



CLARENCE HOUSE

**AS DELIVERED VIDEO MESSAGE RECORDED  
BY THE PRINCE OF WALES  
PATRON NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME**

It was with great pride that I succeeded my grandmother, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, as Patron of the National Garden Scheme eighteen years ago. The National Garden Scheme is a remarkable organisation with such a simple, but effective mission – people open their gardens to visitors and raise money which the National Garden Scheme donates annually to a group of national nursing and health charities – some of which I am also involved with, such as Macmillan and Marie Curie.

The scheme was actually set up by a nursing organization: the Queen's Nursing Institute, which managed district nursing prior to the formation of the National Health Service, and which continues to give these community nurses vital support today.

When the scheme started in the 1920s, all gardens charged the same admission of one shilling. Today they charge a bit more and the total raised is quite phenomenal – some £4 million in 2019 alone.

But now, for the first time in over ninety years, gardens are unable to open, and subsequently no funds are being raised for charity. I must say that I can empathize with garden owners' frustration about this because, like them, for the first time in 26 years, I too have been unable to open Highgrove Garden to visitors. Of course, this is at a time when the nursing charities the National Garden Scheme supports are working heroically on the front line of the coronavirus pandemic, and need the financial support more than ever.

I realize that people may not be able physically to visit any gardens at the moment, but I am delighted to say that the National Garden Scheme has cleverly adapted itself to offer 'Virtual Garden Visits' instead. Garden owners are making short films about their gardens and every week they are uploaded to the National Garden Scheme's website for members of the public to watch and enjoy.

Of course, this is tapping into the theme that we all know to be so important; that gardens are good for everyone's health and wellbeing. I am especially proud that the National Garden Scheme has undertaken pioneering work in this space, in particular commissioning, in 2016, a report from the King's Fund entitled 'Gardens and Health', as well as supporting charities that build gardens in hospitals and other healthcare settings.

This link between gardens and our health has never been more relevant – especially as we endure the challenges of the confined circumstances in which we

currently find ourselves, in many cases beset with anxiety and, I am afraid to say, often with personal tragedy. During these times the beneficial effects of gardens and green spaces have never been more apparent. The reassuring solace, peace and inspiration of a garden, whether it is your own or someone else's, can now be found to a certain extent through digital means, thanks to this terrific scheme.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I do hope that you enjoy the films and are able to support this remarkable charity.