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The Gardens Trust Committees Report 2025

Conservation Committee,

Chaired by Deborah Evans, CMLI, MA, IHBC and Jo Barnes BA PGdip IHBC (from Nov 2025)

Statutory consultee casework

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, carrying a unique responsibility. We deliver this role working closely with volunteers in the County Gardens Trusts, whose local expertise is invaluable.

In 2025 we received 1798 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 1389 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.

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.

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:

- We produced various data to demonstrate that we are not 'blockers' to development, that our role is important, and that it produces a huge cost saving for local planning authorities.
- 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 around asking what evidence the Government had for its proposal, with a non-committal response.
- Daisy Cooper MP, a Liberal Democrat, 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 could include 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, as well as many more beside.
- We quickly launched the Fighting Fund Appeal and raised £26,059.95—more than double the target. This exceptional level of support enabled us to take rapid, coordinated action in defence of our role and the historic landscapes we champion. It also enabled us 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.
- 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.

The consultation was launched in November and within 9 days the Gardens Trust submitted and published a detailed evidence-based response, encouraging its network of supporters to do similar. 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 1700 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. You can download a Setting Q&A above.
- 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 Department of Culture, Media and Sport to deliver its statutory consultee role.)
- The disparity in the protection of registered parks and gardens compared to 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.

Policy consultations

We also submitted responses to policy and guidance consultations, including: Historic England's Local Heritage List guidance, Defra's Land Use framework proposals and the Law Commission's Burial and Cremation consultation.

Designation advice

We responded to a designation assessments for Leaden Hall (Salisbury), Wiltshire.

Green Futures project

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 landscape 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 <https://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.

Green Futures will result in new research on 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 group of trained research volunteers, researching and supporting historic parks and gardens into the future.

Research and Recording 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.

The first session was hosted by Oxfordshire Gardens Trust (OGT), in November, at Banbury Museum. Our Project Volunteer Support Officer led 14 attendees through a full 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.

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 attended 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 reboot one of the smallest CGTs.

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, strategic planning and over the spring held 9 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 mechanism; facilitate more routine and sustainable networking amongst 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 who 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 were still wanting to remain a CGT).

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 also 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 their help with our ongoing volunteer support commitments.

The County Gardens Trusts are always productive and examples from 2025 include:

Essex Gardens Trust have 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 fourteen 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 in 2024, has examined all the 1898 OS maps of Hertfordshire to find 400 walled gardens. The group is now embarking on more detailed research to discover when individual gardens may have been created and how long they lasted.

London Parks and Gardens' decade-long campaign continues to safeguard Victoria Tower Gardens, a Grade II listed 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.

Norfolk Gardens Trust partnered with the Royal Norfolk Show's

School Gardens Competition in 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. NGT has also awarded small grants to an additional 14 schools and community groups this year.

Thanks to Surrey Gardens Trust, two drawings by Gertrude Jekyll, have been rediscovered and gifted to the Surrey History Centre for public benefit. SGT was instrumental in their conservation - recognising them as rare survivals important to the historic record and requiring professional preservation.

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.

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.

As well as researching Sutton Lawn's 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 ATTFE College and Takeover Radio DJ Ken Mead, interviewed older people to find out what makes the park special to them. These stories have now been made into a short film for Mill Waters' website. This project will result in a research report feeding into a walking leaflet and book.

Education and Training Committee, **Chaired by Jill Sinclair, MA**

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, Belgian 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 twentieth century.

The New Research Symposium is run as a free online event in order to support the academic community. In 2025 almost 200 people attended, from 16 different countries.

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 student, worldwide, registered in a bona-fide university or other recognised qualification-awarding institution of higher or further education or who has recently graduated from such an institution no more than two years prior to submission.

2025 saw a strong field of entries and 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, who 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'.

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; and '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. A full searchable contents list from 1969 to 2025 is at <https://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 students ranged 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. A Research Day highlighting the work of the students was also held at University of Buckingham in November and this will be repeated annually.

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, 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.

World-leading events

In 2025 we ran over 80 events (online and in person), with 10,000 tickets booked by attendees from across the globe, including over 2500 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 8-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 our regular speakers' 'Favourite Gardens'.

Alongside our standard online programme, we piloted two mini-series of free lunchtime sessions, designed to attract new audiences to our work. These both focused on the well-being 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 almost £38,000 to the cause.

Historic Landscapes Assembly

In April 2025 the national Historic Landscapes Assembly focused on parks and gardens in the planning system. 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.

Archives Revealed grant

We received £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.

Unforgettable Gardens book

Sales since publication in November 2024 of the Unforgettable Gardens book 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.

**Audience Development, Marketing and Communications Committee,
Chaired by Rachel Savage and Christopher Weddell (from September
2025)**

Harnessing Parks and Gardens report

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 around meeting the need for growth and housing whilst 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 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 hosted influential sector leaders at the launch event, at Red Cross Gardens in Southwark. A free copy can be downloaded at <https://thegardenstrust.org/resources/parks-gardens-21st-century/>

The Gardens Trust Community Grant

The Gardens Trust Community Grant is intended to help seed-fund volunteer projects that will support historic designed landscapes in the UK. The projects who received a GT Community Grants in 2025 are:

- [Your Park Bristol and Bath](#), supporting the reintroduction and enhancement of sustainable natural habitats to Bath's green spaces at scale with volunteers, to boost the City's biodiversity. (£1025)
- [The Warneford 200 Gardening Group](#), recreating an early nineteenth-century asylum garden and the creation of the Warneford Walk in the hospital grounds. (£1025)
- [Broomhill Community Trust](#), restoring gardens designed by the internationally renowned garden designer Percy Cane. (£2400)
- [Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust](#), helping continue the upkeep and restore the Grade II* listed cemetery, including parts of the original Arcadian Victorian cemetery designed by Charles Underwood. (£1544)

Social Media

News of the potential removal of our statutory consultee role was a main driver of our social media in 2025. Here are some statistics from across our platforms in 2025:

Facebook

- 177 new followers
- Posts viewed more than 65,000 times

Instagram

- 438 new followers

LinkedIn

- 612 new followers
- Posts viewed more than 22,000 times

YouTube

- 122 subscribers
- Videos had over 2400 views

A part of an 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. These videos were viewed more than 2500 times.

GT magazine and eBulletin

For the 10th anniversary year the *GT News* was relaunched into the *GT magazine*, a modern, accessible magazine format edited by volunteer Charlotte Casella. 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.

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. Sandra was presented with a certificate and glass trophy at the annual Volunteering Celebration held in July at Stowe Landscape Gardens.

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 presented 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. 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.

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.

For the first time, the Gardens Trust took part in the London Marathon. Our five inaugural runners raised £12,886, and it raised our profile too, including with a 'cheer station' en route.

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

At the end of 2025 we had 1210 members and 22 Patrons including: 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.