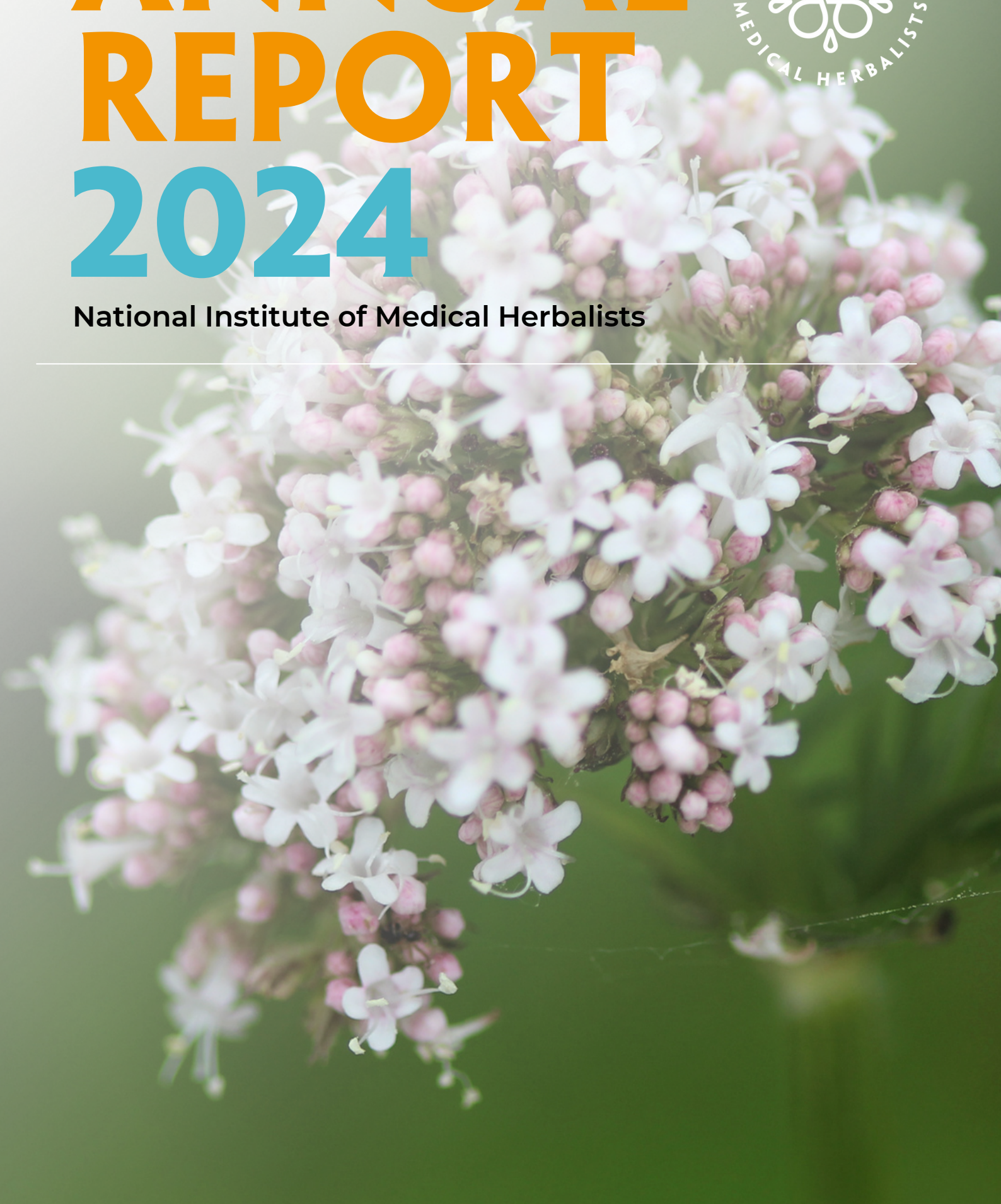

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



National Institute of Medical Herbalists



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME



2024

We are the foremost professional body in western herbal medicine, with the biggest membership and the most extraordinary history. Herbalists are amazing, wonderful, passionate, creative people. We could change the world.

So this year we have been working to expand the power of the Institute to achieve our individual and collective ambitions for herbal medicine. We want to welcome and support all of our members to be able to take part in that mission. How do we become a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts?

One major step has been to re-think the role of Council and our committees and project teams. Having finally received legal clarity over who can and cannot receive financial recognition for contributing to the Institute's work, we have tried to create a structure that allows those who need to be rewarded for their contribution to be, whilst evolving the ask of those who cannot be paid. So we are aiming to move the directors away from day to day executive responsibilities in order to focus on steering the overall strategy of the Institute.

And that leaves space for other members, friends and herbal allies to take ownership of the projects that they feel passionate about. How would you like to get involved? From thinking about how we train new herbalists to raising public awareness of our services; from encouraging research on our practice to supporting our members, working with the Institute could enable you to make your own impact on herbal medicine. Of course, if nobody is interested in a project, then nothing will happen. But I believe that there is a will and energy in the Institute and amongst our friends and allies to work on creating the future that herbal medicine deserves. Let's hope so! [Click here](#) for more information about how to get involved.

Robyn Soma
April 2024

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



This last year has felt like a year of new opportunities.

Last summer saw the exciting possibility of a partnership with Twinings. Although this was a very complex, and nuanced decision for us all to take, I feel that as an organisation we took huge steps forward in how we collectively went through that process. It is always a challenge in a membership organisation, with such a range of priorities and perspectives, to plot a path that suits everybody, however the process which we went through in this consultation is something which I think we can all feel incredibly proud of and puts us in a strong position to assess other opportunities in the future. Even where Members may not have aligned with the outcome of the consultation the process itself received almost universal praise, and that is something which cannot be overstated.

With the consultation delivering a mandate to take the discussions with Twinings forward, we have been in continuous discussions with them since, and we'll launch some collaborative marketing projects with them later on this year. Due to events at their end we have pushed back the start of the packaging project, but we look forward to seeing the impact of the Institute being launched into millions of homes.

We've also seen the second year of our Power of Plants Festival, which grew hugely in scale and showed that it can become a profit making event within its first three years. Despite the challenging weather it was an incredible weekend, and demonstrated just how remarkable the herbal community is, and what a broad range of knowledge (and dancing skills) we hold. The festival has grown again for this year and I'm thrilled that we will be seeing so many of you again in July.

Alongside this we have begun to extend our events offering. The Natural and Integrative Menopause Summit in October was an incredible success, with over 300 people joining us for an amazing day of speakers highlighting the impact that herbal medicine can have on health, and the extent to which relationships with other healthcare professionals can enhance our profession. We have also, thanks to the generous support of The Herbal Medicine Trust, added a new Events and Learning role to our team, and will be delivering some very exciting events across this year, as well as working to promote all of the events our Members are already involved in.

I also wanted to mention the changes that we have made to our governance across the Institute, reflecting the evolution of our organisation over recent years. Having assessed where we are, how we worked, and what we wanted to achieve, and having consulted with Members, Students, other membership bodies and prominent charities, the changes we are making will enable us to push forward into the next stage of our growth and to make the involvements of Members, Students and others who contribute to our work as positive as possible.

As always I'd like to recognise the huge number of people who make the Institute what it is, and thank the Institute Council, our committee members, festival volunteers, our brilliant speakers and presenters, all of you who help create some of our fabulous public facing content, and anyone else who has been part of what we do. Thank you.

James Wiltshire
April 2024

YOUR COUNCIL



Robyn Soma
President



Melinda McDougall
Vice President
(Stepped down 18 December 2023)



Emma Barker
Honorary
General Secretary
(Co-opted Vice President)



Martin Schoenbeck
Honorary Treasurer
(Stepped down 31 March 2024)



Katie Dobiesz
Director



Paula McCreary
Director



Mary Tassell
Director



Natasha Lloyd
Director
(Co-opted Honorary Treasurer)

STRATEGY UPDATE

Advancing our profession

Our vision:

“A world where herbalists provide a recognised and valued healthcare option.”

Our purpose:

- To champion herbal medicine
- To promote the expertise of our Members
- To safeguard the public and maintain standards

Our priorities

- 1 Supporting the provision of world class herbal education and development**
- 2 Maintaining the highest professional standards across our membership**
- 3 Promoting the recognition and advocacy of herbal medicine**
- 4 Ensuring herbal careers are viable and rewarding**
- 5 Enabling freedom and innovation in practice**

Our values

Collaboration:

We believe that we can achieve more by working with our Members, partners and other organisations. We will find common goals and build relationships for success.

Sustainability

We trust that the planet, its people and herbal medicine all have strong futures, and everything we do aims to secure and enhance them.

Diversity

We celebrate the diverse scope of herbal practice and its practitioners, and always operate with openness, integrity and inclusivity.

Clarity

We want everyone to understand what we do and how we do it, so are committed to making everything we do as clear and accessible as possible.

Visibility

We believe we make a difference, and we will continually seek to have our voices heard and secure herbal medicine's place in society.

Strategic priorities progress



CONNECTION

With over 500 people at Power of Plants Festival and so many other healthcare professionals attending our other events, we are building important connections



EDUCATION

We have agreed with Lincoln College to directly accredit them again, having been accepting graduates via their EHTPA accreditation for a number of years. We now have four accredited courses, strengthening our pathway of high quality new herbalists.



DEVELOPMENT

Our Herbal Medicine Conference was joined by the Natural & Integrative Menopause Summit, meaning that during October over 500 people accessed world class herbal development through our events.



DEVELOPMENT

We have simplified our mentoring platform, and launched mentoring training to support the provision of high quality mentoring for all Members.



STUDENTS

Our first Student Council made a big impact in helping us to understand the priorities of our student population, and has now been joined by open student drop-in sessions.

Strategic priorities progress



COSTS

The economic environment has been challenging, and we have been looking at how we can maximise the value of membership, so that despite the recent small increase in membership fees to offset some of the inflationary pressures we have absorbed, we have added further benefits like the free Menopause summit to keep membership good value.



VISIBILITY

We've used our social media and other digital channels to shine a spotlight on all of the mazing things our Members have been doing, and supporting you in attending so many events in your own communities.



COMMUNITY

Our online Community Space, with its own dedicated app, continues grow, giving a space where our whole community can connect, share and grow.



ENGAGEMENT

Our Power of Plants Magazine has gone from strength to strength, with an ever growing number of external subscribers, alongside the free copies for all of our Members.



SUPPORT

Our Member Assistance Programme has seen really strong use from our community, offering free personal support services 24/7 every day of the year. Being a herbal practitioner or student can be tough, and we want to offer the best support we can.

OUR COMMUNITY	
MEMBERS	597
STUDENTS	542

as at 15 April 2024

FINANCIAL REPORT

Once again this has been a challenging year financially for the Institute, as it will have been for all of you and your patients.

As in 2022, it was projected that the Institute would make a loss in 2023, mainly due to these financial challenges and the desire to cushion our membership from the worst of them, as well as reflecting the strong profit making performance across the previous few years. The pandemic was incredibly tough for herbal practitioners, and coming off the back of that the twin financial impacts of Brexit and the conflict in Ukraine meant that for the long-term sustainability of practitioners and therefore our profession, the Institute wanted to support our members through this period. Our strong financial performance across 2020 and 2021 put us in a position to be able to do this.

The drivers of 2023's financial performance were two main factors:

- **Inflationary pressures.** Put simply the cost of everything we do as an organisation has increased considerably, something which you will all be familiar with from your own businesses. However we have not put any increases in place for membership fees, merchandise or events, meaning that whilst our costs have increased considerably, our income has not, in a conscious effort to keep herbal practice viable for our membership.
- **Enhanced activities.** Activity such as producing and posting a printed magazine four times a year, offering the Member Assistance Program to our whole community, launching an app and many other things we have done to support our membership all carry a cost. Again this has not led to an increase in membership fees as we look to invest in a better longer-term future for the profession.

We also saw considerable costs in hosting the Power of Plants Festival, although 2023's event performed far better financially than 2022's, and the Festival is on its way to being a profit generating event.

We believe that our membership, and therefore the profession and the Institute itself, will be in a far healthier state and better positioned to thrive in the long term because of the projected losses made in 2022 and 2023. We anticipate returning to breaking even in 2024, and returning to profit in the following years as our exciting growth plans continue.

Our accounts will be included when ready for your consideration and if you have any queries please do contact us on info@nimh.org.uk. We will be prioritising pre-submitted questions for the AGM and are happy to share the answers in full to Members on the day.