[INSERT DATE]

Dear [INSERT MP NAME]

I am writing to seek your help in addressing the government’s proposal to remove the Gardens Trust as a statutory consultee in the planning system. As MP for [INSERT CONSTITUENCY NAME]. your constituency includes many important historic parks and gardens, such as [INSERT LOCAL REGISTERED PARK OR GARDEN].

I am asking you to please:

* Ensure that the government takes proper account of the evidence and the public consultation responses in making its decision around the Gardens Trust’s statutory consultee role
* Support Amendment NC90 to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (pages 59-60 [online here](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/59-01/0196/amend/planning_day_pbc_0520.pdf)).

About the Gardens Trust

The Gardens Trust is the only national organisation exclusively focused on historic designed landscapes, commonly known as ‘historic parks and gardens’. A charity, the Gardens Trust represents and supports the 36 local volunteer County Garden Trusts in England, and works with related bodies across the UK. As a statutory consultee, local planning authorities must consult the Gardens Trust in relation to all planning applications that may affect historic designed landscapes on the statutory Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. The Gardens Trust is the only consultee for sites on the Register at all Grades (Grades I, II\* and II). Like all other statutory consultees, its responses are advisory only and are used to inform the local planning authorities’ decision-making.

Historic parks and gardens have a role to play in:

* Growing the economy, as historic parks and gardens support well-designed development with ready-made access to pre-existing greenspace. They also add hugely to the UK’s tourism economy, being one of the biggest drivers in this field, nationally and internationally.
* Meeting climate change challenges. They are critical in supporting nature recovery, especially as older, established landscapes support biodiversity significantly more than new green space.
* Fostering safer streets, as public parks play an important role in social cohesion by offering both places to come together and build communities, as well as offering places for wellbeing, play and recreation for all. This is why so many were created in the mid-19th century and challenging inter-war periods.
* Ensuring that the NHS is fit for the future, because parks help reduce demand on the NHS by offering free-to-access places to exercise and enjoy fresh air, critical for health and wellbeing.
* Nurturing opportunity for all, because not only does an active parks and gardens sector support inclusive access to leisure but it also offers a range of accessible career pathways.

The Gardens Trust’s performance as a statutory consultee

In 2024-25 the Gardens Trust made 1289 planning consultation responses. 372 of the responses were bespoke, detailed responses of advice, with no objection. Only 85 of the responses were objections, and 16 of these were procedural because the consultation did not include the required information. Objections were made only when vital and many more responses were supportive. Where housing development is proposed, the Gardens Trust advises on impacts and harm and possible mitigations.

Cost of the Gardens Trust’s contribution to the planning system

The cost of the Gardens Trust’s statutory consultee role to the taxpayer is currently £43,963. If it did not carry out this work, the cost to local planning authorities in plugging the gap could be over £10m.

The impact of removing the Gardens Trust’s statutory consultee role

There is no other body able to offer dedicated and expert advice to local planning authorities on planning applications that may affect historic parks and gardens. Local planning authorities do not hold this knowledge themselves and if they must make planning decisions in a vacuum of information about the impact on parks and gardens then the result is likely to be poor quality development and missed opportunities to make the most of the nation’s readymade green infrastructure, an irreplaceable resource.

Yours sincerely,

[INSERT NAME / SIGNATURE]