



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

Chair of  
Trustees  
Recruitment  
Pack

2024

RESEARCH • CONSERVE • CAMPAIGN



# Chair of Trustees Role Description



## About the Gardens Trust

**T**he **Gardens Trust** is the only UK national charity dedicated to protecting and conserving our heritage of designed landscapes. We campaign for them, undertake research and conservation work, and encourage public appreciation and involvement. More information can be found at [www.thegardenstrust.org](http://www.thegardenstrust.org)

**The Gardens Trust** is a membership organization of around 1300 members, and also represents 36 County Gardens Trusts as well as the Welsh Historic Parks and Gardens Trust, who between them carry around 7500 members.

**We are a statutory consultee in the English planning system**, which means that we are consulted on planning applications affecting the parks, gardens, cemeteries, and other designed landscapes on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The GT's three part-time conservation staff provide constructive advice in response to consultations from local planning authorities, working closely with County Gardens Trusts' volunteers to benefit from their local expertise and knowledge.

**We love to work with volunteers.** We run volunteer support for the County Gardens Trusts and others to ensure that our professional national expertise can benefit from substantial local support and expert contributions. This work enables CGTs to be resilient and proactive in their work helping conserve historic designed landscapes, including through commenting on planning applications, and through research and recording.

We manage the Gardens Trust Community Grant scheme, in 2024 making £6000 available to volunteer projects at historic parks and gardens. We also present an annual Volunteer Award, presented at a special Volunteering Celebration event.

**We lead the way in sharing knowledge and research.** We publish the leading international

journal, *Garden History*, as well as the *GT News* magazine and monthly *eBulletin*. We also award the annual *Mavis Batey Essay Prize*, and convene the New Research Symposium.

Over 10,000 attendees participate in GT online events, training and lectures annually, including people from other heritage or professional organisations.

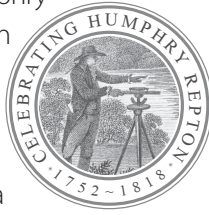
The Gardens Trust uses X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok to engage with new audiences and other organisations. Our social media following is growing fast, with 3046 X followers, 2560 Instagram followers, 58 TikTok followers, 250 LinkedIn followers, and 684 Facebook likes/followers.

**We work hard to raise awareness of historic parks and gardens through campaigns and other initiatives.** Recent campaigns include *Unforgettable Gardens*, which sought to draw attention to the value of all historic designed landscapes whilst recognising their vulnerability and the role volunteers can play in protecting their future; Compiling the Record, which researched under-recognised 20th century designed landscapes, --with the result of 20 sites being added to the NLHE; Celebrating Repton, a collaborative project



## The Gardens Trust

to mark the bicentenary of Humphry Repton; and the Capability Brown Tercentenary celebrations, to research and update what is known about his works.



The GT benefited from a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to deliver a project called 'Engaging with our Future', which addressed GT resilience issues particularly through improving diversity and inclusion. Previously, the GT ran *Sharing Repton: Landscapes for All* project, thanks to Lottery players, to bring historic landscapes to new audiences whilst updating knowledge on Repton landscapes (2018-20).

You can read our Impact Reports at <https://thegardenstrust.org/what-we-do/our-impact/>

### Opportunities and Challenges

The Gardens Trust is ambitious to be dynamic and impactful in helping protect and share historic designed landscapes for this and future generations. With a new government, there is a fresh impetus to be bold in developing and implementing our vision for historic designed landscapes in delivering social, economic and environmental benefit for all, and we have a key role to play. We are a growing organization, with an energetic and keenly motivated team of Trustees, volunteers, members, supporters and staff, carrying with us 37 County and Country Gardens Trusts too. However, we are operating in increasingly challenging times, with decreasing public funding, shifting government policies, and an increasingly-stretched volunteer workforce. We are midway through delivering our current Business Plan, Audience Development Strategy and Fundraising Strategy, and it's time to look ahead to the next stages.

### The Gardens Trust team

The Gardens Trust is managed by a Board of up to twelve Trustees. This Board is responsible for

the overall governance and strategic direction of the Gardens Trust, developing and implementing the aims, objectives and goals. Trustees are nominated by the existing Board and elected by members of the Gardens Trust at an Annual General Meeting.

The Board is supported by various committees, who meet regularly:

- Management Committee
- Conservation Committee
- Education & Training Committee
- Audience Development, Marketing and Communications Committee

Where appropriate, the committees may also include sub-groups.

Delivery of Gardens Trust workstreams is undertaken by a small, mainly part time staff team, comprising:

- Head of Operations & Strategy
- Finance Officer
- Administration & Membership Officer
- Fundraising Development Officer
- Conservation Officer
- Conservation Casework Manager
- Assistant Conservation Casework Manager
- Lead Volunteer Support Officer
- Engagement Officer

### The Role

This is an important and rewarding role, facilitating the Gardens Trust's work conserving and sharing historic designed landscapes. We are ambitious for our organisation and its work but are operating in an increasingly challenging context. We are looking for a Chair who will relish the challenge as we do.

The Chair of Trustees plays a pivotal role in the leadership and governance of the Gardens Trust. As the leader of the Board of Trustees, the Chair will provide strategic direction, oversee governance, and ensure the effective operation of the charity by working



closely with others. The Chair of Trustees role is a key position within a small and friendly team. They will work closely with the Honorary Treasurer and Secretary, other Trustees and senior staff such as the Head of Operations & Strategy.

### **The Chair's key tasks and responsibilities are:**

#### **Governance**

- Provide robust and effective leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring the Gardens Trust's mission, vision, and values are rigorously upheld.
- Chair quarterly hybrid Board meetings, fostering open and constructive discussions among Trustees, making sure all voices are heard.
- Lead the Annual General Meeting.
- Uphold the highest standards of governance, ethics, and compliance with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks, with the Honorary Secretary.
- Oversee the annual review and update of governance policies and procedures, with the Honorary Secretary.

#### **Strategic Planning**

- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Gardens Trust's strategic plans and business plan aligning with the broader goals and objectives.

- Work collaboratively with fellow Trustees to shape the charity's long-term vision.

#### **Support to the Head of Operations & Strategy**

- Collaborate with HOS and provide guidance and support in the execution of their duties.
- Ensure the Board is a good employer.
- Ensure effective communication and cooperation between the Board and the staff team.

#### **Financial oversight and fundraising**

- Along with all Trustees, take responsibility for approval and management of the charity's finances, working particularly with the Treasurer.
- Work with the Treasurer to produce the annual year-end financial accounts.
- Support fundraising initiatives and contribute to the development of strategies to secure resources for the Gardens Trust.

#### **Advocacy and stakeholder engagement**

- Advocate for historic designed landscapes and the GT's work championing and protecting them.
- Act as a visible and influential ambassador for the Gardens Trust, fostering positive relationships with key stakeholders, County and Country Gardens Trust partners, members and the wider community.
- Represent the Gardens Trust at external events as needed.

Delivery of these tasks will be through partnership with the staff team via the Head of Operations & Strategy.

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**This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses are reimbursed.**

***Please see the Person Specification below.***

### **What do you gain from becoming a Trustee?**

The organisation Reach Volunteering has highlighted 5 benefits people get for their career from becoming a Trustee:

1. Contributing to a great cause
2. Strategic experience
3. Professional networks
4. Developing skills and experience
5. Team working

Read more here: [The five career benefits of trusteeship | Reach Volunteering](#)

Perhaps you're not interested in career benefits? If so, don't forget that you will also get to work with a great group of people all focused on a common cause, at an exciting time of challenge and opportunity!

### **Training and Support**

The new Chair of Trustees will benefit from a comprehensive induction process, which will include meeting the staff and briefings on the responsibilities and duties as Chair. They will work closely with the Head of Operations & Strategy to ensure they have all the necessary resources and guidance.

All Board members are encouraged to attend Gardens Trust events where possible. All online events are free for Board members to attend.

### **Time commitment**

The Board usually meets four times a year, plus an annual Awayday and Annual General Meeting. Meetings take place in the afternoon, currently in March, June, October and December, mostly by Zoom. The Gardens Trust Chair is also expected to Chair the Management Committee, which

meets once a month, currently in the early evening, also by Zoom.

The Chair should expect to allocate around 3–4 days per month as a basic requirement, although more time might be needed for projects or specific initiatives.

The appointment is for an initial term of three years, renewable once to a maximum of six years.

### **How to apply**

Please apply by sending to:

**[Catriona.hoyes@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:Catriona.hoyes@thegardenstrust.org)**

a cover letter setting out why you would like to be our Chair, how you meet the criteria and a CV.

**Please get in touch if you would like to discuss the role before applying.**

**The deadline for applications is 6th January 2025.**

We will review candidates against our role description to assess how well they meet our requirements. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an informal Zoom interview shortly afterwards.

Those invited for an interview will be asked to talk briefly to summarise what key challenges they think may be facing us over the next five years. During the interviews, we will be looking for individuals who possess:

- Enthusiasm for the charity and the fulfilment of its objectives.
- Enthusiasm for collaboratively helping the Gardens Trust and its partners to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.
- Experience of management and charity governance.
- Ability to chair a meeting, lead a group of people to decisions and support the staff team.
- Good judgment and clear vision.
- Knowledge of heritage charities and their roles.
- Acceptance of the legal role of a Trustee.



**We are looking for a candidate to ideally start by April 2025.**

## Person Specification

We are looking for a collaborative team player with good networks who is bold enough to lead, but who also knows their limits and is willing to listen to others' expertise too. Our new Chair will need to be a strategic thinker who can relish a challenge and be bold about seizing opportunities. They will need to have been a Trustee previously, or had significant leadership experience, ideally but not necessarily in the heritage sector. Candidates might already be a Gardens Trust or County Gardens Trust member, or they may be entirely new to the organisation.

### Essential:

- Board, Trustee or significant leadership experience, preferably in the voluntary sector;
- Enthusiasm for the Gardens Trust's objectives, and an excitement about working with a friendly likeminded team to achieve our goals.
- A desire to support a small established organisation and a willingness to learn and adapt skills to our needs. A team oriented approach to problem solving and management.
- Analytical and evaluation skills. Capacity to think strategically and contribute to the development and implementation of the organisation's strategic and business plans.
- Willingness to learn and accept the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a Trustee;
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to collaborate effectively and build relationships with diverse stakeholders.
- Willingness to engage with fellow trustees and the Head of Operations & Strategy between meetings to provide ongoing support and advice.
- Ability to attend and appropriately represent the organisation at occasional events and functions as needed.



- Excellent chairing skills to effectively lead formal meetings with a large number of participants, including quarterly Board meetings and annual Meet Ups with the Chairs of our partner County Gardens Trusts.

### Desirable:

- Proven leadership experience.
- Experience of Charity Governance.
- Substantial experience of the voluntary sector.
- Understanding of historic designed landscapes, their history and their value to a successful society.

**The Gardens Trust** is wholly committed to inclusion and diversity, and to building a culture and environment where everyone is appreciated for the contributions they make. We welcome candidates who will contribute a diversity of representation and thinking, including people from minority ethnic groups, LGBT+ people, people with disabilities, and those with experience of socio-economic disadvantage.



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