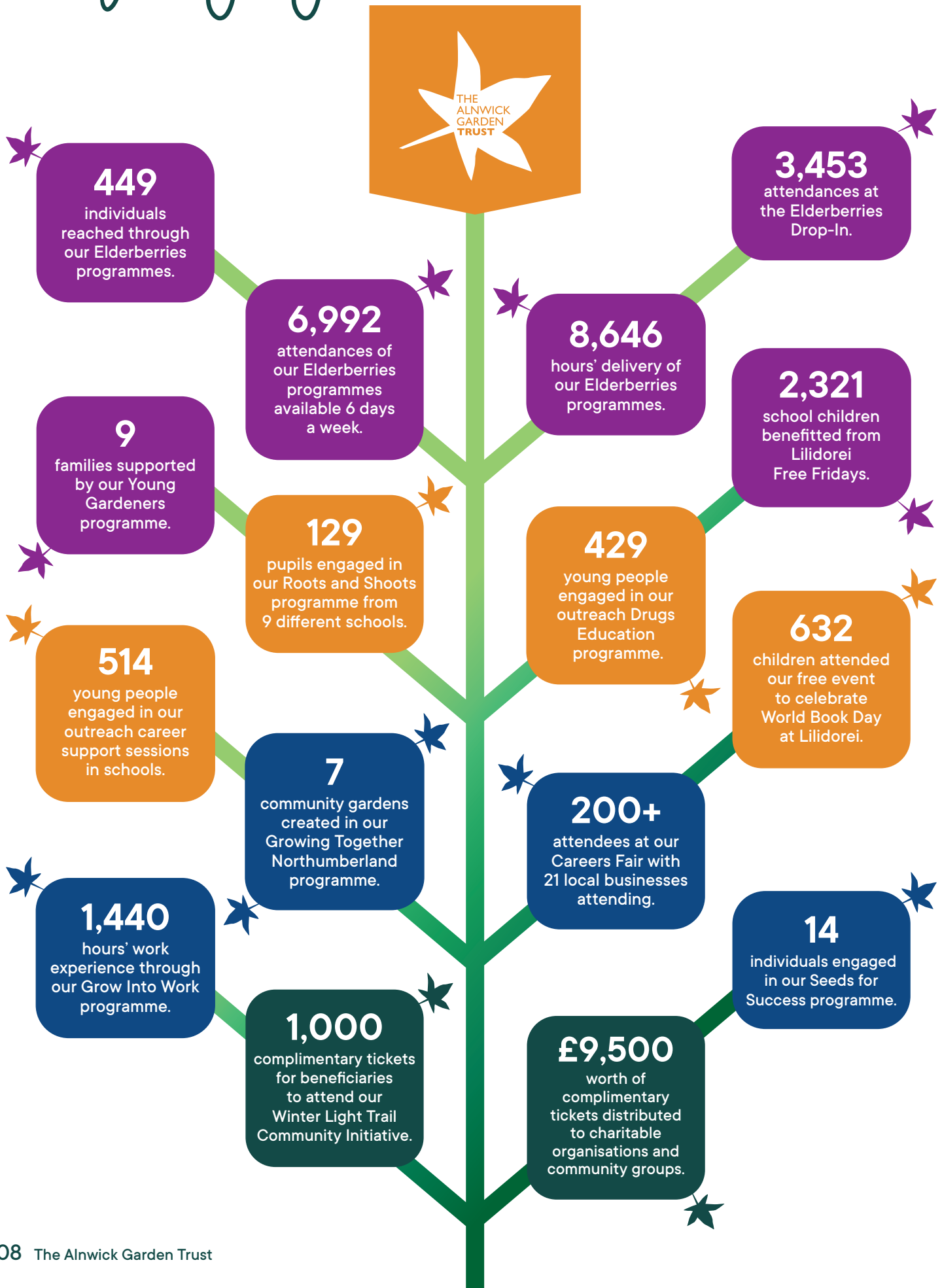
Purpose: To prepare individuals for the workplace by building confidence and skills through tailored support and hands-on work placements across the departments of The Alnwick Garden and Lilidorei.

Economic Impact

Beyond the direct impact of our community programmes, The Alnwick Garden Trust contributes significantly from an economic and social perspective to the wider region. Based on research conducted independently and extrapolated to 24 years, it is estimated that we have contributed over **£378 million** to the local economy over the last 24 years, of which **£183 million** was spent with local suppliers. Annually there are **216** full-time equivalent employees, whilst the Trust's economic activity has supported **3,538** jobs regionally since opening.



Key Highlights 2024/25



Wellbeing in The Community

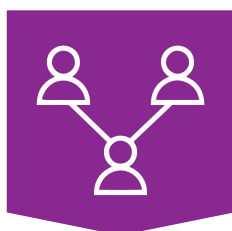
Fact

Elderberries programmes are on offer 6 days a week.

Elderberries

In 2024, there were 22 million people aged over 50 in England, equivalent to two in five of the total population. Ageing well physically, mentally, and emotionally, can lead to a longer, healthier and more fulfilling life. With an increasingly ageing population, we need to be aware of the heightened vulnerability many older adults face. Age UK estimates that 2 million people aged 65+ have unmet needs for care and support, and many more may be at risk of isolation, illness, or neglect.

The Elderberries programmes reach out to people aged over 55 to combat isolation, provide stimulating and meaningful activities, as well as increasing physical exercise and promoting mental wellbeing. All activities and group sessions follow at least one of the **NHS 5 Steps to Wellbeing**:



**CONNECT
WITH OTHER
PEOPLE**



**BE PHYSICALLY
ACTIVE**



**LEARN NEW
SKILLS**



**GIVE TO
OTHERS**



**PAY ATTENTION
TO THE
PRESENT
MOMENT
(MINDFULNESS)**

449 beneficiaries were reached through our Elderberries programmes in 2024/25, with a total of **8,646 hours'** worth of activities. The Elderberries' activities are delivered all year and run 6 days a week supporting our over 55s to have a positive outlook and live a fulfilling life.

"Elderberries gives me focus, it means I've got something to get out of bed for."

Ron attends Elderberries on a Friday

Elderberries - Blooming Well

A twice weekly initiative to support over 55s, who have early onset dementia, and their carers. The sessions offer a range of activities from arts and crafts to therapeutic horticulture, as well as allowing those who attend to connect with others to reduce social isolation. **33 people** benefitted from these groups in 2024/25 with **792 attendances**.

"It is a break for Kate and I, from being constantly at home! We get to meet other people and it is always something to look forward too. It is a lovely collection of people with a great community spirit."

George from Blooming Well



Fact

Our Elderberries programmes had 6,992 attendances.



Elderberries - Gentlemen's Garden

A weekly gardening session that allows gentlemen to socialise through connecting with others, sharing traditional skills and learning new ones, all whilst benefitting from the positive impact gardening has on mood and wellbeing. During the growing season the gentlemen work on their own allotment plots growing their own produce, not only keeping them physically active, but also allowing them to eat healthily. Through the winter months, the sessions continue indoors where the gentlemen make crafts, attend informative talks given by guest speakers, or enjoy a trip out. **15 gentlemen** engaged in Gentlemen's Garden in 2024/25 with **410 attendances**.

Elderberries - Drop-In Centre

The Drop-In opens every Thursday, Friday and Sunday for those over the age of 55. The Drop-In is volunteer-led and provides a welcoming space for Elderberries to connect with others, reducing social isolation and nurturing friendships. There were **3,453 attendances** in 2024/25.



Fact

Drop-In had
3,453 attendances
over the year.



Elderberries - Walking Group

A weekly walking session encouraging Elderberries to be physically active and gain health benefits through exercise. **68 individuals** attended the walking group in 2024/25 with **1,194 attendances**. They noted an improvement in wellbeing both physically and mentally, as well as connecting with others and making friendships along the way.

"I moved into the area, not knowing anyone but after walking with the Elderberries, it has brought me out of my shell and I have met some lovely people. We get exercised, fed, we chat and we get a laugh. I leave the house at half past nine and get home about half one, so it's a beautiful morning, it really is."

Gail, a member of the Walking Group

"My daughter suggested coming to Elderberries as it was a nice friendly get together and a little bit of a walk and you could just come and go as you wanted, so I came. That was four or five years ago and I have virtually not missed many sessions because of how much I enjoy it. I've made friends with everybody, really, and meet them outside of here."

Joe attends Elderberries

Elderberries - Ukulele for Fun

A 12 week course for beginners where Elderberries are able to learn a new skill, make new friends and connect with others. Evidence shows that learning to play a musical instrument improves memory, attention and concentration as well as promoting wellbeing. **21 individuals attended.**



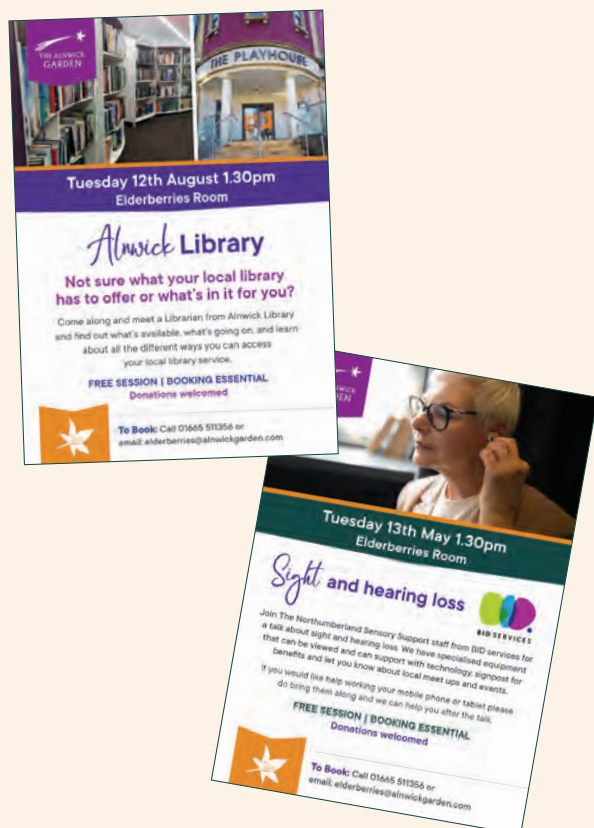


Elderberries - Footcare

Providing footcare sessions to our Elderberries to help them avoid foot ailments. There were **190 attendances** at footcare sessions in 2024/25.

Elderberries - Wellbeing Talks

Monthly talks and presentations from services and professionals, offering advice and information on topics such as health and wellbeing, fraud and scams and energy efficiency. There were **142 attendances** in 2024/25.



Fact

Our Elderberries programmes worked with **449 individuals.**

Elderberries - Afternoon Tea Parties

350 Elderberries attended the ticketed Christmas, Spring and Summer Parties for afternoons of entertainment, singing and dancing. Afternoon Tea was provided alongside live music and performances from singers, a ukulele band and school choirs.



Elderberries - Tunes on Tuesday

An initiative promoting wellbeing through singing, helping to lower stress, enhance memory and improve mental health. The singing group runs monthly and is open to all, regardless of singing ability. **26 individuals** attended Tunes on Tuesday throughout 2024/25.



Young Gardeners

Young Gardeners is a horticulture initiative designed to support young people with additional needs, and their families. The programme provides opportunities to learn new skills while also fostering friendships and meaningful connections with others.

During the 2024/25 programme, nine families took part, visiting their allotment plots each month, with the following key outcomes achieved:

- ★ Increased time outdoors and opportunities for families to spend quality time together.
- ★ Improved knowledge of healthy eating through hands-on growing and food education.
- ★ Development of transferable skills, enabling participants to continue gardening projects at home.

The programme not only nurtures practical skills but also promotes wellbeing, inclusion, and stronger family relationships through shared horticultural activities.

Fact

Young Gardeners supported 9 families in our 2024/25 programme.



Community Fridge

It is estimated that approximately one third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted each year. In the UK alone, more than 10 million tonnes of food are discarded annually. Food waste represents a serious environmental and social issue. Methane is produced when food rots impacting upon the environment and climate. Natural resources needed to grow, produce and sell food are also wasted, if the food is not consumed. With an ongoing cost of living crisis and related food insecurity, we are also presented with an ethical problem of discarding perfectly edible food.

The Trust continues to open its Community Fridge every week, with **774kg of surplus food** prevented from waste during the year.

We also struck up a new partnership with FareShare, thanks to funding through Northumberland County Council. FareShare is the UK's largest charity fighting hunger and food waste. They save good food from going to waste and redistribute it to frontline charities. During 2024/25 we provided food parcels to our Elderberries, supported our Young Gardeners project and put any surplus into our Community Fridge.



Fact

2,321 school children
from Northumberland
benefitted from
Free Fridays
at Lilidorei.

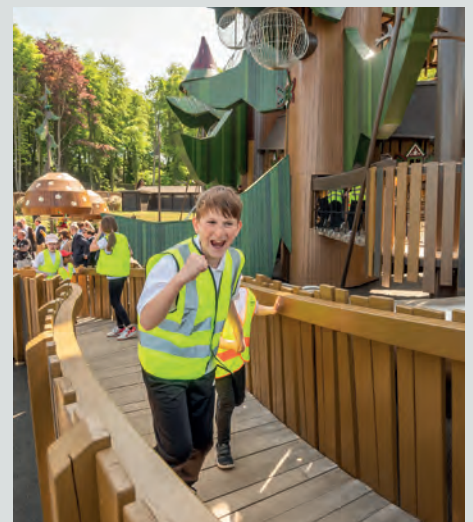


Free Fridays at Lilidorei

Free Fridays is an initiative offering Northumberland primary school children the chance to visit Lilidorei free of charge during term time with their schools. Alongside the visit, schools are given access to specially designed educational resources that link directly to the National Curriculum, supporting both learning and play.

By removing cost barriers, the programme ensures that children who may not otherwise have the opportunity to visit, can take part. The concept of Lilidorei is rooted in the promotion of imagination and play, helping children to develop their cognitive, physical and social skills, and improving their emotional wellbeing in a fun and inspiring environment.

2,321 children benefitted from Free Friday visits during 2024/25.



Learning Through Nature

Located within The Roots and Shoots Allotment is the Observation Hive and Apiary. Here, visitors can explore the vital role of bees and nature in tackling the Climate Crisis. By learning more about biodiversity, we encourage people to consider other causes of Climate Change and take small but powerful steps towards living more sustainably.

Year 12 and 13 pupils from the Duchess' Community High School had the opportunity to complete a component of their A-Level Environmental Science coursework on site, making full use of the natural environment as a living classroom.

Activities undertaken included:

- ✧ **Measuring carbon sequestration across tree species of different types and ages.**
- ✧ **Biodiversity sampling and recording species data within a variety of habitats.**
- ✧ **Applying scientific techniques for sampling and monitoring live species.**
- ✧ **Conducting habitat surface area experiments using the site's pond environment.**



Through these activities, students gained valuable hands-on experience in fieldwork, data collection, and ecological analysis, directly supporting their curriculum studies with support from our Climate Action Programme Manager.





Fact

129 pupils engaged
in our Roots and
Shoots programme.

Root and Shoots

Living with obesity is often described as one of the major public health problems we face today. Obesity can have an impact on life expectancy and a range of health conditions. Importantly, it can also have a big impact on the mental and social wellbeing of our children.

The Roots and Shoots initiative aims to help combat some of the causes of childhood obesity by working with children, their families and schools through a structured horticulture and health education programme. Through a series of sessions, the children gain practical experience of growing their own food and are given the opportunity to consume a range of fruits and vegetables. In collaboration with Northumberland County Council's Public Health team, the children also learn about the importance of a balanced diet and being physically active, in conjunction with the Better Health key messages.

82%

of the children who attended the programme said they had a better understanding of healthy eating.

92%

said they were more likely to eat healthily after attending the Roots and Shoots sessions.

Teachers' Feedback

"Even the most reluctant pupils enjoyed participating in the sessions."

"It is a great programme. Super fun. The children learnt a lot and really enjoyed all of the sessions. Thank you very much."

Overweight or obese children across Northumberland

24.7%



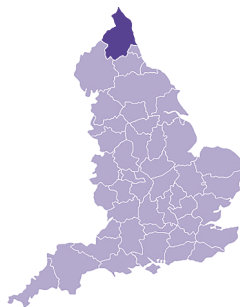
of Reception children

35.2%



of Year 6 children

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023).



Fact

9 different schools
across Northumberland
engaged in our
Roots and Shoots
programme.

2023/24 Children in England who are overweight or living with obesity children

22%



Children starting
primary school

increases to 35.9%



Children leaving
primary school

(National Child Measurement programme).



134,075

Children across England
starting high school
with a BMI above
the 98th centile in 2024

(NHS Digital, 2024).

By providing a fun and interactive programme, alongside consistent messaging with the children, their schools and their families, we hope to leave a legacy of learning that inspires our children to achieve a healthy weight. By including the children's families in this messaging, we hope to widen the reach of the programme and improve the whole families' physical health.

We know that there is strong relationship between deprivation and obesity, therefore schools selected each year are based on the following indicators: areas of deprivation and percentage of children living with obesity. Our 2024 programme saw **129 children** engage from **9 different schools** from across Northumberland.



What the pupils said they enjoyed:

"I like when we were tasting foods."

"Taking the vegetables out of the ground."

"I loved growing."

"Learning all about the healthy eating and activities; showing amount of sugar and salt."

Fact

429 young people engaged in our outreach Drugs Education programme.



Drugs Education

Our Drugs Education programme is designed to help young people make safer and healthier choices. Through creative and engaging workshops, they explore:

- ✦ The real risks of drugs and alcohol, dispelling myths.
- ✦ Why some young people may use substances.
- ✦ Safer, more positive alternatives.
- ✦ The wider harms, including the law and social impact.

Although primarily outreach-based, the project is an expansion of the Trust's Poison Garden tours which provide information on drug-related plants' use and misuse. This space uses the analogy of plant toxicity to highlight the risks of substance use in an engaging and memorable way. By linking drugs to their plant origins, we help to break down barriers, spark curiosity, and encourage meaningful conversations.

429 young people engaged directly with the outreach Drugs Education programme. Following the sessions young people reported that they had:

- ✦ An increased knowledge of the health risks linked to drug and alcohol use.
- ✦ Explored reasons for substance use and positive alternatives.
- ✦ Considered wider harms, including legal and social consequences.

95,975 visitors experienced The Poison Garden in 2024/25, all receiving information about the drug-related plants within.



Fact

4,313 children visited Lilidorei and The Alnwick Garden with their schools.



Core Education Programme

4,313 children visited Lilidorei and The Alnwick Garden with their schools as part of our education offer.

Our core educational offer aims to provide a bespoke programme of English writing work with supporting display materials for classroom working walls. A range of smaller curriculum-linked units which focus on key learning outcomes across multiple subject areas.

The programme engages young minds both creatively and practically, with lessons tailored to the National Curriculum, enhancing classroom learning with imaginative and hands-on activities that bring subjects to life.

Outcomes and Benefits

- ✦ Support teachers with ready-to-use, curriculum-aligned resources, reducing planning workload.
- ✦ Enhance literacy and writing skills through structured, imaginative tasks.
- ✦ Promote cross-curricular learning, helping pupils make meaningful connections across subjects.
- ✦ Encourage creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking through practical, hands-on activities.
- ✦ Build confidence and engagement by allowing pupils to see their learning celebrated in classroom displays.





Dyes, Textiles and Eco-Sustainability Event

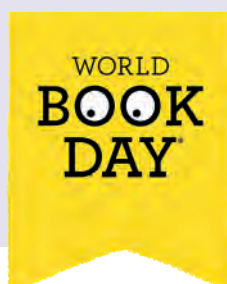
Building on the success of 'The Poisons in the Garden' event in 2022, this further collaboration with Northumbria University took place in May 2024. The event engaged students from local schools, exploring the important issue of eco-sustainability with a particular focus on dyes and textiles. Activities were designed to link directly to the National Curriculum's theme of reclaim, reuse and recycle, encouraging young people to think critically about environmental impact and sustainable practices. Outreach sessions were delivered in schools which culminated in a weekend of events at The Alnwick Garden, where students' work was exhibited, celebrating their creativity and learning journey.

Alongside the displays, members of the public were invited to take part in interactive activities that encouraged reflection on sustainable living and practical steps towards reducing environmental impact.

More than **1,600 pupils, families, and members of the public** engaged with this inspiring programme of activities.

World Book Day at Lilidorei

To celebrate World Book Day, Lilidorei opened its doors for a free event designed to inspire children to read and enjoy stories in a magical setting. A total of **632 children** attended, many dressed as their favourite book characters, bringing stories to life within the enchanting world of Lilidorei. The event not only created a sense of joy and imagination but also reinforced the importance and value of literacy, in a fun and memorable way.



Empowerment

Employability & Enterprise

Fact

14 individuals
engaged in our
Seeds for Success
programme.



The Trust is committed to helping people move closer to meaningful employment. We know that a thriving community depends on a strong local economy, and our employability initiatives are designed to provide tailored support, helping people build confidence, skills, and work readiness, while also addressing the wider challenges of rural living.

While the national unemployment rate in 2024 was around 3.7%, Northumberland continues to face slightly higher levels of unemployment. Many residents encounter barriers to work, including:

- ✦ **Health-related challenges (both physical and mental).**
- ✦ **Lack of skills or experience.**
- ✦ **Rural disadvantages, such as limited local opportunities and higher travel costs.**

The Trust recognises that overcoming these barriers is essential for both individual wellbeing and community prosperity.

Seeds for Success

Aim: To encourage entrepreneurship and small business start-ups.

What we delivered: Practical workshops covering the essentials of business start-up with opportunities focusing on first steps to creating a small business.

Impact: 3 courses were delivered through the year and 14 individuals benefitted through attending these sessions covering topics such as market research, marketing, USP and financials.



Growing Together Northumberland

Growing Together Northumberland, our new exciting 5-year project, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities, supports people aged 16 and over who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), economically inactive, or unemployed.

Aim: The project aims to improve wellbeing, cultivate skills, and raise aspirations, enabling participants to take their next steps into training, employment, or volunteering opportunities within their local community.

Programme Activities: Improving wellbeing through gardening. This was achieved through opportunities to engage in horticulture activities at The Alnwick Garden to build confidence and resilience. The participants were also able to collaborate and engage in community social action projects to create visible, positive local impact.

Cultivating skills through volunteering. Volunteering placements helped our participants establish positive routines, develop a stronger sense of purpose and achievement, and raise their aspirations to reach their goals.

Outcomes for 2024/25: **27 participants** benefitted from direct support through the project, including volunteering in community projects, volunteering at The Alnwick Garden and one-to-one employability support to help people move onto their next step.

7 community projects have been established and supported outside of volunteering opportunities at The Alnwick Garden. These projects have included allotments for food growing to be used by the local community, developing unused areas to improve biodiversity and inclusive sensory gardens. An additional **320 members** of the community are benefitting from these spaces.



"We have waited a long time to have a space to grow food for the local community, thank you so much for helping us to get this started. This garden is about much more than plants, it's about connection, wellbeing and community. We're so grateful to Ben and The Alnwick Garden for making this dream a reality."

Feedback from Growing Together Northumberland

Fact

7 community gardens created by Growing Together Northumberland.





Fact
1,440 hours' work experience through our Grow Into Work programme.

Grow Into Work

This programme gives those out of work real opportunities to get them ready for the workplace, building confidence and skills through work placements within the various different departments of The Alnwick Garden.

Aim: To support Northumberland residents into sustainable employment.

What we delivered: A combination of tailored one-to-one learning (CV writing, application forms, interviews, presentation skills) and hands-on work experience. In total there were **516 hours** of direct employability-skills programme delivery with **1,440 hours** of work experience offered.



Ongoing support: Tailored follow-up for up to 6 months post-programme, if needed.

Impact: **19 individuals** engaged in Grow Into Work with **7 people** securing employment following work placements. Individuals also noted improvement in skills and an increase in confidence upon completion.

"I'm thrilled to share Paige has gained employment at Alnwick Castle. Her dedication, determination and confidence has soared since completing the Grow into Work scheme with Alastair and The Alnwick Garden team. Paige's hard work has truly paid off, and I'm confident she will thrive in her new role both personally and professionally."

Feedback from a DWP Employment Coach

Careers support in schools

514 young people engaged in outreach career support sessions in schools, this included CV building, interview skills and careers guidance.

Through our collaboration with North East Combined Authority we provided enterprise advisor guidance to Collingwood School and Media Arts College, a local school focusing on providing high quality education to young people with SEN.

Collaboration & Supporting Others

in the Wider Community



The Trust plays a pivotal role as a key stakeholder in advancing the interests of Alnwick and the surrounding areas. Through collaboration and support for local businesses and initiatives, we aim to contribute significantly to economic growth and the long-term prosperity of the region.

In 2024/25, the Trust:

Provided representation on the Visit Northumberland Management Plan Board, actively contributing to making Northumberland a more sustainable and prosperous visitor destination.



Attracted over 500 visitors to Alnwick town centre by bringing the Spark! entertainers, generating both community engagement and economic benefit.



Supported civic and cultural initiatives, including the Alnwick in Bloom competition and the Twin Town (Lagny-Sur-Marne) visit.



As part of our ongoing commitment to community engagement and support, a total of £9,500 worth of **complimentary tickets** were distributed to charitable organisations and community groups. These tickets enabled their own beneficiaries to visit The Alnwick Garden and Lilidorei. This also included raffle prizes that were donated to assist these organisations in raising funds in support of their own charitable aims.



Supported town-wide initiatives and actively contributed to strategic partnerships, including the Borderlands Board and the Alnwick Business Forum.



We were thrilled to welcome 1,000 beneficiaries to our Winter Light Trail Community Initiative. We offered free entry to families and individuals who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to experience the magic of the lights. The initiative is designed to spread joy and create lasting memories for those facing barriers such as cost of living and affordability or challenging life circumstances.



Provided full support to the Bailiffgate Museum relocation and redevelopment project, helping to preserve and promote local heritage.



Continued our commitment as a corporate member of Rotary International.



Contributed to the local tourist bus initiative to ease the movement of visitors around the town.



Delivered 8 sessions of the Grow Business Club, a club formed to break the stereotypical business networking mould, giving often-overlooked businesses in Northumberland an opportunity to share learning, knowledge and to network.



Provided complimentary venue hire in support of local events including Story Fest and the Alnwick Expo event.



Hosted a Careers Fair with 21 local businesses in attendance. Over 200 job seekers attended the event.



Collaboration & Supporting Others

in the Wider Community



Longwood Gardens

Outside of our local connections, we strengthened our international relationship with Longwood Gardens in the USA. We supported one of their Fellowship students, offering a placement with responsibilities within our senior leadership team, enabling practical learning, leadership exposure, and development of skills to enable their career advancement.



St Oswald's Hospice – Cycle by the Sea Challenge

Cyclists started the challenge at The Alnwick Garden with a super send off, before heading off on their coastal adventure to Tynemouth. Those wanting a tougher challenge looped to finish back at The Alnwick Garden.



The Great North Air Ambulance Service Training

The Great North Air Ambulance Service paid us a visit in April for a day of training simulations on site at The Alnwick Garden. The ability to train Helicopter Emergency Medical Service doctors and pre-hospital emergency paramedics in such a unique environment allowed the service to set up bespoke scenarios within our contemporary visitor attraction.





Comrades in Chairs Collaboration

Chair exercises are a gentle and accessible form of physical activity for older adults, offering a safe way to improve strength, flexibility, and circulation while reducing the risk of falls. Comrades in Chairs are a group who formed in Blyth for over 50s that meet weekly and participate in fun chair exercises to promote health and mental wellbeing and provide valuable social interaction.

We invited the group along to The Alnwick Garden for a joint chair exercise session with our Elderberries. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to get moving together, enjoy the beautiful surroundings and, most importantly, meet new people. The session was full of smiles, chatter, and laughter, making it just as beneficial socially as it was physically.

Lilidorei and Northumberland College Partnership



We were delighted to work in partnership with Northumberland College's T Level Technical Qualification in Education and Early Years students.

The students designed creative activities to be included in our education offer for children attending Lilidorei. The results were truly impressive, with resources entitled We're Going on an Adventure, Fairy Dust and Wishes, and Music for Lilidorei. These inspiring resources, all carefully linked to the statutory framework and educational theory, are available on our website for providers.



Gay Day

We proudly hosted the first Mr Gay World competition to be held in the UK, promoting inclusion and welcoming diversity.



Collaboration & Supporting Others

in the Wider Community



The Gallery Youth Project

We continued our longstanding collaboration with Alnwick's Gallery Youth Project, providing holiday activities for young people. Free Halloween arts and crafts sessions and summer workshops were delivered, and the young people also took an active role in planning a nature trail at the local Freeriders' Bike Track.



Young People's Wellbeing Showcase – Alnwick Community Action Group



We were involved in the planning and delivery of an event to highlight the services and opportunities available to improve the wellbeing of young people and their families in and around Alnwick. We sponsored the event along with Alnwick Town Council, providing free entry tickets to The Garden to those who took part in a consultation to improve what is on offer to young people in the area.



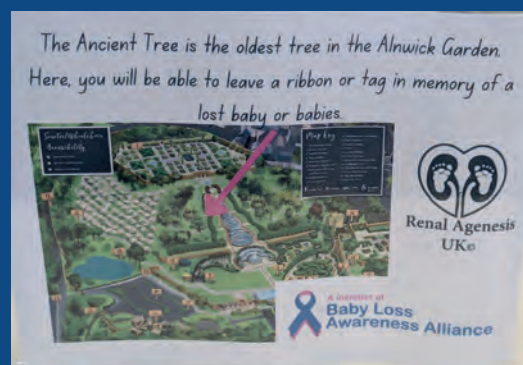
King's Trust with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service

The King's Trust team programme, delivered by Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, is a 12-week personal development and employability course for 16–25 year olds who are not currently in education, employment or training. The programme is designed to build confidence, improve social skills, and support young people in taking their next positive steps towards work, training or further education. As part of the course, 21 young people visited The Alnwick Garden, where they successfully completed the Supporting Others in the Community and Community Projects modules. The young people were involved in planting trees, supporting our Elderberries programmes and engaged in a Honey Enterprise Project.



Northumberland's "Speak My Name" Memorial Quilt

We supported families bereaved by suicide, coming together for the Northumberland "Speak My Name" memorial quilt reveal. The quilt was made up of unique, individual squares, each one dedicated to a loved one lost. This beautiful memorial and shared tribute was about celebrating lives, telling lost ones' stories, and raising awareness of mental health.



Baby Loss Awareness Week

We provided a dedicated remembrance space for Baby Loss Awareness Week during October, allowing bereaved families to place ribbons on The Garden's oldest tree, in memory of their babies. In collaboration with Renal Agenesis UK and in support of the national campaign, the aim is to raise awareness and offer comfort to those affected by the loss of a child.



Chatty Bench

The "Chatty Bench" initiative was supported by the Trust in collaboration with our local Co-op's Member Pioneer. Located outside of the Elderberries' Drop-In centre, the physical installation represents a warm invitation to strike up conversations and forge new friendships.



Thank you

Fact

The Trust benefits from the support of 80 dedicated volunteers each year.



The Alnwick Garden Trust is supported by an amazing team of volunteers, working quietly behind the scenes to ensure we can do what we do. Their dedication, passion, and generosity form the backbone of everything we achieve.

Our volunteers make a difference every single day whether welcoming visitors with a friendly smile, helping care for our beautiful garden or supporting our community projects. They give their time freely, not for recognition, but because they believe in what The Alnwick Garden Trust stands for: a place of beauty, community, and inspiration.

On average the Trust benefits from the support of **80 dedicated volunteers** each year and we truly cannot thank them enough. Over the 2024/25 year, volunteers gave up **9,226 hours** of their time to support the Trust's endeavours. Their time, kindness and dedication make all the difference.

As well as our dedicated team of regular volunteers we were supported by the following organisations in our “Big January Clean Up” operation:

Worldpay
AtkinsRéalis
RBC Brewin Dolphin
Newcastle Building Society
Newcastle Strategic Solutions
Vodafone
Reheat

Thank you to all participants for your help which is hugely appreciated.

 Brewin
Dolphin

 Newcastle
Building Society

 Newcastle
Strategic
Solutions

 **vodafone**

 Reheat

We would also like to sincerely thank our wonderful sponsors and donors for their generous support. Their contributions help us to continue with our mission and make lasting and positive impacts.

In 2024/25 our key sponsors and donors included:

Community Foundation Tyne & Wear
The National Lottery Community Fund
The Stuart Halbert Foundation
Hazelhurst Trust
Carr-Ellison Trust
Jane Robertson Alnwick
CEO Sleepout
Bernicia
Bidfood
Franklin Food & Drinks
Sage Wealth Management



In 2024/25 our Winter Light Trail sponsors included:

Sage Wealth Management
WorldPay
Arnold Clark
Ad Gefrin
Fusion Spaces
Eldon Square
Northern Powergrid
Northern Stage
Utilita Arena Newcastle



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