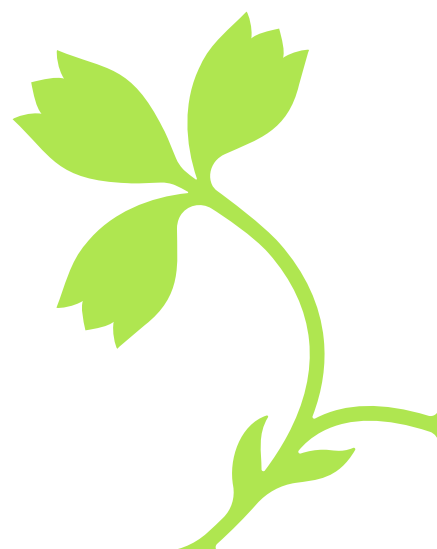


RBGE Annual Report and Accounts

2024/25

ROYAL
BOTANIC
GARDEN
EDINBURGH



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OVERVIEW

Our vision

A positive future for plants, people and the planet.

Our mission

To explore, conserve and explain the world of plants.

FOUR GARDENS, ONE BOTANIC WORLD

We are a leading botanic garden and a global centre for biodiversity science, horticulture and education. We conserve one of the worlds' richest botanical collections at our four Gardens, Edinburgh, Benmore, Dawyck and Logan.

Life on earth is in jeopardy as we face an environmental crisis with catastrophic biodiversity loss and a climate emergency. These threats to our life-support system demand urgent and collective action. Our response is to explore, conserve and explain the world of plants, pushing the boundaries of our scientific knowledge to find and apply solutions.

We engage nationally and internationally, empowering individuals, communities and partners to protect our botanic world, helping us build a positive future for plants, people and the planet.

Values

We work collaboratively

We work together to achieve our goals and connect our work across communities, partnerships and disciplines.

We value evidence

We make decisions based on data and insight, empowering each other to make and champion informed choices and positive change for the future.

We cultivate curiosity

We are a place of questions and discovery, pushing the boundaries of what we know and do.

STATEMENT FROM THE REGIUS KEEPER

The past year has been marked by profound global uncertainty. Geopolitical instability, economic turbulence, and shifting political priorities have disrupted international efforts to address the climate and biodiversity crises. Just as science calls for urgent, united action, the world has grown increasingly fragmented. International agreements have stalled, and national commitments have been delayed – placing even greater importance on institutions that deliver trusted, long-term solutions for people and the planet.

In this challenging context, the role of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) has never been more vital – or more visible. We are stepping up to meet the moment: deepening our scientific research, conserving plant life under threat, supporting capacity building and public education, and forging international partnerships grounded in trust and collaboration. In a divided world, RBGE is a bridge – connecting communities, countries, and disciplines in service of a shared future. Our global network of partners, from local communities to academic institutions, underlines the power of botanic gardens as agents of diplomacy, discovery, and hope.

At the heart of our impact lies the National Botanical Collection – a treasure of global significance. With over 13,500 species in our Living Collection, more than three million specimens in our Herbarium, and extensive archives and library holdings, we are custodians of one of the most comprehensive plant collections in the world. But it is the people – our scientists, horticulturists, educators, enabling staff, and volunteers – who transform these assets into action. Their expertise, passion, and commitment are driving real-world solutions to some of the biggest challenges of our time. We continue to attract outstanding staff and students who not only bring exceptional technical expertise but also embody our values: collaboration, curiosity, and a deep respect for evidence.

Aging infrastructure remains a concern across many parts of the RBGE estate. However, significant progress has been made this year on the Edinburgh Biomes programme. Restoration of our iconic Victorian and Georgian Palm Houses is well underway, alongside essential infrastructure upgrades across the site. Edinburgh Biomes is much more than a capital programme: it is an investment in national resilience. It will protect irreplaceable plant species, secure our scientific capacity for generations to come, and create world-class facilities for education, conservation, and public engagement. Crucially, it also supports our commitment to environmental responsibility by substantially reducing our carbon footprint through modern, energy-efficient systems and sustainable design. But realising its full potential depends on continued government support. This is a once-in-a-century opportunity – and with sustained, multi-year capital funding, Edinburgh Biomes will deliver benefits far beyond our walls, to Scotland and the world.

Our ambition to modernise extends beyond physical infrastructure. Over the past year, we have also made significant strides in upgrading our digital systems, enhancing cybersecurity, and investing in the tools and technologies needed to support a future-ready organisation. We are improving procurement processes to ensure greater efficiency, transparency, and value for money. At the same time, we remain committed to developing our staff – through training, wellbeing initiatives, and leadership development – to ensure we continue to attract and empower the best talent in our sector. These changes are not just internal improvements; they reflect our contribution to the broader aims of Scottish Government Public Services Reform, with a focus on innovation, effective delivery, and increased self-generated income.

This Annual Report highlights a year of ambition, achievement, and deepening impact. From pioneering research in biodiversity genomics and the restoration of the Atlantic Rainforest to training future leaders in plant science and horticulture and supporting wellbeing through community programmes – our work reaches far and wide. These are not short-term wins, but enduring contributions to climate resilience, food security, public health, and education. However, to sustain and grow this impact, we must navigate an increasingly complex and uncertain funding landscape. We are therefore expanding our philanthropic partnerships and

diversifying income streams – ensuring our work remains robust, far-reaching, and resilient to political and economic tides.

Our resilience was tested in January 2025, when Storm Éowyn caused significant damage across all four of our Gardens – particularly at Benmore, where 300 trees were lost and infrastructure was badly affected. The response was swift and collaborative, with staff, volunteers, and arborists working tirelessly to stabilise and recover. The generosity of public donors through our emergency appeal was both humbling and essential, as was the practical assistance from arborists across the country. While full restoration will take time, the experience reaffirmed our collective strength – and our resolve to protect and adapt these precious landscapes in a changing climate.

Climate change, habitat loss, and the spread of plant pathogens are accelerating at an alarming rate – but so too is our determination to meet these challenges head-on. At RBGE, we are strengthening our focus on biosecurity, addressing habitat degradation, and advancing nature-based solutions. Through our collections, research, and public engagement, we are working to support ecological resilience and promote the health of both natural and urban environments. Our commitment is clear: to help build a greener, fairer, and more sustainable future – and to demonstrate what’s possible when science, nature, and society come together.

None of this would be possible without the people who bring our mission to life. The commitment and skill of our staff and volunteers underpin every success we achieve. Their dedication is behind every research breakthrough, every community initiative, every carefully curated garden landscape, and every graduating student. We remain committed to fostering an inclusive, inspiring workplace that empowers the very best minds and hands to flourish – and to keeping our doors open as a place of learning, healing, and hope for all.

As both a charity and a Non-Departmental Public Body, we are proud to deliver exceptional public value. Our work is deeply aligned with Scotland’s national priorities – from advancing biodiversity and climate action to supporting education, tourism, green jobs, and wellbeing. We are grateful for the continued support of the Scottish Government, and for the many individuals, donors, and partners who believe in our mission. This support extends the reach of our work and the strength of our voice at a time when nature needs both.

This year has demonstrated not only the scale of the challenges we face, but also the strength of the collective response RBGE represents. We are more than a garden – we are a living laboratory, a national asset, a global source of expertise, and a catalyst for change. With the appropriate support, we will continue to protect what matters most and grow a better future – for Scotland, and for the world.

Simon Milne MBE, Regius Keeper

TRUSTEES REPORT

Structure

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) is a registered Scottish charity (SC007983) under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. It operates two wholly owned subsidiaries: Botanics Trading Company Ltd (BTC), which manages retail, catering, events, and consultancy services; and Botanics Energy Company Ltd (BEC), which is developing a sustainable energy centre to reduce RBGE's carbon footprint. BTC donates its taxable profits to RBGE under Gift Aid legislation, and both subsidiaries' financial results are consolidated within the RBGE Annual Report and Accounts.

The remit of RBGE is set out in the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, which empowers the Board of Trustees, who are appointed by Scottish Ministers to:

- Carry out investigation and research into the science of plants and related subjects and to disseminate the results.
- Maintain and develop collections of living plants and preserved plant material, books, archives and other related objects.
- Keep the collections as national reference collections and ensure they are secure and that they are available to persons for the purposes of study.
- Provide advice, information and education, in any manner which seems appropriate to them, in relation to any aspect of the science of plants or of any related subject.
- Provide other services (including quarantine) in relation to plants.
- Afford members of the public opportunities to enter any land managed by the Board for the purpose of gaining knowledge and enjoyment from the collections.

Strategy and planning

Our strategic direction is guided by a long-term vision that extends beyond the five-year corporate planning cycles set by the Scottish Government. Central to this is the *RBGE Strategy 2021–2026: Responding to the Biodiversity Crisis and Climate Emergency*, developed alongside the *Science and Biodiversity Strategy 2021–2030*. These frameworks underpin organisational development and ensure alignment with national priorities, including Scotland's green recovery, net-zero commitments, and the transition to a nature-rich economy. The *Operational Delivery Plan 2024/25* further reinforces this alignment, translating strategic intent into actionable outcomes.

Performance management

RBGE fosters a strong culture of performance management, underpinned by a robust framework that supports strategic decision-making and organisational alignment. Departmental deliverables are closely tied to our strategic objectives, with progress monitored through structured reporting and quarterly reviews at senior leadership and Board levels. Staff performance is actively managed through regular appraisals, ensuring individual goals remain aligned with institutional priorities and contribute to the successful delivery of our mission.

Key outcomes

We work closely with the Scottish Government to evidence the considerable contribution RBGE makes in fulfilling the National Outcomes for Scotland. In 2024/25 RBGE contributed to the following Scottish Government National Outcomes:

Environment: We face an environmental crisis involving potentially catastrophic biodiversity loss. These threats to our life support system demand urgent and collective action. Our Gardens bring these issues to life in a way that is tangible and meaningful. We explore, conserve and explain the world of plants and fungi, pushing the boundaries of our knowledge to find and

apply solutions to protect our botanic world. The more we value and protect plants, the more they will protect us in the future.

Economy and Work and Business: We contribute over £5 for every £1 spent annually to the Scottish economy; develop apprenticeship, internship and work experience opportunities; grow commercial income, fundraising and philanthropy, and research grant activities; and increase collaboration and partnerships. We build an equal and fair society through embedding racial justice, equality, diversity and inclusion principles and practices.

International: We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally by advancing global scientific collaboration, biodiversity conservation, and cultural diplomacy. Through international fieldwork, research partnerships, and capacity-building programmes, RBGE strengthens Scotland’s global reputation in plant science and environmental leadership. Its role in hosting diplomatic visits, contributing to global conservation frameworks, and sharing expertise with institutions worldwide exemplifies Scotland’s commitment to openness, connectivity, and positive global impact.

Education: We train, upskill and empower learners and professionals of all ages, with programmes ranging from recreational courses to global capacity-building. Our education and engagement portfolio focuses on climate change and biodiversity loss, sustainable development, health and wellbeing, green recovery and a nature-rich economy.

Communities: We integrate biodiversity science with community livelihoods and land-use choices to support sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources, support community groups to enhance their local environment by transforming urban sites and infrastructure, to support biodiversity, wellbeing, and local food production, and to use plants, horticulture and landscaping to mitigate against weather extremes and the effects of climate change.



Strategic priorities

Our work is guided by three strategic priorities and one enabling priority:

Strategic priorities

- Knowledge & Understanding: Unlocking knowledge and understanding of plants and fungi for the benefit of society.
- Botanical Collections: Conserving and developing botanical collections as a global resource.
- Learning & Engagement: Enriching and empowering individuals and communities through learning and engagement with plants and fungi.

Enabling priority

- Sustaining RBGE: Ensuring a sustainable organisation



ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Knowledge and understanding: Unlocking knowledge and understanding of plants and fungi for the benefit of society

Our research focuses on understanding the diversity of and threats to different species and biomes. By understanding their likely responses to environmental change, we can develop enhanced strategies and actions to protect and restore biodiversity.

The Science and Biodiversity Strategy 2021–2030 is a direct response to the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency, reaffirming our focus on understanding plant and fungal diversity and biodiversity and ecosystem change. Through our Strategy we will deliver science to enable the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, working to grow global capacity in biodiversity science, conservation and horticulture. The Strategy reflects the urgent need for widespread action to:

- Secure a nature-rich future in the face of global environmental change.
- Develop nature-based solutions to climate change.
- Support the sustainable utilisation of the planet’s natural resources.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE continues to demonstrate international leadership in plant science and biodiversity research. Over the past year, 150 peer-reviewed publications — including six in *Nature* and *Science* — have advanced global understanding across genomics, macroecology, conservation, and biogeography. With 94 papers cited more than 50 times, our research portfolio reflects both depth and influence.

Strategic contributions to taxonomy included the description of 26 species new to science and the revision of over 500 species in Monographs and Floras.

The launch of the *Plants with Purpose* research programme, supported by over £200,000 in matched funding and a new PhD partnership with Scottish Water, exemplifies our commitment to applied science and nature-based solutions. Fieldwork across six continents and the release of new DNA reference datasets — including a UK lichen dataset — continue to expand global access to plant data, notably through contributions to World Flora Online.

Our international profile was further elevated through high-level diplomatic engagement, including the Royal visit to Nepal and hosting senior officials from the Government of India’s Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Scientific publications

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals	134	141	150	150	162	150
Total number of publications	154	163	196	187	275*	200
Papers published in the last 5 years cited > 50 times	69	73	85	85	94	90

* Genome notes published through the Darwin Tree of Life project made a major contribution to our 2024/25 publication output.

Discovery science

Our priorities for understanding plant and fungal diversity in Scotland and worldwide were accelerating biodiversity discovery, characterisation and mapping to support conservation planning and land-use choices; technological innovation – including large-scale use of genomic

data for biodiversity characterisation and monitoring; and development of data-portals and workflows to support large-scale analyses of biodiversity data and trends.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE continues to deliver high-impact contributions to global biodiversity research and conservation. Fieldwork across Türkiye, Madagascar, Nepal, Australia and the UK has advanced discovery science and strengthened international collaboration. Notably, the rediscovery of the rare subterranean liverwort *Aneura mirabilis* in Scotland underscores RBGE’s leadership in safeguarding native species.

Global conservation efforts were reinforced through the publication of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List assessments for key plant groups, including 32 Sulawesi *Cyrtandra*, 82 South American *Solanum*, and multiple *Rhododendron* species under the Global Conservation Consortium. Additionally, 13 global Red List drafts for *Boswellia* (frankincense) were completed and integrated into the IUCN Species Information Service, supporting international conservation prioritisation.

The launch of a *Boswellia* resource centre website and its presentation at the international *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species* meeting further elevated our role in linking biodiversity protection with sustainable livelihoods. Two Darwin Initiative projects – focused on tree seed supply systems in Asia and the conservation status of *Boswellia* – were successfully completed, reinforcing our commitment to applied conservation science.

Our research excellence was also recognised through a high-impact publication in *Science* on the genetic control of prickly development, which featured on the journal’s cover and generated global media attention.

Technological innovation remains central to our strategy, with new DNA reference datasets released, including a UK lichen barcode library and a plant DNA reference library for AUUa, Saudi Arabia. These resources support future taxonomic research and biodiversity monitoring at national and international scales.

Species discovery

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
No. of species new to science described	58	72	15*	34	26	52
No. of species revised in monographs and floras	72	121	97	688	524	200
No. of species in published checklists**	3,384	0	400	3,737	6,530	1,000

* The lower number of newly described species partly reflects publication timing and the pause in fieldwork during the Covid-19 pandemic.

** Checklist species counts vary year to year, as publications are infrequent but typically cover large volumes.

Global environmental change

Our priorities for global environmental change research were understanding, quantifying and predicting drivers of change leading to biodiversity loss — at scales ranging from individual species to major biomes — and developing and implementing rapid threat assessments to prioritise conservation actions and interventions to minimise biodiversity loss and extinction.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE achieved major milestones in scientific infrastructure and innovation during 2024/25. The DNA reference library for the Saudi Diet Project was successfully completed, supporting advanced metabarcoding research. A new vegetation map for central Madagascar was delivered through DEFRA's accelerated impact grant, enhancing regional conservation planning. Over 100 samples were generated for the Biodiversity Genomics Europe barcoding stream, and a UK lichen DNA reference dataset added 771 sequences from 118 species to our holdings.

Further innovation included the development and testing of a hybrid capture-based metabarcoding pipeline for 384 samples, advancing analytical capabilities. The reopening of our pathology laboratory re-established critical workflows for pathogen surveillance. Additionally, plant health planning was formally integrated into the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, with RBGE contributions published via Scotland's Centre of Expertise in Plant Health. These achievements reflect our leadership in applied science, data infrastructure, and policy integration — positioning the organisation at the forefront of biodiversity research and plant health strategy.

Conservation and sustainability

Our priorities in conservation and sustainability were developing integrated strategies to support the conservation and sustainable utilisation of natural capital and the maintenance of ecosystem services; and developing and implementing restoration plans that lead to net gains for biodiversity and/or nature-based solutions to climate change.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE continues to deliver high-impact conservation and research initiatives aligned with national and global biodiversity priorities. As part of the Scottish Plant Recovery Programme, targeted fieldwork — including the survey of rare and endemic *Hedlundia* spp. on Arran and the identification of translocation sites for *Woodsia ilvensis* — supports the expansion of wild populations and the protection of threatened species.

Internationally, RBGE has played a leading role in advancing sustainable practices within the rubber industry. Through extensive engagement with stakeholders around the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), RBGE has contributed to the development of due diligence frameworks that promote transparency, accountability, and equitable access to certification schemes for smallholder growers — helping to reduce deforestation-linked planting.

The launch of the Science-Horticulture *Plants with Purpose* research programme marks a significant step forward in our strategic research agenda. With over £200,000 in matched funding secured in its first year and the commencement of a PhD project in partnership with Scottish Water, the programme exemplifies our commitment to applied science and cross-sector collaboration.

Key concerns and mitigating actions:

RBGE continues to advance its scientific and operational ambitions, supported by dedicated teams and evolving infrastructure. However, challenges remain in sustaining capacity across key workstreams. These pressures underscore the need for continued investment in workforce resilience and strategic resource planning.

Technological infrastructure also faced strain during the year, with legacy systems and connectivity issues impacting data workflows and editorial processes. Strategic forums have been established to align future digital capabilities with scientific priorities.

Facilities and equipment require modernisation to meet growing research and plant health demands. Ageing infrastructure and environmental impacts have highlighted the need for

capital investment in controlled environments and diagnostic capabilities. Planning is underway to secure funding and ensure long-term operational resilience.

The number of newly described species has declined over the past couple of years. This trend is attributed to a shift in staff focus towards other areas of impact and a reduction in fieldwork following the COVID-19 pandemic. While fieldwork has resumed, there is a lag before new collections result in published species descriptions.

Despite these challenges, RBGE remains committed to delivering excellence in science, conservation, and public engagement, with proactive steps being taken to strengthen systems, safeguard research assets, and support future growth.

BOTANICAL COLLECTIONS

Conserving and developing botanical collections as a global resource

Our work focuses on enhancing the National Botanical Collection held at RBGE as a scientific, horticultural and cultural heritage resource. We also support the wider development of botanical collections, particularly in countries in the Global South.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE delivered several landmark achievements in 2024/25, reinforcing its leadership in botanical collections, heritage stewardship, and digital innovation. The publication of a new Living Collections Policy set a refreshed strategic direction for curatorial excellence, while the RBGE Archive was awarded National Archives Service ‘Accredited’ status, recognising its commitment to best practice in archival management.

Digitisation efforts reached a major milestone with the millionth herbarium specimen digitised, generating substantial media attention. The total number of databased herbarium records surpassed 1.5 million, exceeding the annual target by over 58,000, and specimen images online are approaching the 1.2 million mark. Over 100 new RBGE publications were also added to the Research Scotland digital repository, expanding access to scientific outputs.

In January 2025, Storm Eowyn caused significant damage across our Gardens, resulting in the loss of over 400 trees – including Edinburgh’s tallest, a 166-year-old Himalayan Cedar – and widespread glasshouse infrastructure damage. The event received national media coverage and highlighted the vulnerability of heritage landscapes to climate-related events. Recovery efforts are ongoing, with a focus on restoration, resilience planning, and securing support for long-term infrastructure renewal.

Enhancing the conservation value of living collections

Our priorities are increasing the number and diversity of threatened plant species in conservation collections to protect against extinction.

2024/25 Overview:

- This year marked the launch of the Living Collections Policy, establishing a robust and forward-looking framework to guide the development of living collections and support fieldwork initiatives, including significant activity in China.
- We celebrated the formal establishment of the Global Conservation Consortium for Conifers (GCCC), highlighted by the ceremonial planting of six Wollemi pines from the global meta collection – symbolising international collaboration and commitment to conifer conservation.
- The International Conifer Conservation Project (ICCP) led a series of successful planting tours and visits, culminating in a public lecture at Glasnevin Botanic Garden and active participation in Ireland’s National Biodiversity Week, further strengthening public engagement and awareness.
- Additionally, a dedicated conifer conservation event was delivered for RBGE patrons, fostering stakeholder support and deepening engagement with our conservation mission.

Conservation value of the Living Collection

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Wild origin in the Living Collection %	60.4%	64%	60%	59.6%	58.9%	65%
IUCN threatened species in the Living Collection *	451	548	1,043	1,042	1,042	1,200

* Release of updated IUCN conservation assessment data can change the conservation status of individual taxa held in the collections both positively and negatively.

The large increase in the number of IUCN threatened species recorded in the Living Collection over the last few years, was in part due to the increased functionality in our new Living Collections database (IrisBG) that allows us to query the IUCN Red List more accurately, resulting in more detailed and accurate data available on the accessions within our collections.

Digitising our collections

Our priorities are digitisation of the Preserved Collections at RBGE and supporting international digital collections infrastructure to enhance access to natural history collections.

2024/25 Overview:

- Significant progress has been made in advancing digital access to botanical collections. A major milestone was reached with the digitisation of the millionth herbarium specimen – a Scottish lichen collected for the Darwin Tree of Life project and digitised by a Botanic Explorer participant (from our secondary school summer camp) – highlighting the intersection of scientific research and youth engagement. This achievement drew widespread attention across social and traditional media platforms.
- Strategic collaborations have also been initiated, including a new partnership with an international working group to standardise spectroscopy methods in herbaria. This initiative aims to enhance specimen identification and data interoperability across global collections.
- Investments in high-spec imaging infrastructure have expanded digitisation capacity, supporting the organisation’s commitment to open access and scientific excellence. As a result, substantial portions of the British and Irish vascular plants, lichens, and basidiomycetes collections have now been digitised to internationally recognised standards.

Digitising the Herbarium Collection

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Annual Herbarium specimen record downloads	791,996	884,827	900,000	1,230,789	891,320	990,000
Total Herbarium specimen records databased	985,578	1,094,225	1,254,225	1,378,891	1,508,656	1,450,000
Total Herbarium specimen images digitised and online	512,324	559,551	720,000	944,204	1,099,881	1,200,000

Research Scotland repository

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Total RBGE (full text) items in Research Scotland repository	160	161	203	245	444	400
New RBGE (full text) publications added to Research Scotland repository	160	1	42	46	126	100

Caring for and maintaining our collections

Our priorities are maintaining a high standard of collections care and curation, data management, verification, and accessibility.

2024/25 Overview:

- Strategic enhancements to the Herbarium and preserved collections have advanced long-term conservation and risk management. This includes the accession of new fern specimens and the re-curation of the RBGE map collection, reinforcing our commitment to safeguarding botanical heritage. That commitment was further demonstrated in June 2024, when RBGE received a significant private collection, expanding the depth and diversity of our holdings.
- Infrastructure improvements, including optimised specimen storage and the formation of a dedicated Estates–Preserved Collections focus group, reflect proactive measures to mitigate risks associated with ageing facilities.
- In parallel, the opening of a new viewing platform at Dawyck has enriched the visitor experience, receiving positive public feedback and reinforcing our role in connecting people with nature.

Developing the collections

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Living Collection: New accessions	418	1,408	1,000	800	1,722	2,000
Herbarium Collection: New accessions	-	-	-	5,704	24,054*	5,000
Silica-dried Collection: New accessions	-	551	502	365	859	1,000
Library and Archives Collection: New items added	4,535	2,625	2,879	2,965	3,497	2,500

* A large private collection received in June 2024 enabled the Herbarium to exceed its annual accession target.

Enhancing the sustainability of collection management

Our priorities are reducing the environmental impacts of maintaining the collections, increasing their resilience to emerging threats and promoting biodiversity on our estates.

2024/25 Overview:

- Now in its sixth year, our Edinburgh Rain Garden continues to deliver strategic impact by supporting climate resilience, enhancing biodiversity, and fostering meaningful public engagement, while contributing to broader flood management objectives. Complementing this, the installation of stormwater planters demonstrates ongoing innovation in sustainable water management.

Key concerns and mitigating actions:

Ongoing risks associated with ageing infrastructure for specimen storage are being actively managed through cross-functional collaboration, while efforts to strengthen awareness of system dependencies are underway to support long-term business continuity and resilience. Plant health threats remain a significant strategic risk to the Living Collection across all four gardens. While resource-intensive statutory requirements and recent storm-related disruptions have impacted progress toward Plant Healthy accreditation, collaborative efforts between Science, Horticulture, and Estates teams have led to meaningful improvements in biosecurity measures. In parallel, proactive risk management continues, with infrastructure-related concerns being addressed through coordinated planning and oversight, ensuring readiness for future operational developments.

The proportion of wild origin plants in the Living Collection declined from 64% in 2021/22 to 60% in 2022/23, primarily due to losses of cold-sensitive species during the December 2022 cold weather. This lower level has persisted, as restricted fieldwork since 2020 has limited new wild-origin plantings following the pandemic and impacting the number of new accessions to the Living Collection.

IUCN threatened species in the Living Collection rose sharply in 2022/23 due to improved data accuracy from the new IrisBG database, which enables precise Red List queries. Numbers have since stabilised, reflecting new taxa additions and ongoing conservation status update. A network outage disrupted the herbarium digitisation programme, halting imaging and processing and reducing the year's specimen output.

LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

Enriching and empowering individuals and communities through learning and engagement with plants and fungi

We are building global capacity to address the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency by advancing scientific and horticultural knowledge, delivering professional training, and inspiring over one million annual visitors and learners across 80+ countries to protect our fragile planet.

2024/25 Overview:

Our refreshed brand was successfully launched, supported by a new portfolio of visual assets representing all four Gardens. Public engagement continued to grow, with over 1.1 million visitors and strong participation across exhibitions, events, and community programmes. Educational reach expanded significantly, engaging more than 12,000 learners and enrolling 1,200 participants in online courses. Strategic planning progressed with the early outline of the Learning & Engagement Strategy receiving positive feedback from the Board of Trustees.

Access & inclusion

Our priorities are maximising social and physical access across the four Gardens and providing high quality interpretation.

2024/25 Overview:

- The publication of the Edinburgh Garden map in eight languages demonstrates RBGE’s commitment to accessibility and inclusive engagement across diverse audiences. In parallel, confirmation of further funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the proposed Palm Houses interpretation structure marks a significant step forward in enhancing the visitor experience and storytelling within the historic glasshouses.

Increasing access to our collections

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Number of digital images captured for Library and Archives Collections	-	-	-	1,142	119	300
Number of curated images of the RBGE Living Collection (key groups and threatened species)	-	-	-	322	222	300

Training, upskilling and empowering learners and professionals

Our priorities are training, upskilling and empowering learners and professionals of all ages, ranging from building global capacity in plant biodiversity science, conservation, and horticulture to informal recreational courses.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE continues to strengthen its academic programmes through formal revalidation of the BSc (Hons) degree, incorporating new modules aligned with evolving institutional priorities. A Memorandum of Agreement with Scotland’s Rural College further reinforces the strategic delivery of horticultural education.

Innovative learning experiences remain central to our mission, with the Tropical Plant Identification module of the MSc Biodiversity and Taxonomy of Plants returning to overseas field-based delivery for the first time since 2019. Public engagement also expanded through

digital outreach, including a live schools’ talk on fungi that reached hundreds of pupils across Scotland.

Education: Learners / engagement

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Number of learners engaged	4,754	3,468	5,157	9,061	12,019	8,000
Number of school sessions delivered	0	54	114	319	461	200
Number of undergraduate / taught postgraduate learners *	73	78	88	90	87	90

Student achievement / satisfaction / retention

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Student satisfaction %	65%	79%	75%	93%	90%	85%
Undergraduate students course achievement rate (SCQF levels 7 – 10)	-	-	-	102%	86%	90%
Postgraduate students course achievement rate (SCQF levels 11 – 12)	85%	78%	92%	90%	94%	90%

Online learning and social media

Our priorities are leveraging the use of online learning, social media platforms and mobile apps to support environmental education and public engagement.

2024/25 Overview:

- RBGE continues to build its digital presence, with social media followership surpassing 280,000 and engagement levels significantly outperforming industry benchmarks. Sustained growth in online audiences has also contributed to notable income generation.
- The launch of the brand-refreshed website received positive stakeholder feedback, reinforcing our commitment to accessible and engaging digital platforms. Additionally, impactful content illustrating the effects of Storm Éowyn secured extensive national and international media coverage, further elevating the organisation’s public profile.

Online learning

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
New PropaGate course enrolments (online learners)	2,565	1,579	1,173	1,326	1,200	1,440
Number of countries represented by online learners	-	-	81	72	73	80

Online engagement

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Social Media Community (no: of followers across all platforms)	208,773	229,254	237,169	262,836	281,408	270,000
RBGE website: Users *	775,293	946,978	780,000	433,010	437,182	270,000

* G4 analytics was introduced in 2023/24 to track active users, so figures from previous years are not directly comparable.

Inspiring communities

Our priorities are inspiring communities to celebrate, protect and enjoy the natural capital of Scotland and the world and to maximise health and wellbeing.

2024/25 Overview:

- RBGE continues to advance inclusive engagement through innovative programming, including a pilot ESOL nature connections initiative for New Scots and large-scale public events such as the Harvest Festival, which connected thousands of participants with edible gardening and community partnerships.
- The Biodiversity Roadshow extended our reach across Scotland, with trainee Biodiversity Ambassadors delivering sessions that foster plant protection awareness and nature connection. Strategic collaboration with the University of Edinburgh further supports the development of evidence-based approaches to measuring wellbeing, social connection, and nature engagement across our programmes.

Community engagement

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Community engagement participants	3,612	4,000	8,589	12,588	13,060	14,170

Includes participants in the Engaging Gardens Programme, Skills-sharing Programme, and Edinburgh Biomes Diversity tool and Restoration Forth Community Programme from 2022/23 onwards.

Enhancing public understanding of plants, fungi and environmental sustainability

Our priorities are using all our resources and programmes, from science and horticulture to the arts, to enhance public understanding of plants, fungi and environmental sustainability while contributing to Scotland's economy through being a major international tourist destination.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE continues to connect with its audiences through innovative, family-focused programming and high-profile cultural events. The launch of the Play with Plants initiative, the popular LEGO-building event and nature play installations, attracted strong visitor numbers, reinforcing our commitment to accessible, nature-based learning.

Science and research were prominently showcased through the Easter Trail and Science Festival, which achieved pre-pandemic levels of engagement, and through the publication of *The Fascinating World of Fungi*, which aligned with the Fungi Forms exhibition and received international media attention, including coverage in *Forbes*.

Our public profile was further elevated by extensive national and international media coverage of the flowering of *Amorphophallus titanum*, and the success of fungi-themed events such as *Botanic Lates* and the Merlin Sheldrake talk, which sold out due to high demand. Seasonal programming, including Christmas at the Botanic, also received positive feedback and

achieved the highest % of first-time visitors in the last five years despite operational challenges, underscoring our resilience and continued appeal.

Visits to the four Gardens

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Day visits	425,843	731,348	973,833	1,040,820	1,031,418	1,035,000
Additional out of hours visits	68,089	100,872	114,406	116,887	109,749	115,000
Total visits	493,932	832,220	1,088,239	1,157,707	1,141,167	1,150,000

Public Engagement

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Number of visits to RBGE exhibitions	5,708	14,082	120,926	147,650	105,169	110,000
Audiences at Public Programme Events (Edinburgh)	-	4,759	68,762	18,329	26,437	20,000

Christmas at the Botanic event

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Tickets sold	66,638	93,480	98,000	93,119	92,598	120,000
First-time visitors to RBGE %	31%	32%	33%	31%	34.7%	33%
Income	£102,327	£311,735	£294,982	£295,061	£273,902	£321,682

Key concerns and Mitigating actions:

Digital image capture in 2024/25 fell short of target due to a strategic shift from large-scale digitisation to prioritising new botanical acquisitions and external requests. Volumes are expected to return to previous levels in 2025/26 as the new approach matures.

Scotland's tertiary education challenges are affecting academic partnerships and revenue streams. Learner numbers for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes in 2024/25 were slightly below target, driven by alternative graduate routes and cost-of-living pressures prompting early exits for employment. To mitigate these risks, we are intensifying recruitment and marketing, introducing domestic student bursaries, and strengthening the financial sustainability of other courses.

Online enrolment reached 1,200 against a target of 1,440, reflecting sector-wide recruitment challenges and increased competition. To address this, we are boosting marketing and launching a new grassland urban management course with NatureScot to attract professional learners and broaden our audience.

Although we did not meet the 24/25 target for Community Engagement participants, engagement levels exceeded previous years and reached the highest point since the pandemic

in 2020. The team is prioritising quality and impact over volume, and feedback from participating groups has been overwhelmingly positive.

Christmas at the Botanic Gardens 2024 experienced lower visitor numbers primarily due to six event cancellations caused by severe weather conditions. While many guests were able to exchange tickets, the timing of cancellations meant some could not, resulting in an estimated shortfall against a projected 105,000 ticket sales. To address this and optimise attendance for 2025, we have implemented key measures:

- Introduced off-peak ticket options to boost mid-week capacity.
- Enhanced our weather cancellation process and communication protocols.
- Partnered with our ticketing provider to improve the customer journey, including a streamlined ticket exchange tool.

Market trends indicate wider challenges, with reduced sales across most UK venues, driven by cost-of-living pressures and last-minute booking behaviour linked to weather confidence and budgeting.

Recognising the growing impact of adverse weather on outdoor events, RBGE is developing a comprehensive Adverse Weather Plan to mitigate operational risks and safeguard visitor experience.

SUSTAINING RBGE

Ensuring a sustainable organisation

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE made significant progress across its environmental, social, infrastructure, and financial sustainability priorities. Carbon emissions have been cut by 23% since its 2019/20 baseline, marking strong progress toward its 2030 and 2045 climate targets, despite a temporary rise in 2024/25 due to infrastructure and storm-related challenges. Social sustainability was strengthened through a reduction in the Gender Pay Gap to 3.9%, the introduction of a 35-hour work week, and a record 18,364 volunteer hours – nearly doubling the annual target. Infrastructure improvements included strategic estate assessments, key repairs, enhanced connectivity, and planning digital transformation projects. Economically, RBGE delivered £5.62 in public value for every £1 invested, secured over £6.3m in philanthropic income, and advanced the Biomes restoration project with £3.3m in pledges.

Environmental sustainability

Our priorities are reducing our carbon footprint; reducing waste, fossil fuel use and increasing recycling; developing sustainable supply chains and investing in green technologies and innovative green projects.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE has achieved a 23% reduction in carbon emissions since its 2019/20 baseline, narrowly missing the FY target of 25%. This shortfall was primarily due to infrastructure challenges and storm-related repairs in 2024/25. Despite this, RBGE continues to implement impactful initiatives such as boiler upgrades, improved building management systems, and a transition to cleaner energy sources. Over 100 projects outlined in its Carbon Management Plan support annual reductions in energy use and travel emissions. Beyond carbon reporting, RBGE is embedding sustainability across its operations – from eco-conscious procurement and electric vehicle schemes to academic collaborations and climate education – reinforcing its role as a leader in environmental stewardship.

Carbon footprint reduction

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Total carbon footprint (tCO ₂ e)	2,273	2,333	2,284	2,179	2,345	2,282
Reduction %	-25%	-23%	-25%	-28%	-23%	
Reduction target %	-5%	-10%	-15%	-20%	-25%	

Carbon footprint reduction targets are based on 5% reduction per year from 2019/20 baseline of 3,043 tonnes CO₂e.

Social sustainability

Our priorities continue to be building an equal and fair society through embedding racial justice, equality, diversity and inclusion principles and practices; developing quality, visible and accessible leadership and management; enhancing our volunteer programme; and advancing our research associate community, work exchanges and secondments.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE continues to strengthen its organisational culture through strategic initiatives that advance equity, wellbeing, and leadership. Progress in pay equity is reflected in a reduced gender pay gap, while the introduction of a 35-hour work week and targeted wellbeing

programmes have enhanced workforce engagement. Investments in digital HR systems are improving operational efficiency, and inclusive leadership development is being reinforced through strengthened volunteer and research associate programmes.

Gender pay gap

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Pay gap %	9.1%	10.7%	8.1%	4.9%	3.91%	4%
Average hourly earnings for men	-	£18.20	£18.13	£19.12	£20.76	£19.50
Average hourly earnings for women	-	£16.26	£16.66	£18.18	£19.95	£19.00

Gender Pay Gap figures are based on employer payroll data drawn from a specified date occurring in the previous financial year (determined by ONS).

Volunteers

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Volunteer hours	1,330	2,155	7,756	14,527	18,364	10,200

Infrastructure sustainability

Our priorities are developing and maintaining secure, resilient and fit for purpose digital and physical estate environments, ensuring compliant and robust corporate and information governance.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE is advancing its strategic infrastructure and digital transformation agenda through coordinated improvements across estates, connectivity, and governance. A prioritised repair and maintenance programme is being informed by expert assessment of principal buildings, while key upgrades have enhanced operational resilience across sites. Digital transformation plans have entered the pre-implementation phase, supported through cyber-integrated delivery, strategic procurement, service desk modernisation and secure infrastructure planning. Governance has been reinforced through Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) certification, enhancing capability and supporting consistent, user-focused delivery.

Cybersecurity: Number of incidents

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Reported incidents	-	-	0	0	0	0
Number of major security incidents	-	0	0	0	0	0
Number of minor security incidents	1	0	1	2	1	0

Physical infrastructure maintenance: Planned vs reactive

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Planned works vs reactive works [% ratio]	62/38	48/52	70/30	91/9	60/40	70/30
Maintenance spend: Planned vs reactive	£441k / £276k	£315k / £342k	£443k / £200k	£504k / £53k	£361k / £240k	£423k / £181k

This PI is an industry standard with a set target ratio of 70/30. It demonstrates the effectiveness over time of investing in planned maintenance to reduce the reactive requirement. 70/30 is considered the optimum ratio.

Economic & financial sustainability

Our priorities are delivering a return on investment in Scotland for every £1 spent; developing apprenticeship, internship and work experience opportunities; growing commercial income, fundraising and philanthropy, and research grant activities; and increasing collaboration and partnerships.

2024/25 Overview:

RBGE continues to demonstrate exceptional value and fundraising success, generating £5.62 in economic return for every £1 of public investment and securing over £6.3 million in philanthropic income – exceeding annual targets. Strategic fundraising for the Biomes initiative advanced with £3.3 million in gift pledges, which included a £1.5m gift from The Julia Rausing Trust and a £750k gift from The Wolfson Foundation, while the Storm Damage Appeal raised over £250,000, unlocking match funding from the Scottish Government. Membership income surpassed expectations. In parallel, our research excellence was reinforced through the submission of 41 science grant applications totalling £7 million, resulting in 26 successful awards and nearly £500,000 in overheads.

Philanthropic giving

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Philanthropic income *	£1,280,536	£1,788,488	£2,250,000	£3,600,513	£6,310,003	£2,500,000
Major Gifts pledges	£283,000	£2,213,000	£1,290,000	£2,169,936	£1,716,599	£1,300,000
Patrons subscription income**	£21,000	£34,000	£35,000	£71,109	£85,312	£70,000

* All income and pledges relate to RBGE (i.e. not the Botanic Foundation or BTC).

**VAT exclusive.

Edinburgh Biomes fundraising

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Palm House / Edinburgh Biomes pledges	-	£4,603,000	£660,000	£309,551	£3,343,187	£600,000

Individual Giving: Membership

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Total number of members	10,770	11,889	11,693	11,710	11,548	11,500
Number of new members	1,594	2,266	1,430	1,506	1,260	1,500
DD % of memberships	69%	71%	75%	76%	77%	78%
Membership retention %	82.2%	94%	82%	81%	78%	85%
Membership subscription income	£168,000	£241,000	£231,612	£242,280	£314,677	£290,000

Individual Giving income

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Celebrate Life*	£31,000	£37,000	£36,359	£150,752	£132,313	£105,000
Visitor Giving income**	£46,000	£147,000	£121,169	£143,278	£146,279	£130,000
Legacy income	£195,000	£144,000	£88,960	£865,784	£173,581	£242,000

* Celebrate Life income net of bench maintenance costs.

** Contactless, Cairn Cash and Mobility Scooter donation.

Science Grant funding: Applications and awards

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Target
Number of grant applications	19	29	12	33	41	20
Value of grant applications	£2,743,979	£5,189,890	£2,020,289	£8,049,339	£7,071,096	£5,000,000
Number of successful awards	10	16	17	19	26	18
Value of successful awards	£303,836	£1,719,000	£1,975,239	£2,817,626	£1,348,118	£2,000,000
Value of overheads and salary recharge	£346,909	£284,765	£375,000	£463,564	£483,205	£425,000

Key concerns and mitigating actions:

RBGE continues to strengthen its organisational resilience and sustainability through targeted actions across key operational areas. While gas consumption reductions remain a challenge, capital investment in heating system upgrades is driving long-term energy efficiency.

Progress on job evaluation and grading has been slower than anticipated, but renewed policy development is underway to restore momentum. In response to recent network disruptions, RBGE is enhancing contingency planning and digital infrastructure to bolster cybersecurity and operational continuity.

Fundraising efforts for the Biomes project have been recalibrated, ensuring sustained donor engagement despite cost and timeline pressures. Membership retention for 2024/25 was 78%, slightly below the 85% target. While the fee increases in late 2023/24 prompted some cancellations, retention improved steadily through the year, supported by initiatives such as monthly direct debits, ongoing recruitment, and new member-focused programmes. Legacy income totalled £173,581, below target following an exceptional prior year, while grant awards reached £1.35m against a £2m target, reflecting fluctuations in the funding landscape. Additional training has taken place to widen and strengthen the Principal Investigator pool, and strategic workshops are taking place with the Science management team to identify key opportunities and priorities to focus on. A new Legacy strategy, enhanced tracking processes, and updated content have laid foundations for growth, alongside investment in grant-writing skills and major proposals planned for 2025/26.

These measures reflect RBGE's ongoing commitment to sustaining its people, infrastructure, and financial health in support of its wider mission.

Financial Review

The Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities on page 54 reports an overall increase in total funds of £19,131k, primarily driven by a £20,025k rise in restricted funds. Group unrestricted funds decreased by £795k, following a £149k reduction in 2023/24. This decline mainly reflects lower profits from the Botanics Trading Company (BTC), as both hospitality and consultancy income fell, and the level of gift aid transferred from 2023/24 profits exceeded those generated in 2024/25. In addition, General Fund expenditure surpassed income, partly due to a modest reduction in unrestricted Grant-in-Aid from the Scottish Government. The increase in restricted funds is largely attributable to capital funds exceeding depreciation by £16,824k, a £1,992k surplus on restricted projects, and a £1,069k gain from the revaluation of fixed assets. Endowment funds recorded a surplus of £41k, with £140k transferred from Endowment funds to Restricted funds during the year.

The accounts have been prepared in a form directed by Scottish Ministers under paragraph 20(3) of Schedule 1 to the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and on the basis of the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the accounts.

During the year the Garden received revenue grant in aid of £11.7m (2023/24: £11.5m), of which £11.5m was unrestricted, and capital grant of £17.0m (2023/24: £15.5m). The increase in capital grant was to continue work on the Edinburgh Biomes project. Other grants, gifts and donations increased by £5.4m to £9.7m, mainly due to grants received for the Edinburgh Biomes project. Income from admissions to the Regional Gardens, education courses, rents, concessions, membership income and other activities was £3.0m compared to £2.6m in 2023/24. Trading and commercial activity contributed £3.4m compared to £4.5m in 2023/24, mainly due to a fall in legacy income, and a reduction of £0.5m in BTC income. Staff costs amounted to £15.4m (2023/24: £14.4m) and £8.3m (2023/24: £8.3m) was spent on other direct costs excluding depreciation and impairment.

Capital expenditure of £19.3m (2023/24: £14.1m) was incurred, of which £17.6m was spent on land and buildings and infrastructure. The biggest project spend in the year was on the Edinburgh Biomes project, with construction work continuing on the energy infrastructure work and the renovation of the Victorian Palm House through the year.

The Statement of Financial Activities for RBGE (page 53) shows an overall net movement on funds of £19,781k, mainly due to the increase in restricted funds detailed above.

The overall reserves remain healthy with an increase in group reserves to £112.6m from £93.6m. This is mainly made up of fixed assets. Unrestricted group funds have decreased from £875k to £80k, partly due to the timing of gift aid transfers from BTC to RBGE. Project funds have increased from £1,378k to £3,509k as grants received were higher than those spent during the period.

Uncertainty continues around the level of longer-term funding from Scottish Government which makes future planning difficult. However, Grant-in-Aid funding has been agreed for 2025/26 and discussions have taken place on future revenue and capital funding requirements. Ongoing discussions with our sponsor department in the Scottish Government indicate there are no concerns or indications that SG intends to cease funding for RBGE. It is therefore considered appropriate to prepare accounts on a going concern basis.

RBGE continually strives to increase revenue streams to offset the effect of the Edinburgh Biomes project which will further restrict income generation over the next few years.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy of the organisation is explained in Note 1 of the accounts. In line with the Scottish Public Finance Manual, RBGE are not allowed to draw down Grant-in-Aid in advance of need. The Trustees' view is that a target level of £100k of unrestricted reserves for RBGE is desirable to give the organisation flexibility to cope with funding fluctuations. A deficit of £145k in the year has seen the unrestricted reserves decrease to £36k at the 31 March 2025, below the target. The aim is to increase the level of unrestricted reserves in 2025/26.

Other Fixed Assets

Significant changes in other fixed assets are shown in Notes 11 and 12.

Payment Policy

RBGE's policy is to settle all debts with its creditors within 10 days to comply with the Scottish Government requirement, but to also ensure all debts are settled within 30 days. The average duration for 2024/25 was 24 days (23/24: 24 days), with 79% (2023/24: 81%) of invoices paid within 30 days.

Investment Policy and Performance

It was the policy of RBGE to keep capital balances intact and use only the income generated for expenditure related to the charity. However, after a review of the stipulations made as part of the Ferguson Bequest, the Trustees consider it appropriate to use the capital for specific projects, in line with any stipulations made as part of the bequests. The portfolio is managed by Investment Managers using a Total Return approach. During the year, dividend and interest income of £38k was received; the investment portfolio increased in value by 3.0%, net of fees. Gross of fees, the portfolio increased by 3.7% against a benchmark of 6.8%.

An ethical investment policy was approved by the RBGE Board in 2018/19 and has been implemented but remains under constant review. This is available on the RBGE website.

Sustainability Report 2024/2025

The Climate Change (Scotland) Acts 2009 and 2019

Given the dual challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change, the work carried out by RBGE is more essential than ever. Delivering this work often involves international travel, and the scale of our estate demands considerable resources for its upkeep – both of which contribute to our carbon emissions. RBGE acknowledges the importance of regularly reviewing how we operate, enhancing our infrastructure and practices, and adjusting our organisational behaviours and activities to reduce our carbon footprint and minimise environmental harm.

In 2009, the Scottish Government introduced one of the world's most ambitious climate change laws, aiming for net zero emissions by 2050. This target was later revised in the Climate Change Emissions Act (2019), which accelerated the goal to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with interim milestones of a 75% reduction by 2030 and 90% by 2040.

Under Section 44 of the 2009 Act, Scottish public bodies have specific responsibilities regarding climate change. Since 1 January 2011, all public bodies must carry out their functions:

- in a manner that best supports the achievement of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- in a way that contributes effectively to any statutory programme for adapting to climate change impacts;
- and in a way they deem to be the most sustainable.

Carbon Management Plan

To align with the Scottish Government's climate objectives, RBGE has introduced a Carbon Management Plan to 2030. This plan sets out our strategic route to achieving Net Zero and responds directly to legislative requirements. It also reflects the urgency brought about by global climate discussions and the ongoing energy crisis, which has significantly impacted fuel costs.

The plan includes more than 100 targeted projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions across the RBGE estate, while also delivering financial savings. Our emissions reduction goal is a 40% cut by 2030, using 2019/20 as the baseline year. This trajectory supports our commitment to reaching Net Zero by 2045. Key annual targets include a 5% decrease in both gas and electricity usage, alongside a substantial reduction in travel-related emissions compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Achieving these targets will require a combination of sustainable upgrades to our buildings and a proactive approach to managing energy use and operational behaviours. A critical part of this effort will be reviewing and refining our travel policy to ensure that essential international activities can continue with a reduced environmental impact.

Carbon Foot Printing

RBGE maintains its commitment to submitting the annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report (PBCCDR), as required. This report offers a detailed account of our greenhouse gas emissions and highlights the progress of our renewable energy initiatives. Although the full report is currently being prepared for submission in November, a draft overview of the key data and findings intended for inclusion is presented in the table below.

RBGE Carbon Emissions 2024/2025

Emissions Category		Total Carbon Emitted (tCO ₂ e)		Percentage of Total Carbon		Cost of Carbon Emitted	
		2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Scope 1	Building heat (Gas, LPG, oil)	1,452.4	1,621.4	67%	69%	£373,682	£461,595
	Fuel – vehicles and machinery	44.0	16.6	2%	1%	£6,061	£3,780
Scope 2	Electricity	419.8	442.9	19%	18%	£607,503	£716,608
Scope 3	Electricity T&D	36.3	38.3	12%	12%	-	-
	Business Travel	202.6	230.0			£170,124	£278,772
	Waste	15.2	12.3			£56,908	£62,468
	Water	7.8	7.4			£57,216	£91,523
	Homeworking	0.9	0.9	-	-	-	-
Renewables	Generated electricity	(12.8)	(5.1)	-	-	(£21,426)	(£18,255)
Totals (Gross)		2,179	2,370	100%		£ 1,271,494	£1,614,746
Totals (Net)*		2,166	2,365	-		£1,250,068	£1,596,491

* Net Totals include electricity generated on site which we earn income on via the Feed in Tariff scheme

RBGE measures its progress towards Net Zero from its baseline year 2019/20. Total carbon footprint in 2019/20 was measured to be 3,043 tCO₂e. In addition to its Net Zero aspirations RBGE set an interim goal to reduce its carbon footprint by 40% by 2030. Consumption of Gas and Electricity increased in 2024/25 which resulted in an overall increase of 166 tCO₂e compared to the previous year. While disappointing, RBGE remains on track to achieving the 40% reduction target by 2030 as total emissions (2,332 tCO₂e) for 2024/25 are 22% below the baseline year.

Utility costs have risen compared to last year, largely due to increased unit prices. Total carbon emissions increased by 8%, mainly due to colder weather increasing the use of gas, whereas utility cost increased by a total of 18% or £229k compared to last year's data.

The increase in electricity usage is expected as RBGE transitions to cleaner energy and less reliance upon fossil fuels. Electric vehicles and increased usage of battery powered equipment increases its consumption on electricity.

There is still a significant burden placed on RBGE's antiquated and ageing infrastructure. The reliance upon gas boilers that have exceeded their useful life and failing heating systems are resulting in increased repair costs and heating losses. The introduction of the new Energy Centre as part of the Edinburgh Biomes project in 2027 will make a significant contribution to lowering energy costs and RBGE's carbon footprint.

Between now and the new Energy Centre coming into operation, RBGE has identified several initiatives that will contribute towards lowering emissions and reducing operational costs.

For FY 2025/26 the following projects will be undertaken:

- Replacement of Gas Boilers in the John Hope Gateway
- Upgrade of Caledonian Hall Heating system to utilise Air Source Heat Pump technology
- Replacement of East Gate Lodge Gas Boiler
- Repairs to steam distribution network, glasshouse vents and Environmental Monitoring System (EMS).

While measuring carbon emissions is integral to RBGE's progress towards Net Zero, it is important to note the other activities occurring at RBGE that are not necessarily captured within

our emissions reporting but play a large part in the wider sustainability practices and ambitions of the organisation. For example:

-
- Our salary sacrifice scheme has allowed for purchasing of electric vehicles by staff
- Our procurement process puts weight on sustainability at the tendering stage, which allows us to work closely with newly appointed suppliers and contractors to ensure best practice and alignment with our sustainability targets
- Sustainable materials and ways of working are being included in the Biomes project
- Engagement with MSc and PhD students on research projects on sustainability
- Collaboration between departments on nature-based solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change
- Development of climate change and biodiversity short courses as part of our education offer
- Development of our Environmental Sustainability Strategy, and inclusion of sustainability measures in various policies and procedures throughout the organisation
- Continued partnerships with various organisations around Edinburgh and Scotland, including the Cultural Public Bodies Sustainability Group and the Environment & Economy Leaders Group.

While this is not an exhaustive list of every sustainability related activity at RBGE, it does provide an insight into how RBGE is implementing greener practices and behaviours across the organisation in tandem with our larger carbon-reduction goals.

Governance & Management

Board of Trustees

Scottish Ministers appoint the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. The following were members of the Board during the period covered by the Accounts:

Chair

- Dominic Fry

Trustees

- Professor Sarah Gurr
- Dr David Hamilton
- Dr Ian Jardine
- Elizabeth Trevor
- Professor Cara Aitchison
- Professor Elise Cartmell
- Stella Morse FCA

The Board of Trustees is responsible for developing and approving policy and strategy for RBGE. In practice, both are developed jointly by Trustees and management, and adopted formally by the Board. Management has a responsibility for ensuring effective processes and deployment of resources for optimum performance. Implementation and operation are solely the responsibility of the Regius Keeper and Executive and Senior Leadership Teams. The RBGE Strategy and Operational Delivery Plans along with the Framework Document are in place to enable RBGE and the Scottish Government to develop a shared understanding of the joint priorities over the medium term which contribute towards delivery of the Scottish Government's National Outcomes, and to ensure that RBGE's corporate communications and engagement strategies fully reflect these.

None of the Board members has any financial interests in the RBGE. Details of relationships between RBGE and related parties are provided in Note 25 to the accounts.

When a requirement arises to appoint a new Trustee the RBGE works with the Scottish Government's sponsor team and Public Appointment Centre of Excellence (PACE) to ensure appointment rounds and other appointment activity is conducted in line with the Codes of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland. On appointment Trustees sign a code of conduct and complete a Register of Interests. The latter is renewed annually. They are given a Trustee Handbook that includes the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 that sets out the remit of RBGE, Scottish Government's 'On Board: A Guide for Board Members of Public Bodies in Scotland', the Framework Document, Risk Register, Staff Handbook and Statement of Roles and Responsibilities of RBGE Trustees. New Trustees meet with the Regius Keeper, Chair of Trustees and Board Secretary and are invited to an induction tour of the Edinburgh Garden. According to their skills and experience they take responsibility for activity areas by appointment to a committee. Training needs are assessed and met, and Trustees participate in an annual strategy day where all major risks are reviewed alongside discussions on key strategic initiatives. Further information on Organisational Risk Management, including the major risks RBGE has identified, is given in the Governance Statement on page 38.

The Board met four times during the period covered by the accounts. The Board operates in accordance with the 'Principles of Corporate Governance' as set out in 'On Board: A Guide for Board Members of Public Bodies in Scotland' published by the Scottish Government.

The Regius Keeper and Accountable Officer

The Regius Keeper and Accountable Officer is Simon Milne MBE.

Science Advisory Committee

The RBGE has a Science Advisory Committee chaired by a non-executive member of the Board. The aim of the group is to advise the RBGE Board of Trustees, the Regius Keeper, and the Director of Science and Deputy Keeper, on:

- RBGE's science and biodiversity strategy
- The wider scientific, environmental and policy context in which RBGE's science sits, to inform its remit and collaborative opportunities
- Opportunities for increasing research grant income
- Opportunities for increasing the international profile and impacts of the scientific and biodiversity activities of RBGE
- Strategic approaches for peer review of the quality of RBGE's science and conservation activities
- Emerging opportunities, issues, trends and threats relevant to RBGE's science and biodiversity activities
- Development of departmental and staffing structures to meet organisational needs

The members of this committee are:

- Professor Sarah Gurr (Chair)
- Professor Beverley Glover
- Professor Janis Antonovics, PhD, FRS, FLS
- Professor John Grace, FRSE
- Professor Simon Hiscock
- Professor Thomas Meagher
- Professor Michelle Price
- Professor Des B.A. Thompson DSC, FCIEEM, FRSE

Audit Committee

The RBGE Board has set up an Audit Committee, chaired by a non-executive member. The Audit Committee meets four times per year to provide independent advice and assurance on the effectiveness of the internal control and risk management systems. In 2024/25 the Audit Committee completed a review of the effectiveness of its activities. The following were members of the Audit Committee during the period covered by the accounts:

- Dr Ian Jardine (Chair)
- Amanda Forsyth FCA, FCSI
- Elizabeth Trevor
- Stella Morse FCA

The Committee met four times during this period.

Biomes Oversight Committee

The overarching purposes of the Committee is to provide assurance to the RBGE Board of Trustees for the successful development and implementation of Edinburgh Biomes, to make decisions within the delegated authority of the Board of Trustees, and to challenge, guide and support the Senior Responsible Officer on the delivery of Edinburgh Biomes. The following were members of the Biomes Oversight Committee during the period covered by the accounts:

- Dominic Fry (Chair)
- Dr David Hamilton
- Professor Elise Cartmell
- Lynda Johnstone
- Simon Milne MBE
- Joanne Hannah

The Committee met seven times during the period covered by the accounts (meetings are held monthly, on five occasions a papers-only update was issued rather than holding a meeting in response to organisational need).

Remuneration Committee

The following were members of the Remuneration Committee during the period covered by the accounts:

- Dominic Fry (Chair)
- Professor Cara Aitchison

As a 2 year pay award had previously been agreed for the Financial Years 2023-24 and 2024-25 the Committee did not meet to discuss a pay award for the staff group in 2024-25. The Regius Keeper's pay award for 2024-25 was discussed and agreed via e-mail correspondence.

Legal & Administrative Details

PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh
20A Inverleith Row
Edinburgh, EH3 5LR

BANKERS

The Royal Bank of Scotland
142/144 Princes Street
Edinburgh, EH3 6SX

SOLICITORS

Brodies LLP Solicitors
15 Atholl Crescent
Edinburgh, EH3 8HA

AUDITORS

External
Audit Scotland
4th Floor
102 West Port
Edinburgh EH3 9DN

Internal
Henderson Loggie
Ground floor, 11-15 Thistle Street
Edinburgh EH2 1DF

INVESTMENT ADVISERS

Brewin Dolphin
Atria One
144 Morrison Street
Edinburgh EH3 9BR

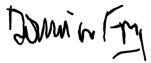
Appointment of Auditors

In terms of Schedule 1 to the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, an auditor appointed by the Auditor General for Scotland audits the annual report and accounts prepared by the Board of Trustees in respect of each financial year. Scottish Ministers lay copies of it and the auditor's report before the Scottish Parliament.

Disclosure of Relevant Audit Information

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh – Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31 March 2025

All reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that all relevant audit information has been disclosed to the auditors. So far as I am aware, all relevant information has been provided to the auditors.



Dominic Fry
Chair of the Board of Trustees

11 December 2025



Simon Milne MBE
Regius Keeper and Accountable Officer

11 December 2025

Statement of Board and Regius Keepers Responsibilities

Under paragraph 20 of Schedule 1 of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is required to prepare, in accordance with best commercial practice, a consolidated statement of accounts dealing with the RBGE and its subsidiary companies (together referred to as the “group”) for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by Scottish Ministers. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the group and of its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Board is required to:

- Observe the accounts direction issued by Scottish Ministers, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain material departures in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Group will continue in operation;
- Confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable

The Accountable Officer for the SG Rural and Environment, Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS) has designated the Regius Keeper as the Accountable Officer for the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. The responsibilities of an Accountable Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh assets, are set out in the Financial Memorandum of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh issued by Scottish Ministers.

As the Accountable Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, all relevant information has been provided to the auditors.

Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

The Regius Keeper, as Accountable Officer, and the Board of Trustees, have joint responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the organisation's policies, aims and objectives, set by Scottish Ministers, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which the Regius Keeper is responsible in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them in the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM).

The SPFM is issued by the Scottish Ministers to provide guidance to the Scottish Government and other public bodies on the proper handling of public funds. It is mainly designed to ensure compliance with statutory and Parliamentary requirements, promote value for money and high standards of propriety, and secure effective accountability and good systems of internal control.

In addition, the Regius Keeper is accountable to the Accountable Officer, the Director General Economy within Scottish Government, to enable them to discharge their overall responsibility for ensuring that RBGE, as a SG Non-Departmental Public Body, has adequate financial systems and procedures in place.

Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve the organisation's policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify the principal risks to the achievement of the organisation's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the nature and extent of those risks and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The process within the organisation accords with the SPFM and has been in place for the year ended 31 March 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and accords with guidance from the Scottish Ministers. The Regius Keeper has received assurances from all Directors about operations and internal controls under their remit and no issues have been identified.

Organisational Risk Management

Risk Strategy and Risk Management

With the wide range of activities at RBGE and the diverse groups of stakeholders it serves, it is essential that RBGE's approach to, and appetite for, risk is carefully assessed.

Strategic leadership on risk management comes from the Executive Team with oversight by the Board of Trustees. The RBGE Risk Register was updated regularly during the year by the Senior Leadership Team to allow the consideration and management of risks. Annually the Board of Trustees completes a review of the Key Strategic Risks; this review coincides with the Trustees' annual strategic review. An exercise was carried out to review the external risk environment to identify emerging risks that may impact on RBGE, which was reported to the Audit Committee and Board of Trustees. This has been integrated into the risk management framework for ongoing monitoring.

All risks are reported quarterly to ensure that the risk management process is embedded in the operational management of RBGE.

At the detailed level, individual Directors are responsible for the implementation of risk management and mitigation within their division. The Senior Leadership Team monitors and

reports on the progress of actions taken to manage risks and on the emergence of new risks which are updated in the quarterly performance report.

Major Risks to RBGE Strategy

The high priority risks faced by RBGE were reviewed on a quarterly basis and their findings reported to the Board of Trustees. The Board carries out their own independent assessment once a year and the most serious risks that face the RBGE have been determined by the Board as follows:

Risk	Risk Detail
Risk of loss of scientific laboratories	Risk of losing laboratory facilities and samples due to fire, flood, or disaster, leading to the loss of scientific assets, collections, and research materials.
Risk of decline in place / excellence of laboratory facilities	Failure to invest in lab infrastructure and equipment may lead to facility deterioration, reduced strategic relevance, and diminished innovation and research impact.
Risk of damage to the Collections - Library & Archives Collections	Failure to implement adequate safeguards against infrastructure failure, fire, or theft could result in loss or damage to the irreplaceable National Botanical Collections, compromising their scientific, cultural, educational, and biodiversity value.
Risk of loss or damage to the Living Collection from pest or pathogens	Failure to ensure awareness of plant pathogens or adherence to biosecurity measures may lead to pest and disease outbreaks in the Living Collection, risking loss of the National Botanical Collections and their scientific, cultural, educational, and biodiversity value, with reputational consequences.
Risk of low financial resilience resulting from insufficient GiA in light of reduced self-generated fund	Insufficient Grant-in-Aid to offset glasshouse closures and rising costs may reduce RBGE's operational capacity, risking long-term sustainability.
Risk of inability to operate due to unsustainable financial model	Risk of insufficient income to meet rising cost may weaken RBGE's financial resilience and threaten delivery of its business model.
Risk of loss of widespread digital or critical business systems due to major incident	Risk of data loss or unavailability from a major incident may disrupt operations and research, incur recovery and outsourcing costs, breach legal obligations, and harm reputation.
Risk that the Edinburgh Biomes programme cannot meet the desired spend within each 12-month period	Failure to align construction timelines with available funding may result in loss of in-year project funding and potential underspend from secured totals.

Detailed mitigation plans are in place to address the above as appropriate

Financial Management and Control

RBGE maintains systems of internal financial control which are managed by the Finance, Corporate Governance and Risk Department. Internal audit carried out a review of Financial Procedures in 2022 and found them to be satisfactory. Guidance on all financial systems is available to staff on the Intranet. Financial management is supported through monthly management accounts to the Senior Leadership Team, and quarterly reporting to the Audit Committee and Board of Trustees. Financial information is frequently reviewed during monthly meetings of the Senior Leadership Team and is available to all budget holders so that they can monitor their performance against budgets at any time.

Fraud Risk Management

RBGE's policies relating to fraud are set out in the Staff Handbook and available on the intranet. These detail the steps taken to manage the risk of fraud and how to respond to fraudulent activity if it is suspected or discovered. Processes are in place to ensure that policies for counter-fraud are consistent with Scottish Government guidance, including a review of current counter-fraud activity.

There is a Whistleblowers Procedure set out in the Staff Handbook and a member of the Board of Trustees nominated to oversee this area of governance.

The National Fraud Initiative in Scotland (NFI) is a national detection exercise carried out by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Cabinet Office. RBGE participated in the 2024-25 exercise, the latest to take place. RBGE submitted information in line with the published timescales and data on possible fraudulent transactions has been investigated with no fraud taking place.

Project Management

For major capital projects (valued at in excess of £2M) a Project Board, involving the Board of Trustees (and representatives of Scottish Government, as required), is established and a separate risk register is maintained for each such project. Smaller projects are managed directly by RBGE Directors and the Estates and Technology Services Department. Major capital projects have Scottish Government sponsored gateway reviews and post project appraisals carried out. Non-capital projects, including externally funded research projects and consultancy work are managed through line managers within the Divisions and progress is monitored and financial variances are reported within the monthly management accounts.

Best Value

In accordance with the principles of Best Value, RBGE aims to foster a culture of continuous improvement. As part of this regime, Directors and managers are encouraged to review, identify and improve the efficient and effective use of resources. Arrangements have been made to secure Best Value, as set out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual. Business cases for major capital investment are produced where spending limits require it.

RBGE set up an in-house procurement service in April 2020 to ensure compliance with regulations, directives and guidelines and to improve value and service. The Scottish Government's Procurement Department carried out a Procurement Capability Healthcheck during the year and 4 out of the 6 measures being rated as green and 2 as amber. The recommendations for the 2 amber measures are being implemented.

Other Government Policies

RBGE subscribes to diversity initiatives and has successfully put in place processes to increase opportunities for equalities within the workplace. We pay, as a minimum, the Scottish Living Wage and have required all new bids for contracts to provide evidence that a similar intention exists by the bidding contractor. The RBGE engages with Scotland's Digital Future as much as resources can permit and reports separately under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act.

Information Management

As one of Scotland's National Collections, RBGE holds unique information resources relating to its living and preserved collections of plants, its library and archives. Increasingly these information resources are being captured in digital form, which provides for the wider dissemination of information via the internet and also for digital archives to be securely backed up and managed within a Business Continuity Plan.

RBGE is committed to ensuring the proper management of all personal data. There were three minor data related incidents in 2024/25, the same as the previous year. RBGE has implemented the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) by updating and strengthening policies and procedures, delivering training for Information Asset Owners and Administrators, understanding data flows in and out of the organisation and updating the Information Asset Register and Privacy Statements. To test the robustness of the systems put in place, RBGE's approach to GDPR has been audited and all of the recommendations have been implemented.

Review of Effectiveness

The Regius Keeper (as Accountable Officer) and the Board of Trustees have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. RBGE's review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the Senior Leadership Team, supported by the findings of the programme of internal audit and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports. The Regius Keeper has received assurances from all Directors about operations and internal controls under their remit and no issues have been identified.

At each quarterly Board of Trustees meeting, the Trustees receive an update on key operational matters including risks, and a copy of the quarterly Performance Report.

The Internal Auditors reviewed and reported on these areas in their 2024/25 audit plan:

- Budget Control/Financial Sustainability – overall Satisfactory rating (reported to the March 2025 Audit Committee meeting)
- Income Recognition – overall satisfactory rating (reported to the June 2025 Audit Committee meeting)

In addition, there was a follow up report on the status of previous recommendations.

In the Internal Auditor's opinion, RBGE has adequate and effective arrangements for risk management, control and governance. Proper arrangements are in place to promote and secure Value for Money. This opinion has been arrived at taking into consideration the work undertaken during 2024/25 and in previous years.

The Internal Auditor's Reports made recommendations in several areas, none of which was classified as fundamental issues which required review by the Board. However, in a previous year's Cyber Security audit, a number of areas for improvement were highlighted that would help to achieve the control objectives. Work on these recommendations continued during the year and were fully implemented by May 2025.

Assessment of Corporate Governance

The RBGE's arrangements for corporate governance comply with generally accepted best practice principles and relevant guidance as set out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual and therefore meet the governance requirements of the Board of Trustees and Scottish Government. There are no significant issues of governance / internal control to be reported.



Dominic Fry
Chair of the Board of Trustees
11 December 2025



Simon Milne MBE
Regius Keeper and Accountable Officer
11 December 2025

Remuneration & Staff Report

The information in the Annual Report is reviewed by the external auditors for consistency with the financial statements, and the information relating to the remuneration and pension benefits of board members and the Senior Leadership Team, fair pay disclosures, staff numbers, staff costs and number of exit packages has been audited by them. The sections on Remuneration Policy, Analysis of Each Sex, Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Inclusion, Sickness Absence Data, Employee Consultation and Trade Union Activity, Staff engagement, Staff turnover percentage and Health and safety are not subject to audit.

Remuneration Policy

RBGE reviews pay annually and pay settlements are negotiated within the pay policy agreed with the Scottish Government and are approved by the Remuneration Committee of the Board. The Remuneration Committee, in approving the pay award, has regard to:

- The need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities;
- Regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- Objectives for improving the public services including the requirement on departments to meet the output targets for the delivery of departmental services;
- Compliance with SG pay policy; and
- The affordability of the recommendation.

Remuneration for the Regius Keeper (Chief Executive) is agreed in line with the Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy for Senior Appointments, agreed with the Scottish Government and is also approved by the Remuneration Committee of the Board.

Trustees' remuneration

Trustees do not receive any remuneration for their services. Travelling and subsistence expenses of £3,126 (2023/24 £4,203) in relation to nine Trustees have been charged as part of other direct costs – Note 10.

Executive Team remuneration and pension benefits (audited)

	2024/25			2023/24		
	Salary £000	Pension benefits £000	Total £000	Salary £000	Pension benefits £000	Total £000
Regius Keeper						
S Milne	115-120	47	166-170	110-115	44	155-160
Directors						
K Coghill*	30-35	11	40-45	90-95	37	130-135
J Hannah	95-100	37	130-135	90-95	36	130-135
P Hollingsworth	90-95	43	135-140	90-95	26	115-120
E Lacroix**	70-75	34	105-110	90-95	34	125-130
R Curtis-Machin	85-90	49	135-140	80-85	79	160-165
L Bradshaw	5-10	3	5-10	-	-	-
S Cathcart	80-85	32	110-115	-	-	-

* Left in July, full year salary of £90k-95k; ** Left in December, full year salary of £90k-95k; All of the above are members of the Civil Service pension arrangements. The Civil Service pension arrangements include the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the Civil Servant and Other Pension Scheme (CSOPS) – known as Alpha.

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Employee	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/2025	Real Increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/03/2025	CETV at 31/03/2024	Real increase in CETV
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Simon Milne MBE-Pension	30-35	2.5-5	600	525	43
K Coghill-Pension	40-45	0-2.5	1095	1074	9
K Coghill-Lump sum	115-120	0-2.5	-	-	-
J Hannah-Pension	5-10	0-2.5	144	101	27
P Hollingsworth-Pension	35-40	0-2.5	815	747	33
P Hollingsworth-Lump sum	85-90	0-2.5	-	-	-
E Lacroix-Pension	15-20	0-2.5	187	150	19
R Curtis-Machin-Pension	5-10	2.5-5	129	80	36
L Bradshaw-Pension	0-5	0-2.5	2	-	1
S Cathcart-Pension	0-5	0-2.5	28	-	22

Employees earning over £60,000 (audited)

The number of RBGE employees, including the Regius Keeper, whose emoluments as defined for taxation purposes amounted to over £60,000 in the year was as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
£60,000 - £69,999	18	16
£70,000 - £79,999	4	1
£80,000 - £89,999	2	1
£90,000 - £99,000	2	4
£100,000 - £110,000	-	-
£110,000 - £120,000	1	1

Staff numbers and costs (audited)

	2024/25	2023/24
Permanent Staff	284	284
Other staff	68	68
Total Headcount	352	352
	£000	£000
Staff Costs	15,368	14,367

Further detail on staff costs can be found at note 9 to the accounts.

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year analysed by function (audited)

	2024/25	2023/24 Restated
Horticulture and Visitor Experience	89	94
Science	47	55
Resources & Planning	38	42
Directorate	2	2
Development & Communications	18	20
Learning & Engagement	39	37
Botanics Trading Company	24	24
Externally funded	49	35
Total FTE	306	309

The average headcount during the year analysed by function (audited)

	2024/25	2023/24 Restated
Horticulture and Visitor Experience	97	101
Science	53	62
Resources & Planning	40	44
Directorate	2	2
Development & Communications	22	25
Learning & Engagement	44	42
Botanics Trading Company	33	33
Externally funded	61	43
Total Headcount	352	352

Staff composition (audited)

	Female	Male	Total
Directors	3	3	6
Other employees	190	156	346
2024/25 Total	193	159	352
2023/24 Total	217	135	352

Fair Pay Disclosure (audited)

	2024/25	2023/24
Band of highest paid director's remuneration (Regius Keeper)	115-120K	110-115K
Percentage change in highest paid director's remuneration	4.4%	0.0%
Average salary of other employees	£38,736	£37,340
Percentage change in average salary of other employees	3.74%	8.0%

Year	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
2024/25 Total pay	£27,058	£34,592	£40,452
2024/25 Ratio to highest paid director	4.34	3.40	2.90
2023/24 Total pay	£25,558	£33,584	£39,274
2023/24 Ratio to highest paid director	4.40	3.35	2.86

The banded remuneration, excluding pension benefits, of the lowest paid employee at RBGE in the financial year 2024-25 was £20-25k (2023-24: £20-25k). The band of the highest paid employee, excluding pension benefits, was £115-120k (2023-24: £110-115k). The increase in the highest paid director's remuneration, shown in the table above, is based on the mid-point of the bands and does not show the actual increase. Total pay does not differ from salary.

The ratios to the highest paid directors have fallen slightly in the year. This was due to the percentage pay increase received at lower bands being higher than the percentage increase received by the highest paid director. The increase in median pay was in line with the pay increase for most staff and fairly reflects the position for employees as a whole.

Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Inclusion

RBGE continues to be actively committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, students and visitors are treated equally and without bias irrespective of their sex, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or social background, any pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, or marriage / civil partnership status in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

RBGE will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline, and selection for redundancy. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. RBGE will comply with its obligations in relation to

statutory requests for contract variations and will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Sickness Absence Data

The average number of days of sickness absence per employee excluding long term sickness absence decreased in 2024/25 to 3.5 days compared to 4.7 in 2023/24, while sickness absence including long term sickness absence increased to 6.7 days in 2024/2025 compared to 6.2 days in 2023/2024. The public sector average has also increased in the same period to 8.1 days per employee (source – Office for National Statistics). The total days of reported staff absence for the last 3 calendar years is shown below:

Year	22/23	23/24	24/25
Total Absence (days)	1,771 (all absence) 1,113 (excl long term)	1,953 (all absence) 1,482 (excl long term)	2,130 (all absence) 1,128 (excl long term)

Employee Consultation and Trade Union Activity

RBGE continues to recognise the Prospect and Unite trade unions for collective bargaining purposes. We continue to hold formal partnership meetings three times per year involving union officials. Informal meetings are held monthly between our People & OD team and members of the Prospect branch committee to ensure positive employee relations.

Number of employees who were union officials during the relevant period 11.0
Full time equivalent employee number 9.3

Percentage of Time	Number of employees
0%	0
1-50%	11
51-99%	0
100	0

The percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time was 0.07%. Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours was 38.4%.

Staff engagement

RBGE does not participate in the Civil Service People Survey but runs its own survey of staff on a regular basis.

Staff turnover percentage

	2024/25	2023/24
Voluntary Turnover %age	8.8%	5.7%
Total Turnover %age	16.3%	8.5%

Voluntary turnover includes only resignations and elective retirements. Total turnover includes dismissals, end of fixed-term contracts, and staff reaching RBGE’s default retirement age of 67.

Health and safety

Health and safety at RBGE is managed through a number of regular pan-RBGE operational meetings, and biannual organisation-wide meetings. We have 3 health and safety advisors in post, 2 Prospect trade union health and safety representatives, and call upon the services of an external consultant as required.

Compensation for Loss of Office (audited)

There were no voluntary exit scheme or compulsory redundancy departures at RBGE in the 24/25 financial year. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure. 2 members of staff left RBGE and received ex gratia payments, totalling £29,400. 2 members of staff left due to the ending of fixed term contracts that lasted more than 2 years and received redundancy payments, totalling £32,513.

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
£0,000 - £25,000	0 (0)	3 (1)	3 (1)
£25,000 - £50,000	0 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)
Total number of exit packages	0 (0)	4 (1)	4 (1)
Total cost /£	£0 (£0)	£72,346 (£5,427)	£72,346 (£5,427)

Figures in brackets represent 2023/24 comparison

Consultancy

Expenditure on consultancy for 2024/25 was £29,000 (2023/24: £36,000).

Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. Before 1 April 2015, the only scheme was the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), which is divided into a few different sections – classic, premium, and classic plus provide benefits on a final salary basis, whilst nuvos provides benefits on a career average basis. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis. All newly appointed civil servants, and the majority of those already in service, joined the new scheme.

The PCSPS and alpha are unfunded statutory schemes. Employees and employers make contributions (employee contributions range between 4.6% and 8.05%, depending on salary). The balance of the cost of benefits in payment is met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions in payment are increased annually in line with the Pensions Increase legislation. Instead of the defined benefit arrangements, employees may opt for a defined contribution pension with an employer contribution, the partnership pension account.

In alpha, pension builds up at a rate of 2.32% of pensionable earnings each year, and the total amount accrued is adjusted annually in line with a rate set by HM Treasury. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004. All members who switched to alpha from the PCSPS had their PCSPS benefits ‘banked’, with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha.

The accrued pensions shown in this report are the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over normal pension age. Normal pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium, and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha. The pension figures in this report show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where a member has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha, the figures show the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes but note that the constituent parts of that pension may be payable from different ages.

When the Government introduced new public service pension schemes in 2015, there were transitional arrangements which treated existing scheme members differently based on their age. Older members of the PCSPS remained in that scheme, rather than moving to alpha. In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional arrangements in the public service pension schemes unlawfully discriminated against younger members (the “McCloud judgment”).

As a result, steps are being taken to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. The Public Service Pensions Remedy is made up of two parts. The first part closed the PCSPS on 31 March 2022, with all active members becoming members of alpha from 1 April 2022. The second part removes the age discrimination for the remedy period, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, by moving the membership of eligible members during this period back into the PCSPS on 1 October 2023.

The accrued pension benefits, Cash Equivalent Transfer Value and single total figure of remuneration reported for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the PCSPS for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the PCSPS for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

The partnership pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Mastertrust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute but, where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer’s basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website <http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk>

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost.

CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the Civil Servant and Other Pension Scheme (CSOPS) – known as “alpha” – are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

The Scheme Actuary valued the PCSPS as at 31 March 2016. You can find details in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation.

For 2024-25, employers' contributions of £3,110,386 were payable to the CSOPS (2023-24 £2,848,490) at 28.97% of pensionable earnings.

The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2024-25 to be paid when the member retires and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £47,730 (2023-24 £47,566) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and ranged from 8% to 14.75%.

Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings. In addition, employer contributions of £1,579 (2023-24 £1,587), 0.5% of pensionable pay, were payable to the PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service or ill health retirement of these employees.

Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the balance sheet date were £0.

Contributions prepaid at that date were £0.

Independent auditor’s report to the Trustees of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, the Auditor General for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements in the annual report and accounts of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and its group for the year ended 31 March 2025 under the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. The financial statements comprise the RBGE Statement of Financial Activities, Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, Consolidated Balance Sheet, Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In my opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the body and its group as at 31 March 2025 and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Auditor General for Scotland. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I was appointed by the Auditor General on 16 March 2023. My period of appointment is five years, covering 2022/23 to 2026/27. I am independent of the body and its group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council’s Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical Standard were not provided to the body. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the ability of the body and its group to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

These conclusions are not intended to, nor do they, provide assurance on the current or future financial sustainability of the body and its group. However, I report on the body’s arrangements

for financial sustainability in a separate Annual Audit Report available from the Audit Scotland website.

Risks of material misstatement

I report in my separate Annual Audit Report the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that I identified and my judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Accountable Officer and trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accountable Officer's Responsibilities, the Accountable Officer and trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Accountable Officer and trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Accountable Officer and trustees are responsible for assessing the ability of the body and its group to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention to discontinue the body's operations.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities outlined above to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Procedures include:

- using my understanding of the central government sector to identify that the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, and The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 are significant in the context of the body;
- inquiring of the Accountable Officer as to other laws or regulations that may be expected to have a fundamental effect on the operations of the body;
- inquiring of the Accountable Officer concerning the body's policies and procedures regarding compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework;
- discussions among my audit team on the susceptibility of the financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur; and
- considering whether the audit team collectively has the appropriate competence and capabilities to identify or recognise non-compliance with laws and regulations.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the body's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

Irregularities that result from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error as fraud may involve collusion, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. The capability of the audit to detect fraud and other irregularities depends on factors such as the skilfulness of the perpetrator, the frequency and extent of manipulation, the degree of collusion involved, the relative size of individual amounts manipulated, and the seniority of those individuals involved.

A further description of the auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council’s website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor’s report.

Reporting on regularity of expenditure and income

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion in all material respects the expenditure and income in the financial statements were incurred or applied in accordance with any applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers.

Responsibilities for regularity

The Accountable Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of expenditure and income. In addition to my responsibilities in respect of irregularities explained in the audit of the financial statements section of my report, I am responsible for expressing an opinion on the regularity of expenditure and income in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

Reporting on other requirements

Opinion prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report

I have audited the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report described as audited. In my opinion, the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report have been properly prepared in accordance with the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Other information

The Accountable Officer and trustees are responsible for the other information in the annual report and accounts. The other information comprises the Trustees’ Report, Governance Statement and the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report which are not subject to audit. My responsibility is to read all the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on the Trustees’ Report and Governance Statement to the extent explicitly stated in the following opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland.

Opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on Trustees’ Annual Report and Governance Statement

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees’ Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers; and
- the information given in the Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that

report has been prepared in accordance with the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Matters on which I am required to report by exception

I am required by The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 to report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

In addition to my responsibilities for the annual report and accounts, my conclusions on the wider scope responsibilities specified in the Code of Audit Practice are set out in my Annual Audit Report.

Use of my report

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 108 of the Code of Audit Practice, I do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Pauline Murray

Pauline Murray CPFA
Audit Scotland
4th Floor, 102 West Port
Edinburgh, EH3 9DN
11 December 2025

Pauline Murray is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 21 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

RBGE Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	Endowment Funds £000	2024/25 Total Funds £000	2023/24 Total Funds £000
Income and Endowments from:						
Scottish Government	3	11,466	17,230	-	28,696	26,987
Donations and Legacies	4	2,551	8,308	-	10,859	5,332
Charitable activities	5	2,698	349	-	3,047	2,713
Other trading activities	6	296	187	-	483	1,067
Investments	7	58	-	38	96	113
Total income and Endowments		17,069	26,074	38	43,181	36,212
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds		623	-	10	633	519
Charitable activities						
Collections		6,511	989	-	7,500	7,244
Visitor offer		1,987	302	-	2,289	2,373
Education		2,359	358	-	2,717	2,248
Scientific research		5,734	5,609	-	11,343	10,745
Total Expenditure		17,214	7,258	10	24,482	23,129
Net (losses)/gains on investments	19	-	-	13	13	109
Net income/(expenditure)		(145)	18,816	41	18,712	13,192
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Transfer between funds		-	140	(140)	-	-
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets	19	-	1,069	-	1,069	1,326
Net movement in funds		(145)	20,025	(99)	19,781	14,518
RESERVES AS AT 1 APRIL 2024		181	90,927	1,763	92,871	78,353
RESERVES AS AT 31 MARCH 2025		36	110,952	1,664	112,652	92,871

All recognised gains and losses have been included within the Statement of Financial Activities. All activities are classed as continuing.

The notes on pages 57 to 75 form part of these accounts

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	Endowment Funds £000	2024/25 Total Funds £000	2023/24 Total Funds £000
Income and Endowments from:						
Scottish Government	3	11,466	17,230	-	28,696	26,987
Donations and Legacies	4	1,346	8,308	-	9,654	4,314
Charitable activities	5	2,626	349	-	2,975	2,644
Other trading activities	6	3,211	187	-	3,398	4,460
Investments	7	91	-	38	129	125
Total Income and Endowments		18,740	26,074	38	44,852	38,530
Expenditure on:						
Raising Funds	29	2,938	-	10	2,948	2,954
Charitable activities						
Collections		6,517	989	-	7,506	7,251
Visitor offer		1,987	302	-	2,289	2,373
Education		2,359	358	-	2,717	2,248
Scientific research		5,734	5,609	-	11,343	10,745
Total Expenditure	8	19,535	7,258	10	26,803	25,571
Net gains/(losses) on investments	19	-	-	13	13	109
Net income/(expenditure)		(795)	18,816	41	18,062	13,068
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Transfer between funds			140	(140)	-	-
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets	19	-	1,069	-	1,066	1,326
Net movement in funds		(795)	20,025	(99)	19,131	14,394
RESERVES AS AT 1 APRIL 2024		875	90,927	1,763	93,565	79,171
RESERVES AS AT 31 MARCH 2025		80	110,952	1,664	112,696	93,565

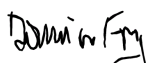
All recognised gains and losses have been included within the Statement of Financial Activities. All activities are classed as continuing.

The notes on pages 57 to 75 form part of these accounts.

Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	RBGE		Consolidated	
		2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
Fixed Assets					
Other tangible assets	11	95,188	84,821	104,021	87,090
Intangible assets	12	754	501	754	501
Investments	13a	10,177	3,239	1,333	1,432
		<u>106,119</u>	<u>88,561</u>	<u>106,108</u>	<u>89,023</u>
Current Assets					
Stock	14	135	146	360	372
Debtors	15	4,711	4,450	4,540	4,314
Current asset investments	13b	1	1	1	1
Cash at bank and in hand	24	5,439	4,673	6,015	5,895
		<u>10,286</u>	<u>9,270</u>	<u>10,916</u>	<u>10,582</u>
Current Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	16	(3,753)	(4,960)	(4,328)	(6,040)
		<u>6,533</u>	<u>4,310</u>	<u>6,588</u>	<u>4,542</u>
Net Current Assets					
Total Assets less Current Liabilities					
		<u>112,652</u>	<u>92,871</u>	<u>112,696</u>	<u>93,565</u>
Creditors: Amnts falling due after more than one year	16	-	-	-	-
Provisions		-	-	-	-
Total Assets less Liabilities					
		<u>112,652</u>	<u>92,871</u>	<u>112,696</u>	<u>93,565</u>
CAPITAL AND RESERVES					
Unrestricted Funds					
Board reserve fund: trustee funds	17	36	181	80	875
Total Unrestricted Funds					
		<u>36</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>875</u>
Restricted Funds					
Capital revaluation reserve	17	32,209	31,140	32,209	31,140
Capital grants fund	17	75,234	58,409	75,234	58,409
Project fund	17	3,509	1,378	3,509	1,378
Total Restricted Funds					
		<u>110,952</u>	<u>90,927</u>	<u>110,952</u>	<u>90,927</u>
Endowment Funds					
Ferguson Bequest	17	1,133	1,193	1,133	1,193
Education Endowment	17	35	35	35	35
QMMG Endowment	17	30	30	30	30
Investments Revaluation Reserve	17	466	505	466	505
Total Endowment Funds					
		<u>1,664</u>	<u>1,763</u>	<u>1,664</u>	<u>1,763</u>
		<u>112,652</u>	<u>92,871</u>	<u>112,696</u>	<u>93,565</u>

The Accountable Officer authorised these statements for issue on 11 December 2025



Dominic Fry
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Simon Milne MBE
Regius Keeper and Accountable
Officer

The notes on pages 57 to 75 form part of these accounts.

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2025

		2024/25	2023/24
	Notes	£000	£000
Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities	24	(818)	(1,090)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest received		91	90
Payments to acquire fixed assets	11 & 12	(19,277)	(14,327)
Receipts from sale of fixed assets		44	13
Receipts from sale of investments		140	-
Decrease in current asset investments		-	-
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(19,002)	(14,224)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Capital funding from Scottish Government	3	17,000	15,500
Other capital grants	4	2,940	-
Cash provided by (used in) financing activities		19,940	15,500
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		120	186
		2024/25	2023/24
		£000	£000
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		120	186
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		5,895	5,709
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>6,015</u>	<u>5,895</u>

The notes on pages 57 to 75 form part of these accounts

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified by the revaluation of tangible fixed assets and investments at their market value. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with an Accounts Direction given by Scottish Ministers in accordance with paragraph 20(3) of Schedule 1 of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985. The Accounts Direction can be found at the end of these accounts.

The Accounts Direction requires RBGE to prepare the accounts in compliance with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) which is in force for the year for which the statement of accounts are prepared. As a non-departmental public body which is also a registered charity, the FReM requires that the accounts comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act (2005), the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulation (2006) and the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS102) (effective January 2015) and provide any additional disclosures as required by the Manual. In addition to the requirements of the SORP, our sponsoring department has also directed us to prepare an Income and Expenditure Summary which can be seen at note 27.

The accounts are prepared on the going concern basis which provides that the entity will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The accounts are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts are to the nearest £1,000.

The charity's legal form and address of main office are shown at pages 7 and 35 of the Trustees' report.

In preparing the accounts we have complied with FRS102 and SORP FRS102.

b) Basis of consolidation

The consolidated accounts, ("the Group") include the accounts of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh ("RBGE") and its subsidiary companies, The Botanics Trading Company Limited ("BTC") and The Botanics Energy Company Limited ("BEC") , for the year ended 31 March 2025. The accounts were consolidated on a line by line basis for assets and liabilities.

c) Asset Policy

i) The title to the land and buildings administered by the Board is held in the name of the Scottish Ministers. The Board holds a 99 year lease covering the use of these assets. Nevertheless, on the direction of the Scottish Ministers, these fixed assets have been valued and are included in the Balance Sheet. The method of valuation for specialised properties, that is land and buildings for which there is effectively no market, is depreciated replacement cost. Other properties are valued at open market value for existing use. The value of Tangible Fixed Assets is £104,021k. The value of Intangible assets is £754k.

ii) All items of capital expenditure greater than £5,000 are treated as additions to tangible or intangible fixed assets. Land and buildings are subject to 5 yearly full revaluation by a valuer with indexation applied annually in the intervening years. Land and Buildings were last valued on 31 March 2023. The indexation rate used is BCIS All in TPI rate, published by the Building Cost Information Service. Depreciation is charged on the basis of the revalued amounts for land and buildings and on historic cost for other tangible fixed assets. Historic costs are not disclosed as required by the SORP as, in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual, this adds no information of value to the accounts.

iii) From 2017/18, Infrastructure has been separated from land and buildings and is held at depreciated historic cost.

iv) Assets under construction are valued at historical cost and are not depreciated.

v) Land is not depreciated. Depreciation is provided on all other fixed assets at rates calculated to write off their valuation, less estimated residual value, evenly over the remainder of their expected lives. The principal rates used are based on estimated lives as follows:

Buildings & Infrastructure	10-50	Years
Garden Machinery	5-10	Years
Scientific Equipment	4-5	Years
Office Equipment	3-10	Years
Motor Vehicles	4	Years
Intangible Assets	3-5	Years

d) Heritage Assets

A heritage asset is defined as a tangible asset with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture.

The collections of specimens, reference books and other material related to work at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as at 31 March 2001 have not been capitalised in these accounts in line with HM Treasury Guidance for non-operational heritage assets. Individual items acquired after 1 April 2001 with a value at the date of acquisition in excess of £5,000 are capitalised. Under HM Treasury guidance, capitalised collection items are not depreciated or revalued. The collections are truly “priceless” in that they cannot be valued meaningfully due to the number of items, lack of comparative market values and the diverse nature of the collections. It is not possible to obtain reliable cost or valuation information.

e) Income Policy

In the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA), Grant in Aid including Capital Grant is credited to income in the year for which it is received. Income from donations and other grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably. Government grants are recognised based on the performance model. Income from activities is accounted for on a receivable basis, net of VAT, in line with IFRS15, with the exception of income from the Membership Scheme that is accounted for on a cash basis net of VAT. Gifts in Kind and Donated Services and Facilities have been included in the SOFA when they can be quantified with reasonable certainty.

f) Expenditure Policy

Within the Statement of Financial Activities the costs of the development and membership departments are shown as expenditure on raising funds. Staff and operating costs incurred in relation to governance are included within expenditure on charitable activities. These include internal and external audit, Trustees expenses and meeting costs. Charitable activities are those in furtherance of the RBGE’s objectives. Indirect costs have been allocated on the basis of activity staff numbers. Liabilities and provisions are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing RBGE to the expenditure.

g) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of RBGE. Designated funds are unrestricted funds which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are to be used for the purpose specified by the donor.

h) Reserves

Reserves are analysed under the headings Restricted, Unrestricted and Endowment Funds. Restricted funds are those given to RBGE for specific purposes. Unrestricted funds are divided into the Board Reserve Fund and the General Fund. Each fund is described below.

i) Board Reserve Fund

The Board of Trustees, with the approval of Scottish Ministers, may undertake certain activities, the profits from which, together with donations and funds from other sources, including the results of the Botanics Trading Company, are taken to the Board Reserve. These funds may be used at the Board's discretion under the terms of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985.

ii) General Fund

The General Fund represents the surplus or deficit on the Income and Expenditure Account after taking into account the movement attributed to other specific funds (including the Board Reserve).

iii) Endowment Fund

These are donations to RBGE that have been made by way of endowment. The Trustees either have no power to convert the capital to income (permanent endowment funds) or they do have the power to convert the capital into expendable income (expendable endowments). All of the RBGE endowment funds are expendable.

i) Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value or, if this is different by a material amount, their value to the business by reference to current costs. The carrying value of stock in the consolidated accounts is £360k (2024: £372k).

j) Debtors

Trade and other debtors represent balances due from customers at the year end, less any specific doubtful debts. Debts over one year old are provided for at 100%.

k) Liabilities and Provisions

Liabilities and provisions, including trade creditors, are recognised as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure.

l) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is made up by balances held with the charity's bankers which are available on demand. It also includes petty cash and float balances.

m) Investments

Investments are carried in the balance sheet at market value in accordance with the SORP. The unrealised surplus or deficit relative to cost is dealt with in the revaluation reserve. Investment in subsidiary companies represents share capital and long-term loans.

n) Taxation

RBGE is a charity within the meaning of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and as such is a charity within the meaning of Para 1 of Schedule 6 to the Finance Act 2010 and is recorded on the index of charities maintained by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (Charity Number SC007983). Accordingly, RBGE is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by sections 478-488 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 (CTA 2010) (formerly enacted in Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (ICTA)) or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied to exclusively charitable purposes. RBGE is registered, as a group, for Value Added Tax and claims partial recovery of input VAT.

o) Pensions

RBGE participates in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). This scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and participating organisations are unable to

identify their share of the underlying assets and liabilities on a consistent and reliable basis. The cost recognised within the Statement of Financial Activities will be equal to the contribution payable to the schemes for the year. Further details about the pension scheme is available in the Remuneration and Staff Report. In the past RBGE has also provided enhanced pensions to former employees who accepted early retirement and provision is made on an actuarial basis for the liability to those former employees at the time of their retirement.

p) Financial Instruments

Financial assets (represented by lending and receivables) are carried in the balance sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining period of the instrument, using the following assumptions:

- No early repayment or impairment is recognised.
- Where an instrument will mature in the next 12 months, the carrying amount is assumed to approximate to fair value.
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

q) Foreign Currency Policy

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are recorded at the rates of exchange ruling at the date of the transactions.

r) Intra Group Transactions

Gains or losses on any intra-group transactions are eliminated in full. Amounts in relation to debts and claims between undertakings included in the consolidation are also eliminated.

s) Gift Aid Payments from Subsidiary

To ensure that there is clarity and consistency in how gift aid payments by subsidiaries are reported, Financial Reporting Standard 102, was updated in December 2017. Under the revised treatment, gift aid payments can only be recognised in the accounts when paid, although no tax charge needs to be shown in the subsidiary's accounts.

t) Government Grants

RBGE received Grant-in-Aid of £28,696k (2023/24: £26,987k) from the Scottish Government during the year. A further £1,604k (2023/24 £92k) was received from UK government entities to fund a number of RBGE's research projects.

u) Accounting standards issued but not yet effective

At 31 March 2025 the following amendments to FRS 102, none of which will be material to the accounts, have been issued but are not effective:

- A new model of revenue recognition based on IFRS 15
- A new model of lease accounting based on IFRS 16

u) Significant judgments and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires the Board and Accountable Officer to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amount of assets and liabilities. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision

affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

The items in the financial statements where estimates and judgements have been made are set out below.

Estimation in the valuation of land and buildings

The value of all land and buildings is assessed by performing a full valuation at every five years. The valuations are carried out by professionally Qualified Valuers, in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Appraisal and Valuations Standards, insofar as these Standards are consistent with the agreed requirements of the FReM. In the years between formal valuations, land and buildings are revalued using the BCIS All-in Tender Price Index information obtain from Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. An annual review also takes place to consider losses in value (impairment) due to a change in the consumption of economic benefits. Should it be determined that an impairment review is required professionally Qualified Valuers would be appointed to provide current valuations and action the outcome of their work as appropriate at the time.

The carrying value at 31 March 2025 is £49,358k (2024: £49,769). Additional information is disclosed in Note 11.

2. PRIOR YEAR COMPARATIVES

2a. RBGE Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	Endowment Funds £000	2023/24 Total Funds £000
Income and Endowments from:				
Scottish Government	11,487	15,500	-	26,987
Donations and Legacies	1,769	3,563	-	5,332
Charitable activities	2,409	304	-	2,713
Other trading activities	294	773	-	1,067
Investments	78	-	35	113
Total income and Endowments	16,037	20,140	35	36,212
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	519	-	-	519
Charitable activities				
Collections	6,324	920	-	7,244
Visitor offer	2,072	301	-	2,373
Education	1,955	284	9	2,248
Scientific research	5,192	5,553	-	10,745
Total Expenditure	16,062	7,058	9	23,129
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	109	109
Net income/(expenditure)	(25)	13,082	135	13,192
Other recognised gains/(losses):				
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets	-	1,326	-	1,326
Net movement in funds	(25)	14,408	135	14,518
RESERVES AS AT 1 APRIL 2023	206	76,519	1,628	78,353
RESERVES AS AT 31 MARCH 2024	181	90,927	1,763	92,871

2b. Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	Endowment Funds £000	2023/24 Total Funds £000
Income and Endowments from:				
Scottish Government	11,487	15,500	-	26,987
Donations and Legacies	751	3,563	-	4,314
Charitable activities	2,340	304	-	2,644
Other trading activities	3,687	773	-	4,460
Investments	90	-	35	125
Total Income and Endowments	18,355	20,140	35	38,530
Expenditure on:				
Raising Funds	2,954	-	-	2,954
Charitable activities				
Collections	6,331	920	-	7,251
Visitor offer	2,072	301	-	2,373
Education	1,955	284	9	2,248
Scientific research	5,192	5,553	-	10,745
Total Expenditure	18,504	7,058	9	25,571
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	109	109
Net income/(expenditure)	(149)	13,082	135	13,068
Other recognised gains/(losses):				
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets	-	1,326	-	1,326
Net movement in funds	(149)	14,408	135	14,394
RESERVES AS AT 1 APRIL 2023	1,024	76,519	1,628	79,171
RESERVES AS AT 31 MARCH 2024	875	90,927	1,763	93,565

3. GRANT-IN-AID

	RBGE		Group	
	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Revenue Grant in Aid	11,696	11,487	11,696	11,487
Capital Grant	17,000	15,500	17,000	15,500
Total Grant from RESAS	<u>28,696</u>	<u>26,987</u>	<u>28,696</u>	<u>26,987</u>

4. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	RBGE		Group	
	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Income from Botanics Foundation	1,194	654	1,194	654
Gift Aid from BTC	1,205	1,018	-	-
Grants from UK Government entities	810	92	810	92
Grants from EU	495	-	495	-
Other grants	2,982	2,795	2,982	2,795
Donations and Legacies	1,233	773	1,233	773
Capital grants – UK Government	794	-	794	-
Capital grants – non-Government	2,146	-	2,146	-
	<u>10,859</u>	<u>5,332</u>	<u>9,654</u>	<u>4,314</u>

5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	RBGE		Group	
	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Admissions	374	237	374	237
Education charges	1,600	1,744	1,600	1,744
Rents receivable	64	64	27	28
Membership income	407	326	407	326
Other income from third parties	602	342	567	309
	<u>3,047</u>	<u>2,713</u>	<u>2,975</u>	<u>2,644</u>

6. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	RBGE		Group	
	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Trading company income	-	-	3,015	3,484
Commercial development	205	206	105	115
Commemorative programme	278	861	278	861
	<u>483</u>	<u>1,067</u>	<u>3,398</u>	<u>4,460</u>

Commercial development consists of events, venue hire, licensing and commercial publishing.

7. INVESTMENT INCOME

	RBGE		Group	
	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Dividends	34	29	34	29
Interest receivable	62	84	95	96
	<u>96</u>	<u>113</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>125</u>

8. EXPENDITURE

	Staff costs £000	Dep'n & Imp £000	Other Direct Costs £000	Allocated Costs £000	2024/25 Total £000	2023/24 Total £000
Raising Funds	1,460	4	1,484	-	2,948	2,954
Charitable activities						
Collections	4,183	989	538	1,796	7,506	7,251
Visitor offer	1,129	302	310	548	2,289	2,373
Education	1,437	358	271	651	2,717	2,248
Scientific research	5,195	1,497	1,931	2,720	11,343	10,745
Support Costs	1,964	-	3,751	(5,715)	-	-
Total	15,368	3,150	8,285	-	26,803	25,571

Support costs have been allocated as per note 1f. The cost of charitable activities includes the cost of enabling services (estates and facilities, finance, people and organisational development, digital and technology services, corporate management, marketing and communications) of £5,715k (2023/24 £5,309k).

9. STAFF COSTS

	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Salaries	10,121	9,663
Social security costs	1,116	1,038
Staff pensions	2,909	2,624
Redundancy costs	72	5
Total RBGE staff costs	14,218	13,330
BTC staff costs	1,150	1,037
Total Group staff costs	15,368	14,367

10. OTHER DIRECT COSTS

	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Botanics Trading Company	1,162	1,395
Botanics Energy Company	6	6
Depreciation	3,137	2,876
Impairment of fixed assets	13	-
Materials	982	941
Direct Project Costs	1,323	855
Repairs and Maintenance	845	903
Rates and Utilities	1,469	1,330
Trustees travel and subsistence	3	4
Staff travel and subsistence	246	182
General services	1,622	2,150
External Audit fees	25	24
Internal Audit fees	7	9
Legal, consultancy and other professional fees	595	529
	11,435	11,204

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Land & Buildings	General Infrastructure	Assets under Construction	Garden Machinery	Scientific Equipment	Office Equipment	Motor Vehicles	RBGE Total	Subs	Group Total
Cost or Valuation										
At 1 Apr 2024	51,588	3,989	30,707	2,072	1,968	4,366	250	94,940	2,314	97,254
Additions	402	426	10,239	183	399	611	44	12,304	6,566	18,870
Disposals	-	-	-	(82)	(27)	(291)	(19)	(419)	-	(419)
Transfers	11	-	(11)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	1,152	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,152	-	1,152
At 31 Mar 2025	53,154	4,415	40,935	2,173	2,340	4,686	275	107,977	8,880	116,857
Depreciation										
At 1 Apr 2024	1,819	1,847	-	1,485	1,598	3,220	150	10,119	45	10,164
Charge for the period	1,880	350	-	197	126	404	33	2,990	2	2,992
Impairment	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	13
Disposals	-	-	-	(82)	(27)	(288)	(19)	(416)	-	(416)
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Backlog	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	83	-	83
At 31 Mar 2025	3,795	2,197	-	1,600	1,697	3,336	164	12,789	47	12,836
Net book value										
At 31 Mar 2025	49,358	2,218	40,935	573	643	1,350	111	95,188	8,833	104,021
At 31 Mar 2024	49,769	2,142	30,707	587	370	1,146	100	84,821	2,269	87,090

Land and buildings were revalued on 31 March 2023 by Jones Lang LaSalle Limited on the basis of fair value or market value for existing use, except for those properties and land which have such specialised use that they have no market value. Such properties and land are valued at depreciated replacement cost representing their value in use to the Group. Replacement costs were derived by the valuers on the basis of land values and estimated current construction costs, including professional fees, for each individual property. The amount by which replacement cost for each property was discounted to arrive at depreciated replacement cost was assessed by the valuers on the basis of the current condition and state of repair of the property concerned (rather than by time apportioning over the total estimated life of the property). The cost of new land donated has been impaired in line with the previous valuation rates.

Infrastructure assets have been separated from land and buildings and are held at depreciated replacement costs.

Tangible Fixed Assets - Prior year comparatives

	Land & Buildings	General Infrastructure	Assets under Construction	Garden Machinery	Scientific Equipment	Office Equipment	Motor Vehicles	RBGE Total	Subs	Group Total
Cost or Valuation										
At 1 Apr 2023	48,935	3,450	21,246	2,056	1,781	4,359	241	82,068	50	82,118
Additions	736	489	10,042	69	155	368	-	11,859	2,264	14,123
Disposals	-	-	-	(28)	(32)	(304)	-	(364)	-	(364)
Transfers	540	50	(581)	(25)	64	(57)	9	-	-	-
Revaluation	1,377	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,377	-	1,377
At 31 Mar 2024	51,588	3,989	30,707	2,072	1,968	4,366	250	94,940	2,314	97,254
Depreciation										
At 1 Apr 2023	-	1,510	-	1,322	1,519	3,221	101	7,673	41	7,714
Charge for the period	1,768	328	-	209	111	303	40	2,759	4	2,763
Disposals	-	-	-	(28)	(32)	(304)	-	(364)	-	(364)
Transfers	-	9	-	(18)	-	-	9	-	-	-
Backlog	51	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	-	51
At 31 Mar 2024	1,819	1,847	-	1,485	1,598	3,220	150	10,119	45	10,164
Net book value										
At 31 Mar 2024	49,769	2,142	30,707	587	370	1,146	100	84,821	2,269	87,090
At 31 Mar 2023	48,935	1,940	21,246	734	262	1,138	140	74,395	9	74,404

12. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

	RBGE and Group 2025 £000	RBGE and Group 2024 £000
At 1 April	998	869
Software acquired during the year	407	204
Transfer from Assets under construction	-	-
Disposals	(11)	(75)
As at 31 March	<u>1,394</u>	<u>998</u>
Amortisation:		
As at 1 April	497	459
Charge for the year	145	113
Disposals	(2)	(75)
As at 31 March	<u>640</u>	<u>497</u>
Net Book Value		
As at 31 March 2025	<u>754</u>	<u>501</u>
As at 31 March 2024	<u>501</u>	<u>410</u>

13. INVESTMENTS

a. Fixed asset investments

	Group Total £000	Listed £000	Subsidiary Undertakings £000	RBGE Total £000
Investments at cost as at 1 Apr 2024	927	927	1,807	2,734
Revaluation reserve as at 1 Apr 2024	505	505	-	505
Investments at valuation as at 1 April 2024	<u>1,432</u>	<u>1,432</u>	<u>1,807</u>	<u>3,239</u>
Less: Repayment of loan/conversion to grant	-	-	(4)	(4)
Add: Additions at cost	-	-	7,041	7,041
Add: Dividends received into fund	38	38	-	38
Less: Fund management fee	(10)	(10)	-	(10)
Less: Disposals	(140)	(140)	-	(140)
Add: Unrealised gain on revaluation at 31 March 2025	13	13	-	13
Investments at valuation as at 31 March 2025	<u>1,333</u>	<u>1,333</u>	<u>8,844</u>	<u>10,177</u>
Cost as at 31 March 2025	867	867	8,848	9,715
Less: Repayment of loan/conversion to grant	-	-	(4)	(4)
Revaluation reserve as at 31 Mar 2025	466	466	-	466
Investments at valuation as at 31 March 2025	<u>1,333</u>	<u>1,333</u>	<u>8,844</u>	<u>10,177</u>

Subsidiary companies

The investment in the Botanics Trading Company Ltd represents a long term loan of £28,000 and £1,000 of share capital of the Botanics Trading Company Ltd which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. The loan to the Botanics Trading Company Ltd is being repaid over twenty five years. It is secured by a floating charge over the assets of the company. Interest was applied at the Bank of England base rate plus 3%. The investment in the Botanics Energy Company represents a long term loan of £8,816,000 and £1 of share capital of the Botanics Energy Company Ltd which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. The loan is interest free and will be repayable over 20 years from 2027.

Listed investments

Listed company investments form part of the Ferguson Bequest and the Education Endowment. The investment portfolio is invested in a range of securities. As at 31 March 2025 the portfolio was made up of 24.9% fixed interest, 55.2% equities, 18.4% alternative and 1.5% cash. The corresponding figures for 31 March 2024 were 23.1% fixed interest, 54.6% equities, 17.4% alternative and 4.9% cash.

Investment holdings in gold were the only investment holdings over 5% of the Portfolio Value.

b. Current asset investments

As at 31 March 2025 £1k of cash was held in term deposit accounts (2024 £1k):

	RBGE		Group	
	2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
Term deposits	1	1	1	1

Current asset investments represent term deposits held with commercial banks in line with the credit risk policy.

c. Financial instruments disclosures

i. i. Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from the short-term lending of surplus funds to banks, building societies and other third parties as well as credit exposures to RBGE's customers. RBGE restricts deposits to the following banks (HSBC, Royal Bank of Scotland, Barclays, Lloyds TSB, Bank of Scotland, Co-Operative and Clydesdale) to a maximum counterparty limit of £300k. The treasury management policy is reviewed annually.

RBGE reviews the credit risk associated with financial institutions on a monthly basis and more regularly if market conditions are volatile or other information is made available on the financial security of UK banks and building societies.

ii. ii. Liquidity Risk

RBGE does not have any external borrowings.

iii. iii. Market Risk

Changes in market interest rates influence the interest payable on borrowings and on interest receivable on surplus funds invested. RBGE is not considered dependent on interest receivable

14. STOCKS

	RBGE		Group	
	2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
Heating oil	24	24	24	24
RBGE Shops (retail goods for resale)	-	-	225	226
Publications	111	122	111	122
	<u>135</u>	<u>146</u>	<u>360</u>	<u>372</u>

The current cost value of stocks, excluding heating oil, is not materially different from historic cost and accordingly no adjustment has been made to reflect current costs.

The stock of heating oil is held for precautionary purposes to ensure the protection of the living collections in the event of power loss, gas supply interruption or a national emergency

15. DEBTORS

	RBGE		Group	
	2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
Prepaid expenditure and accrued income	3,246	2,403	3,246	2,403
Sundry debtors	354	259	1,138	1,109
VAT debtor	156	802	156	802
Due by other group entities	955	986	-	-
	<u>4,711</u>	<u>4,450</u>	<u>4,540</u>	<u>4,314</u>

	RBGE		Group	
	2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
Balances with central government	1,092	1,737	1,334	1,978
Subtotal of intra government balances	<u>1,092</u>	<u>1,737</u>	<u>1,334</u>	<u>1,978</u>
Balances with bodies external to government	3,619	2,713	3,206	2,336
	<u>4,711</u>	<u>4,450</u>	<u>4,540</u>	<u>4,314</u>

16. CREDITORS

Amounts falling due within one year	RBGE		Group	
	2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
Accrued charges	2,088	3,588	2,168	3,686
Holiday pay	189	161	189	161
Creditors – social security	274	273	286	284
Creditors – other	675	509	816	652
Creditors – VAT	-	-	2	-
Trade creditors – revenue	488	262	558	297
Trade creditors – capital	39	167	309	960
	<u>3,753</u>	<u>4,960</u>	<u>4,328</u>	<u>6,040</u>

Amounts falling due within one year	RBGE		Group	
	2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
Balances with central government	282	277	296	288
Balances with local authorities	4	2	4	2
Subtotal of intra government balances	<u>286</u>	<u>279</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>290</u>
Balances with bodies external to government	3,467	4,681	4,028	5,750
	<u>3,753</u>	<u>4,960</u>	<u>4,328</u>	<u>6,040</u>

17. STATEMENT OF GROUP RESERVES

	As at 31 March 2024 £000	Income £000	Expend- iture £000	Transfer s £000	Reval- uation £000	Group As at 31 March 2025 £000
Unrestricted						
General fund	-	15,689	15,834	145	-	-
Board reserve	875	3,051	3,701	(145)	-	80
Total unrestricted funds	875	18,740	19,535	-	-	80
Restricted						
Capital revaluation reserve	31,140	-	-	-	1,069	32,209
Capital grants fund	58,409	19,972	3,147	-	-	75,234
Projects fund	1,378	6,102	4,111	140	-	3,509
Total restricted funds	90,927	26,074	7,258	140	1,069	110,952
Endowments						
Ferguson Bequest	1,193	38	10	(88)	-	1,133
Education endowment	35	-	-	-	-	35
QMMG endowment	30	-	-	-	-	30
Investments revaluation	505	-	-	(52)	13	466
Total endowments	1,763	38	10	(140)	13	1,664
Total	93,565	44,852	26,803	-	1,082	112,696

The Reserves of the organisation are explained in Note 1 of the accounts. The Capital Grants Fund represents funding for expenditure which has been capitalised as Tangible Assets in the balance sheet where either the funds received were subject to restrictions or the funds were Government Capital Grant in Aid. This reserve will fund the future depreciation costs arising from those assets.

Projects are where the RBGE receives money from third parties to fund various activities such as specific areas of research and developments in the Garden. The Ferguson Bequest is an endowment fund for botanical projects. The Education Endowment was established to support the educational activities of the RBGE. The QMMG Endowment is the Queen Mother's Memorial Garden endowment and was established to support the maintenance of the Queen Mother's Memorial Garden.

Closing RBGE unrestricted reserves were £36k.

18. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted £000	Restricted £000	Endowments £000	Total £000
Fixed Assets	-	104,775	1,333	106,108
Current Assets	4,408	6,177	331	10,916
Current Liabilities	(4,328)	-	-	(4,328)
Creditors > 1 year	-	-	-	-
Provisions	-	-	-	-
Total	80	110,952	1,664	112,696

19. REVALUATION RESERVE

	Tangible Fixed Assets 2025 £000	Investments 2025 £000	Total 2025 £000	Total 2024 £000
At 1 April	31,140	505	31,645	30,210
Surplus/(deficit) arising on revaluation in year	1,152	13	1,165	1,486
Realisation on sale of shares	-	(52)	(52)	-
Difference between depreciation based on revalued amounts and historic cost	(83)	-	(83)	(51)
At 31 March	32,209	466	32,675	31,645

The revaluation reserve relating to investments is attributable to the Ferguson Bequest and the Education Endowment.

20. CAPITAL GRANTS FUND

	RBGE		Group	
	2025 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2024 £000
At 1 April	58,409	45,768	58,409	45,768
RESAS capital grant	17,000	15,500	17,000	15,500
Other capital grants	2,940	-	2,940	-
Gain/(loss) on sale of fixed assets	32	13	32	13
Less depreciation	(3,134)	(2,872)	(3,134)	(2,872)
Impairment of fixed assets	(13)	-	(13)	-
At 31 March	75,234	58,409	75,234	58,409
SG capital grant	57,218	43,110	57,218	43,110
Gateway capital grants	13,537	13,643	13,537	13,643
Other capital grants	4,479	1,656	4,479	1,656
	75,234	58,409	75,234	58,409

21. TRADING SUBSIDIARY

A summary of the results of the wholly owned subsidiary the Botanic Trading Company Ltd. (company number: SC136616) is shown below. All values are historic costs.

Profit and Loss			Balance Sheet		
Account	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000		2025 £000	2024 £000
Turnover	3,015	3,484	Fixed assets	3	6
Cost of sales	(829)	(843)	Current assets	1,341	1,999
Gross Profit	2,186	2,641	Current liabilities	(1,264)	(1,276)
Other expenses	(1,659)	(1,759)	Loan from RBGE	(24)	(28)
Interest receivable	34	16	Provisions	-	-
Interest payable	(2)	(3)		56	701
Net profit	559	895	Share capital	1	1
Gift aid to RBGE	(1,204)	(1,019)	Accumulated	55	700
Tax on profit	0	2	(loss)/profit	56	701
Retained (loss) / profit for the year	(645)	(122)			
Retained Profit b/f	700	822			
Retained profit	55	700			

The company donates its taxable profits, allowable for distribution from reserves, to RBGE under the gift aid scheme on an annual basis.

22. CONSULTANCY SUBSIDIARY

The wholly owned subsidiary the Centre for Middle Eastern Plants (CMEP) Ltd. is now a dormant company. CMEP trades via BTC for all its commercial activities.

23. ENERGY COMPANY SUBSIDIARY

A summary of the results of the wholly owned subsidiary the Botanics Energy Company Ltd. (company number: SC712170) is shown below. All values are historic costs.

Profit and Loss		
Account	2024/25	2023/24
	£000	£000
Other expenses	(7)	(6)
Interest Receivable	2	
Net loss	(5)	(6)
Retained (loss) / profit for the year	(5)	(6)
Retained Profit b/f	(6)	-
Retained profit	(11)	(6)

Balance Sheet		
	2025	2024
	£000	£000
Fixed assets	8,830	2,264
Current assets	245	298
Current liabilities	(270)	(793)
Loan from RBGE	(8,816)	(1,775)
	(11)	(6)
Share capital	-	-
Accumulated (loss)	(11)	(6)
	(11)	(6)

24. CASH FLOW STATEMENT

Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024/25	2023/24
	£000	£000
Net income as per SOFA	18,062	13,068
Depreciation charge	3,137	2,876
Impairment of Fixed Assets	13	-
Capital GIA	(17,000)	(15,500)
Other capital grants	(2,940)	-
(Gain)/loss on sale of fixed assets	(32)	(13)
Unrealised (gain) on investment	(13)	(109)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments inc fees	(119)	(116)
Increase in stocks	12	(11)
Decrease/(Increase) in debtors	(226)	(2,173)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors & provisions	(1,712)	888
Net cash provided by operating activities	(818)	(1,090)

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	RBGE		Group	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cash in hand	5,439	4,673	6,015	5,895
Total cash and equivalents	5,439	4,673	6,015	5,895

25. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a non-departmental public body of the SG Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS) which is regarded as a related party. During the year, RBGE has had a number of material transactions with RESAS.

The Regius Keeper is, ex officio, a Trustee of the Sibbald Trust and a Director of the Botanics Trading Company Ltd (BTC) and the Centre for Middle Eastern Plants Limited (CMEP). RBGE received £134k of restricted funding income for the Sibbald Trust in 2024/25. The Director of Science/Deputy Keeper was a Director of CMEP for the whole year. The Director of Resources & Planning and Director of Horticulture and Visitor Experience were directors of BTC and the Botanics Energy Company (BEC) for the whole year. Two RBGE Trustees can be appointed to the Botanics Foundation Board in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Foundation. Dominic Fry and Elizabeth Trevor held these positions during the year. At an RBGE Board meeting of 28 February 2018, the Trustees agreed that any unapplied self-generated income should be donated to the Botanics Foundation, in addition to legacies received, to support the objectives of RBGE, as the Foundation Board see fit. As a result, legacies and donations to the value of £141,559 that were received in 2024/25 will be transferred directly into the Foundation's name. The Botanics Trading Company (BTC) is a wholly owned subsidiary of RBGE. A summary of the BTC results are disclosed at note 21. As well as the loan noted in note 21, BTC had a creditors balance with RBGE of £954,798.

The Botanics Energy Company (BEC) is a wholly owned subsidiary of RBGE. The company commenced trading in 2023/24 and a summary of the BEC results are disclosed at note 23.

Other than the loan noted in note 23, BEC had no other balances with RBGE.

During the year, none of the Trustees, members of key management staff or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with RBGE. Donations and other income from the Trustees to RBGE amounted to £200 in 2024/25 (2023/24: £780).

26. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

As at 31 March 2025 there were capital commitments contracted for but not provided for in the accounts of £2,031,000 (2024: £13,707,000). This relates mainly to the Edinburgh Biomes project.

27. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

	Notes	RBGE		Group	
		2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2023/24 £000
Income					
SG - Revenue grant in aid	3	11,696	11,487	11,696	11,487
Donations and Legacies excl capital grants	4	7,919	5,332	6,714	4,314
Charitable activities	5	3,015	2,700	2,943	2,631
Other trading activities	6	483	1,067	3,398	4,460
Investments	7	96	113	129	125
		23,209	20,699	24,880	23,017
Expenditure					
Staff costs	9	14,219	13,330	15,368	14,367
Other operating costs		6,975	6,186	8,147	7,590
		21,194	19,516	23,515	21,957
Donation to Botanics Foundation		(142)	(742)	(142)	(742)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		1,873	441	1,223	318

The group surplus of £1,223k comprises a deficit of £145k on unrestricted RBGE funds, a deficit on BTC of £645k, a deficit on BEC of £5k, a surplus of 28k on endowments and a £1,990k surplus from restricted project funds. In addition to this, the Restricted Capital Grants fund

relating to depreciation was underspent compared to new grants received by £16,826k; and the endowment had a £13k revaluation surplus. Once this is taken into account the net income for the year – as recorded in the Consolidated SOFA at page 54 – is £18,062k.

28. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

No significant events have occurred since 1 April 2025 that will have an impact on these accounts.

29. RAISING FUNDS EXPENDITURE

Reconciliation of RBGE total to consolidated expenditure within the statement of financial activities.

	2024/25	2023/24
	£000	£000
RBGE total expenditure per SOFA	633	519
BTC Cost of Sales	829	843
BTC Expenses	1,659	1,757
BTC Interest payable	2	3
Less inter group transactions		
Rental	(38)	(36)
Accountancy Fees	(35)	(34)
Salary Allowance	(91)	(82)
Support Services	(9)	(13)
Interest Payable	(2)	(3)
Total consolidated amount per SOFA	2,948	2,954

Accounts Direction

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN, EDINBURGH
DIRECTION BY THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS

The Scottish Ministers, in pursuance of paragraph 20(3) of Schedule 1 of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, hereby give the following direction.

The statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2006, and subsequent years, shall comply with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) which is in force for the year for which the statement of accounts are prepared.

The accounts shall be prepared so as to give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year, and of the state of affairs as at the end of the financial year.

This direction shall be reproduced as an appendix to the statement of accounts. The direction given on 17 October 2002 is hereby revoked.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'R' followed by a series of loops and a long, sweeping tail that ends in a diagonal slash.

Signed by the authority of the Scottish Ministers

Dated: 9 December 2005