



BRIEF: THE GARDENS TRUST AUDIENCE RESEARCH

OVERVIEW

The Gardens Trust seeks to appoint an audience researcher to design and implement audience research.

We want to gain insight into existing and potential audiences: their interests, motivations and barriers to engaging with and participating in the Gardens Trust and its work.

Fee: £8,000 (inc VAT and all costs)

Application Deadline: midnight, Monday 6 September

Interviews: Tuesday 21 September

Project Timeframe: final report w/c 8 November 2021

ABOUT THE GARDENS TRUST

The Gardens Trust is the only national organisation focussed on historic designed landscapes. We champion them through conservation, knowledge sharing, and supporting local engagement.

We want to help communities get value from historic parks and gardens; including the health and wellbeing benefits they offer and the social cohesion that they can foster. Our role supporting these heritage assets is vital and never more so as they struggle for survival in the economic aftermath of the pandemic.

Ultimately we aim to increase people's awareness of heritage landscapes and gardens, and to celebrate and champion the places that are important to them: the more people care deeply, the more voices will speak out to protect heritage when it's under threat.

We want to:

- Increase people's awareness of The Gardens Trust and of the places we exist to protect.
- Engage more people, and a wider range of people, with our work - whether events within a community or online talks, casual social media interactions or people making use of our expertise and resources.
- Develop advocates and champions - build our membership, inspire people to donate money, time and expertise to benefit the future of the organisation.

We have identified a number of critical issues including:

- A lack of diverse representation amongst our supporters
- Over-reliance on a loyal but narrow core audience of members, event attendees and volunteers, mainly from affiliated County Gardens Trusts.
- Reliance on engagement through a limited traditional programme of in-person activities.

We are working to address these issues through a programme of audience development.

In order to fulfil our social responsibility to ensure historic parks and gardens are a shared resource we will be running pilot projects to better connect with and understand the needs of under-represented audiences. In particular we want to focus our efforts on reaching Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and younger people (under 45), with digital as well as in-person activity.

The insight from the research will be key both for the development of the pilot activity and also for helping to shape future activity that will be at the heart of the audience development plan.

AIMS AND OUTCOMES

We require evidence to shape our future direction. We need a factual grounding for the decisions we make, to ensure stakeholders can see how and why we need to change and feel confident in our reasoning, and to strengthen future fundraising appeals.

This piece of research is to inform a 3-year audience development strategy. It is the first stage of this process, and therefore vital that we use this opportunity to ask what we need to know in order to develop our plans.

In order to identify and agree target audiences for our strategy, we need:

- A clear and current view of existing audiences and how they are engaged
- To learn about our potential audience - who they are, and what we could offer them
- To better understand who *isn't* interested (despite factors suggesting they might be)
- Audience profiling or personas - an easy to use description of the types of people we have the propensity to engage, describing lifestage, preferences, motivations.
- Information to be cross-tabulated to extract as much learning as possible (and to make future exploration of the results possible if a new question arises)
- Learning to be presented in an accessible format, easily shared with staff and stakeholders
- We would also like the researcher to share and discuss the findings in a presentation to the team at The Gardens Trust.

What we want to learn

We want to gain rich insights into the kind of people who we have the potential to engage.

In brief, the themes to explore are:

- Who they are - demographics, with national dataset comparison
- Where they are
- What kind of people they are - interests, attitudes
- Motivations and barriers to engagement
- Awareness of our brand / work
- Awareness / use of heritage landscapes
- Level of interest in what we could offer
- How they would prefer to engage

METHODOLOGY

We want to learn more about people who have a propensity to engage with our work, from across the UK. We are working to become more inclusive so want the research to actively seek responses a wide range of respondents, to ensure our results reflect the diversity of the population.

To gain a robust sample we envisage the research will be conducted by online survey. We welcome creative ideas and additional approaches which would gain a wider range of audience response, or help us to gain deeper insights.

We also require a mirror survey of members - adding in some questions specific to their membership - so that we can compare the results with the main survey. Our Members currently number approximately 1100. Some will require the survey in paper format.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The researcher will work with Frankie Taylor, Audience Development and Engagement Officer, and Jo Kay, Audience Development Consultant, to develop and implement the research.

Consultation with other key members of The Gardens Trust staff and Board will be needed, particularly Linden Groves, Strategic Development Officer, the Gardens Trust and Rachel Savage, Trustee and the Chair of the Audience Development, Marketing and Communications Committee.

FEE

£8,000 (including VAT)

This will include all costs, e.g. incentives to encourage survey completion, data profiling / mapping / segmentation, cost of social media promotion to reach a wide audience, and making the survey available in alternative/accessible formats.

TIMESCALE

We are working to the following outline timetable.

Midnight, Monday 6 September: Application deadline

Thursday 9 September: Invitation to interview for shortlisted applicants

Tuesday 21 September: interviews (online)

Weds 22 September: confirmation of contract offer

w/c 27 September: first planning meeting with Audience Development Officer and Consultant. To be followed by consultation meeting/s with key team members, as needed, to agree and sign off research objectives and approach.

October: Research conducted

w/c 8 November: Deadline for final report

SUBMISSIONS

If you are interested in working with us on this project, please submit a concise (approx 4 sides of A4) proposal of your approach to delivery and proposed methodology/project plan, and a budget breakdown.

Send by email to jo.kay@jokay.me by midnight on Monday 6 September

Jo Kay is working as the Audience Development Consultant for The Gardens Trust. This address can be used if you need more information or would like to clarify anything in this brief.

*Jo works part time so be aware that responses may take several days - to allow for this, please **submit any questions by Wednesday 1 September.***
