

**Gardens Reopening FAQ's.**  
**27<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**To All County Organisers**

*These have come out of questions that have arisen from my recent emails. I am including everyone in Wales, but at the moment no gardens there will open. In no particular order:*

Q.

What details does a garden that wishes to open need to supply

A.

- Date/s of opening
- Confirmation their admission price is as currently published
- Any directions given that there will be no yellow arrows or directional posters
- How many people can comfortably be in their garden at one time. That will be the numbers per time slot
- How long is their preferred time slot – 1 hour, 1½ hours, 2 hours (*note: some people have asked for shorter but that rules out those who wish to sit and relax for a time*)
- How many time slots are they happy to have and when do they start/finish. We are setting it up with 15 minutes between time slots, that allows one group to leave – and leave in car – before the next lot arrive
- Will they be selling plants
- Are people allowed to picnic – if yes, then add 30 minutes to time slots

Q.

To whom is the information to be supplied

A.

The information should be sent direct from a garden to one central point at Hatchlands, which is Georgina's email: [georgina@ngs.org.uk](mailto:georgina@ngs.org.uk). We will ensure that all county organisers are sent a copy of what a garden has sent in.

Q.

When does the information have to be submitted

A.

We will be loading up the information for gardens opening as soon as we receive it from them. But we will only be selling tickets from Mondays for the following six days. So we suggest that anyone wishing to open on the first two weekends (6-7 and 13-14 June) does it as soon as they are ready and for subsequent weekends by the Thursday before latest (so 11<sup>th</sup> June for weekend 20-21 June)

Q.

Can a garden open on a different day, or more days, than they originally published before Covid-19.

A.

Yes, the information we are sent can replace their existing garden details. So, for instance, gardens that had to cancel earlier in the year can move to have a 'pop-up' opening from June onwards.

Q.

Will county organisers have to confirm details for all gardens

A.

No, if a garden does not send in opening details we will presume they are not opening and they will show on the website as such

Q.

How will the information about gardens opening sit on the website with those not opening

A.

Messaging on the website will clearly steer people to gardens that are opening and confirm on a month by month basis that any garden not showing as available to visit is not opening and their individual profile will carry an appropriate message to this effect.

Q.

What is the position regarding county booklets that have been circulated

A.

In the current general circumstances we feel it is extremely unlikely that anyone will pick up a booklet, find a garden and decide to visit. Currently that is not possible for most activities. The messaging on the website will make it clear that gardens can only be visited by pre-booked tickets. So we are not suggesting that booklets have to be collected up.

Q.

Is it compulsory for a garden to operate a one-way circuit and separate in-out gates

A.

No, some gardens might feel it is the best way to proceed and we can supply arrows – see below. But where there is space a one-way system is not mandatory and a single gate will usually be sufficient except at large gardens where they have large numbers in a time-slot in which case in-out gates are recommended

Q.

Do tickets have to be checked on the gate

A.

People will be asked to have their tickets available either printed off or on a phone, so they can be checked and this is preferable because it would include some kind of welcome. However, it would work unmanned, just be done on trust

Q.

What posters and other material will you be circulating

A.

We are preparing the following, all to be sent to gardens directly – open to other suggestions, within reason:

- A4 poster to go at garden gate to show ticket holders where to go. This will have simple messaging on social distancing, no refreshments etc (for everyone)
- A4/5 posters to be distributed to garden centres and other outlets confirming that some – but not all – gardens are opening, but only via pre-purchased tickets on the website (on request from county organiser/team member)

- Arrows to help set up a one-way system (on demand from garden owner)
- A poster for anyone wishing to sell plants – see below. Please ask gardens to use this standard poster, not make up their own (on demand from garden owner)

Q.

Can gardens sell plants

A.

Yes so long as they follow certain guidelines. Plants should be set up so they can be purchased without human contact. So on a table etc with labels, prices etc. Payment can be either an honesty box or with a donation by text message or online. The poster will explain that if payment is by donation the purchaser cannot claim Gift Aid, because they are getting something in return

*Note: we have been asked why plant sales can have an honesty box but not garden entrance. That is because we need to control numbers which can only be done with pre-purchased tickets*

Q.

Will the insurance cover be in place and does it cover if someone claims for contracting Covid-19 in a garden.

A.

Yes and yes – all details have been discussed and agreed with our insurers

Q.

Should toilets be available

A.

Not if access involves entering the house. If available elsewhere we suggest it is limited to emergencies only

Q.

What is the position with group gardens

A.

They need to be taken on a case by case basis. If opening, the number of visitors is how many they are happy to have in the village at one time. The bottom line is that group gardens will need to be policed by group coordinator and others on the ground to monitor and control the flow of people from one garden to another. If this is not possible then difficult for them to open. The guidelines on the website will explain that people might have to wait for access to a garden. Booking times for group gardens will probably be longer, so a good idea to suggest they are open for as long as possible. Finally, in groups that are not able to open together, individual gardens may decide they want to open for small numbers in time slots, that is fine.

Q.

What is the position with by arrangement gardens

A.

An update from what I have suggested previously. At the moment it is very unlikely there are going to be group visits to by arrangement gardens because doing anything in a group is outside the government guidelines. So by arrangement can either wait for restrictions to

relax and then let us know they want to be open. Or if they want to be open now, we are happy for the booking to be done with the owner but payment must be the same as the others, in advance on the website. It is up to a by arrangement owner if they want just one time slot which gets filled up, or they are happy to offer more than one timeslot.

Q.

What does a garden owner do if people just turn up.

A.

If the time slots are full they turn them away. If they have space they can allow them in on the basis they pay for their admission there and then with a donation by text message – or, last resort if they have no phone, they make a donation online when they get home

Q.

What is the position with commercial gardens

A.

There will be some commercial gardens opening regularly for themselves and giving us one or more days. They will have their own system in place and if they want to use that for their open day for us that is fine. We will post the relevant details on their profile on the website. If they want to use our pre-booking/time-slot system for their day that is also fine

Q.

Will we supply hand sanitiser

A.

We think it a good idea for gardens to have this available at or near their entry point. We think it is widely available so best to recommend that gardens have some and leave them to acquire it themselves – they can charge us if they like.

Q.

Are you sending out 'cancelled' posters or stickers for all gardens not opening

A.

Given the logistics this would involve we would prefer not to and we will aim to ensure that the new messaging on web, social media, via eNewsletter etc makes it crystal clear that many gardens are not open and if they don't show opening details they are not opening

Q.

Are picnics allowed

A.

If a garden is large enough then yes and given that no refreshments are being offered it would be a nice option. If this is possible the time slots would need to be longer

Q.

Will there be an announcement on the website and to the press

A.

Yes. We will prepare a statement about gardens reopening that will be prominent on the website from next week. This will carry a suitable explanation about why some gardens are opening and others are not. We will also prepare statement that we will circulate to the media and to publicity and social media officers for them to also circulate and post