



Impact Report RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024





Impact Summary

National Garden Scheme Garden, RHS Chelsea 2024

Designed by Tom Stuart-Smith

Brought to life by Crocus

Funded by Project Giving Back

- Significantly strengthened our charity profile and reach with impactful media coverage, effective digital and social content and engagement and connected with a wide range of high profile visitors
- RHS Gold Medal achieved industry endorsement and raised awareness of the quality of the gardens that open for the National Garden Scheme including those connected to our Chelsea garden and its designer
- Raised £41,500 profit in total plus significant sponsorship and pro bono support for additional costs
- Built new, and strengthened existing, donor relationships with a series of events throughout the week
- Strengthened pride and loyalty amongst staff, volunteers and supporters and utilised our existing networks to support another Project Giving Back garden
- Shone a spotlight on the good causes and generosity of spirit that lies at the heart of the National Garden Scheme

Photo right: Nine times Gold Medal winning garden designer, Tom Stuart-Smith

Photo left: The National Garden Scheme Garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith for RHS Chelsea 2024



Chairman's overview

I was absolutely thrilled with the hugely well-deserved Gold Medal for our show garden at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The award was testament to Tom Stuart-Smith's outstanding skill as garden designer and plantsman and the work of his team and their partners at Crocus. Crocus constructed and planted this wonderful garden for us and it ended their 22-year history at Chelsea which saw them win 38 gold medals. What a great end to such an illustrious history at the world's greatest flower show.

The brilliant design captured the essence of the National Garden Scheme ethos: the sheer joy that a garden brings; and the sharing of that joy with everyone by being open to all. The fact that the garden was a collection of plants and of course trees to be looked after communally – also neatly played into our hugely successful Community Gardens Scheme.

Their efforts gave us all something we could share and brought to my mind the words of Voltaire: 'Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.'

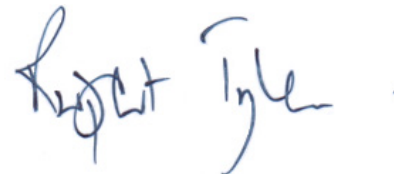
Absolutely none of this would have been possible without the astounding vision and generosity of Project Giving Back. Quite simply we couldn't have dreamt of having a garden without their amazingly generous sponsorship. That generosity was turned into a reality by the extraordinary hard work of our small staff team. They managed the administration and events and enabled our volunteers to spend time on the garden, talking to visitors.

We were honoured to welcome a host of special guests including Her Majesty The Queen and other members of the Royal Family to the garden.

Over and above its visual beauty and impact, our garden was there to publicise the astounding donations that the National Garden Scheme makes each year, and the beneficiary charities which we support. Having a show garden as a week-long shop window gave us the unique opportunity to demonstrate to people the impact of our charitable activities and to champion the work of the wonderful charities that we support; from our founders the Queen's Nursing Institute to Marie Curie and Carers Trust. The fact that our garden is going to end up with one of them, as the garden of a brand new Maggie's centre at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, was a powerful illustration of these activities.

Our show garden had an immediate impact which was made evident by feedback from visitors to our gardens throughout the summer. Following the Chelsea Flower Show it produced a huge increase in the number of people who registered interest in opening their own gardens for us. And it has helped to raise awareness for our Centenary which we will be celebrating in 2027 – on which we are now all firmly focused.

This report looks at the wider impact that having a show garden at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2024 had, and will continue to have, for the National Garden Scheme.



Rupert Tyler, Chairman, National Garden Scheme

*Photo right: Her Majesty The Queen visiting The National Garden Scheme Garden
Associated Press / Alamy Stock Photo*



Media Coverage

The National Garden Scheme enjoyed increased media coverage before and during RHS Chelsea raising awareness about the work of the charity to a wider, garden loving audience in print, broadcast and online.

Broadcast coverage across regional radio and television increased significantly with 74 mentions on BBC One, BBC Two and regional BBC news and radio channels.

BBC TV audience reach* for the show May 20-26

BBC One 2,368,000

BBC Two 2,251,000

Our already healthy media reach spiked during Chelsea week reaching an estimated audience of 3,993,087 across broadcast, digital and print on Monday 20 May.

Media mentions during the week totalled 241 with an equivalent advertising value during May of £2.98 million**.

	May 2023	May 2024
Total mentions	207	1,093
Broadcast		253
Print		352
Online		488
Increase percentage		428 %

*Barb.co.uk

**Vuelio media monitoring



“It’s a wonderful garden, but actually the National Garden Scheme is really important...”

Monty Don in conversation with Tom Stuart-Smith
BBC One, Thursday 23 May

“The craftsmanship is exquisite, the atmosphere is incredible ... I walked on (to the garden) and got goosebumps,”

Adam Frost,
BBC One, Sunday 19 May

“It really is a garden that makes you want to go and explore.”

Sophie Raworth,
BBC One, Sunday 19 May

Photo left: BBC presenters Sophie Raworth and Adam Frost for BBC Gardeners' World on the National Garden Scheme Garden



Social Media & Digital Engagement

The National Garden Scheme enjoyed increased social media and digital engagement during RHS Chelsea.

As well as engagement across our main National Garden Scheme channels we were supported by our regional team accounts which have 149,184 additional followers, and by our beneficiary charities, together we reach more than 3,500,000 followers.

Further social media engagement was generated through Tom Stuart-Smith (personal Instagram) Tom Stuart-Smith Studio, Crocus, and various influencers.

Following the RHS/BBC guidelines on video outputs we produced six, 90 second stories / reels which enjoyed 95,712 plays on Instagram alone during May.

Commenting on an Instagram reel Hazel Gardiner (influencer) said:

“Goosebumps... This beautifully captures the essence of the garden, the emotions it stirs, and the incredible people at the heart of the @nationalgardenscheme. Such an honour to witness it!”

Traffic to our website peaked at 700 hits per minute on Saturday 25 May - there were 273,000 visitors to the website in May 2024 up 78,000 from the same period in 2023, with over 1.4 million views to our 'Find a Garden' section.

700+

hits per minute to our website on
Saturday 25 May

484%

link click increase on Instagram stories
compared to previous week

2,696

new followers across our Social Media
channels during Chelsea week

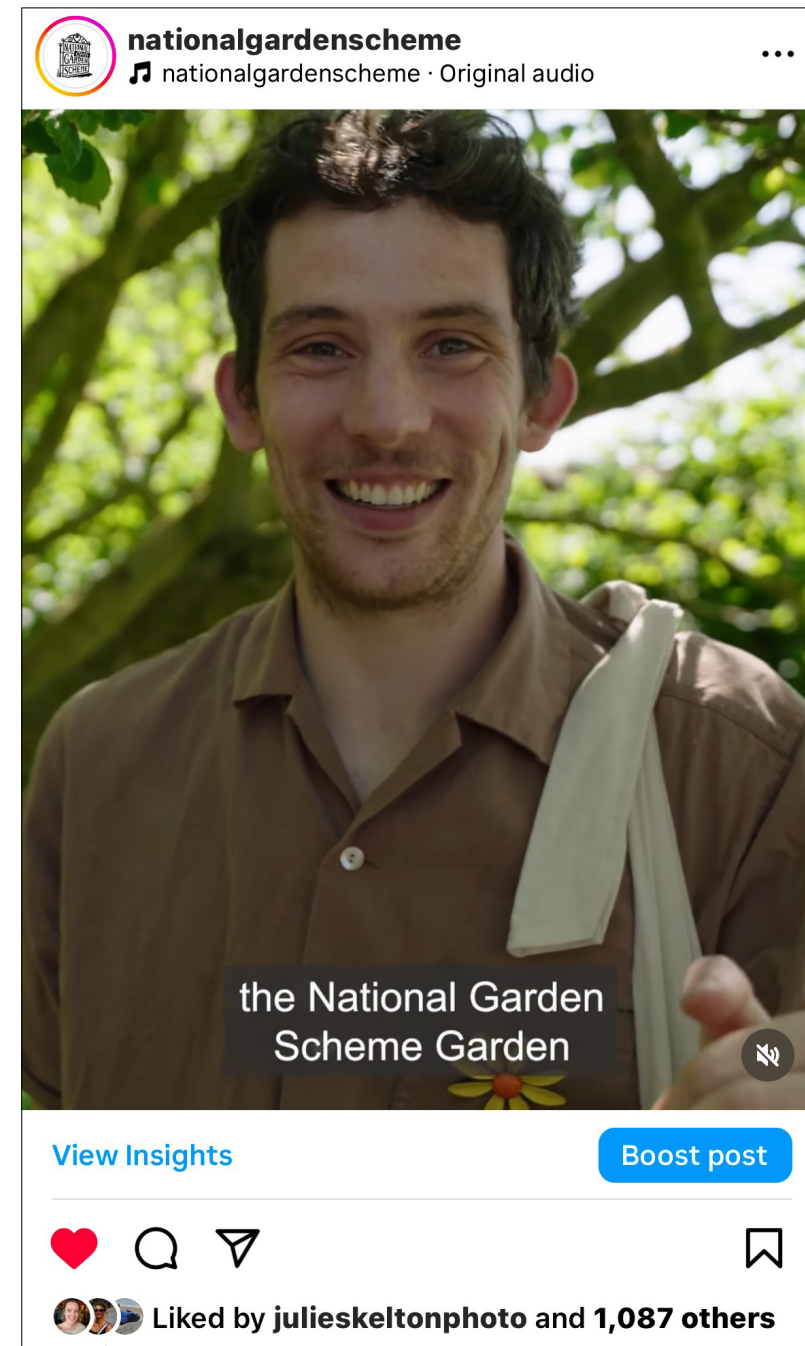
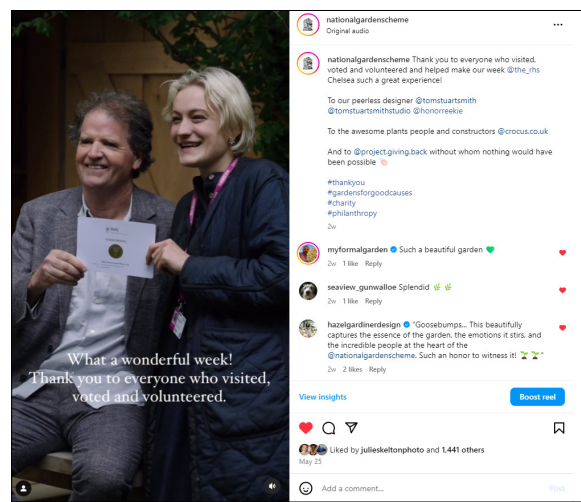
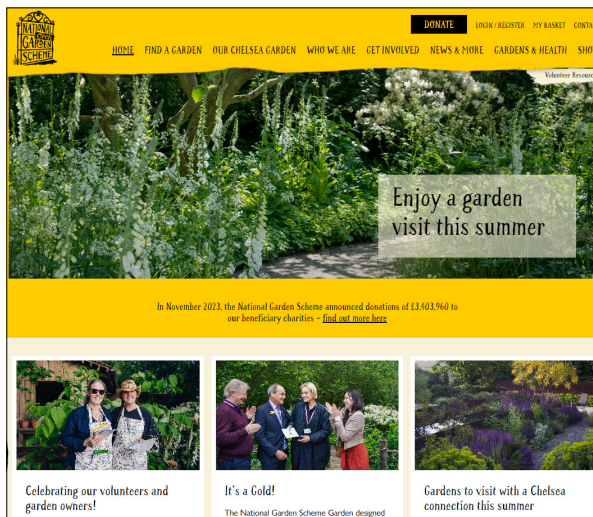
565%

increase in reach on Facebook during
Chelsea week

95,712

plays of Instagram reels

Photos right: a selection of images from the National Garden Scheme website and social media channels during the RHS Chelsea Flower Show



Fundraising Events

We ran a series of fundraising events centred around our Chelsea garden which together raised over £41,500 gross income and engaged over 1,500 new and existing supporters.

Online talk pre-Chelsea: *The Secrets of a Chelsea Garden* with Tom Stuart-Smith and Peter Clay engaged 315 people raising £2,885.

Raffles: We held two prize draws, a Pre-Chelsea raffle and a Prize Draw launched in Chelsea week with prizes generously donated by our corporate partners. The two events have raised £7,636.

Artwork sale: Artist Tyga Helme was the artist-in-residence for our RHS Chelsea show garden. The beautiful work she captured at the beginning of the week was put on sale on Messums website with one work up for auction. All proceeds from the sale, £6,025 will be used directly to help fund Maggie's at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge.

A vertical poster for the Chelsea Prize Draw. At the top, a decorative border of yellow and green flowers and leaves frames the title 'CHELSEA PRIZE DRAW' in large, green, serif capital letters. Below the title, the text 'This is your chance to win something truly special!' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The main body of the poster is green. On the right side, there is a large, ornate white teapot with a floral pattern. To its left, a yellow box contains the text 'EXCLUSIVE EMMA BRIDGEWATER TEAPOT'. Below this, white text describes the teapot as 'Unique gallon teapot designed exclusively in celebration of the National Garden Scheme at Chelsea 2024. Donated by Emma Bridgewater'. Below the teapot, there are two smaller images. The left one shows a black metal gazebo in a garden, with a yellow box below it reading 'ELEGANT VENETIAN GAZEBO' and 'Donated by Agriframes'. The right one shows a close-up of a hand-crafted garden parasol with a wooden frame and a patterned canopy, with a yellow box below it reading 'HAND CRAFTED GARDEN PARASOL' and 'Donated by Parasol-UK'. At the bottom left, there is a QR code in a green box. To its right, text says 'Tickets cost £10. Scan the QR code or visit ngs.org.uk/chelsea to see all the prizes on offer and to buy tickets.' The bottom of the poster is framed by the same decorative floral border as the top. At the very bottom, small text reads 'All proceeds in aid of the National Garden Scheme | Charity Number 1112664'.

Photo right: Artist-in-residence Tyga Helme at work on the National Garden Scheme Garden. Her work raised £6,025 to help fund Maggie's at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge



Fundraising Events

Plant sale: Our plant sale, generously hosted by Chilworth Manor on 1 June welcomed 659 visitors and raised over £25,000 including £15,697 from the sale of plants. These funds will be used to buy new perennials when the garden at Maggie's at Addenbrooke's Hospital is ready to be planted. The remaining £9,521 was raised from the sale of home-made refreshments, admissions and merchandise.



Volunteers from Maggie's (above) and from Sunnyside Rural Trust joined National Garden Scheme staff and volunteers at the Chelsea Plant Sale at Chilworth Manor, Surrey (opposite) on 1 June

The plant sale also gave us visibility to new audiences as one visitor said:

“Brilliant that you raised so much money. I’ll confess I hadn’t heard of the National Garden Scheme, but having looked you up I am very impressed with what you do!”



Strengthening Partnerships

Long standing partner Emma Bridgewater designed an exclusive range of merchandise to celebrate the National Garden Scheme at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024. The additional merchandise ranges encouraged new audiences to the trade stand, enabling the starting point of many conversations about the National Garden Scheme and what we do. Funds raised through merchandise sales increased by 1362% raising a total of £17,269 gross income.

Partnerships were strengthened with all existing partners who were invited onto the garden and to our hospitality events, and conversations begun with potential new partners looking forward to our centenary in 2027.

Additional Support & Events:

We received an additional £65,000 funding from Investec Wealth & Investment (UK) to cover the cost of hospitality events as well as our marketing and communications activities. A further £2,000 was received from Blue Book ensuring minimal costs for the National Garden Scheme.

We held three breakfast events and two evening events on the garden engaging 270 high value and prospective supporters.

We handed out 37,000 garden brochures throughout the week as well as 2,000 bookmarks listing the donations made by the National Garden Scheme to health and nursing charities in 2023.

Funds raised through
merchandise sales increased by

1362% raising a total of
£17,269 gross income

“Creating collections to
support charities like the
National Garden Scheme that
do so much good - not just to
promote the joy of gardens
but also raise millions for
some of the UK’s best-loved
nursing and health charities -
is always a pleasure.”

Emma Bridgewater



Pictured: David Austin Roses © Dave Nelson, Potted Plants & Lush Gardens © Benjamin



Connections & Wider Impacts

Building celebrity connections

We welcomed our celebrity President, Dame Mary Berry, our Ambassadors and Trustees and built on existing celebrity connections with Sophie Raworth and Monty Don while creating new ones with Paul Hollywood and Caroline Quentin - as described on the next page.

We were also introduced to new influencers and will continue to build on conversations and connections from RHS Chelsea in the coming weeks and months.

Creation of assets

The National Garden Scheme took the opportunity to gather media assets during RHS Chelsea 2024 that will be vital in the lead up to the charity's centenary in 2027 and other major milestones.

Video and photographic assets will be used to mark the annual launch of our NGS Elsie Wagg Scholarship programme with the Queen's Nursing Institute, the celebration of 40 years of funding for Macmillan Cancer Support which will be marked on 12 September at the Garden Museum in London, Volunteers Week, our Great British Garden Party campaign and the onward relocation of the garden to Maggie's in Cambridgeshire.

Photo right: National Garden Scheme President, Dame Mary Berry and gardener and broadcaster Alan Titchmarsh, were among the many celebrities who supported the National Garden Scheme during the week





Sophie Raworth promised to open her parents garden (which opened for the National Garden Scheme from 1981-2022 raising over £82,000) with her sister as a tribute to her parents dedication to the charity.

Other connections:

Caroline Quentin, actor, gardener and author is doing a social media and digital collaboration on her new book *Drawn to the Garden* with the National Garden Scheme in National Allotment Week 12-18 August.

We will follow up with new and existing celebrity contacts to garner further support, garden openings, income generating events and to broaden our audience appeal.



Monty Don promised to be the key speaker at a future fundraising talk for the National Garden Scheme to help raise funds and awareness. Previous talks by Monty Don have sold out, the last one raising £19,500. We are working towards a date for February 2025.



Paul Hollywood, TV baker and presenter, promised a lemon drizzle cake recipe for us to share with our audiences.

Connections & Wider Impacts *continued*

To-date we have received five direct approaches to our dedicated Chelsea@ngs.org.uk email address and over 150 - unusually high for this time of year - to our general inbox from people wanting to open their gardens for the National Garden Scheme which we are attributing to the Chelsea effect.

We will have confirmation of how many gardens open in 2025 inspired by our presence at RHS Chelsea at the point of registration in October 2024. One visitor said:

"I was inspired by your Chelsea Garden and the lovely lady from Derbyshire on the stand. I would be interested in helping raise funds by opening our garden here in Hever Kent," Vanessa

Utilising our network of community gardens

We were delighted to respond to a call for help from Project Giving Back to re-home plants from the World Child Cancer sanctuary garden. The plants were distributed to community projects in Surrey known to the National Garden Scheme including:

The Therapy Garden - working towards a positive impact on lives whether by giving a sense of purpose to children with special needs, or by reducing the isolation of a young person with autism or someone older living with dementia.

The Patchworking Garden - aiming to provide a safe, friendly and non-judgemental space for those in the community who for various reasons feel excluded.

The Farncombe Community Garden - working to grow community wellbeing by gardening together.

"I was inspired by your Chelsea Garden and the lovely lady from Derbyshire on the stand. I would be interested in helping raise funds by opening our garden in Kent."

Vanessa

Photo: National Garden Scheme staff take delivery of the World Child Cancer plants for onward distribution to community gardens



Strengthening pride in our work

From volunteers, staff, supporters and beneficiaries the response has been universally positive to the National Garden Scheme's presence at RHS Chelsea.

Volunteer Sarah Corvi summed it up when she said:

"I burst with pride to stand on that stunning garden as a part of our wonderful charity. Both the garden and its ultimate destination made a strong emotional connection with so many visitors and it was a privilege to hear their stories including a young woman who was keen to tell me about her plan to walk from the Maggie's centre in Edinburgh down to London to thank them for everything they've done for her. As a relative newcomer to the National Garden Scheme, it was the most motivating and affirming experience that encapsulated everything I love about our charity."

Others were inspired to find out more about opening their gardens for us including these owners from Derbyshire:

"Inspired by my visit to the Chelsea Flower Show yesterday, I am writing to enquire about the process for applying to open for the National Garden Scheme."

While our beneficiaries applauded the garden and its media reach:

"Your garden was simply stunning and a worthy winner of a Gold Medal. I saw so much coverage for it too across the BBC in particular, so enormous congratulations."

"I burst with pride to stand on that stunning garden as a part of our wonderful charity."



Photos: Seventy five National Garden Scheme volunteers manned the garden and our trade stand during the week of RHS Chelsea including Nigel Brandon (Surrey) Jan Brandon and Sara Gadd (Cornwall)



NATIONAL
GARDEN
SCHEME

How you can help
Visit www.nationalgarden.org.uk
or call 01223 313131

Celebrating our Beneficiaries

Our RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024 garden gave the National Garden Scheme a unique opportunity to celebrate its charitable activities and beneficiary partnerships which is what everyone at the National Garden Scheme works so hard to achieve.

Many members of the public – and visitors to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show – have not been aware of the scale of funds raised at National Garden Scheme gardens (£4 million in 2023). Nor have they known about our origins in the 1920s as a fundraising programme to support district nurses, or our decades long support for nursing and health charities and the impact that our long-term funding has on beneficiaries such as the Queen's Nursing Institute, Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie.

Through the week we were able to articulate these messages directly to visitors and they were amplified with superb support from the media, especially on the BBC television coverage which went out to millions of people every day. The end result was an uplift in public awareness that was probably only possible in the unique environment of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Photo: Queens Nurses Kendra Schneller and Fawn Bess-Leith joined us on press day with a host of celebrity supporters and Chelsea Pensioners Paul (ex Royal Army Medical Corps) and Monica who was a nurse in her civilian career

“To be here at Chelsea and see the garden is just magic. We are so proud, not just of the millions that have been raised to support Macmillan nurses and cancer services, but of all the garden owners, volunteers and visitors ... it's a very special partnership.”

At the same time many representatives from our beneficiary charities were able to join us at the show, celebrating with us our place in the world of gardens and horticulture and how we use that to support them, and personalising messages around our charitable activities with examples of what our support means for their charities.





The National Garden Scheme
East Wing Hatchlands
East Clandon
Guildford, Surrey
GU4 7RT

Email: hello@ngs.org.uk
Tel: 01483 211535

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