

Messaging and style guidelines

Stats, facts, key messages, consistent writing styles and descriptions to help us use one voice to raise awareness of the National Garden Scheme.





What are our messaging and style guidelines?

Where brand guidelines provide direction on how we look and our tone of voice, messaging and style guidelines provides direction on what we say.

The National Garden Scheme has a maximum of 15 Trustees (all volunteers), 13 staff at Hatchlands, 500 volunteers in our county teams across the country, 3500 garden owners and 11 beneficiaries, and we all share information about the charity - **whether that's through booklets, posters and flyers; on social media; via email and letters; on websites; in the press; or in conversations with visitors at a garden opening or with friends and family.**

Our messaging and style guidelines enables everyone to communicate our work consistently and accurately, so we can build awareness and a clear understanding of who we are, what we do and how to get involved – which in turn creates a strong brand identity.

Identifying what we need to tell people about the National Garden Scheme, collectively agreeing to use the guidelines in all communications and using one voice to raise awareness of the National Garden Scheme puts the charity in the best possible position to improve engagement among current and new audiences and increase visitor numbers.

NB: These guidelines are updated with relevant figures annually in January and the beneficiary donations will be updated annually in March.

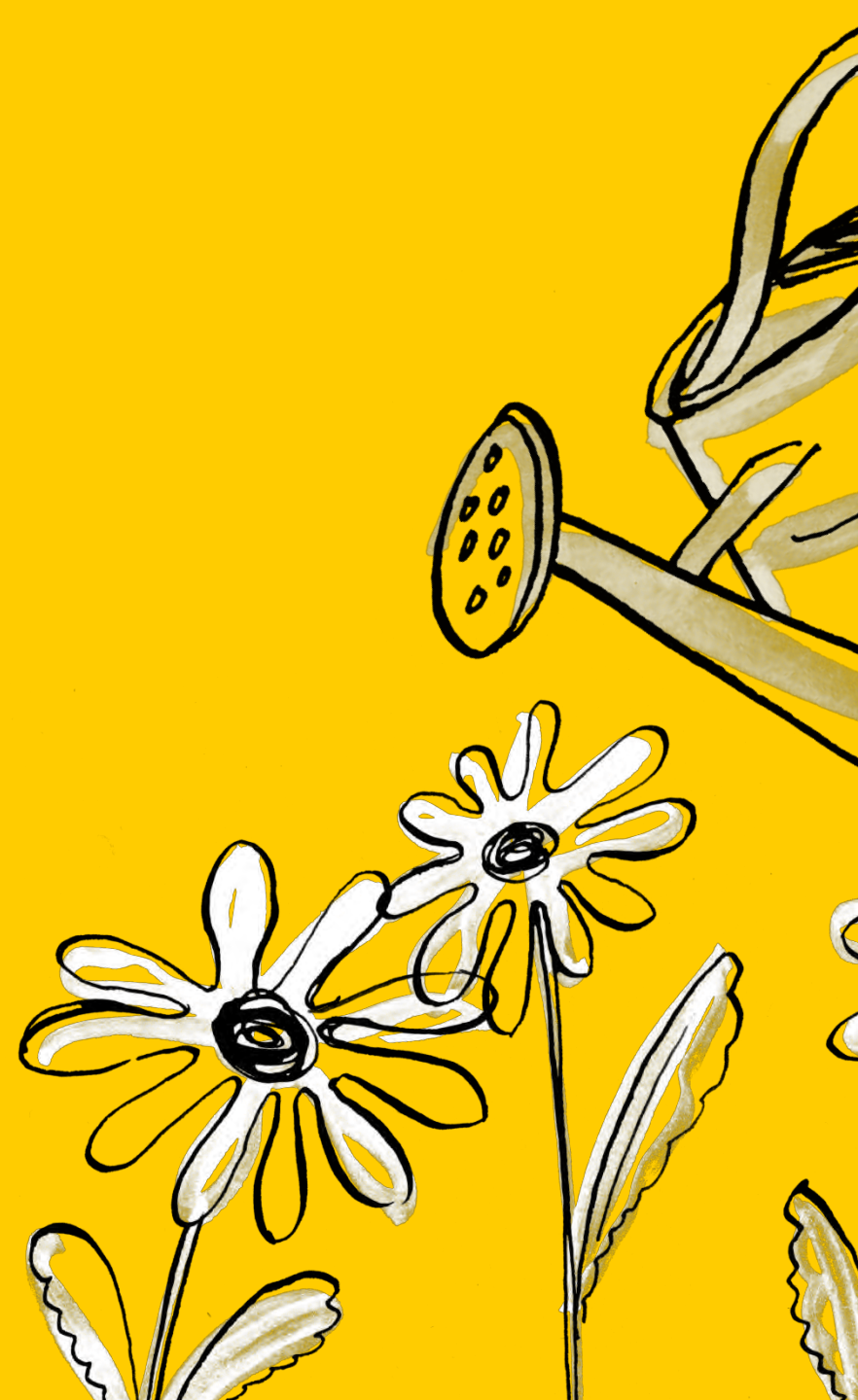
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Messaging





Who is the National Garden Scheme?

Our straplines

- Opening exceptional gardens for charity
- **Discovering the nation's best gardens**
- Great gardens, great cake
- Your visit changes lives (to be used only when in conjunction with a statement about the funds raised)

Footer copy

- All proceeds go to the National Garden Scheme.
- All garden admission proceeds go to the National Garden Scheme.
- All garden admissions, and the money raised from refreshments and plant sales, go to the National Garden Scheme.
- To find your perfect garden, visit ngs.org.uk

The National Garden Scheme in a sentence

The National Garden Scheme gives visitors unique access to 3,500 exceptional private gardens in England and Wales, and raises impressive amounts of money for nursing and health charities through admissions, teas and cake.

NB: These figures are updated annually in January.



Who is the National Garden Scheme? continued...

The National Garden Scheme in under 100 words

The National Garden Scheme gives visitors unique access to 3,500 exceptional private gardens in England and Wales, and raises impressive amounts of money for nursing and health charities through admissions, teas and cake.

Thanks to the generosity of garden owners, volunteers and visitors we have donated a total of £58 million to nursing and health charities, and made an annual donation of £3 million in 2019. Our beneficiaries include **Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK and The Queen's Nursing Institute.**

To find your perfect garden, visit ngs.org.uk

The National Garden Scheme – full description

The National Garden Scheme gives visitors unique access to 3,500 exceptional private gardens in England and Wales, and raises impressive amounts of money for nursing and health charities through admissions, teas and cake.

Thanks to the generosity of garden owners, volunteers and visitors we have donated a total of £58 million to nursing and health charities, and made an annual donation of £3 million in 2019. Founded in 1927 to support district nurses, we are now the most significant charitable funder of nursing in the UK and our beneficiaries include **Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK and The Queen's Nursing Institute.**

The National Garden Scheme doesn't just open beautiful gardens for charity – we are passionate about the physical and mental health benefits of gardens too. We fund projects which promote gardens and gardening as therapy, and in 2017, we launched our annual Gardens and Health Week to raise awareness of the topic.

To find your perfect garden, visit ngs.org.uk, download the National Garden Scheme app or purchase the **National Garden Scheme's Garden Visitor's Handbook**, which is published annually and available via ngs.org.uk/shop and at all good book retailers.

NB: These guidelines are updated with relevant figures annually in January and the beneficiary donations will be updated annually in March.



Who is the National Garden Scheme? continued...

The quality of our gardens

The National Garden Scheme searches the length and breadth of England and Wales for the very best private gardens, and we are passionate about opening those of the highest quality, character and interest to the public.

From extensive country landscapes and romantic cottage gardens, to urban hideaways and ancient woodlands, we offer exclusive access to a diverse range of exceptionally beautiful gardens. With thousands to choose from every year, your perfect garden awaits.

The National Garden Scheme experience

Whether you visit a National Garden Scheme garden for horticultural inspiration, a relaxing day out with friends and family or an opportunity to reconnect with nature, you can expect a warm and friendly welcome from our incredible garden owners and volunteers.

And what could be better? A quintessentially British day out in a beautiful garden – **the product of someone else's** hard work, with home-made teas in the knowledge that your visit is helping to fund vital nursing and health charities.

Visitor quotes

“Visiting any garden helps distract me from the responsibilities of life, gives me some 'downtime', and provides tangible inspiration that I can't get from a book. And I can talk to other gardeners and plant lovers about their experiences with the area, the weather and our gardens. I might even make a new friend!” Garden visitor, August 2018

“It's lovely to see so many beautiful and different gardens and they provide so much inspiration. A garden offers so much and is always a very relaxing experience. The most stressful thing is choosing between the different cakes!” Garden visitor, August 2018

“It inspires me to improve my own garden. I see new ways to garden and nurture wildlife. It lifts my spirits to be in beautiful gardens - plus I love tea and cake! And all for a good cause, what's not to love!” Garden visitor, August 2018



Our story

The National Garden Scheme has a rich and interesting history - with humble beginnings in the early 1900s when we first started supporting district nurses, to donating millions of pounds to nursing and health charities over 90 years later.

- 1859 - William Rathbone, a Liverpool merchant, philanthropist and a later an MP, employed Mary Robinson to **nurse his wife at home during her final illness. After his wife's death, Rathbone retained Mary's services so that** people in Liverpool who could not afford to pay for nursing would benefit from care in their homes. Seeing the good that nursing in the home could do, William Rathbone and Florence Nightingale worked together to try to develop the service – **and so organised 'district nursing' began.**
- 1887 – **As part of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, The Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) was founded as the next** step in coordinating national standards for district nurses - **and had the objectives of providing the 'training, support, maintenance and supply' of nurses for the sick and poor, as well as establishing training homes,** supervising centres, co-operating with other bodies and establishing branches as necessary.
- 1927 - At a QNI council meeting in 1926, council member Miss Elsie Wagg came up with the idea of raising **money for district nursing through the nation's obsession with gardening. A year later in 1927, the National** Garden Scheme was founded, and garden owners were asked to open their gardens for 'a shilling a head'. 609 gardens opened and raised a total of £8,191. Queen Victoria was the first Patron of the charity, and a Queen has been Patron ever since.
- 1930 - By now, 900 gardens opened for the National Garden Scheme, and Sir Winston Churchill and Vita Sackhill-West were among our famous garden owners.
- 1932 - The first National Garden Scheme guide was published - detailing 1,079 gardens open for charity. The guide cost 1 shilling to buy, had a green cover and included an introduction by its editor, Christopher Hussey.
- 1948 - After the Second World War the National Health Service and local authorities took on the district nursing service, but money was still needed to care for retired nurses and invest in training - and the National Garden Scheme continued to raise money for The Queen's Nursing Institute.



Our story continued...

- 1949 - The National Garden Scheme guide turns yellow - symbolising a mood of national regeneration. The colour yellow has continued to be synonymous with the National Garden Scheme right up to the present day.
- 1980 - The National Garden Scheme is made an independent charity by The Queen's Nursing Institute, paving the way to fund a range of nursing and health charities – and HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother becomes a Patron.
- 1984 - Macmillan Cancer Support joins the National Garden Scheme's list of beneficiary charities. We are their longest standing partner and have donated £16.7 million to date.
- 1996 - Marie Curie (formerly Marie Curie Cancer Care), Hospice UK (formerly Help the Hospices) and Carers Trust (formerly Crossroads) become beneficiary charities.
- 2002 - HRH The Prince of Wales took over from his grandmother and becomes the National Garden Scheme's Patron.
- 2013 - Parkinson's UK joins the National Garden Scheme as a guest charity and goes on to become a permanent beneficiary.
- 2016 - Mary Berry becomes President of the National Garden Scheme and we begin an annual funding programme to support gardens and health-related projects run by charities. Our first gardens and health beneficiary is **Horatio's Garden, who receive £130,000 to create and care for beautiful accessible gardens in NHS spinal injury centres.**
- 2017 - In the National Garden Scheme's 90th anniversary year, we launched our annual Gardens and Health Week to continue raising awareness of the amazing impact gardens and gardening can have on physical and mental health.



General facts

- The National Garden Scheme opens exceptional private gardens in England and Wales. **Scotland's Gardens Scheme** – who run independently of the National Garden Scheme - open gardens in Scotland.
- Pop up openings **are additional garden openings which can't be found in the Garden Visitor's Handbook or County Booklets**. All pop-up openings are listed on our website: ngs.org.uk.
- National Garden Scheme gardens start opening for our annual Snowdrop festival in February and continue until the end of October with gardens offering seasonal interest and autumn colour. However, over 50% of our gardens open across seven weekends from the last weekend in May until mid July.
- The majority of gardens open for the National Garden Scheme offer refreshments at open gardens, which is usually homemade teas. Many gardens owners also sell plants at their open garden.
- The majority of money raised from admissions, refreshments and plant sales, go to the National Garden Scheme. Some garden owners decide to donate money raised from refreshments and plants sales to local charities of their choice. Garden owners and National Garden Scheme volunteers do not receive any of the funds raised at garden openings.'
- Each county in England and Wales is run by a team of volunteers – which typically includes a county organiser, assistant county organisers, treasurer, publicity officer, social media officer and booklet coordinator. They seek out new gardens, manage garden openings, publicise garden openings and process the funds raised in their region.



Stats for 2019

- The National Garden Scheme open over 3,500 (3,552) exceptional private gardens across England and Wales.
- Over 1,100 gardens are open by arrangement for the National Garden Scheme. Groups of friends and family, or an organised tour group, can enjoy an exclusive and more personalised visit to one of our stunning gardens at a date and time that is mutually suitable and agreed with the garden owners.
- Over 20 gardens open for the National Garden Scheme on dates that require a pre-booked ticket to visit. Ticketed gardens include gardens that can only accommodate a small number of visitors at one time, limited openings such as the Royal garden at Frogmore, and gardens that offer talks/guided tours. Tickets can be purchased in advance via ngs.org.uk/events
- There are 37 gardens that open regularly to the public and choose to support the National Garden Scheme with a set donation every year, rather than donate garden admissions from a particular day. Many will be open **throughout the year, but some only at certain times. Full details are available in each garden's listings.**
- There are over 240 garden groups – where a visitor pays one admission charge to view a number of gardens in close proximity. Some gardens join forces to open as a group if they are new to garden opening, are unable to provide sufficient parking or feel they are too small to open on their own.
- Over 1,600 gardens welcome dogs.
- Average admission charge: £4.59 (excludes gardens open regularly to the public)

NB: These guidelines are updated with relevant figures annually in January and the beneficiary donations will be updated annually in March.



Our beneficiaries and donations

Originally set up to support district nurses, the National Garden Scheme now raises funds for nursing and health charities. We also support charities doing amazing work in gardens and health, grant bursaries to help community gardening projects and support gardeners at the start of their career.

Thanks to the generosity of garden owners, volunteers and visitors, the National Garden Scheme has donated £58 million to charity since 1927 - and we are the most significant funder of nursing in the UK. In 2019, we donated £3 million from funds raised at our gardens – almost double the £1.6 million donated ten years ago.

Nursing and health beneficiaries

Our nursing and health beneficiaries are our ‘core charities’ and receive an annual donation from the National Garden Scheme. In 2019, we donated:

• Macmillan	£500,000
• Marie Curie	£500,000
• Hospice UK	£500,000
• Carers Trust	£400,000
• The Queen’s Nursing Institute	£250,000
• Parkinson’s UK	£185,000
• Perennial	£130,000
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	£2,465,000

NB: These beneficiary donations will be updated annually in March.



Our beneficiaries and donations continued...

Guest charity

Guest charities are part of the National Garden Scheme's nursing and health donations, and are a beneficiary for 2-3 years. Charities are selected and shortlisted by volunteer county teams, and following a presentation by the charity applying for the funding, the trustees select the successful beneficiary.

Mind is **the National Garden Scheme's** new guest charity for 2019 and we donated:

- Mind £100,000

Gardens and health beneficiaries

In 2016, the National Garden Scheme began an annual funding programme to support gardens and health-related **projects run by charities. Charities apply for funding via the National Garden Scheme's CEO and successful** beneficiaries are selected by trustees.

In 2019, we donated:

- Treloar's £85,000
 - Kids £85,000
 - Horatio's Garden £75,000
-
- £245,000

NB: These beneficiary donations will be updated annually in March.



Our beneficiaries and donations continued...

Support for training gardeners

The National Garden Scheme grants bursaries to support gardeners at the start of their career.

In 2019, we donated the following to support training gardeners:

• ABF The Soldiers' Charity	£80,000
• WRAGS (Work and Retrain as a Gardener)	£65,000
• National Botanic Garden of Wales	£20,000
• Professional Gardener's Trust	£15,000
• Garden Museum	£10,000
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	£190,000

NB: These beneficiary donations will be updated annually in March.



Our beneficiaries and donations continued...

Support for community gardening projects

In partnership with the RHS, the National Garden Scheme grants bursaries to help community gardening projects in memory of the garden writer Elspeth Thompson, who died in 2010. In 2019, we donated:

• Echo, Leominster	£2,667
• Ashley Vale Action Group, Bristol	£2,785
• Kyra Women's Project, York	£800
• Ripon Community Link, North Yorkshire	£2,300
• St Ann's Allotments, Nottingham	£2,000
• The Court Community Garden Project, Powys	£1,316
• The Therapy Garden, Guildford	£3,000
• YMCA East Surrey, Redhill	£1,340
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	£16,208

NB: These beneficiary donations will be updated annually in March.



Gardens and health

The National Garden Scheme isn't just about opening beautiful gardens for charity – we are passionate about the physical and mental health benefits of gardens and gardening.

So, in 2016, we commissioned the King's Fund to produce a report on the topic and began an annual funding programme to support gardens and health-related projects run by charities. In 2017, we also launched our annual Gardens and Health Week to continue raising awareness of the amazing impact gardens and gardening can have on physical and mental health.

The King's Fund report

The King's Fund report, *Gardens and health: Implications for policy and practice*, was commissioned by the National Garden Scheme and published in 2016. The report aims to contribute to the understanding, assessment and development of the links between gardens, gardening and health – and is available to view on our website: ngs.org.uk

Gardens and Health Week

The National Garden Scheme's annual Gardens and Health Week, which began in 2017, is dedicated to promoting the positive impact gardens can have on health and wellbeing. From wandering around a peaceful garden and catching up with a friend over a slice of cake, to reconnecting with nature and finding inspiration – garden visiting offers the perfect opportunity to escape a busy life and soothe the soul.

Our communications campaign for Gardens and Health Week 2019 (11th – 19th May) - A Path to Health, focused on the importance of social prescribing and the role of gardening and gardens in helping to create a positive path to health.



Opening your garden

Have you ever considered opening your garden for the National Garden Scheme? If your friends and family tell you how lovely your garden is, then it's very likely other people will want to visit it too.

By opening your garden for the National Garden Scheme, you're not only giving people a great day out – you're also raising money to help change lives. What's more, you are joining a community of other like-minded garden owners and volunteers, all passionate about great gardens and great cake.

You garden will be included in the prestigious Garden Visitor's Handbook and on our website, and our county teams offer lots of support in the run up to your opening. Thousands of garden owners enjoy sharing their beautiful gardens with the public so much that they continue to do it year after year.

You can decide how many times you'd like to open your garden – many open twice a year to show their garden in a different season and some of our dedicated garden owners open in spring, summer and autumn! It's completely up to you.

Whether your garden is big or small, if you think it has quality, character and interest, we would love to hear from you and arrange a visit.

Garden owner quotes

- **“Every bit of effort was worth it. Garden visitors are almost universally friendly, positive, funny, quirky and interesting.** There was a wonderful mix of neighbours, locals, as well as visitors from all over the UK and abroad. We also had a number of people turn up who had lived in the property back in the 1940s who brought photos and letters relating to the house. The whole experience was just great and we raised just over £4,500. People were so **generous with their support and their comments.**” Simon Cain, garden owner, Hurdley Hall, Powys
- **“As someone who opens their garden under the National Garden Scheme I get great pleasure from seeing people enjoy my garden, spending a happy hour or two in beautiful surroundings, chatting to their friends - and eating cake! The whole experience is therapeutic for both the visitor and garden owner. The fact that one is also raising many hundreds of pounds for such good charitable purposes makes it even more satisfying.**” Anonymous, August 2018
- **“We had so many comments about the garden and I started to think about whether we might be able to open for the National Garden Scheme. I vividly remember the sheer joy my mum got from going to lots of different gardens and the difference it made to her and her condition, so I decided it was time to give back. Now we hope to make lots of people feel as happy as she did when stepping through someone else's garden gate.”** Rosie Dale, garden owner, Derbyshire



Volunteering

Volunteers are at the very heart of our organisation, and without them we simply wouldn't exist.

We have an army of energetic and friendly individuals across the country, who work in teams in their counties to open beautiful gardens. They generously give their time and talents to raise impressive amounts of money for nursing and health charities.

Inspiring, rewarding, sociable, a joy and a privilege are just some of the ways our volunteers describe their experience as part of our team.

If you have experience in social media or publicity, enjoy finance, are a keen photographer or simply love visiting gardens and talking to people – **there's a role that's perfect for you at the National Garden Scheme.**

If you are over 16 years old and have an enthusiasm for the National Garden Scheme, we would love to hear from you. Email hello@ngs.org.uk or call 01483 233535 for more information.

County team member quotes

- **“People often don't realise how wonderful and unique their gardens are. It has been such a joy to encourage and support new garden owners to showcase their hard work and passion for gardening. Volunteering has brought me closer to my local community and I've forged many new friendships along the way.”** Hasruty Patel, Assistant County Organiser, London
- *“We feel part of a valuable community, supporting our wonderful garden owners and helping the National Garden Scheme raise as much money as possible for such worthwhile causes.”* Pamela and Martin Shave, County Organiser and Treasurer, Leicestershire
- **“Becoming a volunteer was a chance to combine my work experience and my love of gardens, with the added bonus of giving as much or as little time as I want. I've met some lovely people and my own garden looks SO much nicer!”** Jane Cooper, Publicity Officer, Yorkshire
- **“It's such a wonderful idea – that gardeners should do something they love and share it with others, all for such a good cause. Our county team is a bunch of committed people who are passionate about what they do. It's even inspired me to open my own garden!”** Vanessa Berridge, Publicity Officer, Gloucestershire
- **“I've been a volunteer for five years and love the variety and flexibility. I especially enjoy giving talks to local groups, encouraging people to visit our beautiful gardens and explaining where the money goes.”** Graham O'Connell, Assistant County Organiser, Berkshire



Legacies

Help open gardens for the future with a gift in your will

If you love gardens and garden visiting, you can help inspire that passion in future generations by leaving a gift in your will to the National Garden Scheme.

After providing for those closest to you, a charitable gift is a very personal way to ensure the things that matter most to you live on, while inspiring your family and friends with the values or causes you hold most dear.

Your gift will help the National Garden Scheme to continue to uncover new gardens each year, open their gates to even more visitors and give people the opportunity to discover a lifelong love of garden visiting.

And by welcoming increasing numbers of visitors to our gardens, we will be able to raise even more money to fund the vital work of nursing and health charities into the future.

Whether you'd like to include the National Garden Scheme in your will or not, it's important that your will reflects your wishes. It doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming to start a will or update a current one - simply speak to a legal adviser who can help you through the process.

Legacy quotes

- **“They were both avid supporters of the National Garden Scheme and loved nothing more than to visit open gardens. It was their express wish that a gift in their will should be made to your organisation. My sister and brother-in-law wanted their legacy to benefit others in a field they were passionate about - and ultimately enable future generations to experience the joy of garden visiting, just like they did.”** Di handled her sister and brother-in-law's estate when they passed away
- **“Why I'm leaving a gift: I love visiting beautiful National Garden Scheme gardens, and I have also been a volunteer for many years which has been immensely rewarding. The National Garden Scheme provides such valuable funding to nursing and health charities and I hope my modest legacy will help them continue for many years to come.”** Graham, National Garden Scheme volunteer and visitor

Style





Numbers

- Numbers one to ten should be written in words and 11 onwards should be written numerically - e.g. Of the 22 beautiful gardens open for the National Garden Scheme in Wiltshire this month, nine feature snowdrops.
- The exception - sentences starting with any number should always be written in words - e.g. Twenty seven gardens open for the National Garden Scheme have received an award.

Capitals

- Only the first letter of the first word of a heading should be capitalised, unless using proper nouns or place names – e.g. Garden visitors enjoy Diple Mill’s **grand opening**
- The first letter of each word of a job title should be capitalised – e.g. County Organiser
- Seasons should be in lower case – e.g. autumn

NGS vs National Garden Scheme

- To encourage greater brand awareness, National Garden Scheme should always be written in full on all external **communications and the abbreviation ‘NGS’ should not be used.**
- **When referring to ourselves within a sentence we talk about ‘the National Garden Scheme’** – e.g. In 2019, the National Garden Scheme donated £3 million to charity.



Garden Visitor's Handbook

- Our Garden Visitor's Handbook is the title of the annual guide and should always be referred to as that, not as the 'Yellow Book' as it was previously called.

However, we can refer to its colour, without caps, within a sentence - e.g. Our iconic yellow book, the Garden Visitor's Handbook, is now available to pre-order.

Date and time format

- Day, date and month, including st, rd, nd or th – e.g. Monday 3rd December
- Timings to be in 12 hour clock format, using a colon and am/pm – e.g. 10:00am – 2:30pm
- The exception - on signage where space is at a premium, timings can be shortened – e.g. 9-11am or 10am-3pm

Please contact anna@ngs.org.uk in the marketing and communications team with any questions regarding messaging, branding and style.

