Dear Member,

Notice of an extraordinary general meeting of the Gardens Trust

I am delighted to take this opportunity to let you know that the GT Board has completed its recruitment process and co-opted John Watkins DHE, M.Hort(RHS), FCIHort. as its Acting Chair.

An extraordinary general meeting of the Gardens Trust will be held on **Monday 31 March 2025**, at 6pm, online via Zoom (the “**EGM**”) in order to complete John’s appointment as a trustee and a director of the Gardens Trust. At the EGM, members will be asked to vote on the proposed election of John for a term of three years. A brief biography of John Watkins is enclosed with this notice.

To be sent the Zoom link please book, via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-gardens-trust-extraordinary-general-meeting-tickets-1280245561939>.

The agenda for the EGM is as follows:

1. **Welcome**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Resolution:** to elect John Watkins as a director and trustee for a term of three years.
4. **Any Other Business**
5. **Close**

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Description automatically generatedI do hope that you will join us or nominate a proxy to vote on your behalf (further details set out below). The GT Board is delighted to have concluded the recruitment process with such a strong candidate and looks for your support in formalising this appointment at the EGM.

With best wishes

Catriona Hoyes (nee Stenhouse)

Company Secretary

**Explanatory notes**

* Please submit any questions in advance by Friday 28th March 2025, to [catriona.hoyes@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:catriona.stenhouse@thegardenstrust.org)
* Individual Members and County Gardens Trusts representatives vote as two separate classes of members and a majority of each class is required in favour of the resolution for it to be passed.
* Individual Members and authorised representatives of County Gardens Trusts who are not able to attend the meeting can vote by appointing a proxy to attend the meeting and vote on their behalf, or by submitting their proxy electronically or by post. Note:

1. Your proxy can be the Chairman of the meeting, or another person of your choice.
2. Please email the Secretary at [catriona.hoyes@gardenstrust.org](mailto:catriona.hoyes@gardenstrust.org) for the appropriate proxy form (i.e. CGT or Individual Member).
3. Completed forms need to be sent via email to [catriona.hoyes@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:catriona.hoyes@thegardenstrust.org) or post to Catriona Hoyes, at the address provided for on the form, to **arrive by 6pm on Saturday 29 March 2025**.
4. If you have a joint membership a second form will need to be submitted.

**Your vote via proxy is important to us and will help to ensure a quorum at the meeting, even if you cannot attend in person. Thank you.**

**Brief Biography of John Watkins**

Working within the Curatorial Department of the English Heritage Trust, John leads the Gardens and Landscape Team which provides specialist advice and technical guidance on the maintenance and management of historic gardens and designed landscapes to the English Heritage Trust. He is a professional horticulturist with some 47 years’ experience, awarded the RHS Associate of Honour in 2016. He was Senior Lecturer at Hadlow College in Kent and has worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh and Kew, the National Trust for Scotland and the Royal Horticultural Society at Wisley and Hyde Hall. He was on the management board of Plant Network, and the Kent Gardens Trust and whilst Chair of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust secured £7M (including HLF funding) to enable the Trust to be independent and secure. He both writes and lectures on plants and historic gardens and their management, including the Glasshouse Garden published by Conran Octopus and jointly edited and contributed to the *English Heritage Manual: The Management & Maintenance of Historic Parks, Gardens & Landscapes*. He has served as an examiner for the Royal Horticultural Society examinations and represented English Heritage on the ODPM Green Flag Board. Working with partners across the horticultural sector he established and secured HLF funding to establish and run the Historic and Botanic Gardens Training Programmes place young people in historic gardens to receive practical training in gardens across the UK. He has been closely involved with a number of high-profile restoration projects at: Chiswick House and Gardens, Down House, Eltham Palace, Wrest Park, Witley Court, Kenilworth Castle, Boscobel House, Audley End Kitchen Garden and Mount Grace Priory. He has recently completed major projects at Marble Hill in London, Belsay Hall in Northumberland. In 2023 he initiated “The King’s Meadows Project” to celebrate and create 100 meadows at English Heritage Trust sites over ten years. He has been a member of the Gardens Trust and the Garden History Society since 1996.