

THE GARDENS TRUST

Research Conserve Campaign



The Gardens Trust
Impact Report 2025

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thegardenstrust.org/support-us

2025 has been an extraordinary year for the Gardens Trust.

We have continued to deliver a wide range of outputs, from the Community Grant, to the *Garden History* journal, to fulfilling our role as a statutory consultee in the planning system, in which we comment on planning applications that may affect Registered parks and gardens.



This work is made possible thanks to a tiny staff team, hardworking Trustees and volunteers, and unstinting support from members and others.

This year, though, has been especially busy because of the Government's announcement in March of its proposal to remove the Gardens Trust's statutory consultee role, followed by the launch of a public consultation in November.

You can read more about the response to this proposal on p.10 of the report, but in the meantime I would like to thank all of our members and supporters for their help protecting in historic parks and gardens.

Despite the uncertainty of the result of the government's consultation, I'm confident that we can work boldly to continue delivering our aims. This confidence comes from watching the Gardens Trust in action over the past decade of its life, since it was created in 2015 – you can read some highlights from this decade on p.20. Together we all make a formidable team, and I'm optimistic about the future and what we can achieve together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Wether".

Chair, the Gardens Trust

Cover image: Tai Chi teacher and Takeover Radio DJ Ken Mead supported children from Sutton Academy to interview and film older people, finding out what makes the Sutton Lawn historic park special to them, as part of the Gardens Trust 'Sutton Lawn Landscape and Living Memories' project with Mill Waters in Nottinghamshire.

Credit: Tamsin McMillan.

Published January 2026

THE GARDENS TRUST AS A STATUTORY CONSULTEE

As a statutory consultee in the English planning system, the Gardens Trust must be consulted by local planning authorities, and we must respond, on any planning applications that may affect sites on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Whilst Historic England are only statutory consultees for Grades I and II*, we are additionally consulted on Grade II, thus carrying a unique responsibility. We deliver this role working closely with volunteers in the County Gardens Trusts, whose local expertise is invaluable.

Statutory consultee casework

In 2025 we received 1,798 planning consultations as a statutory consultee, 924 of which were for Grade II sites, for which we are the only statutory consultee. We responded to 1,389 of them.

Much of our workload has involved complex ongoing advice, in which the outcome will not be seen until future years.

2025 cases have included sites at all grades, from cemeteries to urban landscapes, from public to private designed landscapes, and from small-scale planning applications to large developments.

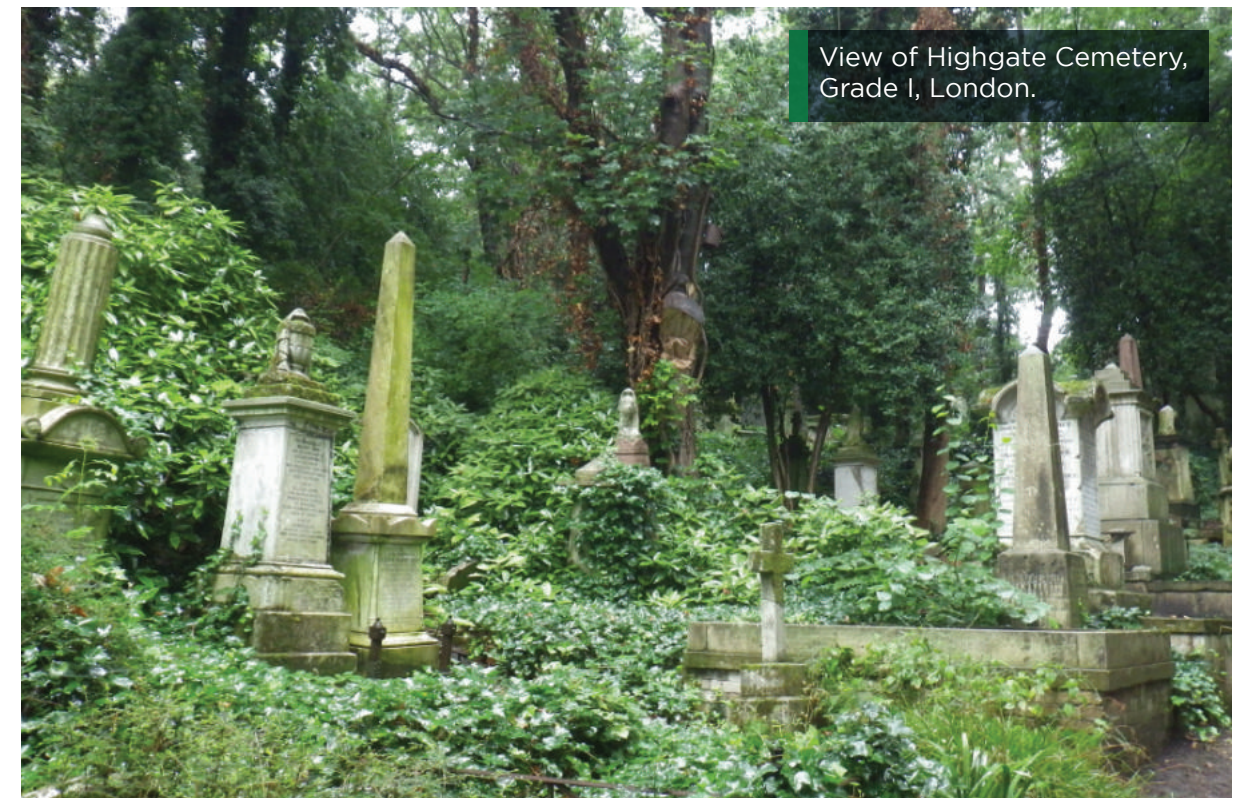
For many of 2025's key cases a local planning authority decision is still pending, but a flavour of the breadth of our casework load is given by:

› **Highgate Cemetery, Grade I, London.** We supported a proposal for visitor facilities and extensive conservation works to underpin the financial sustainability of the cemetery and create a living landscape with emphasis on public amenity, nature and art as well as private commemoration.

The overall plan provided well thought through and sensitive solutions informed by a comprehensive historic environment impact plan and underpinned by high quality design.

› **Napsbury Hospital, Grade II, Hertfordshire.** We identified the substantial impact the development of 9 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping would have on the significance of the historic orchard and designed landscape. The Orchard was an important element of the therapeutic landscape and building on it would prevent future restoration or use for community activities, such as an orchard, and the associated wellbeing benefits.

The Local Authority refused permission, with the decision note highlighting the lack of public benefit but then it was allowed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on appeal.



View of Highgate Cemetery,
Grade I, London.

Highgate Cemetery ©Laika ac, shared under a CC BY-SA 2.0 licence

› **Rousham, Grade I; Middleton Park, Grade II; Aynho Park, Grade II; Kirtlington Park, Grade II, Oxfordshire.**

In Autumn 2025 we were made aware of an application for up to 9,000 new dwellings at the former RAF Upper Heyford, despite having not been consulted by the local planning authority.

› The application site is in a highly sensitive location and it was determined that the proposed redevelopment might cause harm to the significance of Rousham, the Rousham Conservation Area, Aynho Park and Middleton Park, most notably being in a key view from Rousham. Due to an incomplete Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and some weaknesses in the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) we expressed concern that no comfort was provided that views to the site from within the identified Registered sites have been fully interrogated. In particular we highlighted that we do not believe the case has been adequately made to support the conclusion in the HIA that very low ‘less than substantial harm’ would be caused to the significance of Rousham, the Rousham conservation area and Aynho Park. We requested that a thorough LVIA assessment is provided, assessing the views to the development from a range of viewpoints within Rousham, and in particular those that are listed within the Rousham conservation area appraisal.



Rousham Gardens: 'Lion attacking Horse' © Robin Stott shared under a CC BY-SA 2.0 licence.

› We raised concerns regarding the effect that the density, scale and design of the proposed redevelopment would have on the significance of the Registered sites and encouraged that development within those areas closest to the boundaries of Rousham and Middleton Park be limited to low density only, and that the proposed buildings are domestic in character, comprising only of two storey single family dwellings. Further to this, we requested that the building lines are moved further back from the boundary than what is currently proposed, and that greater screening is put in place. As this report goes to press, the proposal is under consideration.

› **Wrotham Park, Grade II, Hertfordshire.** This is a large development of 900 dwellings, a neighbourhood centre and community facilities, a primary school, and an up to 80-bed care home that would affect Wrotham Park, which initially we were unable to assess owing to the lack of an impact assessment that address the registered park. Working with the developer, this was quickly rectified, and the assessment identified that the historic landscape would not be impacted by the proposed development. A planning decision is pending.

› **The Hazells, Grade II, Bedfordshire.** We advised that ‘middling level of less than substantial harm’ to The Hazells would be caused by a proposal for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of an up to 21 megawatts ground mounted solar farm. The proposal would cause the erosion of the Registered site’s agricultural setting and the historic link between The Hazells and Moggerhanger Park. Our response highlighted the need for additional screening and the importance of returning land to arable or pasture after the solar farm’s term. Permission was granted with conditions including that the land shall be returned to its former condition as evident prior to the construction of the facility, that a report recording the existing condition of the access road and adjacent areas within The Hazells has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and that if any damage occurs the area must be restored to its former condition.

› **Sherborne House, Grade II, Gloucestershire.** The National Trust submitted an application for wetland enhancement works upstream of Sherborne Broadwater to reconnect river with floodplain, manage silt, preserve open water, improve biodiversity, and mitigate flood risk in response to siltation problems. Our advice to the local planning authority expressed concerns about the ‘nature-based

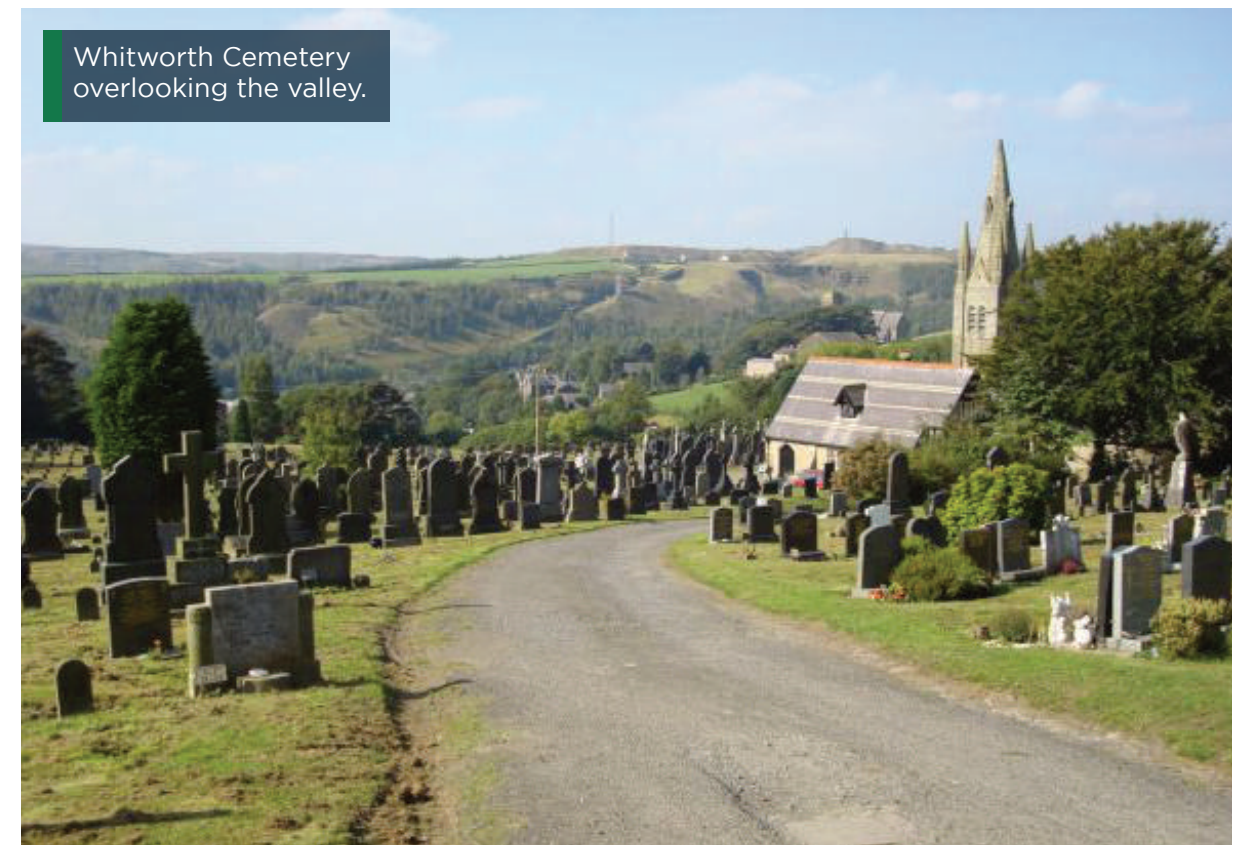
solution' which appeared to be at the expense of loss of historic parkland features. The result is likely to be an all-year-round wetland, instead of existing parkland with some seasonal flooding. We advised that further information is needed about other options considered and discounted in favour of this chosen proposal. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

› **The Barbican, Grade II*, London.** We shared concerns about the impact of the proposed demolition of existing buildings at 1 Silk Street and the construction of a new building up to 20 storeys on the way the Barbican landscape is experienced, particularly regarding height, massing, and light. We advised that the scale and mass of the proposal could significantly affect the experience of the Barbican, including views, spatial enclosure and light, and recommended a thorough assessment of the impact on setting and experience, including cumulative effects, to inform mitigation measures.



Credit: Jim Osley, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons.

› **Beth Chatto Gardens, Grade II, Essex.** 'Beth Chatto's Plants and Gardens' submitted a planning application for enabling development to support the Registered gardens including the development of 79 dwellings with related picnic area and open space. The Gardens Trust advice was that this would involve substantial change to the setting of the Registered site, but limited intervisibility, causing 'less than substantial harm' outweighed by public benefit due to the additional revenue brought to the gardens to support their charitable/engagement activities. This planning permission was refused.



Credit: Peter Holton / CC BY-SA 2.0.

› **Whitworth Cemetery, Grade II, Lancashire.** We were consulted on 17 wind turbines and associated infrastructure on the opposite side of the valley to Whitworth Cemetery, with the easternmost turbines being within 3-4km of the cemetery. The Gardens Trust advice was that this would disrupt the current panoramic views from the cemetery out to the west, across the river valley and Cown Reservoir to Rooley Moor, and to the south over Rochdale towards the Cheshire Plain. We advised that the 'less than substantial harm' that would result would be virtually impossible to mitigate. A planning decision is pending.

The Government's proposal to remove the Gardens Trust's statutory consultee role

The year was dominated by the government announcing in March a plan to consult on a proposal to remove the Gardens Trust's statutory consultee role, with the consultation eventually being launched in November.

The Gardens Trust is the statutory consultee for Registered parks or gardens of all grades, which total over 1,700. We are the only provider of advice for Grade II sites (65%). **We robustly contested the proposal from the start.**

We campaigned publicly and confidently, raising awareness of the errors in the Government's position, the value and vulnerability of Registered parks and gardens, and our concerns about the proposal. For example:

- › The central Gardens Trust team emailed all Members of Parliament (MPs), four times, resulting in an encouraging range of support from different parties. Many CGTs and GT members wrote too, and between us we ensured that MPs are now aware of our vital work.
- › Many of the MPs in turn contacted ministers and ministries, and this helped bring our concerns to the attention of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and to increase their understanding of the value of historic parks and gardens.
- › MPs asked questions in the House of Commons, mainly about what evidence what evidence the Government had for its proposal, with a non-committal response.
- › Daisy Cooper, deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats, tabled an amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, running concurrently with the proposal, to include the Gardens Trust specifically as a statutory consultee. This went to the House of Lords and we successfully gathered several peers to speak on our behalf, although the Bill eventually proceeded without our amendment.
- › We also built a network of over 20 important and demonstrably supportive organisations, with the result that the Gardens Trust website now includes letters of support from organisations including the National Trust, Historic Houses, Landscape Institute, Horticultural Trades Association, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, and the Parks Management Association, and many more besides.

› Thanks largely to the Fighting Fund that many members generously contributed to, we were also able to commission professional PR support, resulting amongst many things in articles in the *Daily Express*, *Country Life*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Financial Times*, interviews on Sky News and local radio stations, and the HortWeek and Roots and All podcast. This coverage is estimated to have reached 50 million people.

› And of course, we built relationships with the key Government departments – DCMS, and the one heading the proposals, MHCLG. We have met extensively with key civil servants at both departments, including taking them on site visits to Grade II Registered parks and gardens. We also met with the Heritage Minister, Baroness Twycross; Shadow Secretary of State for DCMS, Nigel Huddleston; Shadow Minister for DCMS, Louie French; and Shadow Minister for Housing, David Simmonds.

As part of rebutting the Government's proposal, we produced various data to demonstrate that we are not 'blockers' to development, and that our role is important.

For example, in 2024/25:

- › The Gardens Trust received 1,842 statutory consultations. These can be broken down as follows:
 - Grade I: 345 (19%)
 - Grade II*: 531 (29%)
 - Grade II: 966 (52%)
- › The Gardens Trust made 1,289 responses, of which 372 were detailed responses providing expert advice (and not objecting). The discrepancy between the number of consultations received and responded to reflects the large number of Listed Building Consent applications referred to the Gardens Trust in error. Only 85 of the responses were objections (6.6% of the total responses).
- › The volunteer contribution to this work has a value of £200,840. The cost of all local planning authorities having to deliver this service themselves without the Gardens Trust is estimated at £3,692,846 per annum. In 2024/25, the Gardens Trust received a grant of £43,963 from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to deliver its statutory consultee role.

In November the consultation was launched and within nine days the Gardens Trust submitted and published a detailed evidence-based response, encouraging our network of supporters to do similarly.

Our response included:

- › Emphasising that the statutory consultation requirement is an important provision within the limited protections that registered parks and gardens have. Removing that is directly damaging, by reducing specialist input to the consideration of planning proposals, and indirectly damaging, by signalling that parks and gardens are being ‘downgraded’ as heritage assets.
- › Grave concern for the future of Grade II registered parks and gardens (64.7% of all 1,700 registered parks and gardens).
- › Contesting the proposal to notify rather than consult the Gardens Trust. This misguided and clumsy attempt to align registered parks and gardens with listed buildings instead places them with lower protection because listed buildings are subject to greater protection, including:
 - statutory duties for local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting in the consideration of applications for both listed building consent and planning permission
 - a dedicated consent regime: listed building consent is required for works which would affect the character of a listed building
 - identification of failure to obtain listed building consent where needed as a criminal offence.
- › Contesting the proposal to notify the Gardens Trust only on applications within the registered boundary, thus removing protection for the setting of parks and gardens, which can be key to the significance of sites.
- › Local planning authorities (LPAs) do not have the expertise to handle park and garden casework without guaranteed specialist input. The cost of all local planning authorities having to deliver the service currently provided by the Gardens Trust themselves is estimated at £3,692,846 per annum. (In 2024/25, the Gardens Trust received a grant of £43,963 from the DCMS to deliver its statutory consultee role.)

› The disparity in the protection of registered parks and gardens compared with listed buildings (both of which heritage assets are statutory designations, and of ‘special interest’) could be addressed in part by the commencement of section 102 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. This would introduce a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing registered parks or gardens or their setting. This is noted as a possibility in the consultation document and is strongly sought by the Gardens Trust.

› The Gardens Trust response can be read at:
thegardenstrust.org/support-us/consultation

The impact of the Government consultation is difficult to summarise.

At the end of 2025 we do not yet know the results of the consultation or the Government’s conclusion. The impact on our role as a statutory consultee and, more importantly, for the protection of Registered parks and gardens could be devastating. But there is always a silver lining. In our campaigning around the proposal the Gardens Trust has benefitted from an unprecedented platform to share awareness of our work and the role of historic parks and gardens. As a team of GT members, supporters and County Gardens Trusts we have been brought together in the most powerful way to work for a common cause.

AWARENESS RAISING

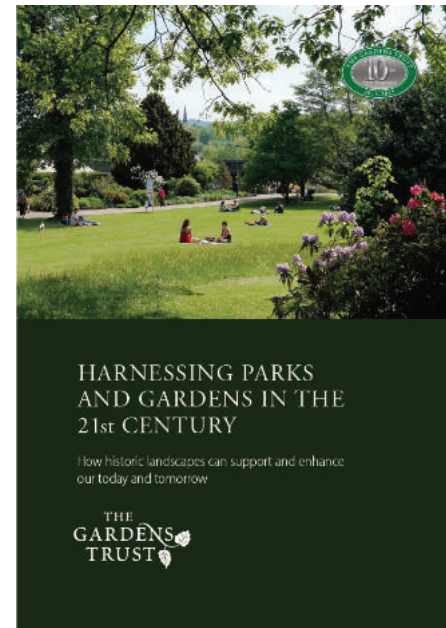
In October we published a report *Harnessing Parks and Gardens in the 21st Century: How historic landscapes can support and enhance our today and tomorrow*, in order to champion the crucial role parks and gardens have in creating and supporting a happy, healthy and prosperous society.

The report emphasises that:

- › parks and gardens are at the heart of our communities and national story but are often taken for granted or undervalued;
- › these historic designed landscapes have a key role in meeting the challenges of today, particularly the need for growth and housing while not sacrificing the health of communities;
- › historic parks and gardens have a critical role to play in nature recovery and helping combat the effects of climate change, by providing established habitats and being highly effective for carbon capture and sequestration.

It calls for help with achieving our aims of:

- › celebrating that we are a nation of gardens and gardeners, recognised and admired across the world;
- › better recognition and protection for our historic legacy of parks and gardens, by improving control and consents and aligning their treatment with other heritage assets;
- › increased awareness that thousands of high-quality parks, gardens and other designed landscapes already exist and require skilled maintenance and management;
- › investment in the conservation and care of historic green spaces, so that they can continue to support communities for generations to come;
- › improving the quantity and quality of expertise available to local planning authorities in historic designed landscapes, through improved training of conservation officers, planning teams and better-connected external advice;
- › new guidance and investment to ensure that historic designed landscapes can be harnessed to fulfil their potential in addressing key challenges of our time such as communities' health and wellbeing, social cohesion, climate change and nature recovery;



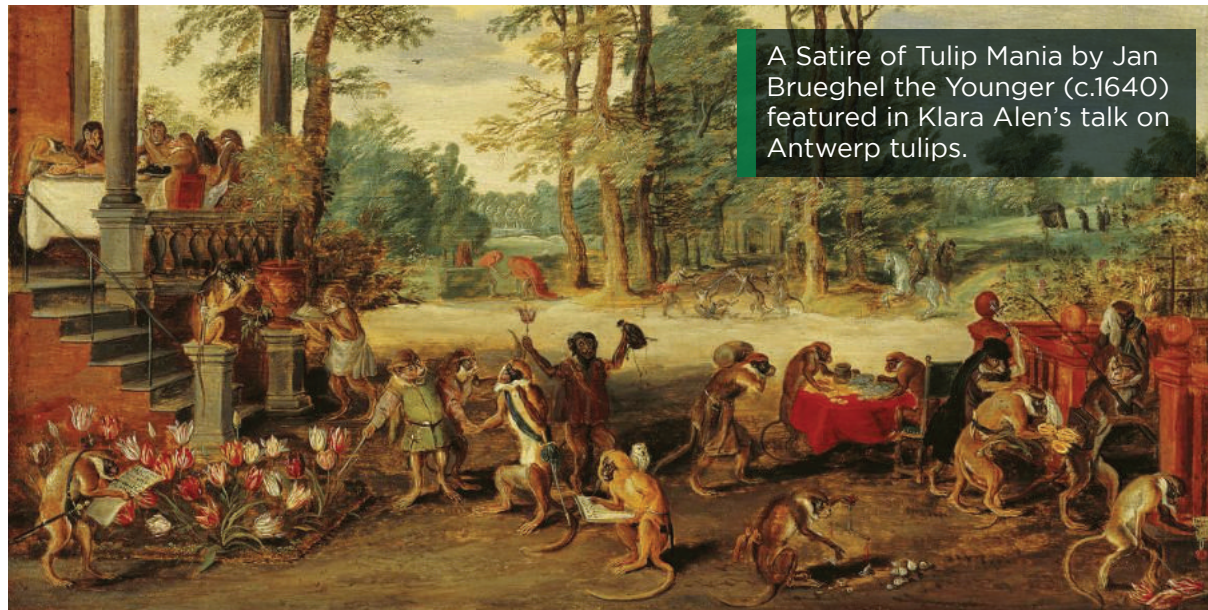
- › a more holistic and joined-up role for the Gardens Trust, stretching beyond our work commenting on planning applications, enabling our expertise to fully support positive development, economic growth and conserving our green heritage for future generations.



A press release accompanied the report launch and resulting coverage in national publications such as *The iPaper*, *The Daily Express* and *The Spectator*, local newspapers and the Independent Radio News via the Press Association reached 40,100,000 people, with an Advertising Value Equivalent of £287,500. A link to the report was sent to all MPs and 113 key stakeholders, from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to Historic England, to Natural England, and we were delighted to host influential sector leaders at the launch event, at Red Cross Gardens in Southwark. A free copy can be downloaded at:

thegardenstrust.org/resources/parks-gardens-21st-century/

RESEARCH AND LEARNING



A Satire of Tulip Mania by Jan Brueghel the Younger (c.1640) featured in Klara Alen's talk on Antwerp tulips.

Public domain

New Research Symposium

The Gardens Trust New Research Symposium is an annual opportunity to share new and unpublished interdisciplinary research relating to garden history. It is open to all researchers and scholars, regardless of whether they are attached to an academic institution, and we welcome submissions from international scholars as well as those based in the UK. The 2025 New Research Symposium speakers were: Klara Alen, Curator of Rubens' garden, who obtained her PhD in art history in 2017, on tulipmania in 1630s Antwerp; Malcolm Cossons, writer and editor with an MA in Imperial and Post-Colonial History, on Lady Eggar's book *An Indian Garden* published in 1904, and the Alipore garden that she created; Abby Chandler, Associate Professor of Early American History at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, on the novels of LM Montgomery (best known for *Anne of Green Gables*) as a historical source on gardens from the first decades of the 20th century.

There was due to be a talk by Boryana Ivanova, an MSt Building History student at the University of Cambridge, on three war-damaged churches in the City of London transformed into unofficial memorial gardens. Unfortunately this had to be postponed so we are finding other ways of sharing her research.

The New Research Symposium is run as a free event in order to support the academic community. In 2025 almost 200 people joined us for the symposium from 16 different countries.

A full list of researchers featured and topics covered in the symposia since its start in 2013 is available at: thegardenstrust.org/new-research-symposium/

Mavis Batey Essay Prize

The Gardens Trust annual essay competition is to encourage vibrant, scholarly writing and new research, especially by those who have not yet had their work published.

It is open to any recent student, worldwide.

2025 saw a particularly strong field of entries but the panel chose as winner 'Gardenesque Urbanism: John Claudius Loudon's Metropolitan "Breathing Places"'. The essay's discussion of the reconciliation of urban growth with the innate human affinity for open space is particularly apt at a time when parks and gardens have an important role to play in supporting positive new built development. Its author, Patrick Smith, graduated in 2025 from the University of Cambridge having studied architecture and is now working for an architect's practice.

Two further essays were highly commended by the panel, and their authors have been invited to submit them for publication in *Garden History*. Peter Williams, a PhD student at the Liverpool School of Architecture, wrote on 'The Lost Landscapes of Trawsfynydd: Landscape Conservation in Conflict', and Kari Traylor, an MPhil graduate of the University of Cambridge, on 'Slave Gardens, Food, Production, and Power in Colonial Barbados, 1800-1833'.

thegardenstrust.org/what-we-do/prize/



Patrick Smith, winner of the 2025 Mavis Batey Essay Prize.

"I am honoured to receive the Mavis Batey Essay Prize from the Gardens Trust, especially given Batey's tireless commitment to the preservation of parks and gardens."

The subject of my essay – John Claudius Loudon – also, in the early 19th century, defended common land and called for the establishment of public parks.

I hope that my analysis of his prescient work might contribute to our understanding of parks' reformist origins, and that others may be inspired by Loudon's rationality, optimism and farsightedness."

Patrick Smith

Garden History journal

Under Dr Barbara Simms' editorship, the *Garden History* journal published a range of papers furthering understanding of garden history.

Papers in 2025 were:

- › *The Design of the First Duke of Chandos's Grounds at Canons, 1713-25*, **Katherine Myers**
- › *The Sculpture Garden at Denham Place*, **Struan Bates**
- › *Thomas Haverfield (1747-1804): royal gardener at Hampton Court*, **Diane Clements**
- › *The Skill and Natural Taste in Ornamental Gardening of Mr Shanley (fl. 1770-85)*, **Patrick Bowe**
- › *The Enigmatic Mr Forrest (1792-1870)*, **Elizabeth Taylor**
- › *The Botanical Painted Panelling at Bramshill, Hampshire: New Insights*, **Ann Benson**
- › *'The environs are finishing in a manner equal to the building': a continuing account of the history and development of Kedleston Hall, its park and its designed landscape, in the third quarter of the eighteenth century*, **Christopher Gallagher**
- › *Planting and gardening at Canons 1713-1747*, **Katy Myers**
- › *Reggie Cooper (1885-1965), Restorer of Houses and Maker of Gardens*, **Helen Langley**
- › *Halswell, Somerset, An Idiosyncratic Landscape: Background, Context and Layout*, **Michael Cousins**
- › *The Filter Approach to Understanding and Restoring Historic Gardens*, **Michael Symes**

Recipients of the *Garden History* journal include 92 libraries, of which 41 are universities, from Columbia in the USA to Tokyo Denki in Japan, to Cardiff in the UK. The journal is also included in the membership of all organisation, individual or joint members.

A full searchable contents list from 1969 to 2025 is at:
thegardenstrust.org/resources/journal/

Garden history at the University of Buckingham

The 2024/25 academic year saw increased enrolment numbers for the MA (Research) in Garden History at the University of Buckingham, a course established and supported by the Gardens Trust.

Topics chosen by our students so far range widely, from colonial gardens of Pakistan, managing living plant collections in Hawaii, and gardens in the writings of Rousseau, to topics closer to home including examining the garden literature for children in the Victorian period, analysis of military influences on 18th century landscape, the role of indoor plants in mid 20th century asylums, the early years of the National Garden Scheme, and analysing postcards for intimations of the role of gender and class in gardens.

Students are drawn from all ages, with a concentration on those who either volunteer for or work within the designed landscape heritage sector, although some are discovering garden history for the first time having arrived via related topics. The Gardens Trust online lectures are an invaluable accompaniment to the course and well-attended by the students. A Research Day highlighting the work of the students was also held at University of Buckingham in November and this will be repeated annually.

www.buckingham.ac.uk/courses/research/ma-garden-history



Credit: Twigs Way.



2015

The Gardens Trust was formed by the merger of two organisations, the Gardens Trust and the Association of Gardens Trusts. The success of the merger was by no means a foregone conclusion, but James Bartos, the first Chair, steered the GT carefully through those early waters, and this stability created the foundations for a decade of achievement.

2017

The beginning of the 'Compiling the Record' project to identify for protection some of the best examples of landscapes designed between the end of the Second World War and the early 1990s. At the culmination, in 2020, Historic England announced 24 resulting new registrations of 20th century designed landscapes, thanks to voluntary contributions from the public, County Gardens Trusts and others. These include Beth Chatto's garden in Colchester; the Kennedy Memorial landscape, Runnymede, Surrey; and Campbell Park in Milton Keynes. All are now Registered Grade II.

2019

The Gardens Trust led the 'Land of the Fanns' research project with Essex Gardens Trust, which was a Lottery-funded project to research and celebrate the former fenland around Upminster. The project trained 15 volunteers, some of whom were already members of EGT, and others who were new to garden history, to research non-designated designed landscapes. This resulted in production of the Fifty Fabulous Features report.

2020

We launched the 'Unforgettable Gardens' campaign to highlight the value of historic parks and gardens, the vulnerabilities they face, and the importance of volunteers. One of the highlights of this was 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.

One of the key achievements of 2020 was keeping the Gardens Trust afloat during the challenges of Covid-19, and supporting the County Gardens Trusts to pull through too. One of the positive legacies of this time was the Gardens Trust quickly offering online events, which has proven to be a game-changer still today.

2022

Launch of the Gardens Trust Community Grant for volunteer projects supporting historic designed landscapes, made possible by the generosity of Gardens Trust members Peter and Rosy Gent.

The Garden History journal celebrated its 50th anniversary. Led by the Gardens Trust Chair at the time, Peter Hughes KC, this was celebrated with a special edition, funded largely by member donations.

2024

Culmination of 'Volunteers Save Space!', which was a project run by our Volunteer Support Officers, who had evolved from the previously named Historic Landscape Project Officers, to support County Gardens Trusts to build their ability to be proactive in the conservation of historic designed landscapes, while also engaging new volunteers from new audiences.

The Gardens Trust was a lead partner in the Capability Brown Festival, a nationwide celebration. This festival was a huge step forward in bringing historic designed landscapes and garden history to wider audiences, and showing how key they are to our national identity.

Also in this year, the Gardens Trust gave evidence at the government inquiry into the state of public parks and produced the campaigning publication *Uncertain Prospects: Public parks in the age of austerity*.

2016

'Celebrating Repton' saw the Gardens Trust lead collaborative celebrations to mark the bicentenary of Humphry Repton's death.

Building on this, we ran a Lottery-funded project called 'Sharing Repton: Historic Landscapes for All', which ran until early 2020. It used Repton as a hook to pilot Five achievable activities that offer ways of engaging new types of people to historic parks and gardens and garden history, with opportunities for others to learn from our experiences, including publishing all the pilot materials and case studies online.

2018

£1.5m in government funding was awarded to 22 local authorities so that they could create, improve or expand their Local Lists. Ten CGTs got involved and worked with local authorities, some of which were unused to the idea of including landscapes in Local Lists.

2021

The Gardens Trust launched an MA in Garden History, and PhD, at the University of Buckingham.

The 'Suffolk's Unforgettable Garden Story' project, run with Suffolk Gardens Trust, recruited volunteers and trained them to research and record historic designed landscapes.

2023



The Gardens Trust's first decade
2015 - 2025 highlights.

REACHING COMMUNITIES

The Gardens Trust Community Grant

The projects which benefited from a GT Community Grant in 2025 are:

- › Your Park Bristol and Bath, supporting the reintroduction and enhancement of sustainable natural habitats in Bath's green spaces at scale with volunteers, to boost the City's biodiversity. (£1,025)
- › The Warneford 200 Gardening Group (Oxford), recreating an early 19th century asylum garden and the creation of the Warneford Walk in the hospital grounds. (£1,025)
- › Broomhill Community Trust (Sheffield), restoring gardens designed by the internationally renowned garden designer Percy Cane. (£2,400)
- › Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust (Bristol), helping continue the upkeep and restore the Grade II* listed cemetery, including parts of the original Arcadian Victorian cemetery designed by Charles Underwood. (£1,544)



A wildflower meadow at Arnos Vale Cemetery.

Credit: Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust.

Update from the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust:

The grant has enabled us to continue to welcome and expand our team of landscape volunteers, whose contribution is integral to the conservation of this cherished heritage site. Set against a challenging financial landscape, our reliance on volunteers to contribute to the smooth running of the estate, is now more essential than ever.

The tools and equipment we were able to purchase with your grant are being used three times a week by volunteer groups that go out on site, in all weathers on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. They help to manage the grassland areas, so that native wildflowers and pollinators can thrive, keep paths clear, process fallen wood, compost green waste, tend raised beds in the community garden and help to locate and tidy graves for families whose loved ones are buried here.

The tools are also being used by visiting groups we host for varied landscape and learning activities.

Over the last year, your grant has directly supported:

- › 4,464 hours of hands-on conservation caring for meadow, grassland and woodland habitats.
- › 109 metres of English yew hedging planted around the Garden of Remembrance, providing a new habitat for nature to thrive.
- › The spread of areas of native wildflowers, with evidence this summer of field scabious appearing in new areas of the site.
- › Participation of young people in a pilot Conservation Skills programme.
- › Corporate volunteering sessions with a local architects' practice who cleared brambles and scrub from a previously overgrown area of graves over a series of sessions during the winter.
- › A hosted woodland session with Ashley Community Housing, a refugee integration and support organisation, to share skills on managing ash die-back, helping them to manage an area of their own land affected by the same issue.

For many local people, volunteering at Arnos Vale Cemetery offers a space to connect with nature, with others, and with themselves. As one regular volunteer recently shared:

"Since finding out about my friend Phil's diagnosis of Early Onset Dementia, we've really benefited from volunteering at Arnos Vale. It has given us a regular opportunity to spend time together, and as Phil's condition has deteriorated the sessions give him a really important connection with the world outside."

Stu, regular volunteer, June 2025

We look forward to seeing work by the recipients of the GT Community Grants awarded in autumn 2025, which are Friends of Palmeira & Adelaide Residents' Association, Hove; Lowestoft North Cliff Community Garden, Suffolk; Saltburn Valleys CIO, Tyne; Friends of Broomfield Park, London; and Oxfordshire Gardens Trust.

We are delighted to be able to offer this grant again in 2026, with an increased total grant pot of £10,000, thanks to the generosity of Gardens Trust members Peter and Rosy Gent.

thegardenstrust.org/community-grant/

RAISING AWARENESS

Social media

News of the potential removal of our statutory consultee role was a main driver of our social media in 2025 and provided a bittersweet opportunity to communicate our work more, and to more people. Here are some highlights from across our platforms in 2025:

Facebook

177 new followers
Our posts have been viewed more than 65,000 times



Instagram

438 new followers



LinkedIn

612 new followers
Posts so far have been viewed more than 22,000 times



YouTube

122 subscribers
Videos have had over 2,400 views



Garden History Storytellers

This year as part of a Historic England funded project, we launched a new Instagram account [@gardenhistorystorytellers](#), aimed at providing a platform for volunteers to share stories about historic green spaces.

We will be continuing to invite our audiences to contribute to this account which will help us to share our love and appreciation of historic parks and gardens with a wider and younger audience. So far these videos have been viewed more than 2,500 times.



Knolls Wood, Bedfordshire.

Credit: © Rudonipphoto.com

Knolls Wood, Bedfordshire. We have been fortunate to benefit from the generosity of photographer James Rudoni, who has taken photographs and videos of historic landscapes impacted by development to be part of a Fragile Landscapes theme shared on social media in late 2025.



The Gardens Trust's *Unforgettable Gardens* book as part of a display in the shop at Wicksteed Park.

Credit: Linden Groves.

We're thrilled that the ***Unforgettable Gardens*** book continues to do well, helping share our enthusiasm and knowledge around garden history and historic parks and gardens. Sales since publication in November 2024 have been UK 1425, US 938, and Australia and New Zealand 285, and it's also proven to be a useful gift as we meet with key decision-makers.

GT magazine

For the 10th anniversary year the *GT News* was relaunched into the *GT magazine*, a modern, accessible magazine format edited by volunteer Charlotte Casella. This will enable us to ensure that we can communicate key messages in a way that is engaging and appealing to as many people as possible.

To complement the *GT magazine* for members, we also have an eBulletin covering sector highlights, also edited by Charlotte Casella, which goes out monthly to over 2200 readers, with a special edition for non-GT members.

Garden History Hub

During the year, a team of dedicated volunteers have written more than 30 short, lively articles on garden history for our new Garden History Hub, due to be launched in Spring 2026. Their varied voices and interests will make this new resource the place to go for anyone curious about the history of horticulture, landscape design and gardens.

With set-up funding from Historic England, the Hub will help us reach new audiences while showcasing our rich heritage of parks, gardens and designed landscapes. Readers can discover articles on a range of topics including: a unique living library of heritage vegetables; secret government experiments in plant electrification; surprising theories that shaped historic garden design; how a humble garden tool began life as a weapon of war; and more.



Georgina Robinson, one of the volunteer contributors to the Garden History Hub.

The Garden History Hub's structure encourages exploration through linked topics, periods, people and authors, and will not only improve people's access to garden history but also and boost the Gardens Trust's appearance in online searches, something which will help us hugely in connecting with more people online.

Meeting the public!

We've had more 1000 conversations with the public at events including: the Historic Buildings, Parks and Gardens event in Westminster, History Day at Senate House Library in London, the London Marathon (where we cheered on Linden Groves and our four other amazing runners), Spetchley Plant Fair in Worcestershire, the Gardens and Empires conference at the British Library, the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show, Belvoir Flower Show in Leicestershire, English Heritage's inaugural Eltham Plant Fair, Gardeners World Autumn Fair at Audley End and a Heritage Open Day in Portsmouth.

Made possible by the mammoth effort of staff and volunteers along with support from Historic England, we've learned a lot about what persuades people to support us and what we can offer to attract a new generation of park and garden history champions. By attending a record amount of events in a single year, we've been able to increase sales of our *Unforgettable Gardens* book and encouraged more people to join us to help fight for the survival of vital green spaces.

World-leading events

In 2025 we ran over 82 events (online and in person), or over 100 if including reruns. Over 10,000 tickets were booked by attendees from across the globe, including over 2,500 free places.

In-person events this year included successful members-only trips to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to view two collections not usually open to the public: the magnificent archive and library of the Linnean Society in central London; and the Windsor Castle Print Room and Library for an exclusive viewing of natural history illustrations in the Royal Collection. Members were also treated to an eight-day study trip to visit gardens in the south of Ireland, based around the historic towns of Waterford, Cork and Bantry.

In addition, we partnered with the Garden Museum for an introductory course, held over four Saturdays, 'Looking at Historic Landscapes and Gardens', and for a celebration of the launch of the Nesfield Archive, which was acquired by the museum in late 2024 (followed up by an online series on Nesfield's work). Our annual Oxford study weekend, organised in partnership with Oxford University and the Twentieth Century Society, examined twentieth century gardens.

Online, highlights included popular series looking at gardens visually ('Gardens on Film', 'Artists' Gardens'), exploring plant history ('Plantmania', 'Craze for Collecting'), hearing absent voices ('Twentieth Century Women in Landscape Design', 'Queer Gardens'), and looking at the role of parks and gardens in recreation ('Places to Play'). We completed our six-series introductory course 'A

History of Gardens', which began in April 2024, and offered further access to the recordings for those who missed the talks first time round. Our offerings for 2025 were completed with an in-depth look at 'Building the 18th-Century Garden', a survey of 'Yorkshire's Designed Landscapes', and a virtual tour of some of regular speakers' 'Favourite Gardens'.

Alongside our regular online programme, we piloted two mini-series of free lunchtime sessions, designed to attract new audiences to our work. These both focused on the wellbeing benefits of parks and gardens, with one exploring biodiversity ('How Can We Make Our Gardens Greener?') and the other ways of celebrating parks and gardens in creative art ('Sketch and Scribe').

Our events programme is designed both to spread the word about the history of gardens and to raise funds for our work - and this year ticket sales contributed over £37,834 to the cause. Thank you to everyone who has participated.

Historic Landscapes Assembly

In April 2025 the national Historic Landscapes Assembly focused on parks and gardens in the planning system, and interest in our role at this was gratifying. There were 119 attendees, both in person and online, from organisations including the Cabinet Office, DCMS, Historic England, local authorities, and landscape, heritage or planning consultancies.



Panel discussion at the Historic Landscapes Assembly 2025, which was on parks and gardens in the planning system.

Credit: Daniel Bowles.

Audience comments on our events

"I really enjoyed the talks; it was a relaxed, informal way to add some more knowledge that will help me with my work, in a stress-free way."

"Outstanding series both rigorously academic and entertaining."

"I enjoyed being presented with more in-depth, researched information and analysis on subjects of interest than is generally available or easily accessible in book or other written form."

"I've listened to all five series of A History of Gardens (and transcribed them, taking about 5 hours/lecture!) and feel that I have had an academic course in Garden History."

"Really enjoyable accessible content. I intend to join the Gardens Trust."

"I'm interested in garden history and thinking of joining a sustainable garden project."

"An excellent series, both for the expert and the interested amateur."

"I enjoyed hearing all the stories about women in landscape, some I was aware of and others I wasn't and that is despite having studied landscape design and management at Masters level."

'This was an excellent, thought provoking series of lectures.'



Thanks to the sponsors of the first five series of A History of Gardens.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Green Futures

2025 took us halfway through our two-year, Historic England-supported 'Green Futures: Gardens and NSIPs' project. Forty volunteers in the East of England were recruited and trained and have started their own research into historic designed landscapes that may be affected by NSIPs - large-scale infrastructure projects like solar farms, reservoirs, windfarms and railways - which are considered crucial for our national stability and climate resilience. These include the Norwich to Tilbury National Grid upgrade, East-West Rail, the Lincolnshire and Fens Reservoirs and solar farms including Drove and Kingsway.

The online training - a significant new bundle including understanding setting and significance and how to research and record landscapes - is now freely available, via: thegardenstrust.org/resources/vs-hub/research-recording/green-futures-project/. In addition, the volunteers have attended in-person visits to their local county archives and have enjoyed a group meet-up at the Food Museum, Stowmarket, where they explored the landscape of Abbot's Hall. Feedback from the meet-up included "plenty to learn... look forward to putting it into practice" and "nice to feel valued as a volunteer".

Green Futures will result in new research on around 50 non-designated historic designed landscapes, including analysis of the various ways in which they are significant. This research will be immediately accessible to those developing NSIPs and to planners and consultees working to protect historic parks and gardens in their vicinity, via the Historic Environment Record. It will also result in a new and enthusiastic group of trained research volunteers, researching and supporting our fabulous historic parks and gardens into the future.



Learning to pace exactly one metre! Green Futures volunteers practised their measuring skills ready to use on their park and garden recording visits.

Regional research training days

Thanks to grants from the Worshipful Company of Gardeners and the Finnis Scott Foundation, we were able to take our research and recording training around the country in 2025. We invited applications from County Gardens Trusts whose research groups would benefit from training and new members, and sessions were awarded to Avon and Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire Gardens Trusts.



Credit: Tamsin McMillan.

The first session was hosted by Oxfordshire Gardens Trust (OGT), in November, at Banbury Museum. Our Project Volunteer Support Officer, Sally Bate, led 14 attendees through a full and fun day of garden detective work, using a wide variety of historic source materials to piece together the history of Banbury's People's Park, followed by a site visit to check what remains today.

All of the attendees were new to garden history research and eight signed up immediately to start researching with OGT. Comments from attendees included "Congrats to all for putting together an interesting and rewarding day" and "Really exciting possibility for personal development". A member of OGT's committee said "Your day was absolutely brilliant, helping us get off to a good start."

Sessions in Bristol and Northamptonshire will be held early in 2026. We hope to be able to offer this in-person training on a regular basis, funding allowing. It's a great opportunity for CGTs to not only train their existing members, but also to engage new people in their work and reinvigorate research.



Support for County Gardens Trusts

County Gardens Trusts, and the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, are key to our work and we support them wherever possible. In October 2025 the Gardens Trust Chair was delighted to attend the AGM of the newly formed Avon and Gloucestershire Gardens Trust, formed from the merger of two separate County Gardens Trusts (CGTs).

The following month, our Director Linden Groves spoke at Derbyshire Gardens Trust's AGM, pleased to support work to boost one of the smallest CGTs. Many CGTs are thriving, but sadly many are struggling and facing difficult decisions around their future. We would like the Gardens Trust to be able to offer more tangible help so that CGTs can survive and thrive. Thanks to a grant from Historic England, in 2025 we were able to deliver a scoping report into the GT-CGT relationship, to identify the help that CGTs need and explore ways in which the Gardens Trust could provide it in a sustainable way, reducing duplication and gaps in our working, and clarifying the relationship between the different organisations.

In January we carried out a survey with all CGTs covering questions around difficulties, capacity and strategic planning and over the spring held nine regional meetings. This resulted in significant learning around the challenges facing the CGTs, their ability to address them, and their experience of the relationship with the Gardens Trust. We distilled ideas emerging from discussions into an array of possible ideas for the relationship between the Gardens Trust and CGTs, ranging from better networking and shared guidance to refreshed membership models, and discussed these at national Chairs' Meet-Ups in March and June, continuing to receive feedback over the summer, which we shared at another Chairs' Meet-Up in November. It was concluded that we will design a multi-year project to:

- › formalise CGTs' involvement in Gardens Trust governance;
- › provide better templates and guidance with fit-for-purpose sharing mechanisms;
- › facilitate more routine and sustainable networking between CGTs and Gardens Trust;
- › examine and potentially implement what would be needed to provide a model for a CGT to merge with the Gardens Trust for the CGT which would like to do that, to provide a safe harbour for those struggling to remain independent and ensure all counties still have an identifiable local group in some form (which may also enable the GT to take on back-office functions for anyone struggling but still wanting to remain a CGT).

We will also need to determine how to pay for this in a sustainable and ongoing way so that CGTs can be secure in the support that the Gardens Trust can provide. The next step will be to find funding to deliver this project.



For well over a decade our work with volunteers has been supported by a series of national project grants from Historic England.

Last year this sequence came to an end, and though Historic England have generously supported locally-based volunteer projects since then, we have struggled to address the national gap. We are working hard to find a resolution, because our work with volunteers is core to delivery of our aims, and as such deserves core ongoing funding.

In the meantime, financial support from membership subscriptions and other has been absolutely vital – **thank you.**

We're also grateful to the Swires Charitable Trust for its help with our ongoing volunteer support commitments.

SWIRE
CHARITABLE
TRUST

The County Gardens Trusts are always productive!

Here are some examples from 2025:

Following on from the success of a joint Heritage Open Day with the Gardens Trust, this year **Cheshire Gardens Trust** organised a walk in Verdin Park, which salt magnate Robert Verdin gave to Northwich for a hospital, park and brine baths. Heritage Open Days are excellent opportunities for County Gardens Trusts to share their love and knowledge of historic designed landscapes with new audiences and we're delighted that many CGTs get involved with the scheme each year.

Essex Gardens Trust have successfully completed their eighth Inventory of Designed Landscapes, for the City of Southend-on-Sea. The document provides a comprehensive account of the history and current condition of 14 historic green locations in the city – a diverse collection including public parks, cemeteries, remnants of a tramway and an orchard.

The **Hertfordshire Gardens Trust** Walled Gardens Research Group, only formed last year, have pored over all the 1898 OS maps of Hertfordshire to find clues for the existence of any walled gardens and discovered a staggering 400 at this time. The group are now embarking on more detailed research to discover when individual gardens may have been created and how long they lasted. Volunteer research projects like this are crucial in identifying overlooked historic parks and gardens and sharing this knowledge helps to safeguard them for the future.

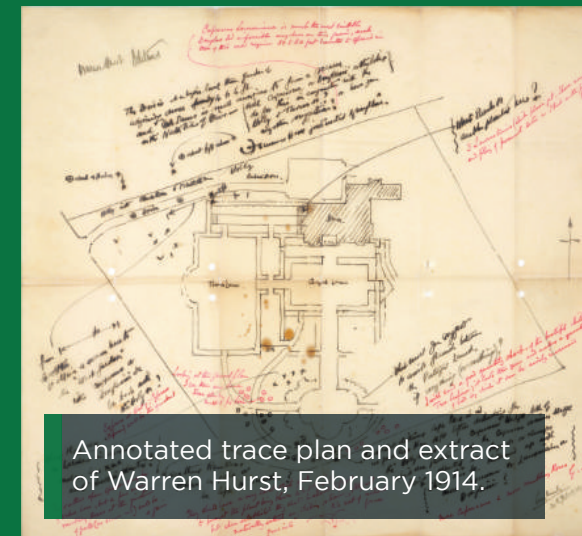
London Parks and Gardens' decade-long campaign continues to safeguard Victoria Tower Gardens, a Grade II registered park next to the Palace of Westminster, for future generations. In July, delegates at a UNESCO meeting in Paris backed their stance, including alternative options, such as a compromise proposal of a suitably scaled memorial in the park and for the Learning Centre to be built at another more suitable location.

Continuing their fantastic work in outreach and education, **Norfolk Gardens Trust** partnered with the Royal Norfolk Show's School Gardens Competition this June, giving every school entry £30 to help build and plant their exhibit. They also arranged an NGT's People's Choice Award, asking over 1300 members of the public to choose their favourite show garden. They visited the winners, PCT Educational Services in Great Yarmouth, to award an engraved silver trowel and cheque. The school plans to build an allotment to allow its students to gain horticultural skills. NGT have also awarded small grants to an additional 14 schools and community groups this year.



Funded by
UK Government

Thanks to **Surrey Gardens Trust**, two long-lost drawings by famous garden designer Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) have been rediscovered and gifted to the Surrey History Centre for public benefit. The 1914 design and planting plans for Warren Hurst, Ashted, were rediscovered in the house after they had been missing for decades. SGT was instrumental in their conservation – recognising them as rare survivals important to the historic record and requiring professional preservation.



Credit: Kind permission Surrey History.

At the Grade II* landscape of Plumpton Place, Sussex Gardens Trust have been working with the applicant since 2020 on a Concept Design for landscaping changes. SGT were able to provide information on the sensitivities of the site and how changes could be incorporated sympathetically into the designed landscape, which includes work by Lutyens as well as earlier phases. This is a wonderful example of how CGTs' specialist knowledge can be called upon to ensure that development can coexist comfortably with the historic design.

Sutton Lawn research project in Nottinghamshire

We've been working with Mill Waters, Nottinghamshire, on their NLHF-funded Next Steps project, which aims to better understand, protect, and interpret for the public the heritage and nature of Mill Waters, which are the reservoirs along the River Maun. Our part in this – the Landscape and Living Memory Project – brought together a small group of volunteers to research their local public park, Sutton Lawn.



Volunteers on our Sutton Lawn Landscape and Living Memories Project enjoying scrutinising the old maps available at Sutton Library.

Once the 18th century home of a wealthy textile manufacturer whose water and wind-powered mill stood by what is now the park's lake, Sutton Lawn has, since 1903, been a busy and much-loved park. As well as researching its history, the volunteers have been collecting people's memories of their visits. In July, in a multi-generational session, four young students from Sutton Lawn Academy, in partnership with ATTFF College and Takeover Radio DJ Ken Mead, interviewed older people to find out what makes the park special to them. We heard tales of the legendary monkey run, the old lido and bandstand and even the time that suffragettes planted an explosive device meant for the Prime Minister. These stories have now been made into a short film for Mill Waters' website.

This project, which will result in a research report feeding into a walking leaflet and book, has been a great way to engage with local people of all ages and backgrounds who are passionate about their park.

We are pleased to again be featured in The Historic Environment Overview, which is part of Heritage Counts, the annual audit of England's heritage, this year focussing on our work with volunteers.

historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/historic-environment-overview

Volunteer Awards

The Gardens Trust's Volunteer Award is given to celebrate volunteers and recognise the value of volunteering; showcase volunteers and the contribution they make; and encourage volunteering through a variety of roles.

The winner of the 2025 Volunteer Award was Sandra Pullen, who volunteers for the national Gardens Trust and has been a major player in the events programme over the last two years. Her nominator said: 'Sandra's volunteering over the past two years has been at the heart of our education work – devising, organising and evaluating a range of varied, high-quality and well-received activities for members and non-members and adding to our reputation as a leading authority on historic gardens. In addition, Sandra's work has helped produce high satisfaction levels with our members and has also contributed several thousand pounds to our

coffers through carefully managed ticket-pricing and accounting.' Sandra was presented with a certificate and glass trophy at the annual Volunteering Celebration held in July at Stowe Landscape Gardens. She commented: "I'm absolutely delighted, thrilled, that the Gardens Trust have offered me this award, although to be honest I do feel I've got far more from it than I've given back. I would thoroughly recommend to anybody to volunteer for the Gardens Trust, they'll really enjoy it."



Volunteer Award winner Sandra Pullen (left), being presented her award by Lisa Watson.



Zhixin Zheng, recipient of the Newcomer Award.

An award for Exceptional Contribution was presented to Colin Wing, who volunteers for London Parks & Gardens. He was nominated for being their in-house tech guru, including for fundraising and membership systems, as well as also organising and running cycle tours.

As part of the 10th anniversary celebration, 2025 saw the launch of additional categories, one looking back to long service, and one supporting stars of the future. The winners of the new Long-service award were Diana Matthews (Cumbria Gardens Trust), Marion Blair (London Parks & Gardens), Clare Greener (Devon Gardens Trust) and Jim Stockwell (Sussex Gardens Trust). The Newcomer Award is to recognise volunteers who, although relatively new to the subject, throw themselves into action and make a quick impact. We were delighted to present this new award to Zhixin Zheng, who was nominated for giving support to the Gardens Trust Events team, from helping find new audiences, to building relationships with similar organisations, to generating promotional social media content. Heartfelt Commendations saw certificates presented to India Cole (national Gardens Trust) and Annette Fettes (Kent Gardens Trust).

FUNDRAISING

In 2025, our fundraising work entered a new phase of growth, urgency and diversification. Building on the foundations laid in previous years, we strengthened our supporter base, expanded our income streams and rallied our community at a moment of significant national challenge.

Patrons Scheme

Our Patrons Scheme continued to grow steadily, with 22 committed supporters now championing our work. Their generosity provides us with a reliable source of unrestricted income and a growing network of advocates who care deeply about the future of our historic landscapes.

London Marathon Success

For the first time, the Gardens Trust took part in the London Marathon. Our five inaugural runners raised an impressive £12,886, a fantastic achievement for a first year of participation, and it was a great way to raise our profile too, including with a 'cheer station' en route. Looking ahead, we have secured nine marathon places for 2026 and aim to increase income from this programme to £22,500, widening public engagement and broadening our fundraising potential.



The Gardens Trust 'cheer stand' getting attention on the London Marathon route.

New Grant Funding

We were delighted to receive £3,000 from Archives Revealed, a fund we had not previously worked with.

Their Scoping Grant, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Wolfson Foundation and The National Archives, enabled us to commission an independent consultant to produce a professional scoping report on the Gardens Trust archives. The next step is to assess the research value of our holdings and the ultimate goal is to make items of interest readily accessible to researchers in future.



Consultant archivist Claire Scales investigates the Gardens Trust's own archives, with Trustee Jill Sinclair.

Credit: Linden Groves.

The Fighting Fund Appeal

A major focus of our fundraising year was the urgent need to respond to the Government's announcement in March that the Gardens Trust may lose its status as a statutory consultee in the English planning system.

We quickly launched the Fighting Fund Appeal, asking supporters to help us raise £10,000 to strengthen our advocacy, commission legal and expert advice, enhance our public campaign, and ensure we could act swiftly and decisively. The response was extraordinary. Thanks to the generosity and passion of our supporters, the appeal raised £26,059.95 – more than double the target. This exceptional level of support has enabled us to take rapid, coordinated action in defence of our role and the historic landscapes we champion.

Together, these achievements reflect a year in which our community stepped forward with remarkable commitment, helping to secure the resilience and impact of the Gardens Trust at a critical moment, and we are deeply grateful for their support.

Thank you to our Patrons for their generosity in supporting the Gardens Trust's work.

Ms Helen R Auty
Dr James Bartos
The Duchess of Bedford
Mr Richard Broyd CBE
The Duke of Devonshire
Mrs Sarah Dickinson
Mr Peter Gent
Lady Hart of Chilton
Mrs Caroline Holmes
Mrs Barbie Moul

Dr Adam Naylor
Ms Helen Payne
Sir Hugh Roberts
Caroline Scaramanga
Jill Sinclair
Mr Mark Sinclair
Mr Martin Stern
Mr Michael Symes
Mrs Gillian Taylor

Support the Gardens Trust:

Help Protect Our Historic Gardens and Landscapes

The Gardens Trust works tirelessly to conserve and promote the rich heritage of gardens and landscapes across England. By supporting us, you'll help protect these vital spaces for future generations, ensuring they remain places of beauty, history, and community. With your help, we can continue our vital work, from championing historic gardens to delivering education and conservation programmes.

How You Can Make a Difference

There are many ways to support the Gardens Trust and become part of our mission:

Become a Member: Join a network of passionate garden history lovers and enjoy exclusive benefits while supporting our work.

Make a Donation: Every contribution, big or small, helps us continue our important work.

Become a Patron: Patrons are key supporters who enjoy tailored benefits and closer involvement in our projects.

Leave a Legacy: By leaving a gift in your will, you can help protect our shared heritage for future generations.

How to Donate or Get Involved

Donate Online: Visit thegardenstrust.org/donate

By Post: Send a cheque payable to the Gardens Trust to:
The Gardens Trust, 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ

Discuss Your Options: For information on becoming a Patron or leaving a gift in your will, contact our Fundraising Development Officer at:
tara.tanjga@thegardenstrust.org



Your support makes everything we do possible. Together, we can ensure the legacy of gardens and landscapes endures for generations to come. Join us today in making a lasting impact!

10 Inspiring Goals Appeal

Support the Gardens Trust: Celebrating the Last 10 Years, Shaping the Next 10 Years

This year marks a very special milestone for the Gardens Trust: a decade of championing the rich heritage of historic gardens and landscapes across the UK. For ten years, we have worked to empower people, protect unique places, and make a meaningful difference nationwide.

It has also been a year of change. These are exceptionally difficult times for many heritage organisations, but we are not stepping back, we're stepping forward. With renewed determination and agility, we are entering our next chapter. Our strength lies in our expertise, our national network, and the invaluable relationships we share with County Gardens Trusts. Together, these make us a powerful voice for historic landscapes. We face challenges, but we also have the trust, respect, and track record to ensure that our voice remains vital in shaping the future.

To mark our 10th anniversary and to look ahead with ambition, we are launching a special campaign: to raise £10,000 to support 10 inspiring goals for the next 10 years. These goals reflect both continuity and change. One of them is to maintain our vital role in the planning system, where we have engaged with thousands of planning applications to offer expert guidance and ensure that historic parks and gardens are protected. While the mechanisms may evolve, our mission will not. With your support, we can continue to influence decisions, raise awareness, and protect these extraordinary places.

At the heart of this campaign lies a simple truth: together, we can ensure that historic gardens and landscapes continue to thrive, inspire, and bring people together for generations to come. Every donation, large or small, will help us make this vision a reality.

Our 10 Goals for the Next 10 Years

1. Continue to influence 15,000 planning applications

We will remain a credible, trusted advocate in the planning system – monitoring proposals, advising local authorities, empowering County Gardens Trusts, and ensuring irreplaceable landscapes are not overlooked.

2. Upskill 6,000 people

Through online and in-person training, we will equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to research, understand, and advocate for historic parks and gardens.

3. Support 5,000 volunteers

Our resources, training, and opportunities will strengthen a nationwide network of passionate volunteers who dedicate their time to protecting these places.

4. Engage 1,500 new members

By expanding our events and outreach, we will inspire more people to join the Gardens Trust, increasing our reach and influence.

5. Organise 850 events and welcome 100,000 attendees

From garden visits to lectures, workshops, and conferences, our events will bring people together, generate vital funding, and deepen appreciation for designed landscapes.

6. Strengthen our relationship with 35 County Gardens Trusts

Collaboration is key. We will foster closer partnerships with County Gardens Trusts, maximising our collective impact through joint initiatives and shared resources.

7. Publish 100 papers, articles, and reports

We will continue to contribute to the body of knowledge on garden history and conservation through our journal, research symposium, and publications.

8. Create 50 new partnerships

By working with like-minded organisations, we can amplify our voice, share expertise, and extend the reach of our advocacy.

9. Digitise 1,000 archival items

Expanding our online archives will preserve historic records and make them accessible to researchers, advocates, and the public.

10. Inspire 3 million people

Through campaigns, social media, and outreach, we will share the importance of historic designed landscapes with a wider audience than ever before.

How You Can Help

Your support is essential to making these goals a reality. By donating today, you are not just celebrating our past achievements, you are helping to secure the future of historic gardens and landscapes for decades to come.

Please donate at thegardenstrust.org/donate and be part of this inspiring journey. With your help, we can ensure that the Gardens Trust continues to be a respected and powerful voice for the places we all cherish. Thank you for standing with us. Together, let's make the next decade as impactful as the last.

Key statistics from the Gardens Trust's year:

1,389 written responses to planning applications affecting historic designed landscapes

603 Registered parks and gardens under planning consultations

784 people upskilled through 23 online or in-person training sessions

1,000 conversations with members of the public about historic parks and gardens and garden history

10,000+ ticket sales to our online lectures and in-person lectures, visits and conferences

11 new papers published in two issues of the *Garden History* journal

92 libraries, including 41 universities, received the *Garden History* journal

More than **273,380** people reached through our social media posts

More than **2,500** free tickets for our online events

209,000 views for our social media posts

8,000+ social media followers, having gained over 1,300 new followers in 2025

50 million people reached by media coverage relating to the Gardens Trust's work

2,648 copies of the GT's *Unforgettable Gardens* book sold globally in its first year of publication

4 meetings with one Minister and three Shadow Ministers to explain the Gardens Trust's work

434 English Members of Parliament written to, highlighting the value of historic parks and gardens

£9,300 awarded to volunteer community projects supporting historic parks and gardens

£26,060 donated to the Gardens Trust's Fighting Fund by its members and supporters



“2025 marked the Gardens Trust’s 10th anniversary and we end the year looking forward to the next 10 years. Clearly there’s a lot of uncertainty for the Gardens Trust currently, particularly around our statutory consultee role, and funding, but I think, on balance, the future actually looks very exciting.

We’ve all made huge strides in raising awareness of historic parks and gardens and their importance. The team of members, County Gardens Trusts, volunteers, Trustees and staff has never been stronger and more unified, in my opinion, and our standing and network across several important sectors is becoming substantial.

In the next decade we will continue to deliver our mission to strive to conserve historic parks and gardens, be it as a statutory consultee or in some other role. We have 30 years of experience at commenting on planning applications, and even more at influencing development in other ways. That will continue, regardless of Government direction – based on current numbers there will be at least 15,000 planning applications potentially affecting Registered parks and gardens over the next decade, and we will be here to address them. Many challenges lie ahead for historic parks and gardens, and the Gardens Trust is energised and ready to help these special places meet these challenges.

We will continue to campaign hard. This will range from ensuring that it is increasingly understood just how valuable historic parks and gardens are to modern communities, to celebrating key garden history landmarks, to continuing to share our messages in engaging and relatable ways so that a wide range of people can engage in historic parks and gardens and garden history. We are passionate about raising awareness and understanding, including through our programme of lectures and visits, and through wide-reaching education and outreach.

Research of course will always be core to the Gardens Trust’s aims and I look forward to seeing the Gardens Trust support this through a wide range of tools, including the *Garden History* journal, Mavis Batey Essay Prize, New Research Symposium, Garden History Hub, and supporting research and recording for Historic Environment Records.

As we enter the next decade, we have an even greater commitment to supporting volunteers, who make what we do possible, both at local and national level. This is reflected in additional categories of Volunteer Award, for both long service and newcomers, as well as the main Volunteer Award and Exceptional Contribution Award.

I’m determined too that our support will make life easier for the hardworking County Gardens Trusts and also make sure that the national Gardens Trust itself is resilient and sustainable for the future. This is an ongoing effort and as the world in which we operate continues to change, we may we need to evolve too.

I’m excited for what the Gardens Trust’s future holds, and hope that you are too.”

Linden Groves, Director

Please join or donate!

Our work relies on the generosity of our members and supporters. Please consider joining, donating, or volunteering via:

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