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ISSUE 130 FEBRUARY 2022



# Review

Client News. How our Grants have helped and continue to improve lives. Page 4

Expert Advice. Mark Lane explains why gardening really is for everyone. Page 11 Snippets. Garden Tips to help you grow successfully! Page 12



I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at once I saw a crowd, A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine And twinkle on the milky way, They stretched in never-ending line Along the margin of a bay: Ten thousand saw I at a glance, Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

A poet could not but be gay, In such a jocund company: I gazed-and gazed-but little thought What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in pensive mood, They flash upon that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude; And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils.





# A little about **Gardening** with **Disabilities Trust**

FORMERLY THE GARDENING FOR DISABLED TRUST

In 1968, Mrs Peggy Kinsey created the Gardening for Disabled Trust. A prescient and inspired lady, she observed that being outside in the fresh air, doing a little gardening and getting the 'soil under the fingernails' was helpful to well-being. Half a century later, the value of 'horticultural therapy' is well-known; and the Gardening with Disabilities Trust continues to award grants to those facing all kinds of mental and physical challenges, helping them defy their disabilities and making gardening possible again. Our clients tell us that these little grants can be 'life-changing'. Thank you for supporting the Trust, and helping more people re-discover the pleasure of gardening. **\*** 

#### LEAVING A CHARITABLE LEGACY

Legacies are a vital source of income for many good causes and charities in the UK and Gardening for Disabled Trust is no exception. The truth is that without the benefit of gifts left in wills many charities would struggle to survive. Leaving a charitable legacy can also produce tax benefits. If you leave a gift to charity in your will, it will not count towards the taxable value of your estate and may eliminate or reduce any Inheritance Tax payable. This is because the value of any legacy you leave to charity is deducted from your estate before the tax bill is calculated. If you are thinking of doing this it is necessary to speak to a solicitor.



# Hello!



Welcome to another edition of our newsletter packed with new and inspiring accounts of gardening creation.

Ever more important in this time of Covid, our gardens have provided a wonderful focus and distraction for our frustration and isolation. Unsurprisingly, requests for funding from the Trust have been breaking all records as more of us have realised the joys of getting down to the soil, or with a grant, getting the soil to the right height to suit our situation. The Trust has never been

so busy and yet fundraising opportunities so limited. However, a brilliant jaunt to a vibrant peony farm helped to restore our spirits and a further visit to the wonderful gardens at Boughton Monchelsea Place on a glorious day in June was a joy.

Sales of our much praised gardening advice book 'Cuttings' have continued apace. We held a well-attended Zoom lecture on forensic biology and spent a fascinating day with Marian Boswell in a garden of her design in Kent. Our Trustees rode to our rescue with a brilliant raffle of exclusive garden tours and teas.

As ever, we run as an entirely volunteer charity with no fixed costs for salaries or premises. Every penny raised or given will go to the deserving client who wants to keep gardening despite everything fate can throw in their direction. All donations to us will be used to fund our grants to keep enthusiastic gardeners actively gardening.

The committee deserve real thanks for their energy, skill and giving their time so very generously. Paul, our brilliant Treasurer, monitors our finance with efficiency and competence. We owe a huge debt to our terrific Trustees whose knowledge and guidance is so vital. Our change of name has now been formalised, we are now Gardening with Disabilities Trust.

So, springing off, with our new name and an optimistic air, we strive to ensure a happier and more colourful world for our many clients. We hope you will enjoy reading this and please, if you have some inspirational ideas, do let us know.

With very best wishes from us all,

Uplicity Seton

Flick Seton Chairman



# Client News

### Stories of how our Grants have helped.

#### Anne, Nottingham

She is in a wheelchair and the Trust gave her a Veg Trug, cover and compost. She says 'The garden has been a joy for me once again. Growing so many more of my own fruit and vegetables has been incredibly helpful in managing my eating disorder, my confidence in talking with my neighbours and the further reduction in our household income. I've experimented with jams and chutneys to extend the life of the produce.

The jam was a huge success – particularly with my neighbour's grandchildren – the chutneys are a work in progress! Having the new raised beds in the front garden has encouraged more people to walk past the house and has led to sharing of ideas and visits to other neighbours' gardens. My neighbour Nigel has spent the year trying to convince me to grow more flowers and I've spent it trying to get him to grow vegetables. We've both been completely unsuccessful but it's been great to have a gardening friend who lives in a wheelchair. Thank you so much to the Trust.' \*



#### **Beverley, Shelford**

She suffers from depression and severe pains throughout her body due to hypothyroidism. She has an allotment and the Trust helped her with a polytunnel and heater. She says 'I have been unwell for several months this year, however myself and fellow allotmenteers are enjoying the full use of the polytunnel that myself and my wife installed.

The heater has allowed us to use it during the cold spring days and lately some chilly summer days. It's made an amazing difference, allowing me to have shelter and warmth and continue to garden, helping me through chronic pain in a therapeutic way. I can't thank you enough for the grant and purchase of the tunnel.' \*



#### Juliet, Wellington

She suffers from Nemaline Myopathy (muscle weakness), lack of balance and curvature of the spine. The Trust helped her with two veg trugs. She says 'I have managed to grow raspberries, strawberries, beetroot and broccoli this year which I love. Thank you so much to Gardening with Disabilities Trust.' \*

#### Laura, Durham

She suffers from mental health issues, fibromyalgia and uses mobility aids. We gave her a grant towards soil, tools and plants. She says 'The grant helped me to make our garden more manageable to maintain and to enable me to enjoy my hobby. Thank you so much to the Gardening with Disabilities Trust.' \*

#### Vivien, Basingstoke

She suffers from chronic pain in her back and cannot bend at all. The Trust helped her with two planters. She says 'I cannot forget your kindness through the happiness I have had through the summer with my planters. For this year I have decided to have both planters with just flowers but next year, I will grow flowers in one and veg in the other. I was so lucky as one of my neighbours sorted out some paving slabs and built the planters for me. Thank from a very happy lady.' \*

#### Gabriella, Bagilt, Flintshire

She suffers from bi-polar disorder and anxiety. The Trust helped her with sleepers for raised beds. Garden-on-a-Roll supplied some plants for her beds. She says 'The raised beds have really given me the ease and confidence I needed to get into gardening, I am now able to potter and it really helps my mental health. Thank you so much to the Trust.' \*

#### Lady Ryder Memorial Garden, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

This is an acre walled community garden. People with physical and mental disabilities have been helping with this making it into an 'All Abilities/All Communities Garden'. They say 'We will teach and train people who want to learn some horticultural skills.

The photo shows the planting as well as the hard landscaping. The raised beds are specifically for the five special educational schools now queuing to come and the autism charity who are absolutely thrilled with what they can now come and do.

Thank you so much for your generous support which has gone to a good home and been well used.' \*



### **Client** News

#### **Caroline, Bexleyheath**

She suffers from mental health, PTSD and M.E. affecting her mobility. The Trust helped her with two Maxi Manger Trough Planters and she says 'The gardening world has literally opened up to me, immediately bursting into life, colour, birdsong and scent, with an abundance of perennials planted therein, for me to enjoy year after year. I am able to tend to them freely without pain or discomfort as I have complete access, allowing me to put my signature on the garden. I enthusiastically and studiously surveyed my RHS gardening books, in creating a plant design for my new troughs.

The unadulterated sheer joy and pleasure I get from my troughs, and garden in general, is incredibly important to me in promoting my overall wellbeing: mind, body and soul. I feel rejuvenated, motivated and inspired. My health conditions are such that I spend most of my time at home, and to be able to potter in my garden freely and without hinderance, taking in the sights and sounds of my garden, is very satisfying. The quality of growing profusely lends itself to a lush and abundant luxuriance display, with welcoming and encouraging wildlife into the garden. I am now full of energy, excitement, cheerfulness, ebullience, such is the power of Mother Nature and I thank Gardening with Disabilities Trust very much.' \*

#### George Eliot Hospital, Serenity Garden Project, Nuneaton

They have many patients suffering from strokes and dementia and the Trust gave them a grant towards wheelchair accessible flower beds to enable them to do some light gardening or simply enjoy the sensory elements of the plants. They say 'Thank you so much to the Trust for the donation provided, we couldn't have done it without your support.'\*



#### Jasmine, Taunton, Somerset

She is young and has spinal muscular atrophy and uses a wheelchair full time. She always loved helping her parents with gardening and the Trust helped her with two Veg Trugs, Herb Planter and some tools. **\*** 



#### **Clare, Sutton Coldfield**

She suffers from mental health and lives in a maisonette with a large drive in the front. The Trust helped her with a Veg Trug which is placed in her front garden as it is south facing. She says 'Earlier in the year I took up half of my brick paved driveway to create a garden for ornamental plants, and this has been complemented by the Veg Trug.

I have made good use of it over this growing season and have had good harvests of beetroot, carrots, broad beans, lettuce and rocket. I have also planted some herbs in it – mint, lemon balm, oregano, bay, rosemary and thyme. Currently there are still carrots, potatoes, and kalettes (which I'd never heard of before!). I have grown tomatoes, gooseberries and blueberries in pots in front of the trug. I have found the work involved in my garden very therapeutic, and my family and I have enjoyed sharing the produce!! Thank you so much Gardening with Disabilities Trust.' \*



Neuro Muscular Centre, Winsford, Cheshire This is a centre of excellence for people with Muscular Dystrophy offering training in digital graphic design. Last year they started a programme of gardening activities, mainly to encourage the students to get away from their computers for a time. The Trust helped them with a potting bench, Veg Trough and tools. They say 'We started our ' Get Up and Grow' Gardening Club in March and have transformed the bare earth of the NMC allotment garden into a bountiful harvest. As well as planting fruit trees and bushes for future years we have grown all our other plants from seed including, onions, radish, beetroot, carrots, beans, peas, courgettes, tomatoes, sweetcorn and more besides. We thank the Trust so much for helping us.' \*



# **Client** News

#### David, Ardrossan, Ayrshire

He has a muscle wasting disease, recently had a stroke which left him very depressed and uses a wheelchair.

He has been given an allotment which has changed his life and he wanted to create his own vegetable garden. The Trust gave him several raised beds and a shed. He also assists with a group of children with additional needs and wanted to help broaden their experiences through gardening. His wife says 'It has helped him socialize with other people and he has grown lots of vegetables and flowers. He has learnt how things grow and shares the vegetables with other people. It has given him a new lease of life and he thanks the Trust.' **\*** 

#### Roger, Middlesborough

He suffers from MS, had to move and is a keen gardener having taught it at school. The Trust helped him with some raised beds made from sleepers. He says 'I have already had great pleasure of getting some plants in before the weather changes as it is getting very cold now.

I am so pleased that I am able to manage this and am extremely grateful to the charity for this gift. It has already had such a positive impact on me!' 360 degree planting while in his wheelchair.' \*

#### Lorna, Ayrshire

She suffers from M.E. and has moved to a house with adaptations. She is a keen gardener and the Trust helped her with a Combi Shed /greenhouse to help her grow more organic vegetables.

She says 'The greenhouse has allowed me to connect with the outside again. I have a purpose to go out and get fresh air and I have grown my own vegetables which is giving me more motivation to eat better.

It has hugely helped my mental health by giving me an interest and getting out of the house. Thank you so much to the Gardening with Disabilities Trust.' \*



#### Bembrook & Apps Field Allotment, Hastings

They approached the Trust for help in building four 'Easy Plots' from an allotment to enable people who could no longer manage a full sized one due to disabilities.

We have given them a grant to build a high raised bed for one Easy Plot with a level area around it and they thanked the Trust. Ken hopes to be the first Easy Plot tenant as shown here. \*



#### Shirley, Lowerstoft

She had polio as a child and uses a wheelchair. She finds it difficult bending and the Trust helped her with raised beds made with recycled plastic. She says 'The grant has helped me to be able to carry on gardening using my wheelchair. It has given me a purpose in living and I love being outdoors.

It takes my mind off my husband's health problems and my own pain. Without your generosity our garden would still be a barren and colourless space. I would encourage anyone with disabilities to enjoy their garden even if it's a small area and to plant flowers or vegetables. Hopefully next year I will plant vegetables as well. Thank you once again.' \*

#### Umbrella Derby and Derbyshire, Mackworth, Derby

This charity supports children and young people aged 5 to 30 with any additional needs, including physical, sensory, learning and behavioural disabilities. They have created an allotment which will allow the young adults to plan and grow their own produce. The Trust helped them with a polytunnel with a work area for potting and wheelchair accessible raised beds. They thank the Trust for helping them. **\*** 

#### New Lodge Apartments, York

This is an extra care development with apartments for people over 55 with many health issues. The Trust helped them with a Vegepod. They say 'Our residents are thrilled and it is integral to the gardening group here at New Lodge. Our residents love their vegepod and it is a real talking point of the development. Once again many thanks to the Trust – we are all enjoying the produce that is growing in the pod and hope to undertake food demos etc in 2022 from the produce grown in it.' **\*** 



# Fundraising

Due to Covid-19 we have not been able to hold some of our usual fund-raising events such as lectures in halls and our Annual Plant Fair but have managed to fit in several garden visits this year.

#### Little Budds Peony Farm, Thurnham, Kent

We had a wonderful tour and talk in June with beautiful peonies in flower. There were many different varieties growing and we were all given 5 flowers to take home.



Garden visit to Boughton Monchelsea Place, Maidstone, Kent. This garden visit was in June and we had a wonderful tour with the owner. There are intimate walled gardens and a courtyard herb garden with spectacular views over its own deer park.

**Fairlight End, Pett, East Sussex**. This garden visit was in June and we had a tour with the owner. There were wonderful views of the unspoilt Wealden landscape with amazing wildflower meadows and ponds.

Garden visit in Eridge, Kent. This garden commands a wonderful position in the High Weald ANOB with wide sweeping views to Eridge Rocks and was designed by Marian Boswall. She gave us a talk and wonderful tour in July and there were some splendid sculptures. We raised £1,604 from these events. **Glorious Garden Raffle.** We had an online raffle with 23 prizes including garden tours around the UK, lunch and garden visits at hotels, online gardening course and gardening books amongst them. We raised £2,500.

Webinar held in October with Dr Mark Spencer 'MURDER MOST FLORID'. We had a fascinating talk from Dr Mark Spencer who is an internationally respected forensic botanist. He has worked on over 30 cases involving murder, violence, terrorism, arson, burglary and wildlife crime, to name a few. Plants are silent witnesses to crimes – they hold secrets and tell stories. Fungi, moss, ferns and brambles all hold evidence and the police are encouraged not to cut down or strim vegetation. We raised £410.

'CUTTINGS'- a cornucopia of gardening tips from famous, expert and green-fingered friends. Having printed our book 'Cuttings' in November 2020 we have continued to sell many copies throughout 2021. Cuttings is a little treasure trove of gardening tips. You can still order a copy now, through our website, at £10 plus p&p, with all proceeds going towards the Trust. www.gardeningwithdisabilitiestrust.org.uk This year we have raised £3,226. \*

### We welcome anyone wanting to open their gardens or hold other events in aid of the charity



## **Expert** Advice

**Gardening does not judge us on our ability or age.** I am a great believer that there is a gardening task for everyone and sometimes you need to think outside the box.

We are an ageing population, and despite eating healthily and exercising regularly, we can still get illnesses and life-changing conditions, but this should not stop us from gardening.

Gardening is a great way to reduce stress levels. Just sitting outside, listening to nature, the birds and perhaps a water feature, will automatically slow down breathing, the muscles in your shoulders will relax and your eyes will have a rest from our hectic lifestyles of computers, mobile phones or other electronic devices.



Many people think of raised beds to help older people and people with a disability; however, if you cannot twist your body the only workable area is the piece of soil to the side or in front of you. A better option is a V shaped plant trough or raised table so that a garden chair or wheelchair can slot underneath. The depth of planting varies but can be up to 70cms. Pots are also a great way to bring colour, scent, and texture up close to the house, by the front or back door, near a seating area or just as a standalone display. Find lightweight pots, which when filled with gravel for drainage and soil, you can still lift. If pots are not your thing, then grow plants in a border, but remember to leave room for a flagstone, kneeling pad or stool, so that you can still get to the back of the border.

Also, consider growing low-maintenance plants, such as Geranium 'Rozanne' (pictured), Erysimum 'Bowles Mauve' and Perovskia 'Little Spires'. Long-handled tools and ergonomic tools help to reach without bending or twisting, and some are designed especially for people with weak wrists or dexterity problems.

The important thing is that gardening improves your endurance and strength, while at the same time relaxing your body and mind. I am a great believer that there is a solution to everything when it comes to gardening. \*

### Mark Lane is a Trustee of Gardening with Disabilities Trust.



garden and landscape designer

### Snippets

### Garden Tips to help you grow successfully!

Perennials: cut back or leave? Herbaceous perennials can fill borders to overflowing in summer, but when cold weather arrives they die back, leaving dead stems. It is tempting to tidy up by removing these but in some cases, it might be better to leave them. Wildlife such as ladybirds, banded snails and spiders find protection in dead stems and foliage. Those that produce seed, such as teasel, coneflower and sunflowers provide food for the birds. Stems that have been left during winter can be cut back and composted when growth resumes (typically in April): look for the tell-tale signs of green shoots emerging from the base of the plant.



Helping young trees grow to healthy maturity. The best way to ensure a tree's good health over its lifetime is to look after it well in its first few years of life. Planting is key. Run a spade through the roots of pot-grown trees before planting to encourage new, fine roots to branch out into the soil making a studier tree. Bare-root trees establish quicker but be gentle with Japanese maples and Magnolias which do not like root disturbance. In the young life of a tree prune for a healthy open shape allowing the wind to blow through.

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**Early fruit blossom** Protect this from frost. Apricots and peaches both flower early so keep fleece on hand to drape over them if frost is forecast.

What opportunities do rented gardens provide? Any space, regardless of how weird or awkward, is an opportunity even if it is a window box or a tree in a pot by the door. Don't be put off if everywhere is paved as you can have all plants in pots which can be moved if need be. Maintain good relations with your landlord - if you give a little the landlord will hopefully give back in return. It is much easier to garden when everything is in the ground. Herbaceous perennials form a clump so quickly and when you move take half and leave half so there is something for nature and the next tenant!

How to coax early blooming. There are many ways to encourage plants into flower a little earlier than usual. Hellebore and other perennials can be moved into a cold or frost-free greenhouse. Tiarella (pictured) surge into flower weeks ahead of normal and the pots can be moved to a porch when in flower or the stems cut for a table posy.



Also Dicentras and Epimediums are good candidates. Make sure that you do not give them too much warmth otherwise it will promote soft, weak growth. The other way is to cover individual plants in the garden with bell jars to provide a little extra warmth.

#### Protect trees from pests.

Rabbits and deer will gnaw at bark during the winter months, so be sure to protect the trunks of any new or young trees from damage. The most fail-safe way of defending your plants is to install deer and rabbit proof fencing around the whole garden or parts that you want to protect. If fencing is impossible or undesirable, shield individual plants with wire netting enclosures or individual guards that spiral around tree trunks. Pest repellents can also help. Grazers sells a deterrent based on calcium that discourages both rabbits and deer from eating the plants to which it is applied. The RHS has a list of deer and rabbit resistant plants which may help prevent future outbreaks of Mr. McGregor-like rage or heartbreak!



Seed Potatoes. When they arrive, stand them eyes-upward on a light cool windowsill to chit.

#### The Healing Hedgerow

The British countryside is a rich source of natural remedies. Discover how our native plants can ease everything from common colds to arthritis. *Rosehips* – They are thought to help diarrhoea and constipation and may relieve osteoarthritis

and rheumatoid arthritis. They are high in Vit C. Wait until after the first frost as this develops their flavour. Boil 1kg cooked rosehips with 1kg caster sugar and strain to make rosehip syrup – take a teaspoon a day.

Brambles – Blackberry picking is a late summer ritual and they are full of nutrients and antioxidants. There is evidence that they help to protect against lung and colon cancer. Pick when they are black and glossy and they can be frozen. For a Vitamin boost, blitz them with some yoghurt and a banana for the perfect breakfast smoothie.

*Cobnuts or Hazelnuts* – Studies have found that they have an antioxidant power 20 times greater than Vit C and help to strengthen blood vessels, lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease. Harvest in September when fresh and green, eat straight from the shell or dry on a tray.

Nettles – Nettle extract can help calm the symptoms of hay fever and the seeds are also a great tonic for boosting energy levels. Harvest leaves in spring and early summer whilst young and dry in an airing cupboard, using gloves, rub off the seeds. Store them in a jar and add to soups or salads. *Comfrey* – It aids tissue regeneration and has antiinflammatory phytochemicals. Ointments can be applied to heal bruises, wounds and help back pain and arthritis, only using it externally. Mash a handful of leaves with some hot water, wrap in muslin and hold against the injured area for up to 10 mins at a time.

Elderflower – This is renowned for its effects on the respiratory system, helping to treat colds, flu and sinusitis. To induce sweating and break a fever, place 2-4 elderflowers in a teapot of just boiled water, steep for 10 mins strain and drink. White flowerheads appear from May and can be used for Elderflower Cordial. \*



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## **Guest** Bloggers

We have a weekly blog on the website from a different guest blogger each week. To read them please visit: www.gardeningwithdisabilitiestrust.org.uk/blog/

This year we have had a really diverse range of guest bloggers, all of which are archived and available on the website to read.

In January 2021 it started with Marty Reville, the Head Gardener at Kilmokea Country Manor and Gardens in Ireland writing about his five favourite plants of 2020 one of them being Calendula officinalis 'Sunset Buff' shown here.



At the end of January I wrote a blog about why we should be buying old gardening books. I am a professional gardener, not a writer and show that anyone can write a blog, just choose a subject you are passionate about. I am always looking for people to write one for our website so if you are interested please email me annamatthewsgdt@gmail.com Although I ask bloggers to write about a subject linked to gardening, it is very broad and results in a diverse range of horticultural subjects.

February Andrew Sinden, a plantaholic who runs his own business, wrote about snail proof gardening and Euphorbias certainly do not attract snails. Followed by Mike Higgins, a tree and landscape officer who wrote about his career and rewarding job. Finally in February Camilla Grayle a garden designer wrote about the Spring Garden. As you can see a wide range of horticultural subjects and that was just February.

In April there was an interesting blog by the owner of Hole Park Gardens, Kent Edward Barham, his Head Gardener Quentin Stark and Assistant Head Gardener Joe Archer. They talked about how they run and have developed an old family run estate which is open to the public.

In June Nikki Cooper, the owner of Old Hogden Seeds wrote about the Herb Garden. Peter Welsh, the co-founder of Tadpole Garden Village wrote about the Greenhouse Project and Christine Fowler, a Garden Designer talked about creating a wildlife friendly garden.

Our bloggers live in many different countries and in July Alan Jolliffe JP Vice President at the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture wrote about Pohutukawa – The New Zealand Christmas tree.



Tanith Perry-Mills, a freelance Garden Writer who lives in Saskatchewan, Canada wrote about making her garden more accessible as she suffers from chronic fatigue. In August Georgie Newbery an artisan florist and flower farmer wrote about growing flowers that benefit wildlife.



Later in the year Mike Rogers, who is a fabulous supporter of our charity as well as being an allotment holder, armchair gardener, and sofa flying book buff wrote about plants he grew on the window-sill. Karin wrote about her experience participating in 'The Glasshouse Project', a horticultural rehabilitation project, growing and selling house plants from disused prison glasshouses in the UK. Geoffrey Juden, the Chairman of the East London Garden Society wrote about the Bethnal Green Mulberry Tree.

Mark Lane, who is a Trustee of our charity as well as a Garden Designer, Writer and Broadcaster wrote in November about a full workout in the garden. In December Beth Otway, a Freelance Garden Writer, Photographer and Horticulturist at Pumpkinbeth.com wrote about her wildlife gardening Tips and the final blogger of the year was Boris Mackey, the Community Outreach Manager for Rehab 4 Addiction a UK based Addiction Helpline.

We can't mention all our super bloggers here but we can thank each and every one of them for taking the time to write for us. \*

Anna Mathews is one of the committee members for Gardening with Disabilities Trust.



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