



case study

equal opportunities



Objective One is
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The Objective One Partnership
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

TREBAH GARDEN

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the project

This project has enhanced one of Cornwall's historic 'Great Gardens' by the restoration and replanting of areas of Trebah Garden as well as the provision of new visitor and educational facilities which includes a 120-seat lecture theatre and facilities to be used for demonstrations and other events.

The Programme has invested £540,223 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the project which has a total cost of £1,350,556.



Trebah Garden is an exciting example of what can be done to enable access to all in an environment which at first appears to be a suitable only for the fit and healthy. Trebah Garden Trust has gone to great lengths to concentrate on what can be done. The trust admits that there will be areas of the garden which are and will remain inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties, they do however try to ensure that these areas are minimised and their constant goal is to improve the overall visitor experience for all.

measures of equal opportunities adopted

To enable equality of access to opportunities for people with disabilities

Visitors with disabilities are able to pre-book "drop off" parking near to the entrance. The garden offers reduced entry fees for people with disabilities and importantly their carers and there is free entrance to the terrace with a spectacular view down the garden to the Helford River for people unable to access the gardens.

Care has been taken with the reception desk to ensure that it is low enough to cater for wheelchair users and children.

Manual and Electronic Buggies: There is 1 manual and 3 electric buggies available for free loan. Trebah has developed their provision in this area to include user familiarisation and proficiency testing in an area outside of the main gardens. This facility includes examples of the buggy route terrain and gradient. It is intended to help Trebah staff and users to judge whether they will be capable of addressing the challenges of the garden itself.

Trails for all to experience: Trebah promote trails for visitors with learning difficulties and younger as well as older children and schools, which encourage them to explore the site and its wonders from different perspectives. These trails and challenges are often modified seasonally to keep the experience fresh for return visitors. The trails also bring visitors of all abilities into contact with the sensory highlights of the garden and are therefore of inclusive benefit to all. This is especially of great benefit to people with sight difficulties who are able to gain maximum enjoyment of the gardens from these several areas of sensory planting.

The garden has specially laid out routes with stepped edges and no steps suitable for wheelchair users and these routes have reduced gradients and frequent seating for those with mobility problems.



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Facilities: There are also new spacious toilet facilities for people with disabilities in the Hibbert Centre.

Publications: The visitor guide and website are both available in large print. Trebah have also published a unique garden guide which reveals the sloping valley gardens in a series of five metre vertical contours, in a flip-over book format which may be an attractive proposition to those with mobility problems.

Positive approach to equal opportunities strategies and policies

The management want to ensure that as many people as possible are able to enjoy the garden and that the attempts they make to ensure this are recognised and appreciated, particularly by people with disabilities. They also recognise that by addressing the needs of people with disabilities they are also addressing the needs of other groups.

Foreign Visitors: The Trebah Garden web site is available in 6 other languages including Japanese and Dutch.

Staff: Approximately 60 staff are employed during the peak visitor periods.

The majority of the staff are female with part time and flexible hours offered in both the visitor centre and the office. 99% of employees live within 5 miles of the garden.

Whilst there are currently no female gardeners, until recently the head gardener was female.

People with learning difficulties are employed in the plant sales areas.

All staff receive both induction training and a staff training handbook in which a strong emphasis is placed on customer service and disability awareness to ensure that the needs of customers are dealt with sensitively.

benefits of equal opportunities

The business benefits of equal opportunities is the resultant increase in the number of locals and visitors able to enjoy the Trebah experience by the improved access and facilities to meet all needs. The enhancement to Trebah Garden will also lead to an increase in annual visitors in the off-season period which will result in extended employment terms as well as the creation of additional jobs, supporting the local economy.



There is also the added benefit of the lecture theatre which can be used for educational and training opportunities.

lessons learnt

The Trust admits that there will be areas of the garden which are and will remain inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties; they do however try to ensure that these areas are minimised and their constant goal is to improve the overall visitor experience for all.

Michael Westley, Programme Manager for the Sensory Trust adds:

“Trebah recognises that different sections of the population visit the garden for different reasons, and they need to be inclusive in their approach to meeting these needs.”

Further information about Trebah Garden can be found at the website www.trebah-garden.co.uk. The link for the information on this website for people with disabilities is <http://www.trebahgarden.co.uk/children.htm#disabled>.

For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.