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Twelfth Annual General Meeting Elections - Brief Biographies

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY:

- We are always keen to welcome new Trustees and are on the lookout for candidates, be they from the garden history world or different backgrounds. If you would be interested in a chat about becoming a Trustee for the Gardens Trust or you are aware of someone else who might be, do get in touch (catriona.hoyes@thegardenstrust.org).
- Given we are in a period of rolling recruitment for the Board, this list of proposed candidates for election may be updated ahead of the AGM. Do keep an eye out.

Trustees – Election

- **Jenifer White**
In 2023, Jenifer stepped down as a chartered landscape architect and Historic England's national lead on the conservation of historic designed landscapes and the settings of buildings and monuments, helping people to understand and care for them. Working with a wide range of stakeholders and partners, Jenifer was their advocate for the relevance of the green historic environment in climate adaptation, health and wellbeing, and nature recovery and she is delighted to now be volunteering with the Gardens Trust on harnessing the benefits of historic designed landscapes. Since studying botany and then landscape ecology, design and maintenance at university, Jenifer has been passionate about landscape conservation, and access to the outdoors. She has worked for local government and various government agencies and has a wealth of technical conservation, designations and policy experience. Jenifer is a member of the Gardens Trust's Conservation Committee and is the trust's appointee on the National Trust Council.
- **Christopher Weddell**
Christopher Weddell BSc, DipHort(Kew), MCIHort, is a professional horticulturist with over 30 years experience working in historic and botanic gardens open to the public. He has worked for the National Trust, University of Bristol Botanic Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, and Royal Horticultural Society. In 2008 he became Senior Gardens

Advisor / Curator at English Heritage, setting the standards of conservation and presentation across garden sites, being the professional lead for garden teams, and supporting both internal and public engagement in gardens. He was a PlantNetwork Board Member, Treasurer and website manager for 12 years, and joined the Audience Development, Marketing & Communications Committee as a member in 2023.

- **Sergio Jovele**

Sergio has spent most of his professional life in the world of private equity and investment management. Most recently he has held senior positions at leading private equity firms such as Partners Group and Cerberus Capital Management. Born in Italy, Sergio moved to the UK over 30 year ago. Since then, he has developed a keen passion for Britain's architectural and natural heritage, delving ever deeper in the history of the country's historic gardens and houses. Sergio is also a member of the Governing Body at the leading co-educational independent school Ibstock Place School in south west London and, in his spare time, he is a passionate gardener.

- **Joanna Davidson**

Jo has been an ex-officio trustee of the Gardens Trust since 2020, a position she assumed as Chair of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust. Given updates to our articles, Jo is now standing as a trustee of the Gardens Trust in her personal capacity. She brings a wealth of experience and wisdom. Her degree was in archaeology, followed by more than a decade of farming. Joanna retrained in horticulture, establishing a small business which has enabled her to design, plant, advise and lecture on horticulture in North Wales for the last 20 years, whilst also running a small plant nursery.

- **Alan Courts, Treasurer**

Alan Courts is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants with over 40 years of senior experience in a variety of industries, the last 27 years as a Board Financial & HR Director: he is also a highly experienced pension fund trustee. Alan's extensive non-executive experience, inter alia, 5 years as a Board Member of the South West Regional Development Agency and 9 years on the South West Regional Development Board - both appointed by the Secretary of State for Trade & Industry. He describes himself as a manager & problem solver with a specialism in finance.

Trustees – Re-election

- **Catriona Hoyes**

Catriona is a finance solicitor, currently working for a law firm in London with specialism in real estate. She has great interest in gardening and history, having obtained the RHS's Certificate in Horticulture in 2021 and an MA in Heritage Management, from Historic Royal Palaces in 2022. For the latter she chose to research the heritage value ascribed to trees by those managing busy heritage sites. She has been honorary secretary of The Gardens Trust for three years.

Vice President – Election

- **Lisa Watson (Vice President)**

It is hard to imagine anyone having done more for the Gardens Trust “movement” than Lisa Watson.

Over the years she has been:

- Treasurer of the Gardens Trust since its formation in 2015 (and before that she was Treasurer for the Association of Gardens Trusts).
- She has also been Vice-Chair of the Gardens Trust, and Chair of London Parks & Gardens.
- Treasurer of Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust and London Parks and Gardens.

This list is not exhaustive and it does not reflect the essential part she played in the successful merger of the Association of the Gardens Trust and the Garden History Society. It is worth noting too that Lisa’s experience with and for County Gardens Trust, and the relationships she has built has part of that, has been invaluable to the Gardens Trust.

It is difficult to imagine the Gardens Trust without Lisa’s day to day involvement. However, it is because of what Lisa has done and achieved that the Gardens Trust can continue without her. Over the years she has invested her time into setting up systems and processes to ensure that we can continue without her and deliver on our charitable aims and ambitions. She has mentored, championed and supported so many members of the Gardens Trust team and we could not be happier that she wishes to continue to be a part of us by becoming Vice-President. Thank you Lisa!

She has given the Gardens Trust ten years of methodical financial management and her help to steer it through challenging times for our sector and a global pandemic. and establishing foundations from which it can have been worked for the National Trust at Stowe Landscape Garden for 17 years, starting as a volunteer and then becoming Estate Secretary until she retired in 2009. She has been Company Secretary of London Parks and Gardens and was their Chairman. She was Treasurer of the Association of Gardens Trusts.