MENTAL HEALTH IN HORTICULTURE

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Welcome

In 597, St Augustine established what is now The King’s School Canterbury, the first charity, still in existence, to be founded in the UK. This year Perennial, established in 1839, celebrates its 180th birthday. So in comparison we don’t seem that old, but in fact very few charities go back as far as us and we are very proud of our history and our record of service to people in horticulture over the last 180 years.

But as I hope this newsletter will show, we are very focused on the present and the future. In this issue you will read about mental health in the horticulture sector, we report on financial wellbeing and the launch of our budgeting tool and we explain how we support families during school holidays.

Included here also is a preview of the new look Perennial brand, which will be launched officially at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May. Our reach has expanded over the years from supporting gardeners to helping everyone working in or retired from horticulture, and our new strapline ‘helping people in horticulture’ has been developed to get this message out as widely as possible.

And of course we have news of how we are marking our 180th year. We have show gardens at Cardiff (with a theme that links to mental health), Harrogate and Chelsea along with a presence at many others. We are offering a bumper programme of special events culminating in our Festival Dinner on 11 October. And we are investing in our garden at York Gate (featured on 15 March on Gardeners’ World) to ensure that it continues to offer a wonderful experience to visiting garden lovers well into the future, and thereby spreads the word about the advice and support we offer.

Everything you read about in this newsletter, indeed everything that we do as a charity, is directed towards the achievement of our purpose of building better futures for people in horticulture and their families. Thank you for supporting us in that endeavour and happy reading.

Peter Newman
Chief Executive
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It is 180 years since Perennial was founded at an annual dinner for ‘nurserymen, florists and amateurs’ with the aim of providing a source of income for gardeners in retirement. We have grown a lot since 1839, evolving to meet the changing needs of today’s horticulture industry and the challenges faced by individuals and families.

This year we want to reach more people than ever and, as part of the year-long calendar of events to mark our 180th anniversary, we are creating a series of show gardens at some of the top flower shows to raise awareness of how Perennial helps people in horticulture.

Within the gardening world, the major flower shows are the most high profile events and a valuable platform for getting in front of a large audience of visitors and the media. None more so than the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, where we are excited to be creating the Perennial Lifeline Garden in May.

We have also been taking part in the RHS Flower Show Cardiff and the Harrogate Spring Flower Show with gardens designed to highlight to visitors Perennial’s vital role in building better futures for people in horticulture and their families now and into the future.

The Perennial Lifeline Garden is inspired by Sir Roy Strong’s autobiographical The Laskett Gardens and designed by first time Chelsea designers Colm Joseph and Duncan Cargill, following a competition run jointly by Perennial and the London College of Garden Design. The garden celebrates Perennial’s role in the heart of horticulture and captures the spirit of The Laskett Gardens in Herefordshire, created by Sir Roy Strong CH and his wife Julia Trevelyan Oman that was bequeathed to Perennial in 2015.

Staged in Chelsea Flower Show’s centrepiece the Great Pavilion, this walk-through exhibit is inspired by the classical rose garden and colonnade at The Laskett Gardens, which are reimagined in a modern design. Here the rose garden takes the form of a lower maintenance and wildlife-friendly ‘rose meadow’, with long seasonal interest. The colonnade is reinterpreted in an asymmetrically arranged series of verticals including metal screens, topiary pillars and sawn limestone columns. Two modern fountains and three multi-stem trees replace the classical water features and sculpture. A contemporary rill flows around the garden, representing the ‘lifeline’ that Perennial has been for so many people over the past 180 years. We understand the critical needs of people in horticulture, but also that anyone can struggle, whether their difficulties are financial, physical or emotional, which is why we are always there as a safety net.

The creation of this garden is a fantastic demonstration of the industry coming together to support its trade charity and ultimately anyone in horticulture that may need help at any time during their lives. The wide range of suppliers and partners that have made it possible include London Stone, providing all the stone for the hard landscaping, Conquest Creative Spaces as contractor and plants and trees supplied by Hardy’s Cottage Garden Plants, Peter Beales Roses and Majestic Trees. Stark & Greensmith have designed and crafted the bespoke metalwork and fountain. By partnering with London College of Garden Design on the design competition and having apprentices from the Association of Professional Landscapers assist with the build, we are helping support new talent entering the industry and giving them experience that will inspire them in their careers to come.
At RHS Flower Show Cardiff, Irish garden designer Peter Donegan, Burnham Landscaping and CED Stone created a show garden to raise awareness of Perennial in Wales.

The garden was a modern urban private space, designed for relaxing with friends or family, but its underlying message was a serious one. It invited visitors to look beyond the polished exterior and imagine what challenges its owner or creator may be facing.

In a modern world dominated by social media, we can so often be fooled and fail to realise when people are struggling. Mental health is a growing concern across the UK but Perennial is here to help people in horticulture when challenges seem overwhelming. The growing need for the awareness of Perennial’s services led us to the Cardiff show for the very first time. Fewer people in Wales know of Perennial and this was a real opportunity to make a difference. The garden would not have been possible without the brilliant support of other partners including Hortus Loci and Oxford Planters.

The garden is now being relocated to Veterans’ Growth in East Sussex, a charity that provides horticultural therapy to ex-service men and women facing mental health issues. We know the positive impact gardening can have on mental health so it is great that this garden is going to live on after the show and help even more people who need it.

We were thrilled that the Perennial Legacy Garden won Best in Show and a Premier Gold Award at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show. The garden aimed to inspire people to think about their own legacy and the difference their help can make to the lives of others.

The conceptual design created by David Wyndham Lewis used water to represent life and legacy. The water reminds us that life emerges, flows through time overcoming all obstacles in its way before returning to the earth. The bubbling, trickling and flowing of water culminated in a still pool, providing a calming space for people to sit, reflect and remember.

Taking part in the flower shows not only brings the work of Perennial to a wide range of people, they are also a great way to demonstrate publicly to the industry that we are there for them. The designers, contractors, nurserymen, growers and all of the other hundreds of professionals that come together to create these wonderful events are the very people Perennial helps if they ever need it. While those involved in public shows are the section of the industry more likely to have heard of us, many show visitors employ self-employed gardeners, tree surgeons and landscapers to help them in their own gardens and it is these types of people that are hard for us to reach. And they are often some of the more vulnerable people and the most likely to need our support.

Against the harsh backdrop of austerity measures that have resulted in growing social problems, longer waiting times for access to key services and a more complex benefits system, our role in supporting people in horticulture has continued to deepen. That is why we really appreciate the part that flower show visitors play in helping spread the word about Perennial.
Be mindful of your mental health

The Perennial Garden at RHS Flower Show Cardiff highlighted the importance of acknowledging mental health in horticulture and we’re committed to supporting people through challenges affecting their mental health every day.

- Nearly half of adults in the UK think they have had a mental health condition
- Nearly 1 in 4 people in the UK have anxiety or depression
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for men aged under 50 in England and Wales
- 1 in 5 adults say they have thought about taking their own life
According to latest figures, nearly half of all adults in the UK believe they have had a mental health condition at some point in their lives. Mental health problems are a growing public health concern: the number of women being diagnosed with common mental health problems has been steadily increasing and suicide remains the leading cause of death for men aged 50 and under in England and Wales.

To highlight the importance of talking about mental health in the horticulture industry, Perennial supported a show garden at RHS Flower Show Cardiff earlier this month, designed by Peter Donegan. Speaking about his decision to design a garden for Perennial, he says:

“In a modern world dominated by social media we can so often be fooled by an edited Instagram post or a gushing status update. When many of us are struggling with physical, mental and financial challenges and burdens. Perennial helps people in horticulture manage and overcome the challenges life throw at us which can become contributing factors to poor physical and mental health in an industry that demands strength and resilience.”

Mental health is often referred to as ‘emotional health’ or ‘wellbeing’ and it touches everyone. We all feel stressed, sad or afraid about something from time to time and usually those feelings pass but sometimes they develop into a more serious problem and this could happen to any of us. Julia Hayne, Director of Services at Perennial says:

“One in four people working in horticulture are likely to experience mental health problems and we know the impact mental health has on lives and the ripple effect on family and friends. Research shows that those on low incomes are more likely to develop a mental health condition, this may be due to the stress of struggling to meet financial demands, the impact of debt, poor housing conditions or poor physical health. Our services team works with people facing challenges that can often seem overwhelming, supporting people coping with life changing events and helping them overcome some of the most complex issues families are facing today. There are many ways in which we help, including maximising income through welfare benefits, financial assistance or support with housing, employment or debt. We’re here for you and your family, so please don’t wait until things are becoming too much before you get in touch.”

Perennial helps people like Leigh, a self-employed landscaper who developed an acute skin condition as a result of stress at work. He was unable to work while he waited for treatment and as a lone parent with bills to pay, he worried about money and fell into depression. He says:

“The bills didn’t stop, so I didn’t. My condition made me mentally depressed and I just didn’t know how I was going to cope.

I was referred to Perennial by In Touch and within a week I had received a visit from my caseworker. He was brilliant from day one, helping me fill in the forms to apply for financial help while I was unable to work. He made all the phone calls and was so patient and organised about everything. It was like a huge weight had been lifted and I know that it has contributed to my recovery.

After a 6 month wait I was referred for regular UV light treatment at Salisbury hospital. Although the individual sessions last only a few minutes the recovery process is very slow. My hands and feet are getting better now though and I am able to stay on my feet for longer periods each day.

If it wasn’t for Perennial I don’t know where I’d be now. They’re patient, they don’t judge. You just feel like you’re being looked after, when you can’t look after yourself.”

You can read more about Leigh and watch a short film about how we helped at perennial.org.uk/leigh

TOP TIPS FOR STAYING MENTALLY HEALTHY

Mental health affects everyone and we should all be mindful about how to take care of our mental wellbeing. We all cope with situations in different ways, but there are a few tips we can all adopt to stay on top of things.

1. Talk about it – It can be difficult to express how you feel but it helps to acknowledge that you’re not ok. Talking about your feelings isn’t a sign of weakness – it can help you cope with a problem if you share it with someone.

2. Keep active and get outdoors – exercise is well known to help keep your mind healthy but if poor physical health prevents you from keeping active, try to enjoy a little time outside every day.

3. Eat well and drink responsibly – eating a balanced diet and not exceeding your recommended daily alcohol consumption will really help you stay physically and mentally healthy.

4. Keep in touch – your own personal network is a powerful safety net so stay in touch with friends and family. Spending time with people you love will make you feel good.

5. Ask for help – we all need a helping hand sometimes and it’s OK to ask for help. Perennial is here for anyone working in or retired from horticulture and no problem or question is too big or small. We’re ready to help you get the support you need.

More advice about staying mentally healthy is available from the Mental Health Foundation at mentalhealth.org.uk
Perennial’s gardens play an important role in raising awareness of the charity, bringing new audiences to Perennial and spreading the word that we are there to help everyone in horticulture. As well as this they also provide opportunities for training and we’re delighted to currently have two full time apprentices at Fullers Mill and two full time trainees at York Gate.

Head Gardener Annie Dellbridge and her team were delighted to welcome visitors back to Perennial’s Suffolk garden when it reopened for the 2019 season on Wednesday 3 April.

The team worked hard over the winter months. A number of really old willow trees were felled, having become hollow and unsafe and the areas replanted with a mixture of shrubs, perennials and bulbs. The millpond in Fullers Mill garden was desilted, leaving it looking fantastic with a new bridge having been constructed over it and new planting opportunities created close to the water.

Volunteers needed
The garden enjoyed record numbers of visitors in 2018, following an appearance on BBC Gardeners’ World, and its ever growing popularity means the team are always on the look out for new volunteers. Whether you’d like to help out in the garden or in the tea room, please get in touch - email fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk for more information or call 01284 728 888.

Fullers Mill is an RHS Partner Garden, with RHS members entitled to free entry on Wednesday afternoons.

Private visits from groups are welcomed throughout the year by prior arrangement, with an introductory talk available from staff and plenty of parking for coaches.

We’d like to say a fond farewell and thank you to John Weeks, the founder of the Friends of Fullers Mill, who retired from his role as Chair of the Friends in October. We are extremely grateful for all he has done over the last 7 years and wish him all the best.

Tea, coffee and delicious home-made cakes are available to purchase from the Bothy. Plants propagated from the garden are available for sale. Assistance dogs welcome.

Dates for your diary
Sunday 19 May - NGS opening
Sunday 21 July - Suffolk Nurseries Plant Fair
Monday 22 July - Illustrating Lilies - two day botanical art course (visit website for details on how to book)
Saturday 17 August - Mid Anglia Alpine Garden Society bulb Sale

Opening times
through to 30 September 2019
Monday — closed
Tuesday — closed
Wednesday — 2:00pm - 5:00pm
Thursday — closed
Friday — 2:00pm - 5:00pm
Saturday — closed
Sunday — 11:00am - 5:00pm
You might have seen at the start of the year that Perennial was granted planning permission for re-development of the facilities at York Gate. Work is due to start in September/October 2019 and is scheduled to finish ahead of or shortly after the 2020 opening. There’ll be no interruption to the facilities at York Gate this year though and it remains business as usual.

What’s the redevelopment about?
Perennial acquired the garden’s neighbouring property in 2015. Following the success of our small but beautiful tea room, it will be relocating to the cottage, doubling our catering capacity to 50 covers. We’ll have onsite parking, releasing the pressure on other facilities around Adel, and giving us a safer, more accessible solution for cars, bikes and pedestrians arriving at the garden. The current front garden of the cottage will undergo a major design and landscape overhaul to create a new beautiful space to compliment the garden rooms next door, and this will form the new entrance to the garden. There’ll be a significant number of native trees planted as part of the development too.

Why the need for redevelopment?
York Gate is an important presence for Perennial in the north of England, as proved by increased concentrations of clients and supporters in and around Yorkshire. The garden enjoyed record numbers of visitors in 2018 and Friends of York Gate membership stands at more than 600 supporters. The redevelopment will accommodate the growing visitor numbers, improving parking and other facilities, and will grow the garden’s profile, feeding into our strategy to increase awareness of Perennial. Individual self-employed and older retired horticulturists are the hardest for us to reach and among the visitors to York Gate will be people who employ horticulturists to maintain their own gardens. We rely on those who enjoy gardens to tell these hard to reach horticulturists that Perennial is here for them and to encourage them to get in touch with us.

Across York Gate and Fullers Mill we have around 150 volunteers, who we rely upon not only to help the gardens staff, but also to support Perennial and spread the word about the charity. The benefits of volunteering are not just one way. Volunteering can help combat loneliness and offer the chance to learn new skills.

Many of you reading this will have supported Perennial by shopping on our website, through our catalogues and at our trade stands at flower shows. The York Gate gift shop provides another outlet for this income stream and also stocks branded products, all of which help spread the word about Perennial. For example our Perennial Christmas cards reached over 340,000 people in 2018.

The investment in York Gate will also provide greater opportunity for training and the improved facilities will provide a base to run training sessions for horticulturists. Last year former York Gate trainee Jack Ogg returned to the garden in the role of Senior Gardener, and we were delighted to welcome him back. Turn to p23 for our day in the life of interview with Jack to read more.

Opening times
Through to 30 September 2019
Open Sunday to Thursday
12.30pm - 4.30pm
Closed Fridays and Saturdays

Our popular Tea Room and Gift Shop is open throughout the garden’s opening times, you can enjoy light lunches and afternoon teas, or a selection of freshly home baked cakes, including a daily gluten free choice.

Please park on Church Lane and walk through the church yard, then straight on to come out opposite the garden gate.

Visitor groups are welcome but please book first.
NOTES FROM THE LASKETT GARDENS

by Sir Roy Strong

Spring arrived early at The Laskett but then, in early April, went into sharp reverse with bitter cold and snow flurries. By then one of the garden’s great set pieces, the Silver Jubilee Garden parterre was virtually in full bloom weeks in advance.

Every year a great Dutch friend of mine sends me some 600 tulips, half orange and half white, the colours of the Dutch royal house. They, in turn, remind me of another great Dutch friend who died in his early fifties who introduced me to his country’s rich horticultural tradition. Later I was to get to know so many of the Dutch who had created some of most wonderful perfectly articulated small gardens. They were brave people who, after the War, went back to a wiped out landscape and began again. To me they have always remained a heroic inspiration. One woman came back and the first thing that she had to do was plant a shelter belt before she could even begin her garden again. She waited a decade and then that moment of rebirth began.

To listen to her tell her story brought tears to my eyes. I need hardly add that her small garden had a poignant and perfect beauty.

As I write this I look out of the window down onto a vista which once was dominated by a great cedar of Lebanon. When we first glimpsed the house in 1972 it seemed to hold the house in its arms. It was the signature tree, referred to when the garden began to open as a point of reference seen from every viewpoint across the four acres. Over the years howling gales from Wales to the west took its toll as vast branch after branch was blown off until, finally, last year the decision had to be taken to fell it. To my late wife and myself it somehow was The Laskett and now it had gone. It had been there since the 1870s and now there was just a poignant stump.

But today I look out across the rolling farmland and muted hills of the Herefordshire landscape and, yes, for the first time the light comes pouring into the garden in front of the house. There too this winter the four malus floribunda, over forty years old and withering, also were felled. But they’ve been replanted and there’s a blossom or two even on these spindly saplings. If I reach ninety, a few years off, I shall see them again in their springtime frothy glory of pink and white.

The Laskett Gardens are open to pre-booked groups on Tuesdays and Thursdays until the end of September. Find out more and book online at: thelaskettgardens.co.uk
Volunteers are hugely important to the work of Perennial. From helping at flower shows and in our gardens to selling Christmas cards and helping in our warehouse, the support they have shown has been amazing and we simply could not do what we do without them.

Now we want to take our volunteering to the next level by setting up a network of community groups across the country. This will become a key part of the way we spread the word about Perennial, so everyone in horticulture knows we’re there for them when they need us, as well as raising funds. To help make this happen, we have recently appointed James Burns as our new Community Fundraising Manager, who will lead this initiative. He joins Perennial from Help for Heroes where he was a Regional Manager.

James says: “Having a proactive team of community fundraising volunteers working in different locations across the country will become an important way for us to reach even more people in horticulture with information about how we can help and provide support before a situation becomes a crisis. We know that volunteers find it a really rewarding experience and they often become actively involved and want to find ways to do more.”

“So now is the chance for you to become an even more valued part of our team. We want you to let us know what you can do and help shape what our community fundraising looks like. Put simply – we need your help! Please contact us if you are interested in setting up a group and or getting involved in any way. It is fun and sociable to be part of a team working together and knowing that you are making a difference.”

There are many ways, big and small, that you can get active for Perennial. You could give a talk at a gardening club or community group, collect donations at your garden centre, attend local fetes or fairs to sell merchandise and raise awareness, or be part of our volunteer team at larger events. We are always keen to encourage people to take part in fundraising activities but there is also a role for volunteers supporting fundraisers. That includes cheering on those who are running, cycling or walking, helping promote Perennial at these events, or becoming the Perennial representative who picks up the cheque and takes part in a photo opportunity.

Above all we want people to find ways to engage with their family, friends and colleagues to raise awareness. Over the next few months we will be out and about speaking to our existing supporters to get their ideas, the more creative the better. George Kestell has been actively promoting Perennial in his local community in Cornwall for over 15 years. As well as creating exhibits for Perennial at Cornish flower shows, he has taken every possible opportunity to spread the word about Perennial and raise money through fundraising events and product sales.

He says: “Working voluntarily for Perennial fulfilled a need in me to do something philanthropic that benefitted the industry I love and have worked in since I was a boy. But volunteering has also opened doors many for me. My advice would simply be to try it – you never know where it may lead.”

If you are interesting in helping set up or take part in a local community group, we want to hear from you.

Please contact James Burns on jburns@perennial.org.uk or call: 07946 055 848.

For a full run down of all current volunteering roles, please visit www.perennial.org.uk/volunteer
Spring clean your finances with Perennial

Our easy to use online budgeting tool offers financial confidence and control to people in horticulture and their families
A recent financial wellbeing survey of working-age people found that 94% worry about money and of this group over three quarters say it impacts their work. Less than half of employees surveyed had a financial plan and debt was cited as an issue for 58% of people. In 2018, Perennial helped people in horticulture access nearly £4 million in financial assistance – more than any other year in our 180 year history. Perennial is encouraging everyone in horticulture, regardless of their financial status, to think about their finances and check their ‘financial health’. Regular checks help people understand their situation, identify potential problems early and plan for the future.

Our easy to use online budgeting tool is a quick and simple way of understanding your situation and proactively managing your money.

Wendy Tozer, Debt Advice Manager at Perennial, says:

“Most of the people we help require financial support of some kind and we know it is a huge contributing factor to stress and other mental health issues. But financial wellbeing is so much more than managing debt and we want everyone in horticulture to have the confidence to take control of their money. Our online budgeting tool can help you understand your financial situation and suggest changes for successfully managing monthly budgets.”

According to the Close Brothers Financial Wellbeing Index 2019, money worries are more prevalent among younger people. Over half of people aged 18-34 say they worry about money, with women twice as likely to worry than men. The top three concerns are funding retirement (31%), paying off debts (27%) and coping financially with losing their job (23%). Taking control of your finances, particularly when earning a low wage, can be challenging but Perennial’s Budgeting Tool could be the first step for many people in horticulture. Wendy continues:

“Creating a realistic budget is really important because it helps you understand how you are using your money and where your biggest expenditures are. Seeing this written down can really help and the great thing about our tool is that it suggests changes you can make to achieve a good balance between your income and expenditure. The tool also offers lots of tips for increasing your income and reducing your spending and points you in the right direction for further help if you need it.”

Speaking about his experience of using the Perennial budgeting tool, one person said:

“I used the Perennial budgeting tool on my phone and it was very easy to use. It has helped me understand my finances better and encouraged me to contact Perennial for additional help and advice. I’d certainly recommend it to others who might be worrying about money.”

In 2019 Perennial wants to reach more people than ever before with information about our services, including preventing the need for Perennial’s help in the first place. Julia Hayne, Director of Services at Perennial, says:

“We have seen a 22% increase in the number of people needing crisis and emergency support since 2016 and we know that unplanned expenditure remains a challenge for families managing a stretched monthly budget. We are committed to helping people take control of their finances to prevent the need for our crisis response services, and would urge anyone worried about money to use the online tool and speak to us as soon as possible. In most cases we can make a positive change to people’s circumstances and the earlier we can get involved, the better.”

Perennial’s online budgeting tool is available via our website (www.perennial.org.uk) and can be used on a desktop computer, tablet or smart phone. It is very easy to use and does not need any technical or financial expertise. All information provided is completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. People can use it anonymously if they wish or they can register to allow them to revisit their budget at any time and see how their planned changes are working.

If you have urgent debt issues you can contact Perennial’s qualified debt advisers who can help by negotiating with creditors, preparing financial statements, advising on bankruptcy, helping with court paperwork and offering representation at hearings. We can often help people working in horticulture and their families with a range of short term financial support. Our team can talk to you about your circumstances and work through solutions together on 0800 093 8546.
Last year Perennial helped people access more financial support than ever before. It is great that we were able to increase our support for those in need, but our ambitious goal to reach more people every year means that demand for our help will only continue to grow.

As a result, our supporters will play an increasingly important role in helping generate the funds that are vital to keeping our services going.

While investments, legacies and donations from people who enjoy gardens, parks and green spaces form a major part of our income, developing our corporate partnerships is key for both bringing in income and raising awareness at grass roots level across different sectors of the industry. Leading the charge in forging new partnerships with businesses and organisations across the industry, Kate Cooney joined Perennial as Corporate Partnerships Manager in the autumn. Kate will be working alongside Sue Brinsden, Partnerships Officer and to further strengthen our work in this area, we welcome Philip Swainston this month as Corporate Development Manager, who comes to us from the HTA.

Kate says: “It is fantastic to see the many original and creative ways that companies are coming up with to support us. We are keen to build lasting partnerships with businesses that complement their own strategic objectives. No matter the size of your organisation or how you would like to get involved, we are keen to hear from you.”

Europlants open day

Thank you to Renato Canale and all the team at Europlants who raised over £3,000 for Perennial at their recent Spring Open Days. Europlants has raised thousands of pounds for various charities over the years at this popular annual event and we were delighted to be chosen as their charity this year. Garden designers, landscapers and local authority buyers came together for a day of networking and the chance to browse Europlants’ ranges of indoor and outdoor plants. A raffle and auction were held in aid of Perennial. Auctioneer extraordinaire was David Domoney from ITV’s Love Your Garden who kept the bidding flowing and worked hard to help raise as much money as possible for Perennial.
Teeing up at BTME

Trade shows are a great way for us to meet new people from across the industry and speak to more people about what Perennial does. At the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition (BTME) in January, Europe’s leading event for the turfcare sector, we partnered with Rigby Taylor, who ran a golf simulator ‘nearest the pin’ competition on their stand. It was an exciting and hotly contested competition. There were some great shots recorded and the winner, who got to within 1.5 feet of the pin, claimed the overall prize of tickets for the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth. With over 400 people taking part, it gave us the opportunity to speak to far more people than we would have otherwise.

Pallets please

A new fundraising initiative from George Davies Turf is the kind of original idea we love to see. They are asking all customers to return as many empty pallets as possible and for every pallet returned, the company will donate 50p to Perennial. Not only is this a great fundraiser for Perennial, it is also good for the environment as the pallets are reused and recycled. George Davies Turf has already taken over 200 pallets back to the turf farm, which is a fantastic start. If you are one of their customers and have a few pallets lurking in a corner somewhere, you know what to do.

Wildflowers in freefall

April saw a brave team of supporters, including James Hewetson-Brown and colleagues from Wildflower Turf; Adam Stoter, from the Royal Parks; Terry Burns and Ian Sadler from idverde and Perennial’s own Julie Skinner, take part in a 80 metre abseil down the ArcelorMittal Orbit Tower in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park - the UK’s highest freefall abseil. It was a particularly apt fundraising challenge for the idverde guys, who are current park contractors and Wildflower Turf, who supplied flowering turf for parts of the park as it is now, as well as for the 2012 games, and who also helped create Danny Boyle’s ‘green and pleasant land’ for the opening ceremony.

REAPING THE REWARDS OF AWARDS

Through our partnerships with the trade, Perennial is sometimes chosen as the nominated charity for industry awards events. Recently we were the beneficiary at the Association of Professional Landscapers (APL) Awards, where attendees were encouraged to make a donation via envelopes on the tables. Host Jamie Butterworth gave an inspiring talk about Perennial to the packed room and the collection raised over £900.

To find out more about how your company can support Perennial, please contact Kate Cooney kcooney@perennial.org.uk or Philip Swainston pswainston@perennial.org.uk
Our Perennial Partnership scheme helps ensure that our work continues. Receiving regular payments from companies, at levels they feel comfortable with, allows us to plan for the future and help more people who are facing difficulty. And by being a Perennial Partner, you are sending out a strong message to your staff, colleagues and clients that you care about the welfare of people working in our industry.

As well as providing vital revenue that supports our services via the partnership scheme, we hope that Perennial Partners might get involved in other ways:

• Adopt Perennial as your charity of choice
• Sponsor a Perennial activity or event and raise your profile in the industry whilst publicly demonstrating your support for your trade charity
• Help us spread the word about how we help through your AGMs, newsletters, social media and team meetings
• Offer a product or a service where a percentage of the sale goes to support Perennial
• Display our collection boxes in prominent positions

To find out more about the Perennial Partners scheme, please contact Kate Cooney on 01372 235 433 or kcooney@perennial.org.uk

Why I support Perennial:

“Tristram Plants is a family owned group of wholesale nurseries in West Sussex comprising Walberton, Binsted and Fleurie Nurseries. All the Nurseries are Silver Partners of Perennial because they strongly believe in the valuable support that Perennial provides to horticultural workers. Some of Tristram Plants staff have been personally helped by Perennial funding, so we know that it makes a real, tangible difference.”
**Fellowship of friends**

Our Fellowship programme takes its inspiration from the pioneering group of socially responsible landowners and leading social influencers who, in 1839, founded a charity to provide welfare support to people in horticulture long before state-provision was available. Today, 180 years later, Perennial is that charity and our support is needed now more than ever.

As a Perennial Fellow you can make a significant impact on the lives of people in horticulture. Your annual donation will help us maintain and plan services that directly support people overcoming challenging events. In addition you will enjoy a range of benefits including invitations to exclusive Fellowship events throughout the year.

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### 2019 Fellowship Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RHS Chelsea Flower Show</strong></td>
<td>May – a private tour of The Perennial Lifeline Garden with the designers, enjoyed with a glass of fizz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buckingham Palace</strong></td>
<td>June – an exclusive private tour of Buckingham Palace gardens followed by a wonderful afternoon tea at The Goring Hotel in Belgravia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Green House</strong></td>
<td>September – an enjoyable and informative afternoon of great food, music and gardens with a fabulous lunch prepared with Mediterranean vegetables from the estate gardens, music from the West Green opera and a tour of the garden with the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>York Gate Garden</strong></td>
<td>October – an opportunity to visit our garden in Leeds in early winter as the garden’s structure is beginning to shine. A private tour will give you a first look at our new garden development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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David Lewis manages the Perennial Fellowship programme and is happy to talk through the benefits of becoming a Fellow at a time to suit you. He says:

“Becoming a Perennial Fellow is a fantastic way to support people in horticulture with a significant annual gift. We have generated over £47,000 through the Fellowship so far which has helped us extend the casework team in Scotland to meet growing demand. We are committed to delivering tailored, personalised support to people in their own homes and rely on donations to allow us to extend that help to everyone who needs it.”

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If you would like to find out more about joining the Perennial Fellowship visit [perennial.org.uk/fellowship](http://perennial.org.uk/fellowship) or contact us on 01372 373962 or fellowship@perennial.org.uk
When school’s out... we’re here to help

While school holidays give families a chance to spend more time together and kids the opportunity to have fun and discover new things, they can put extra financial pressure on families living on low incomes. The additional costs of the long summer break are too much for many families to cope with.
Many children from low-income families are entitled to free school meals during term time but there is currently little provision during holidays. Food poverty affects nearly half of the families. Perennial supports. We can make sure that everyone has access to meals throughout the school holiday periods when free school meals stop.

Childcare is also a major challenge. Most working parents do not have enough annual leave to cover all 13 weeks of school holidays, so they will need to make alternative childcare arrangements. For many horticulturists the summer break may be their busiest period putting additional stress on families to find and fund additional childcare. Parents in Britain now pay an average of £133 per child per week for full-time holiday childcare and over 1.46 million families struggle to fund a day out for their children. Perennial aims to tackle these issues through our fund for families programme to help people working in horticulture with:

- **the additional costs of childcare**
- **addressing holiday hunger especially for those families whose children receive free school meals**
- **enabling low income families to access day trips and holiday activities**

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation poverty index, almost a quarter of all people in the UK are living in poverty. This rate is higher among children, at almost a third. There is a direct correlation between poverty and educational attainment with only around a half of children in receipt of free school meals likely to reach a good level of development at the end of their early years education. Julia Hayne, Director of Services at Perennial, says:

“We believe every child has the right to a healthy childhood and over the last 12 months we’ve supported more children of horticulturists than ever before. The expenditure further, after all their essential bills are paid, they have a very small disposable income to live on. Their son Toby recently started secondary school. Perennial helped by awarding a grant to pay for his compulsory school uniform items including the school blazer, sports clothing and tie, which could only be purchased directly from the school.

Soon after starting school, Toby was soon placed on detention because his homework was not fully completed and had been hand written, when it should be typed. As detention was after the school day had finished, meaning he missed his scheduled bus, Toby had to be collected from school by his parents. This incurred additional petrol costs as it is a 30-mile round trip. It transpired that students at Toby’s school are instructed to take a photo on their smart phones of the homework from the white board. Toby didn’t feel able to say that his parents couldn’t afford a smart phone for him and instead he was attempting to memorise the homework. He also hadn’t felt able to explain that they didn’t have broadband, a laptop or printer at home.

With our support Toby now has all the essential equipment he needs to thrive at school.

Single parent Rob* was struggling to care for Cameron* aged 9 and work full time. As a gardener with a low monthly income, he was unable to find any affordable child care places for the school holidays and before and after school. Eventually the situation became too much for him and Rob was signed off work due to stress and anxiety.

Rob contacted Perennial and together we reviewed all his finances. We were able to sort out his statutory benefits, giving him a little more monthly income, and consolidate his debts, which had accrued as a result of being signed off work. We also helped Rob find suitable childcare for Cameron and awarded a grant to contribute to ongoing childcare costs. As a result, Rob has been able to return to work full time, knowing Cameron is being safely cared for.

**Perennial offers extra support for families**

William* is a self-employed gardener. He has several regular customers but over the winter, bad weather and ill health prevent him from working and as a result his very small disposable income is supplemented, however all their bills have increased and despite reducing their finances. We were able to sort out Cameron is being safely cared for.

“We know how stressful it can be for parents who, despite budgeting hard, are constantly worrying about meeting the rising costs of food, bills and childcare especially during the school holidays. We can help families gain the support they need. We want every child to be able to take part in the same activities as their friends. If you are worried about how you will manage to meet the additional costs during the school holidays we can help.”

“Perennial helped us during a particularly cold winter when our heating bill was higher than usual and we were struggling to pay other bills. They helped with school lunches and paid for a school trip for our older child. Without their help, we just wouldn’t have been able to cover the cost.”

Alison and Stuart – self-employed gardener and garden centre worker.

If you are struggling to meet the essential needs of your child/ren or know someone who is either in term time or in the holiday period, please contact us to talk about how we can help. In most cases we can make a positive difference to your situation. We’re ready to help you.

FREEPHONE: 0800 093 8543
Email: services@perennial.org.uk
Challenge yourself!

CONGRATULATIONS!
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AFRICA’S HIGHEST POINT
WORLD’S HIGHEST FREE-STANDING MOUNTAIN
ONE OF WORLD’S LARGEST VOLCANOES.

WELCOME
We’re delighted by the support shown by the industry, including garden designer Kate Gould (5 x RHS Chelsea gold medals), Keith Chapman, Mark Gregory (Perennial Ambassador, 20+ RHS Chelsea gold medals) and Louise Gregory. These intrepid supporters have signed up to scale the highest freestanding mountain in the world - Mount Kilimanjaro - this September! Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain on the African continent at 5,896m. The spectacular views and beautiful ice formations will be their reward for pushing themselves to the limit both physically and mentally for Perennial.

"I jumped at the chance to be a part of this. Perennial helps so many people and are the only charity of their kind in the UK so I feel really privileged to be climbing this spectacular mountain to raise funds for them. Let’s hope we make it to the top! I am sure I can carry Keith if he starts flagging!" - Kate Gould

"I am a self-confessed hill climbing addict and when I saw the social media post from Perennial announcing a fundraiser by climbing Kilimanjaro I was thrilled and immediately shared the post with Kate. We were both onboard straight away, it was the perfect way for me to raise money for a great charity. I have been in the horticultural industry my whole life and the work that Perennial does for the industry is invaluable. I will put our vertically challenged leader in my backpack if I have to but we are going to summit that mountain!" - Keith Chapman

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kgg

Marathon Month
We have launched our first ever virtual event to commemorate this landmark year, taking place throughout June when the 180th day of the year falls. We’re challenging supporters to walk or run the equivalent distance of a marathon within the month. Whether you want to boost your fitness, or just take a stroll in the summer evenings, the pressure’s off and you can set your own pace.

However, for the more competitive participants, there will be a leaderboard that tracks your progress with exercise tracking apps should you wish to raise the bar and spur yourself on that extra mile to be the 1st over the finish line, or challenge your colleagues. The perfect alternative industry event to Go Nuts for Perennial, which will return next year.

Half marathon places
The Great North Run is the biggest half marathon in the world, with over 57,000 runners taking part. We have secured places this year for the first time, so sign up now to take part in this iconic event. For those of you further south we again have places in the Royal Parks Half Marathon which works its way through four of London’s eight Royal Parks, making it a particularly perfect course on which to raise money so we can continue to help those who need support or advice.

Why your support counts
We are working hard to increase awareness and increase our services, reaching and helping more people. This all costs money and the funds raised through these challenge events is invaluable. But as well as raising money, the awareness the events raise through promotion of justgiving pages on social media and even wearing Perennial vests whilst running amongst 57,000 runners all increases our profile, so more people know we’re there for them if needed.

Find out more at: perennial.org.uk/events
The garden tours always sell well and some have already sold out, but tickets are still available for events including the Leckford Estate in Hampshire and Whatley Manor in Wiltshire. Other highlights include Crewe Hill near Chester, a fascinating Georgian walled garden that has been resurrected by its current owners. Lesley Watson, formerly of the Beechgrove Garden and Perennial’s own Chairman, Dougal Philip will open their private garden overlooking the River Forth in West Lothian, Scotland. There is also the rare opportunity to visit Cantley Hall, Lord Kirkham’s Grade II listed estate near Doncaster.

Chris Crooker, Events Manager at Perennial, said: “We are pleased to be able to offer visitors behind the scenes tours of such a special array of gardens, demonstrating our continued support from and partnership with garden owners large and small. Thanks to the generous involvement of Lumley Insurance, we can ensure that more of the money we raise goes directly to the people who need it most.”

Our special events programme goes from strength to strength offering garden lovers a range of exclusive tours of some of the UK’s most interesting gardens, many of which are not usually open to the public. We are pleased to have the support of Lumley Insurance as headline sponsor this year, meaning that more of the profits from ticket sales can go towards helping people in horticulture. The events include not only a private tour with the head gardener or owner, but also a delicious lunch or afternoon tea and refreshments.

**Events include:**

- **5 June** | Cantley Hall, Doncaster
- **13 June** | Lesley Watson & Dougal Philip’s Garden, West Lothian
- **27 June** | Crewe Hill, Chester
- **18 July** | Whatley Manor, Wiltshire
- **1 August** | Leckford Estate, Hampshire
- **5 September** | Bath Priory, Somerset
- **12 September** | Ulting Wick, Essex

For further information and the full list of events, please visit: perennial.org.uk/events
What does your typical working day look like?
I’m lucky to live just a fifteen-minute cycle ride from York Gate. Usually I am out in the garden most of the day, though if the weather is bad things might change and we spend time in the potting sheds and greenhouses doing tasks such as propagation and sowing seeds. Usually in the mornings during the open season, we spend time tidying the garden and preparing it for visitors. The closed season is the time for some of the heavier, bigger jobs.

What have you been working on recently?
I have rebuilt the rockery in the paved garden and this is where I will plant out a display of succulents once the weather is warm enough.

What is the best part of the job?
For me, it is undoubtedly the plants and seeing what is growing. The garden has a fabulous and varied collection of unusual little gems such as hardy orchids, trilliums, Arisaema and Chinodoxa.

What do you like best about York Gate?
For a small garden York Gate has huge variety – each of the garden ‘rooms’ is a different microclimate, from the shady woodland area in The Dell, to the alpines in the rockery, to our allotment style kitchen garden. It is great to be able to work with such a range of styles of gardening and types of plants.

What are you most looking forward to at York Gate?
During the next year a lot will be happening at York Gate. In the established garden, the Spencers created the frame and we just get to fill in the picture in the middle, but with the new garden we will be creating, it is something I will be involved in from scratch, which is very exciting.

How did you come to work at York Gate?
I undertook part of my training placement at York Gate almost ten years ago, which was funded by Perennial. I went on to become a self-employed gardener but finding regular work was hard and soon we started to struggle. At the same time my wife gave birth to our son who was born with Cystic Fibrosis. While we were completely focused on him and his health needs, we struggled to make ends meet. That is when I thought of Perennial. They gave help with finances and budgeting and it was like a weight had been lifted. Perennial supported me and my family at a really difficult time in our lives and so it feels good to be giving something back by helping look after York Gate now.
NEW, JUST IN

Our product range inspired by the Perennial Lifeline Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Available at the show and online.

TEA TOWEL
NOTEBOOK
WATER BOTTLE

ENAMEL CUP
TOTE BAG
APRON

PRICES START FROM £5

In partnership with one of our RHS Chelsea Flower Show supporters, Stark & Greensmith, we have created an exclusive corten steel modular wall panel with a decorative laser cut design. Inspired by the Perennial Lifeline Garden, these panels are designed to weather over time without care and will last for over 40 years. They look great as an attractive addition to any garden.

All products are available to buy at the Perennial trade stand at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show or online at www.perennial.org.uk/shop

PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS!

If you would like to advertise in Perennial News and get your message to around 20,000 people who love gardening and horticulture please contact us on 01372 373 962 or email info@perennial.org.uk

Helping people in horticulture
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