

## Data Protection and GDPR – How to approach group organisers about talks and garden visits

One of the best ways we spread the word about the fantastic gardens and work the NGS does is by members of county teams going out and delivering talks to local groups like the U3A and Women's Institute, and also inviting such groups to visit our garden.

The new data protection legislation, GDPR, that comes in to force in May 2018 seeks to ensure that individuals are not hounded by businesses and organisations that they have not explicitly consented to hearing from. We therefore have to be more considerate about how we approach and engage with individuals and their personal data.

We can still get in touch with representatives of organisations that we feel might be interested in our work under a legal basis called legitimate interests. Legitimate Interests basically means that the person you contact would have a reasonable expectation that an organisation like the NGS could be in touch.

**For example** – It is quite likely that a local Women's Institute group might be interested to hear about talks we deliver or in visiting one of our gardens as a group activity. They have a contact us page on their website that displays contact details or they have a contact form we can complete. As long as we use those details respectfully, are transparent about how we got the details and why we are getting in contact, give them the opportunity to not be contacted anymore and keep an accurate record of their requests and communications, then we can satisfy the legislation's requests that we have a legitimate interest in contacting them.

### **Example email for contacting groups**

Here is a template email that demonstrates the sort of transparency needed and the option to no longer hear from us that we need to include to comply with the new legislation. Please feel free to use this, add to it or adapt it to your needs and if you have any queries or wish someone to look over the communications you use, please contact [joanne@ngs.org.uk](mailto:joanne@ngs.org.uk) or 01483 213905

*Dear Jane,*

*I am the County Organiser for the National Garden Scheme and I got your details from the contact us page on your website. I wanted to let you know that we have a number of gardens open in your area that welcome groups like yours for bespoke visits. Historically lots of Women's Institute groups have enjoyed visiting National Garden Scheme Gardens and we didn't want you to miss out on the same opportunity.*

*Here are some details of gardens we have .... but I would be happy to discuss this further to help you find the perfect garden to visit for you and your group.*

*With all best wishes*

*Anne Jones – County Organiser, Outer Hebrides, National Garden Scheme*

**Email signature – If you no longer wish to receive communication from us please reply with the word Unsubscribe.**

**(Please ensure that you have an unsubscribe option on your email signature for every email you send out on behalf of the NGS)**

### **To summarise**

- 1) We can still contact group organisers if we can justify that they could reasonably expect to hear from us in their role.
- 2) Be transparent about how you got their details and why you are getting in touch.
- 3) Make sure they always have the option to unsubscribe from receiving any further communication from us.
- 4) If they choose not to hear from us anymore then we must either remove them from any lists/records, or make clear on any lists/records that we are not to contact them.
- 5) Keep up to date records of who you have contacted, when and any preferences they have. Ensure that any changes they ask you to make to their personal data is recorded accurately to make life easy for you and any predecessors.
- 6) Always consider if emailing first is the best way to build a fruitful relationship with a group organiser. Would a phone call or popping in to see them be more successful? Obviously this is based on time volunteers have to devote to a project.
- 7) Please ensure that if you are sending out emails to groups of people that you use the BCC function to ensure that the recipients cannot see each other's details.