

# Perennial News

Keeping you in touch with Perennial



## Director of Services Sheila Thomson retires after 16 years

See page 5

## Gardens of Florence: A guided trip of five historic gardens

See page 3



## Helping you weather the weather

**Factors out of our control, such as the weather, can have a serious impact on the income of those working in horticulture. For some businesses it's a fine line between 'just managing' and not being able to cope. This is where Perennial steps in.**

We are all subject to the vagaries of the British weather but those working in horticulture and its related sectors are particularly at the mercy of the climate. This year's weather has been challenging, with a cold winter and late snow followed by numerous spells of heavy rain and flash flooding and a prolonged, hot summer, which was the joint hottest on record for the UK as a whole and the hottest ever for England. The effects of the summer's heat wave for example has caused serious problems for wholesale Christmas tree growers, affecting not only this year's crop but also destroying young trees that will come to market in the coming years.

### **Rob Morgan, Owner of Gower Fresh Christmas Trees said:**

*"This year's crop will probably be ok, the more mature trees were planted deep enough and responded amazingly well when it did rain, but another week or so of hot weather and it could have been a different story. It's the future crops I'm worried about, coming to market in 6-8 years. I estimate about 8,000-10,000 of these have been lost, not through any fault of our own, just Mother Nature."*

The net result is likely to include lower profits for years to come, redundancy and even bankruptcy and loss of livelihood for some. This year's weather has also had a major impact on the small-scale self-employed gardener, who could not work during the snow and then was not needed in the heatwave as grass didn't need cutting and it was almost impossible to weed.

### **Sheila Thomson, Director of Services comments:**

*"All branches of horticulture can be vulnerable to the effects of the weather and this can lead to serious repercussions for workers. We don't usually see the impact of these issues immediately as people try and struggle on, but this coming winter we expect more people will be facing tough times. Given that more hot summers and extremes of temperature*

*are likely as a result of climate change, these kinds of issues will only become more prevalent."*

Work in the horticultural sectors is often seasonal and, for the large number of people that are self-employed, their income can be in a very uncertain position. Any unforeseen event such as illness, injury or redundancy can cripple a family and often there is no cushion to fall back on. Even those in steady work can find it hard to cope with the financial pressures that life can bring.

### **Sheila continues:**

*"We want to remind everyone that if they are facing difficulty for any reason, we at Perennial are here to help. Our nationwide team of caseworkers and debt advisers visit people in their own homes to really get to the root of their problem, but our telephone only service also exists for those whose challenges are not so complex. Please help us spread the word - one day someone you have told about us will have a better future as a result of our help."*



Rob Morgan - Owner, Gower Fresh Christmas Tree Farm

**New: Child Bursaries available – See page 3**

## Get in touch

**If you, or someone you know, needs help, please contact us in confidence.**

Perennial's nationwide team of professional, highly trained caseworkers and debt advisers provide free advice, support and financial assistance to all those working in, or retired from, the horticulture industry, tailored to each individual's circumstances.

**General Advice Line | 0800 093 8543**

**Debt Advice Line | 0800 093 8546**

Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5pm

**services@perennial.org.uk**

**www.perennial.org.uk**

# From Peter

**"Phew, what a scorcher!"**

With the longest and hottest summer since 1976 (when *The Sun* first used that headline) now behind us, it's a revealing exercise to consider its impact. Ice cream and sun cream manufacturers and air conditioning suppliers will be among the many businesses that thrived, but not everyone benefits from such un-British weather. As we have shown in our lead article, this summer's prolonged hot, dry weather, which followed a longer than average winter, will have an adverse effect on many people working across the horticulture, arboriculture and amenity sectors.

The effect on the income of hard-pressed horticulturists means that we expect, and are prepared for, a busy winter ahead and would like to remind all our supporters that Perennial is here to help. Please continue to pass on our contact details to anyone you feel would benefit from our free and confidential advice and support services.

In some respects though, Perennial has benefitted from the warm weather. Our special events guests enjoyed some glorious days out at private gardens across the UK. We are indebted to garden owners and supporters who allow us access to their private spaces and I know from the comments we received from guests that the programme was a resounding success.

The weather was also welcomed across the flower show circuit this year with both sun hats and umbrellas (for shade!) flying off the shelves of our trading stands. We are ever grateful for the help we receive from volunteers at these events who work tirelessly on both plant crèches and trading stands raising important funds and awareness for Perennial. We know that flower shows are an important way for us to spread the word about how Perennial helps people and we simply couldn't have a presence at the events without our volunteers.

While the weather has presented the staff and volunteers at our gardens at York Gate near Leeds, Fullers Mill in Suffolk and The Laskett in Herefordshire with watering and maintenance challenges, the sunshine has resulted in our highest ever visitor numbers. Over 15,000 people have enjoyed a visit to our gardens this year and as the season draws to a close, we're already planning further improvements to ensure next year is even more successful.

January 2019 will mark the 180th anniversary of the charity and to celebrate our continued commitment to all those who work in or are retired from horticulture we are planning a series of anniversary events throughout the year. There will be more on this in our next issue of Perennial News, or sign up to our e-newsletter for more regular updates on the impact of your support on the horticulturists we help, and information about how you can get involved.

Thank you for your continued support. You are a valued member of our growing Perennial family and we wish you and your family every happiness and success for the season ahead.

Peter Newman



## Child Bursary & Children's Fund

### Perennial helps children of horticulturists with Children's Fund and \*NEW\* Child Bursaries

**We would like all horticulture professionals to know that funding is available to help their dependent children should they need it.**

Perennial recently launched a new Child Bursary scheme to help horticulturists who may not need help themselves, but whose child or children have an educational need that their income will not support. This type of grant can also help those struggling with the extra cost of feeding their children during school holidays.

**Some examples of the type of thing a Perennial Child Bursary could fund include:**

- Laptops, tablets or other electronic equipment essential for school use
- Extra-curricular activities
- Sports training equipment
- Practical equipment such as school bags or uniform
- Educational school trips
- Help with school meals
- Help with meals in school holidays

In addition to this new bursary scheme, Perennial's Children's Fund was established when Perennial merged with the Royal Fund for Gardeners' Children in 2010. If you work in horticulture, you may be eligible for an on-going education benefit or a one-off grant to help fund educational opportunities for your children.

**Helen Waddington, Head of Casework at Perennial, says:**

*"These two child-specific funds are an essential part of our service offering for people working in horticulture on low incomes. So often we find parents will go without essentials in order to fund their child's education and we are here to help with those costs. We would urge anyone who is struggling to make ends meet and who needs additional support for their children's education to contact us to find out if we can help."*

## Alison's story

**Alison\* has an established self-employed gardening round and her husband Stuart\* works at a garden centre.**

They have two children in primary and high school. Stuart's pay has not increased for several years and although Alison has increased her hourly rate, she has lost customers as a result. Their in-work and child benefits have not increased for several years but all their bills have continued to rise.

After a cold winter when Alison had been out of work for a longer period than normal and heating costs were higher than usual they budgeted tightly but were struggling to pay their bills. They contacted Perennial who were not only able to provide advice and assistance but immediately credited school lunches for the children for a half term and paid for a school trip for their older child from the Child Bursary scheme. The scheme is designed to ensure children of people working in horticulture are not missing out on educational opportunities.



*\*Names have been changed and photos posed by models.*



# Budgeting Tool

As the cost of living continues to rise beyond that of economic recovery, more and more people working across the UK horticulture sector are struggling to make ends meet, or are unable to put anything by for savings or emergencies.

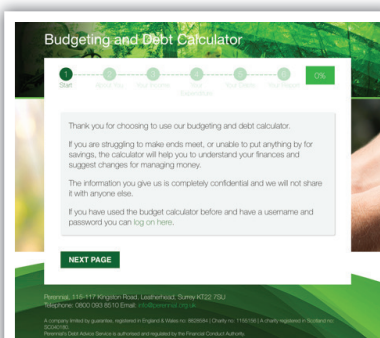
Our new online budgeting tool helps people understand their financial position and plan ahead.

**Perennial's Debt Advice & Compliance Manager Wendy Tozer says:**

*"Creating a budget is important because it helps you understand how you are using your money and where your biggest expenditure is. Seeing this written down is the first step towards making changes to achieve a good balance between your income and spending. The tool also gives lots of tips for increasing your income and reducing your expenditure and points you in the right direction for further help."*

The Perennial budgeting tool is available via our website, is simple to use and all information users input is completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. People can use it anonymously if they wish or can register to allow them to revisit their budget at any time and see how their planned changes are working.

Find out more at [www.perennial.org.uk/budgeting-tool](http://www.perennial.org.uk/budgeting-tool)



# Help extended to foresters

**Perennial's support is now available to those working in forestry.**

This means our help now covers people in every profession working with trees and plants except for farmers, who receive help from the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Society who we work very closely with.

A large proportion of foresters are self-employed or work for private companies, landowners and conservation charities and Perennial will be there for them when they need a helping hand.

Widening our reach to cover forestry was a natural extension to the services we offer to arborists, among whom awareness of Perennial has grown markedly in recent years. We were already working closely with a range of industry organisations associated with the forestry sector.

A large proportion of, unlike these organisations that may support foresters with help such as training funds, no membership is required to access Perennial's help and all support is free and confidential.

We are pleased to be able to fill the gap to offer financial and emotional support to those in the forestry sector who find themselves in difficulty.

Now that our services are available to foresters, we need help in spreading the word. If you know anyone who works in forestry, please let them know that Perennial is there should they need help in the future.



# A sizzling summer of special events

**Perennial's 2018 Special Events programme was generously sponsored by Challenge Fencing, enabling more of the money raised to go directly towards our services.**

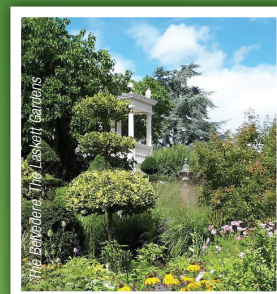
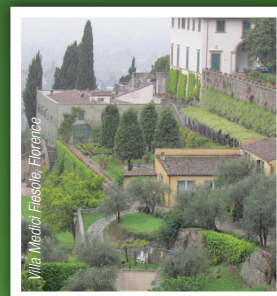
The garden owners and head gardeners had done an amazing job keeping the gardens looking stunning throughout the summer heat wave. One event guest described their tour as "the perfect day whereby the head gardener brought the garden to life!"



We are busy confirming an extra special 2019 programme celebrating Perennial's 180th anniversary. Topping the bill is an incredible opportunity to spend four days exploring some of Tuscany's wonderful horticultural masterpieces, guided by celebrated garden historian Stephen Harmer. Full details are on the website. Also confirmed are guided tours of Haddon Hall Gardens in Bakewell; Folly Farm Garden in Berkshire; Ozeleworth Park in Gloucestershire; Helmingham Hall Gardens in Stowmarket and a double garden tour of Weston Hall & The Laskett Gardens, where guests will be welcomed by Sir Roy Strong.

Fellows, Friends of Perennial and our gardens receive advance notice of all Special Events and it's common for them to sell out before wider release. If you would like to receive advance notice of the remaining events being published in December, then please join using the form on the back of your letter.

For further details and to find out more about the 2019 calendar visit [perennial.org.uk/events](http://perennial.org.uk/events)





# Fellowship programme

Since launching the Perennial Fellowship earlier this year, the membership scheme has raised over £35,000. Perennial Fellows pledge at least £2,500 to the charity annually to help us plan and secure services into the future.

This contribution offers the opportunity to access benefits for 12 months which include invitations to exclusive Fellowship events and complimentary access to our gardens at York Gate and Fullers Mill.

As part of this year's programme of events, Fellows enjoyed a concert and drinks reception at Fitzrovia Chapel in London and garden tours at Sandhill Farm in Hampshire, Hever Castle in Kent and Folly Farm in Berkshire. In 2019 we will invite our guests to a diverse range of venues, including Royal residences, hallowed sports turf and special interest gardens.

Pam Barrow, an inaugural Perennial Fellow, says:

*"Perennial needs regular, sustainable support that it can rely on every year to invest in existing services and plan new ways of helping people. I am proud to count myself among the founding members of the Perennial Fellowship and look forward to seeing the organisation grow in response to those who need it most."*

If you are interested in finding out more about the Perennial Fellowship call us on **01372 373962**, email [fellowship@perennial.org.uk](mailto:fellowship@perennial.org.uk) or visit [www.perennial.org.uk/fellowship](http://www.perennial.org.uk/fellowship)



## Legacy events update

**Gifts left to Perennial in wills account for around a third of our annual income.**

This year we have hosted two exclusive receptions, at Fullers Mill Garden in Suffolk and Shamley Wood Estate in Surrey for those thinking about leaving a gift to the charity. These events are a chance to find out more about how Perennial helps people and how legacy gifts have the power to change lives for the better into the future.



**Julian Hoppit attended our event at Fullers Mill earlier in the summer and said:**

*"As a Friend of Fullers Mill, I'm aware of the part Perennial has played in ensuring that the gardens will be enjoyed for generations to come. The Legacy Event was a wonderful social occasion and the perfect opportunity to discover more about Perennial's essential role at the heart of horticultural industry welfare and how we garden enthusiasts might pledge our support."*

We have a final 2018 event coming up at York Gate garden near Leeds in November. Please let us know if you and a guest would like to attend by calling Becky Sumner on **01372 384045** or emailing [bsumner@perennial.org.uk](mailto:bsumner@perennial.org.uk).



## Paula's story



**Paula\* was forced to stop working as a gardener on a Cumbrian estate when her health deteriorated significantly. As a member of the Professional Gardeners Guild, she was aware of Perennial and contacted us directly.**

Our caseworker was able to help her claim sickness benefits and went on to represent her at a benefits tribunal to get what she was entitled to.

Paula had not previously claimed any form of sickness benefits, so our caseworker assisted her with claims for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The ESA was paid at basic rate but the authorities failed to provide a medical assessment within the correct time frame, despite the caseworker continually chasing. Eventually two years later, following the caseworker making a formal complaint and contacting Paula's MP, she was assessed as eligible for the full payment amount and she received the back payment she was due. A separate claim and tribunal was also needed to get her the correct PIP payment that she should have been awarded in the first place.

**She says:** *"Without Perennial I would not have known what I was entitled to, nor would I have been able to make a claim as I was too unwell. The caseworker was extremely helpful and never gave up pursuing the claim. I cannot thank Perennial enough - I am sure that no problem would be too big or too small for Perennial to help with."*

*\*Photo posed by a model*



# Sheila Thomson retires after 16 years

After a game-changing 16 years as Director of Services at Perennial, Sheila Thomson retired earlier this month. In her time Perennial has extended its reach to include all branches of horticulture and has moved to a comprehensive and highly professional outreach model of service delivery, a model of which Sheila has been chief architect.

Speaking about her contribution to Perennial, Peter Newman said:

*"Sheila is a true legend in the recent history of Perennial. She was employed to transform the way in which Perennial delivered services*



*to horticulturists and their families and she has, categorically, fulfilled the brief. But not only has she been responsible for overseeing the biggest service-delivery change in the history of the organisation, she has helped build a team of professionals that will continue to make a difference for many years to come. In her time with Perennial, Sheila has shown an unwavering focus on*

*and commitment to the horticulturists and their families whom Perennial helps. On behalf of trustees, staff, supporters, volunteers and the many thousands of people our services have made a difference to during her time, I would like to say a huge thank you. She leaves with our deep appreciation, admiration, love and gratitude for all that she has achieved, and our warmest wishes for a long and fulfilling retirement."*

Looking ahead to the next phase in her life, Sheila says:

*"It has been a real pleasure to be given the task of planning and implementing the help offered by the charity to horticulturists. The core of what we now do is based on a person-centred service and it has been a privilege to work with such a dedicated group of staff who share the common purpose of wanting to help people build better futures for themselves and their families. I will be very sad to leave but will follow Perennial's progress with interest and I look forward to a little less motorway driving and a little more time for personal interests."*

Taking up the Director of Services role this month is Julia Hayne, who comes to Perennial from the Youth Hostel Association where she has been Head of Community since 2016. Before that she spent 10 years at Caudwell Children, also as Head of Community.

Peter Newman said:

*"I am delighted to welcome Julia to our team here at Perennial. Her experience of leading a dispersed, home-based team, of advising and supporting vulnerable individuals and families, and her strong track record of working with partners to create and establish support programmes, will enable us to maintain the highest standards of advice and support to our clients and also to shape the new 'prevent' strand of our future strategy."*

## Partnerships are key

Perennial helped 1,473 families last year, but we can only help those who know about us. We're working hard to reach a position where everyone in the industry knows that Perennial exists and everyone who needs help is receiving it. Key to this is continuing to build relationships and partnerships within the industry.

Ours is an industry in which knowledge, and businesses, are handed down from generation to generation and there are true bonds rooted deep in the love of horticulture. It's this quality of friendship and community that's really special to our sector and we view all our stakeholders as members of a family - the Perennial Family.

It really is wonderful to see all of the different ways that our friends across the industry are showing their support. For example the **London College of Garden Design (LCGD)**, run by leading garden designers Andrew Fisher Tomlin and Andrew Wilson, has pledged to raise £10,000 for Perennial in 2018 to help mark its own 10th anniversary. The funds will be raised through a combination of sponsorship of Perennial events, including the Festival Dinner in October, a Platinum Perennial Partnership and donations from students at LCGD events such as the recent conference on trees held at Kew Gardens.

**London Stone** continues to support us and has this year held a series of Landscape Development Days, aiming to provide knowledge and improve skills. Attendance at these events is free but a suggested donation of £25 to Perennial is encouraged. They are on track to raise £3,500 through these in 2018. Recent events have taken place at **Hillier Nursery** and **Hortus Loci** and now autumn events have been announced and include a focus on autumn trees and aftercare. To find out more, please contact Jamie Butterworth [jamielbutterworth@londonstone.co.uk](mailto:jamielbutterworth@londonstone.co.uk).

Thanks go to **Gabriel Ash**, the leading greenhouse designer and manufacturer, who were the headline sponsor for our 'Go Nuts for HortAid' event, which took place in September. Teams from across the industry went head to head across the 5km course of military-style obstacles with lashings of mud, to raise a fantastic amount of money.

Organisations can also sign up to our Perennial Partnership scheme, which allows you to select an annual donation at a level that suits your business, and this regular income help us to securely plan for the future.

Laura Garnett, Senior Development Manager says:

*"Our Perennial Partners have the understanding that it's regular income which enables us to plan for the future, and support those who need it most for years to come. It's this understanding that helps us to create innovative solutions in times of crisis."*

To find out more about trade partnerships, please contact Sue Brinsden [sbrinsden@perennial.org.uk](mailto:sbrinsden@perennial.org.uk).



# Volunteers:

We would like to say a big "thank you" to our amazing volunteers. The head office volunteer team gets involved in everything we do from data entry to picking and packing goods.

In fact, if you have ordered anything from our online shop this past year or plan to order anything from our Christmas Catalogue, the likelihood is your order will be fulfilled by one of them.

We really couldn't do what we do without them, and it means that more of your purchase goes to helping people in need.



*It's so nice to help an often over looked smaller charity, especially as we can work flexibly and our help is always very much appreciated'.*  
- Head Office warehouse volunteers.

The numerous garden volunteers at York Gate and Fullers Mill provide invaluable support to the staff and turn up day in day out all year round, helping to keep the gardens looking stunning.

Our fantastic show volunteers help run our tradestands and plant crèches at flower shows throughout the year, raising money and awareness for Perennial in all weathers with a smile on their faces

***Thank you so much to each and every one of you.***



## 2019 Volunteering Opportunities

**Order fulfillment:** all year round at our head office in Leatherhead, Surrey.

**Trade stand / show gardens / plant creches:**

- 25-28 April | Harrogate Spring Flower Show
- 9-12 May | RHS Malvern Spring Show
- 21-25 May | RHS Chelsea Flower Show
- 31 May – 2 June | Gardening Scotland
- 2-7 July | RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show

**NGS & SGS open gardens:** helping with teas and coffees.

**Cards for Good Causes:** selling Christmas cards and gifts.

**Selling Perennial Christmas cards at local events**

Please email [volunteering@perennial.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@perennial.org.uk) or phone 0800 093 8510.

If you would like to help out either of our two gardens, through gardening, welcoming visitors or in the tea rooms and gift shops or helping with some administrative tasks, the gardens teams would love to hear from you.

**York Gate Garden, Leeds** – Please contact **Ruth Cooke** at [yorkgate@perennial.org.uk](mailto:yorkgate@perennial.org.uk)

**Fullers Mill Garden, Bury St Edmunds**, please email **Anne Valentine** at [fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk](mailto:fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk)

## The 2019 Party for PERENNIAL

Petersham Nurseries, Covent Garden

Join us again for a fantastic evening of entertainment on Tuesday 29th January 2019 and network with like minded professionals in the horticulture industry.

See more at: [www.perennial.org.uk/party](http://www.perennial.org.uk/party)



**PERENNIAL**  
GARDENERS' ROYAL BENEVOLENT SOCIETY  
*Helping Horticulturists In Need Since 1839*

Petersham Nurseries

The UK's only charity dedicated to helping all people in horticulture when times get tough.

For more information: call Maya Albert on 01372 384043, email [malbert@perennial.org.uk](mailto:malbert@perennial.org.uk) or book online now at: [www.perennial.org.uk/party](http://www.perennial.org.uk/party)



# From the Gardens...

## York Gate

The weather at York Gate was beautiful throughout July and August, attracting a record number of visitors to the garden in July. The garden team celebrated the work its brilliant volunteers do with a coffee morning and a private 'mocktails' evening in the garden, both of which enjoyed beautiful sunshine, and gave the team the opportunity to enjoy a rare, quiet view of the garden at its very finest.

Romance was in the air this summer! York Gate hosted a wedding breakfast and reception in August. Staff and volunteers worked hard to help the happy couple celebrate in style. The weather was kind and we're pleased to say the day went beautifully.

Early September saw York Gate

open for the first time for the Heritage Open Days. Volunteers were on hand to guide visitors around the story of York Gate Garden and the Spencer Family, who created the garden between 1951 and 1994.

At the Harrogate Autumn Show in September some 150 volunteers helped on the Perennial stand, raising funds for Perennial and promoting York Gate.

### Opening times:

**Mon 1 April to Mon 30 September 2019**

**Sun to Thurs (inc Bank Holiday Mondays): 12:30 - 4:30pm**

[www.yorkgate.org.uk](http://www.yorkgate.org.uk)



## Fullers Mill Garden

The garden enjoyed a record number of visitors this season, helped no doubt by appearing on BBC Gardeners' World in early June. The segment showed Head Gardener Annie Dellbridge chatting with presenter Mark Lane about woodland planting. The Suffolk Nurseries Plant Fair in July was very successful, showcasing the best independent nurseries in Suffolk and enjoyed by all visitors despite the heat. Indeed, it seemed like an endless summer of sunshine, but thankfully the rain that finally arrived in the latter half of August saved the garden from drought, despite a few plants being lost.

Fullers Mill welcomed lots of new volunteers in the garden and tea room but there is always room for more so do get in touch if you are interested. Please email [fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk](mailto:fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk) for more details.

### Opening times:

**Weds 3 April -**

**Sun 29 Sept 2019**

**Wednesdays**

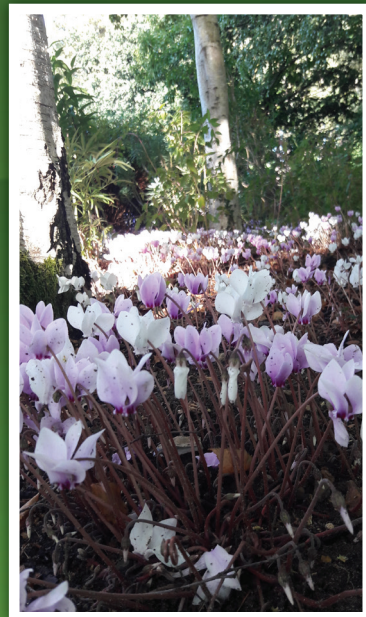
**& Fridays**

**2:00pm-5:00pm,**

**Sundays**

**11:00-5:00pm**

[www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk](http://www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk)



## Trustee Focus – Carole Baxter

**Q. You were the UK's first female gardening presenter – how did that come about?**

**A.** I started in 1983 as the assistant gardener behind the scenes at the Beechgrove Garden and was promoted to Head Gardener the following year. In 1986 I was asked to present in front of the camera and, if I'm honest, my first reaction was 'you've got to be joking!', as at the time it was presented by two gentlemen and obviously I'm female and English! But it was a golden opportunity and I've been presenting on the show ever since. I spent another 10 years behind the scenes gardening as well.

**Q. The Beechgrove Garden is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, what are your favourite memories of your time on the show?**

**A.** I've loved every minute. I realise I'm very lucky, gardening is my career and my hobby and I've had a great time. The production team and crew are like one big family. I've travelled across Scotland with the road shows, community garden projects and seen some amazing gardens. They don't have to be huge, some are tiny but I've been as far as Shetland and Harris as well as south. I couldn't pick just one favourite garden, as you get different things from them all, but I'm particularly fond of woodland gardens and water as a feature.

**Q. How did you hear about Perennial & why did you want to be involved with the charity?**

**A.** I've known of Perennial (or the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society as it was known) for as long as I can remember, just through working in

horticulture for so long. I think I first became more familiar with it at the Gardening Scotland show, and by being a member of the Professional Gardeners' Guild.

I've had a fantastic career, and long may it continue, and I wanted to give something back. I've been employed, self-employed, lived in tied-accommodation and I know what the wages are like, the issues there are and the importance of good health.

I have also been on the executive committee for Scotland's Garden Scheme, who are a big supporter of Perennial, and I try and encourage more garden owners to open for them.

**Q. What gives you the most satisfaction in your role as a Trustee?**

**A.** Helping to spread the word about Perennial, not only to those who need help but also to those who can help support the charity.



# Paul Bradley, Caseworker

Paul has worked for Perennial as one of the charity's UK-wide network of caseworkers since 2015. He works with people and their families across the north of England and Wales.

Here he tells us more about his job and how he helps deliver Perennial's front-line services to people in need of support.

To read the full interview visit [perennial.org.uk/paul-bradley](http://perennial.org.uk/paul-bradley)

## Who comes to Perennial for help?

My caseload is varied; some of my clients are working, some are retired, and some are unable to work due to illness, disability or caring responsibilities. The only thing our clients have in common is the link they have to horticulture. Apart from that they are from different walks of life with a wide range of problems.

## What does a typical day look like for you?

On average I spend half of my working week in the office and half visiting clients. Whilst in the office I spend a day a week on the advice line and the remainder keeping up to date with casework and replying to emails, phone messages and letters. No two weeks are the same in this job which is a really positive thing for me.

## What do you think we can expect in terms of demand for Perennial's services over the coming years?

I think the demand for our services will only continue to grow, largely because of the changes in how social welfare and security is being delivered in the UK and the impact this will have on a lot of our clients. I also think we are being more successful in raising awareness of

Perennial and so naturally, there will be an increase in the number of people accessing our services.

## What do you feel are the main barriers preventing people from contacting Perennial?

Currently, the main barrier is that people don't know about us but hopefully this is changing. Social media is good for getting the word out but there are still a significant number of people who don't use social media and they can be some of the more vulnerable in society so it's important we continue to get our message out in as many different ways as possible.

## What gives you most satisfaction about your job?

Battling injustice and providing support to people at vital moments in their lives provides me with the most job satisfaction. It's not always about the outcomes, sometimes being there for someone in their hour of need can be just as important.

## And if you could change one thing about it, what would it be?

Just one! There are many things I would like to change, not necessarily about my job, but rather the frustration caused by delays elsewhere in the system. So, waiting for replies to letters, having to complain so I get a reply, not being able to get through on telephone numbers and listening to Spring from Vivaldi's Four Seasons whilst being on hold for what seems like hours on end! So, if I could change just one thing then it would be the hold music to something more becoming. I propose 'Mass in F Minor' by The Electric Prunes!

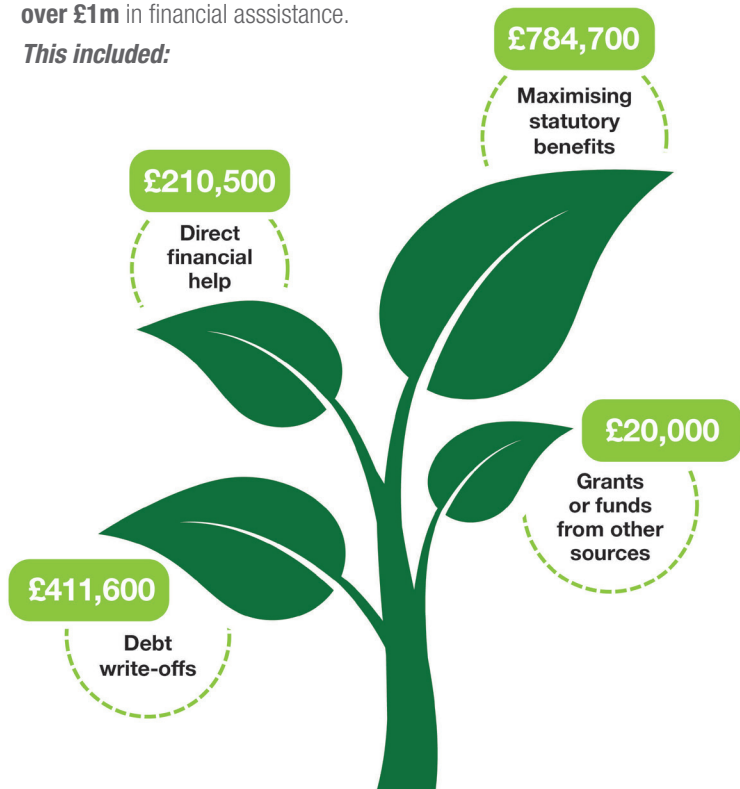


## How Perennial helps

### In the first half of 2018

We helped **961** people and their families. We helped people access **over £1m** in financial assistance.

### This included:



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The Perennial Partner scheme enables your company to support at a level appropriate for you.

Bronze: £100, Silver: £250, Gold £500, Platinum £1,000, Diamond £5,000. Benefits include a framed certificate, a link on the homepage of our website and use of the Perennial logo.

### • Join as a Friend of Perennial

By becoming a Friend (£25 – single membership or £40 joint membership) you will receive a range of benefits including priority booking for events, previews of our catalogues, two free tickets to a Perennial garden of your choice and a lapel badge.

### • Give your own amount monthly, quarterly or annually

Choose how you would like to support Perennial at a level that suits you. If the total annual amount you give is £25 or over you will also become a Friend of Perennial and receive the same benefits as above.

To find out more about how you can give to Perennial, visit [www.perennial.org.uk/donate](http://www.perennial.org.uk/donate), call **01372 373 962** or email [info@perennial.org.uk](mailto:info@perennial.org.uk)