



70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
Telephone: (+44/0) 207 608 2409
Email: enquiries@thegardenstrust.org
www.thegardenstrust.org

The Gardens Trust Committees Report 2024

Conservation Committee,

Chaired by Deborah Evans, CMLI, MA, IHBC

The Gardens Trust is a statutory consultee in the planning system, which means that local planning authorities must consult us, and we must respond, on any planning applications that may affect sites on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The workload involved is immense, and whilst Historic England are only statutory consultees for Grades I and II*, we are additionally consulted on Grade II, carrying a unique responsibility. In 2024 we received 1,744 planning consultations as a statutory consultee, 911 of which were for Grade II sites. Our statutory remit required us to respond to almost all of them, and for 534 these were full written responses. Much of our workload involved complex ongoing advice, for which the outcome will not be seen until future years. Notable cases in 2024 included:

- › Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire, where we worked through multiple consultations for the development of spa buildings, sports facilities, and play equipment. Whilst we are supportive of the scheme's aims to restore areas of the parkland, we expressed concern about how the increased built form would alter the feel of the historic landscape, impacting 'Capability' Brown's naturalistic design of the parkland. We will continue to work closely with Central Bedfordshire Council to provide constructive advice on how harm can be mitigated across the site.
- › Peterborough Cathedral Gardens, Grade II, whereby a former residential site would be developed into housing. We were concerned at the heights of these buildings and their impact on the relationship with the other buildings in the cathedral landscape, whilst the Local Planning Authority worked with Historic England to agree a reduced number of houses on the site. Whilst we remain concerned, working closely with the Local Planning Authority has enabled us to accept that the public benefit the housing would bring clearly outweighs any potential harm the new buildings would cause.
- › Gilling Castle (Grade II) in Yorkshire where we welcomed the change of use from the former school to residential units. This included extensive conservation works to the castle and outbuildings, together with the removal of educational buildings and sports facilities from the front of the castle. However, we were disappointed that this sensitive, prominent location was

then classed as 'brownfield' and identified as the location for six new dwellings. We discussed with the North Yorkshire Council and the developer as to how this development can be improved to reduce the impact on the registered landscape and listed castle and as a result revised plans were submitted. This application was approved.

› At Annesley Hall, Nottinghamshire, following objections from both the Gardens Trust and Historic England to two applications for large-scale industrial sites development immediately west of the Grade II* site, we were disappointed when the first of these received permission in November. We received amended plans for the second application in which the industrial units had been lowered in height and sunk into the ground, the screening bunds widened and increased in height and the proposed tree planting strengthened. Whilst we welcomed these improvements, as did Nottinghamshire GT, we did not consider they offered sufficient mitigation to reduce the harm to the significance of the Registered landscape and maintained our objection to the proposal. The Gardens Trust, Historic England and Ashfield District Council's conservation officer all objected on heritage grounds, but those concerns were overridden by the public benefit and the application approved.

› We continued to discuss the ongoing application by the National Trust at Grade I Studley Royal for the remodelling of the interior and exterior of Canal Gates tearoom including landscaping, demolition of single storey extensions and ancillary structures, and extension to Studley tea-room with external alterations. Although the GT chose not to object to the original plans submitted in 2023, whilst Yorkshire GT did, we have welcomed the resubmission of the application, amended to reduce the size of the Canal Gates tearoom and interpretation area extension, with improvements to the soft landscaping. We considered these changes would reduce the visual impact on views towards the tearoom, across the lake from the north. Permission for this development has recently been given.

We updated the Gardens Trust publication explaining the position of parks and gardens in the English planning system, and the process of consultation with the Gardens Trust. We sent it to over 300 Local Planning Authority contacts, and it can be downloaded for free from: thegardenstrust.org/planning-system-2024.

The inadequacy of government funding for our statutory consultee work against the increasing spotlight on the quality of our delivery of this role means that in Summer 2024 we had to make some changes to our way of working. We can currently only undertake our statutory remit, which is to respond to planning applications which impact on Registered parks and gardens. We are currently unable to offer wider advice on non-registered sites, Forestry Commission consultations, approaches from consultants seeking pre-application discussions, and most wider policy and strategic consultations. We have also had to lean heavily on the goodwill and understanding of the County Gardens Trusts in continuing to support our planning application work despite the difficulties. We very much hope this is a temporary situation.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) increasingly come across our desk. In 2024, these notably involved applications for very large solar arrays - by combining various smaller parcels together, solar providers can make the project so large that it becomes a NSIP, so decided nationally not locally. We continued to be involved with the 'Botley West Solar Farm' proposal that affects the setting of Blenheim Palace and Park in Oxfordshire, which is Grade I Registered and also a World Heritage Site, and more recently 'Lime Down', affecting Badminton in Gloucestershire and the setting of the Grade I landscape. The nature of NSIPs is that the premise has already been agreed, so our potential impact is to influence the detail so as to reduce the impact on historic designed landscapes.

We had some positive updates on earlier cases too:

- › The refusal for a proposal to create a 74 bed hotel and spa with 55 other market residences split into separate development packages across the estate across the Grade I Norris Castle estate on the Isle of Wight, following our objection alongside Isle of Wight Gardens Trust, Georgian Group, SAVE, Historic England and others. The Gardens Trust considered that the proposals were an overdevelopment of the site and would have a substantial adverse impact on an extremely valuable heritage asset and irrevocably alter the character of the landscape and the existing spirit of place.
- › The approval given for the All England Lawn Tennis Club proposal to build new courts and a stadium at Grade II* Wimbledon Park, London. This had been a contentious case as it involves large-scale commercial development in a Registered landscape. The Gardens Trust and London Parks & Gardens came to the view that the likelihood of finding an alternative to fund the significant heritage improvements such as the promised historic landscape and lake restoration scheme and subsequent long-term maintenance was unlikely, and therefore in principle but with some reservations, we supported the scheme.
- › Over many years the Gardens Trust has been commenting on planning applications affecting Marston Park in Somerset, mainly relating to commercialised leisure activities around the lake, which is in separate ownership to the rest of the landscape. Most recently, a 2017 application to build holiday lodges, café, bar and restaurant that we objected to was finally turned down in 2023. In 2024 we heard that the owners of the main Marston Park house have now been able to buy the lake and surrounding land, which should result in more considered management decisions in future. We look forward to working collaboratively with the owners to secure the best possible outcome for this important historic designed landscape.

In Spring 2024 we migrated the Gardens Trust Casework Log to the database of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies (JCNAS). This platform is now shared by all the National Amenity Societies for their casework. With the help of funding from Historic England, the migration project took place over a three month period at the beginning of 2024, with the Gardens Trust becoming fully active on the database on 1st April 2024. This presented challenges because of the different position of the Gardens Trust, the only statutory consultee amongst the JCNAS members, plus our very close working relationship with the County Gardens Trusts, but

these were satisfactorily resolved. The previous casework log, which records over 35,000 cases spanning 2000 to 2024, has been safely archived by York University for future reference. The benefits of the new database include the release of much-needed staff administration time to allow more involvement in actual casework, plus closer working with our JCNAS colleagues, which will result in better-informed and more efficient consultation responses to the local planning authorities.

The Gardens Trust welcomed the opportunity to respond to the consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Whilst the consultation proposals did not directly address heritage matters, there were, nonetheless, a significant number of proposals with implications for historic parks and gardens. Key issues raised in our response included support for the use of design codes to maintain character and setting, alongside the delivery of new development, and a call to exclude glasshouses from the definition of previously developed land. The response also addressed the proposals regarding the identification of 'grey belt' land, highlighting the need to consider the historic environment alongside the natural environment, and took the opportunity to promote the recognition and protection of parks and green spaces - including in relation to climate change. The Gardens Trust was generally supportive of the proposed changes to the NPPF but also made several suggestions to ensure that the stated priorities for driving growth did not compromise the protection and conservation of the core areas and settings of historic parks and gardens. The subsequent changes made largely reflect the Gardens Trust's comments, but it was disappointing to see that the contribution made by historic parks and gardens to the delivery of so many Government objectives was not fully recognised or utilised.

In early 2024 the Gardens Trust was included in the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' 'Rapid Review' of Statutory Consultees by consultant Sam Richards. The data we gathered proved very useful to chart our work, showing that between 2008 and 2023 our statutory consultations increased from 860 to 1302 per year. In 2024 we were asked to respond to 1,744 consultations. In stark contrast, over the same period our statutory consultee grant has decreased from £45,000 and is currently £43,000, a situation which clearly cannot be sustained. Data also shows that we almost always respond within the statutory 21-day deadline, and that fewer than 10% of our responses are objections, with many instead offering constructive advice: we are certainly not a blocker in the planning system. The results of the Richards Review were never published and were eventually overtaken by the change of government. However, the experience gave us the data and confidence to set up an Advocacy Working Group, to work on putting together a compelling case to the new government about the value of historic parks and gardens to the government's mission and the work undertaken by the Gardens Trust to support this. In November 2024 we were approached by the Think Tank LabourTogether with more questions about our work as a statutory consultee and shared the importance of this role.

In September 2024 we started a two-year volunteer training project 'Green Futures: new infrastructure and historic gardens in the East of England', with thanks to Historic England funding. Working with the six East of England County Gardens Trusts - Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire - but sharing the free, online learning nationally with the other CGTs and beyond, we are training volunteers to understand NSIPs; to assess and engage with such applications and how to research, record and understand the significance of historic designed landscapes that may be affected by them. By adding this research to the historic record, via global or virtual platforms like Historic Environment Records and the National Heritage List for England, we support developers, planners and other statutory consultees including Historic England to take into account the effect of NSIPs on historic parks, gardens and other designed landscapes. This will ensure their most important aspects, such as their heritage value, contribution to local green space and established benefits to local are protected wherever possible.

In summer 2024 our two-year *Suffolk's Unforgettable Gardens Story Project* was completed. Over twenty local volunteers have researched and recorded at-risk historic designed landscapes in Suffolk. The project, delivered by the Gardens Trust in partnership with Suffolk Gardens Trust and funded by Historic England, tells the stories of the county's parks and gardens and brings attention to the value of Suffolks historic designed landscapes. This volunteer led project has resulted in the in-depth research of more than twenty historic parks and gardens resulting in seven new additions to the Register of Parks and Gardens. The project gives these sites a better level of protection in the planning system and increases heritage knowledge to be shared within their local communities, including:

- Abbot's Hall in Stowmarket – the pleasure grounds of an early 18th century house - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1486027?section=official-list-entry>
 - Thorpeness Meare – the vibrant and adventurous landscape of Britain's first purpose-built holiday village - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1487571?section=official-list-entry>
 - Crow's Hall – an early moated country house landscape with a reinterpreted period gardens - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1486290?section=official-list-entry>
 - Staverton Park – with its extraordinary cohort of ancient pollarded trees within its relic deer park and woodlands - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1489417?section=official-list-entry>
 - The Walled Garden at the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook – featuring a distinctive Suffolk vernacular 'crinkle-crinkle' wall - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1488516>
- All of these sites are now recorded with public access to the material at the National Heritage List for England online - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>. The research compiled by volunteers will in due course be published on the Suffolk Gardens Trust website: www.suffolkgardenstrust.org

The Gardens Trust's two-year volunteer support project, Volunteers Save Space! (funded by Historic England), was completed in March 2024. Volunteers Save Space! enabled us to run

multiple training, networking and support activities, to share with more people our designed landscape heritage and to build capacity in the volunteer organisations working to understand and protect these landscapes.

This project helped over 1600 people, many of them from diverse audiences, to better understand historic designed landscapes, the threats they face, and how they and other volunteers can help to protect, enjoy, conserve and value them as their local green spaces and biodiversity hubs.

In addition, the project:

- Provided support for nearly all of England's 36 County Gardens Trusts (CGTs) as well as more in-depth training to Cheshire, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Sussex and Northamptonshire Gardens Trusts, via three regional activities: a public Heritage Open Day, a mini research and recording project for volunteers, and social media training for CGTs.
- Reached more than 5,000 people through views of the Royal Horticultural Society/Gardens Trust 'Bicycle Boys' online exhibition, which followed and compared landscapes recorded by Loyal Johnson and Sam Brewster, bicyclists and garden visitors in the 1920s, to their condition today as researched by County Gardens Trusts. This was one of our biggest outreach successes, partnering with the RHS Lindley Library under our "Unforgettable Gardens" campaign.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/digital-collections/the-bicycle-boys>

- Trained seven young and diverse students from University College London, who subsequently went on to volunteer with the Gardens Trust and London Parks & Gardens, using learning materials from the Suffolk project.

Trained 9 new volunteers to research and record 8 non-designated historic landscapes, with Nottinghamshire Gardens Trust.

- In addition to our education programme, we ran 28 online or in-person professional training sessions in garden history, research methods, social media, volunteer recruitment and audience development. We also directly taught 545 people, roughly half from the County Gardens Trusts, and the rest from other public audiences.
- Talked 1:1 to over 650 people about the Gardens Trust's purpose, the County Gardens Trusts volunteer networks and the heritage of designed landscapes at outreach events in Nottinghamshire, Cheshire and London. In addition, we hosted a popular stand at the Gardeners' World's Autumn Fair at Audley End, Essex.
- Engaged and trained 18 new project volunteers contributing to our regional activities.
- Hosted a Heritage Open Day in Queen's Park, Crewe, with Cheshire Gardens Trust, as a platform to share our love of garden history with new audiences.
- Trained Northamptonshire, Norfolk and Sussex Gardens Trusts to use social media to share conservation messages and create a community with new people. This has helped them all grow their audiences.
- Welcomed 247 people to our annual networking events: the Historic Landscapes Assembly in London and our regional Volunteering Celebration.
- Engaged with 116 volunteers in Britain's fantastic green space 'Friends' groups via our survey of their current activities and heritage knowledge and learnt that 58% of them would welcome more

knowledge of their green space site's history and development and think it could help them to protect their landscape.

The network of 36 County Gardens Trusts (CGTs) and the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust are critical to our work, in supporting our statutory consultee role as well as delivering vital research and recording activity. They engage with local and diverse communities across the country. As well as ongoing availability to all CGTs, in 2024 our Volunteer Support team gave specific support to 21 CGTs, helping them to continue their vital local work to bring local volunteer communities together with a common interest in green spaces, landscape and conservation. More on CGTs' work in 2024 is in the Gardens Trust Impact Report <https://thegardenstrust.org/what-we-do/our-impact/>.

Education and Training Committee,

Chaired by Jill Sinclair

Garden History journal

Founded over 50 years ago, the Journal offers a range of scholarly papers furthering understanding of garden and landscape history, under Dr Barbara Simms' editorship. The full contents list from 1969 to 2024 has been updated and is now available and searchable at: thegardenstrust.org/resources/journal/

Papers this year have been: "Gardening...has now happily become the delight of all classes': fifty years (1832-83) of horticultural comment and advice culled from the writing of Victorian gardener Alexander Forsyth' by Jonathan Pointer; 'Heralding Modernity: innovation, internationalism and artistry in Robert Furber's Twelve Months of Flowers' by Margaux Shraiman; 'New Light on the Chiswick Gardens of Spencer Compton, 1st Earl of Wilmington (c.1674-1743)' by Sally Jeffery; 'A Park in Which Beauty and Pure Air could be United': South Shields' marine park and the nineteenth-century conception of health and wellness' by Abigail Carr; 'The fountains of the Fugger family's gardens in sixteenth-century Augsburg' by Davide Martino; 'The Mithraic Altar, the Shepherd's Monument and the Temple of Ceres: contextualizing the inscriptions' by Michael Bevington; "Collegiate plantings': the University of Oxford's experiments in 'theatrical shrubbery', 1740-1820' by Toby Parker and Mark Laird; "I looked out for my materials in case I should want them for another day': 'Alexander Forsyth (1809-85), gardener and prolific contributor to the nineteenth-century horticultural press' by Jonathan Pointer; 'Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942): a maker of 'fine gardens'' by Sara Tenneson; 'The Tale of the Garden: Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) and the development of Hill Top' by Alice Burns.

In Spring 2024 we ran a webinar on ways to share garden history research, to promote diverse contributions to interdisciplinary scholarly discussion, including how to submit papers to the Journal, to encourage knowledge sharing, and promote international dialogues. 110 people attended, joining us from Italy, Switzerland, the US, China, Ireland, Australia and Canada as well as from across the United Kingdom. The submissions guide has been updated, and is on our website: thegardenstrust.org/garden-history-submissions-guide/

Our annual New Research Symposium is an opportunity for researchers and scholars to share new and unpublished interdisciplinary research relating to garden and landscape history. Since its launch in 2011, the symposium has hosted cutting-edge research from more than seventy researchers. The impact of the symposium on our work and the field of historical research and public engagement has been significant: as well as showcasing their new research, speakers have subsequently written full scholarly articles for our journal, contributed to our online talks programme, organised garden history events, walks, talks and even become trustees of the Gardens Trust and other heritage organisations.

This year we received a high number – and high standard – of entries, and hosted two free online sessions on Saturday afternoons in November, both chaired by Dr India Cole, to showcase the

chosen presentations. The speakers were: Kitty Edgerley, PhD student at the University of Bristol: 'Embodying the Garden - Mihri Hatun's Poetry and Performance', Ellie Lewis: Masters student at King's College London: 'Productive Plants and Wasteful Weeds in Early Modern Literature', Grace Murray, recent PhD student at the University of York: 'Pomegranates and Gillyflowers - A Seventeenth-Century Welsh Garden', Aideen Herron, PhD student at University College, Dublin: 'By the Bishop's Design: An analysis of the designed landscape of Georgian Armagh', Kealey Kennedy, historical researcher: 'Colonial Landscapes – The Unique Phenomenon of Garden Cemeteries in Malta', Georgia M. C. Russell, PhD student at Durham: 'Chester Zoological Gardens - Recreation and Hope in Wartime Cheshire (1935-1945)', Zohar Shvarzberg, architect and town planner: 'Rooted Traditions - Exploring Thai Migrant Gardens in Israel' and Viveca Mellegard, PhD student at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: 'Troubled Paradise'.

We look forward to welcoming submissions again in 2025 from researchers approaching garden history and conservation from various academic disciplines and vocational backgrounds. A full list of researchers featured and topics covered in the symposia over the past 13 years is available on our website: thegardenstrust.org/new-research-symposium/

The winner of the Gardens Trust's 2024 Mavis Batey Essay Prize was Emma Poynter (MPhil) for her essay on 'The production, use, and significance of the Hortus Malabaricus (1678-1693) in the creation of colonial botanical knowledge.' Emma, who recently graduated with an MPhil from Cambridge University said "I am delighted to have won the Mavis Batey Essay Prize 2024. Researching the Hortus Malabaricus has uncovered a rich intersection of colonial encounters, economic drivers, and contemporary curiosity in botany and the natural environment. I hope that this paper contributes to ongoing historical conceptions of how botanical knowledge has been gathered and made within the seventeenth century context." Emma was presented with her award, a year's free membership of the Gardens Trust and £500 prize at the Unforgettable Gardens book launch in October. Two more essays were highly commended by our judging panel, including an essay on the Sculpture Garden at Denham Place by Oxford University student Struan Bates and 'Self-fashioning in the Theatre of the Early Modern English Garden' by Anna Brueck Seeley, Master's student at the Warburg Institute, University of London. thegardenstrust.org/what-we-do/prize/

There's been a dearth in recent years of places to study garden history, so the Gardens Trust is delighted to partner with the University of Buckingham on postgraduate degree courses. This gives the opportunity to pursue research at Master's level in any one of a wide range of garden and landscape related topics. The course was set up by Dr David Marsh, previously a Gardens Trust Trustee, and in 2025 he will be working with Dr Twigs Way as co-director. Many of the students on the course are positioned to make practical use of their learning in the conservation of historic parks and gardens. In the 2024-25 academic cohort there are eleven new MA students. These include two professional horticulturists - one with a background from the National Trust and English Heritage who's looking at possible uses for walled gardens, and one from Hawaii who is looking at how to make the garden she cares for sustainable and relevant in the context of climate

change. One has a professional museum background in Pakistan and wants to look the relationship between British and Mughal influences on public gardens there and how to conserve them when she returns to Pakistan. Another is a landscape architect who lives on a historic estate and is researching its history to better manage its maintenance with a Conservation Management Plan in future. Two National Trust volunteers are looking at specific aspects of the places where they volunteer - one at Sissinghurst and the other at Cliveden. Eight part-time MA students are continuing their studies. One is a park manager and is looking at the restoration of a Japanese garden in a public park. Another is examining Gertrude Jekyll's commercial business and working closely with the curator at Munstead Wood. There are also three PhD candidates.

Details at: buckingham.ac.uk/courses/research/ma-garden-history

In November 2024 the Gardens Trust published its first book – *Unforgettable Gardens: 500 Years of Historic Gardens and Landscapes*. It covers around 60 individual gardens, specially selected to give a broad historical overview of British garden design from the Early Modern Period up until the Millennium. Each chapter also includes an essay exploring the wider changes in social context, taste and style in each period. Sales are strong, with almost 1,200 copies sold globally in the first few weeks of its publication. In a review in *The Critic*, Professor James Stevens Curl said that 'The *Gardens* book is a delight...Very well illustrated, the book somehow encapsulates the genius of British gardeners'.

We have received a grant from the National Archives, with thanks to Lottery Players, as part of their Archives Revealed programme. This will enable us in 2025 to scope the contents of the Gardens Trust's sizeable archive of papers to assess its significance and potentially apply for a further grant in order to make the collection available to researchers in future.

In 2024 we ran over 85 events (online and in person), with almost 9000 tickets sold, to attendees from all across the world. Online highlights included a roundtable on 'Why Garden History', the first half of our new 6-series programme *A History of Gardens*, sponsored by Wooden Books, a new partnership with the County Gardens Trusts exploring *Restoration in Action*, and popular series on *People's Parks*, *Community Landscapes*, *John Singer Sargent and Gardens*, *Roman Gardens*, *Botanists and Botanic Art*, *Gardens & the Written Word* and *Head Gardeners Working at Historic Sites*. In-person events included successful trips to the MERL and Forbury Gardens in Reading, Dorneywood in Buckinghamshire, Exbury Gardens in Hampshire, Charlton House and Garden in southeast London, Gravetye Manor in Sussex, a multi-day study trip to Suffolk, and partnership sessions with the Royal Horticultural Society exploring the archives at the Lindley Library. One of the purposes of our events programme is to raise funds for our work and this year ticket sales contributed over £30,000 to the cause.

We also partnered with other organisations, such as the Garden Museum for an Introduction to Garden History course, run as a hybrid event over four Saturdays early in the year. We also welcomed around 30 delegates to our annual study weekend arranged in partnership with Oxford

University, this year with the theme New Perspectives on Botanical Gardens. The weekend included a guided trip to Oxford Botanic Garden, the oldest such site in the country.

We are fortunate to have a team of new and long-standing volunteers making our events programme possible – thank you!

thegardenstrust.org/events/

Audience Development, Marketing and Communications Committee,
Chaired by Rachel Savage

Raising awareness

We're grateful to have the help of 6 volunteers under the age of 30 to help with our social media. Social media is a successful way to share messages around historic parks and gardens and their conservation with as many people as possible across the world. In 2024 our social media engagement was:

X (previously Twitter) - Our posts viewed over 30380 times;

Facebook - 48 new followers. Our posts have reached over 32,000 users;

Instagram - 300 more Followers. Our posts have reached over 126,000 users;

Linkedin - 200 new followers. Posts so far have been viewed 10,000 times;

TikTok - We've posted 19 videos which have been viewed over 75,000 times this year.

To complement the GT News magazine for members, we have an eBulletin covering sector highlights, edited by volunteer Charlotte Casella, which goes out monthly to over 2,100 readers, with an extra edition for non-GT members.

In 2024 our fundraising efforts focused on diversifying and strengthening our income streams to ensure greater financial stability. Together, these achievements lay the foundation for sustained growth and greater impact in the years to come.

We launched a new Patrons Scheme, welcoming 19 patrons in its first year and raising over £10,000. This marked a strong start, and we plan to grow the scheme, including by offering exclusive events to our supporters. Thank you to our Patrons for their generosity in supporting the Gardens Trust's work, including: Ms Helen R Auty, Dr James Bartos, The Duchess of Bedford, Mr Richard Broyd CBE, The Duke of Devonshire, Mrs Sarah Dickinson, Mr John Entwistle, Mr Jeremy Garnett, Mr Peter Gent, Lady Hart of Chilton, Mrs Caroline Holmes, Mrs Barbie Moul, Dr Adam Naylor, Sir Hugh Roberts, Caroline Scaramanga, Jill Sinclair, Miss Peggy Stenbridge and Dr Ian Varndell.

We also expanded our funding portfolio, securing £17,500 from four Trusts and Foundations, demonstrating the value of our work. In particular, we secured grants from the Swires Charitable Trust for volunteer support work, and the Finnis Scott Foundation and the Worshipful Company of Gardeners that will allow us to deliver three compact research and recording workshops for County Gardens Trust volunteers in the coming years.

Additionally, invested in five London Marathon places for 2025, aiming to raise an impressive £12,500.

Whenever resources allow, we take a Gardens Trust display to events and fairs to talk about garden history, conservation, and our work. In November 2024 we spoke to almost 100 people from garden owners to managers to volunteers at the Historic Buildings, Parks & Gardens Event in

Westminster, and at the History Day at the Institute of Historic Research met around 50 people of all ages, with a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate students, including international students, professionals working across the sector and local organisations and groups.

In 2024 two community garden projects in historic designed landscapes were able to progress thanks to our Gardens Trust Community Grant, supported with the generosity of members Peter and Rosy Gent. Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace in Hove, East Sussex, received £2500 to help restore the garden not only for the mental, physical and social benefits of the volunteers who go every Saturday, but for the many local residents and tourists that appreciate the Square too. Dawber Garden Community Trust, Lincoln, received £1000 for a project around the restoration, ongoing maintenance, and significant improvement of the garden to ensure long term survival.