



Impact Report 2025



Great gardens supporting great causes



About us

The National Garden Scheme gives visitors unique access to 3,500 exceptional private gardens in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands, and raises money for nursing and health charities through admissions, teas and cake.

Thanks to the generosity of garden owners, volunteers and visitors we have donated over £77.8 million to nursing and health charities since we were founded in 1927. In November 2025 we agreed total donations from our garden season of £3,875,596 - the highest total in our history.

Originally established to raise funds for 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, Parkinson's UK, The Queen's Institute of Community Nursing and Carers Trust.

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 run a Community Garden Grants programme and fund projects which promote gardens and gardening as therapy. In 2017 we launched our annual Gardens and Health Week to raise awareness of the topic.

Our funding also supports the training of gardeners and offers respite to horticultural workers who have fallen on difficult times.

This report looks at the impact of our donations throughout 2025 and how our beneficiaries use those donations to support thousands of people and improving lives across the UK.

We look forward to welcoming you to our gardens in 2026.

Front cover image:

Chilworth Manor, Surrey has opened for the National Garden Scheme under successive owners since 1933
© Julie Skelton

Photo (left):

National Garden Scheme gardens are for everyone, of all ages
© Benjamin Mole

Contents

Page 2	About us
Page 3	Chairman and CEO review
Page 4	Our donations
Page 5	2025 in numbers
Page 7	Nursing and health beneficiaries
Page 14	Gardens and health beneficiaries
Page 18	Support for gardeners
Page 22	Community Garden Grants
Page 24	NGS Elsie Wagg (Innovation) Scholarships
Page 25	Special thanks
Page 26	Who's who Additional thanks

Chairman's and Chief Executive's review



Chief Executive, Dr Richard Claxton and Chairman, Rupert Tyler

2025 was another landmark year for the National Garden Scheme, with a record £3,875,596 donated. These funds helped thousands of people living with cancer, Parkinson's, poor mental health, or the pressures of unpaid caring, by supporting the nurses, health professionals and case workers who care for them.

Our donations also reached hundreds of gardens and health projects. In 2025, 114 new gardens received Community Garden Grants, and five new nurse-led projects were funded through our NGS Elsie Wagg (Innovation) Scholarships - bringing vital support to many communities, often in areas of deprivation. We also continued to fund the training and welfare of gardeners, whose skills underpin horticulture throughout the country as well as a number of gardens that open for us.

Nearly 100 years since our founding to support district nursing, our commitment to nursing remains central. Long-term partnerships with Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Parkinson's UK, the Queen's Institute of Community Nursing, and Hospice UK helped strengthen the nursing and healthcare workforce and support the third sector as it responds to growing need.

Our support for Horatio's Garden, Maggie's, and the Army Benevolent Fund ensured that hundreds more people could benefit from gardens, green spaces and horticultural therapy during treatment

and recovery. We also funded special garden projects and apprenticeships with organisations including English Heritage, the National Botanic Garden of Wales, the Garden Museum and the Bankside Open Trust.

Our Gardens and Health programme continues to champion the wellbeing benefits of gardening. Each May, Gardens and Health Week and the *Little Yellow Book of Gardens and Health* help us share this message with wider and newer audiences.

Thanks to very generous support from the Julia Rausing Trust, £288,876 was awarded to 114 Community Garden Grants in 2025, helping projects that promote health, wellbeing and community across the UK, particularly in urban and deprived areas.

Behind all this impact are the garden owners and volunteers whose enthusiasm and generosity of spirit makes garden visiting such a pleasure - and whose commitment makes our work possible. We are equally grateful to every visitor who, sometimes without realising it, helps improve so many lives.

Rupert Tyler
Chairman

Dr Richard Claxton
Chief Executive

Our donations

Established in 1927 to support district nurses, the National Garden Scheme now raises millions for nursing and health charities each year. We also support charities creating gardens to provide direct health benefits to people, grant bursaries to support gardeners at the start of their careers and run a grants programme for community gardens.

Throughout 2025 we worked with our main beneficiaries to help promote our partnerships, the importance of gardens to health, and to generate increased interest and support for the work of the National Garden Scheme and its portfolio of gardens. This report looks at how our donations made in November 2024 were spent throughout the year and highlights the amount we donated at the end of the 2025 garden season.

In November 2025, we donated a total of £3,875,596 which includes:

Main beneficiaries:

Carers Trust	£450,000
Hospice UK	£450,000
Macmillan Cancer Support	£450,000
Marie Curie	£450,000
Parkinson's UK	£450,000
The Queen's Institute of Community Nursing	£475,000

Gardens and health:

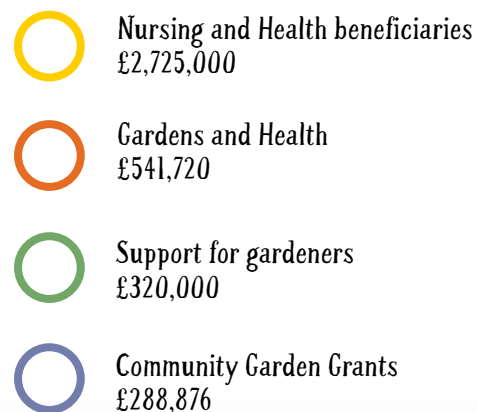
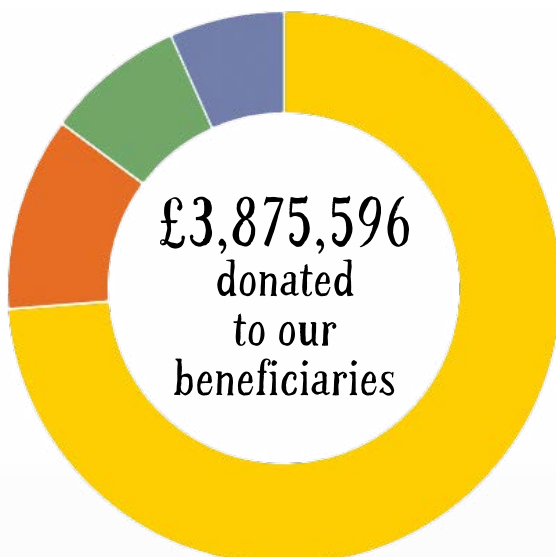
Maggie's	£125,000
Horatio's Garden	£110,000
Army Benevolent Fund	£80,000
The Country Trust	£35,000
Crossfire Trust, Northern Ireland	£43,000
King's College Hospital	£37,828
Grow, Sheffield	£27,411
Grangeway Community Garden	£20,500
Green Hub Surrey	£20,000
Douglas House (Turning Point)	£18,921
Healthy Minds	£14,060
Mount Vernon Cancer Centre	£10,000

Support for gardeners:

English Heritage	£125,000
Perennial	£100,000
National Botanic Garden of Wales	£26,000
Bankside Open Spaces Trust	£25,000
The Garden Museum	£24,000
Professional Gardeners' Trust	£20,000

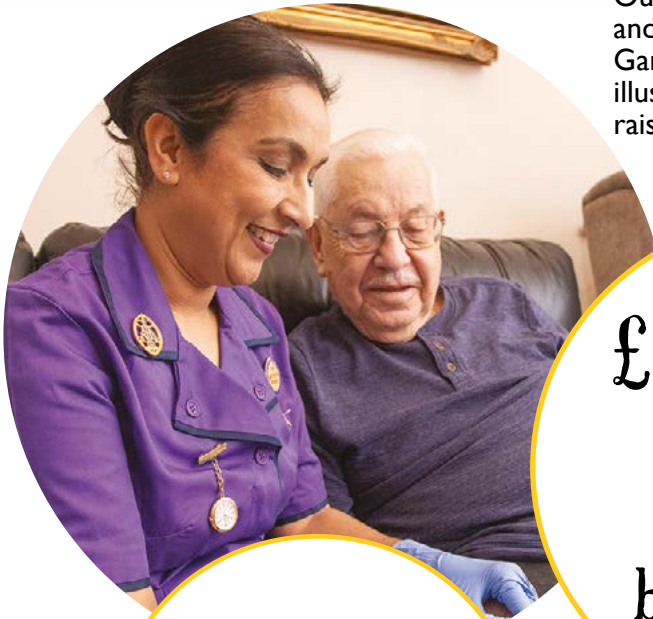
Community gardening projects:

114 projects funded	£288,876
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2025 in numbers ...

Our donations of £3,875,596 were generated from 4,743 garden openings, and almost 600,000 garden visitors, supported by over 600 National Garden Scheme volunteers during the 2025 season. The numbers illustrated here are just some of the incredible things that the money raised has supported.



£3,875,596
Donated
to our
beneficiaries

78,000

People affected by cancer
reached by Maggie's centres
supported by the National
Garden Scheme

3,500

Queen's Nurses
supported
by our funding



1,200

outpatients and
70 inpatients supported
at Horatio's Northern
Ireland



8,500

people supported at the
NGS Macmillan Information
and Support Centre in
Chesterfield

25,978

individual interventions supported
by National Garden Scheme funding
to overcome immediate problems
and make a sustainable impact
on long-term futures through
Perennial's work

what our funding supports



The equivalent of
17,521
hours of nurse hospice
at home care for
Marie Curie



114
Community Garden
projects funded

42
members of staff across
29 hospices received
Professional Development
grants



3,251
The number of hours of
learning supported by our
funding of The Country
Trust's Food Discovery
programme



10,000
People with Parkinson's
supported across the UK by
nurses funded by us

776
Individuals supported
through our donation for
the Army Benevolent Fund



Our audience reach in 2025 included: 69,900 subscribers to our weekly eNewsletter - 1.3 million visits to our website - 135,000 Instagram followers - 52,000 Facebook followers - 20,000 Threads followers and 22,700 YouTube subscribers. Twenty five National Garden Scheme gardens featured on BBC Gardeners' World.

Nursing and health beneficiaries

£450,000 donated
in 2025 over
£6.5 million since
the partnership
began in 1996



Young carers enjoyed a free visit to a WWT Wetland Centre as part of the National Garden Scheme's partnership with WWT © Jonny Donovan

CARERS TRUST

The National Garden Scheme has been supporting Carers Trust since 1996, and has donated over £6.5 million in that time to help the charity raise the profile of carers' issues, and enabled them to extend their reach and support to even more unpaid carers.

In 2025 the majority of National Garden Scheme funding, £325,000, was instrumental in supporting Carers Trust's core charitable activities, including policy, research, public affairs and major awareness-raising campaigns as well as supporting their UK-wide network of local carer centres.

The funding has helped Carers Trust expand their reach and impact and ensures that they are able to consistently deliver quality support to unpaid carers during the current cost of living crisis.

Thanks to the flexibility of unrestricted funding Carers Trust has been able to deliver and adapt its core work including:

- Publishing three new reports highlighting the issues faced by carers
- Building links with the new Government and MPs to ensure carer issues are on their radar

- Supporting Young Carers Action Day 2025
- Supporting the 'Protest from Home' campaign

During 2024-25, £19,402 was allocated to support grants from the Carers Fund enabling 63 carers and their families to benefit from support for essential household items, respite breaks, garden equipment, courses, and transport costs.

Demand for these grants continues to increase as more carers experience financial hardship due to the rising cost of living and inadequate support from statutory services. The National Garden Scheme's funding helped Carers Trust increase their maximum grant amount from £300 to £400 and support more carers than ever before. The remaining funding helped support four garden visits for over 50 carers including a Young Carers visit to WWT Wetland Centre, Barnes and the largest ever carer group visit to Godinton in Kent.

Commenting on the Godinton visit one carer said: "Within my role as a carer there is so much of me that is lost - just getting up and getting dressed to come somewhere just for me was wonderful - this experience made me come alive again."

In 2026 the National Garden Scheme and Carers Trust celebrate 30 years of partnership and will continue to raise awareness of the issues faced by carers in the UK.

£450,000 donated
in 2025 and over
£8 million since the
partnership
began in 1996



Sophie Brewis and Kate Ball, Healthcare Assistants at St Cuthbert's Hospice, who open their beautiful gardens for the National Garden Scheme



The National Garden Scheme has supported Hospice UK since 1996 donating over £8 million in that time, enabling them to continue supporting over 200 hospices in the UK that provide care for people facing terminal and life shortening illnesses, and their families.

In 2025 National Garden Scheme funding enabled Hospice UK to:

- Invest £25,000 into Professional Development Grants for hospice staff
- Invest £75,000 in improving equity of access, ensuring every person gets the end-of-life care they need
- Invest £150,000 to enhance the quality of care, supporting hospices to deliver individualised quality care amid rapidly changing demands
- Invest £200,000 to achieve sustainability, fighting for hospice services, making sure they are well funded, well governed and well staffed long into the future

The impact of this National Garden Scheme funding was felt both through restricted grants directly reaching 42 members of staff across 29 hospices, and through unrestricted funding underpinning every aspect of Hospice UK's national work.

Eleven hospices in the network registered to open their gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme in 2025, inviting the local community to enjoy these special places and to engage with hospice staff and volunteers to better understand the role of hospices. Hospice UK continues to work to raise awareness of the benefits of opening hospice gardens throughout their network.

In 2025 Hospice UK produced a partnership video focusing on the garden opening at St Cuthbert's Hospice in Durham highlighting the positive impact of opening through the National Garden Scheme.

Commenting on the partnership Chief Executive of Hospice UK, Toby Porter said: "Without the core support from the National Garden Scheme we simply wouldn't be able to provide the guidance, advocacy, and resources that help hospices thrive in communities across the UK."

Nursing and health beneficiaries



£450,000 donated
in 2025 and over
£20 million since the
partnership
began in 1984

Macmillan Cancer Support has enjoyed funding from the National Garden Scheme for over 41 years

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

The National Garden Scheme is Macmillan Cancer Support's longest standing partner having donated more than £20 million since the partnership began 41 years ago. In November 2025 the National Garden Scheme made a donation of £450,000.

In the past year we have funded six Macmillan Nurses in their roles across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to support people living with cancer, and their families. These nurses play a crucial role in ensuring that people have access to personalised care, giving them choice and control over the way their care is planned and delivered.

Previous years' funding from the National Garden Scheme helped build NGS Macmillan Information and Support Centres in Chesterfield and Bristol, and the Y Bwthyn NGS Macmillan Specialist Palliative Care Unit in Wales, all of which continue to support people affected by cancer and their families.

In Chesterfield, Macmillan professionals supported over 8,500 people, and in Bristol an average of 250

people per week, made up of drop-ins and planned appointments, were helped. The drop-in service is hugely valuable for patients who have just received a diagnosis or need support navigating through the NHS.

At Y Bwthyn the community cancer nurse specialist and psychologist ran a clinic from the day unit once a week, and a complementary therapist worked with 89 people. A dog therapist also attended the ward on a weekly basis, and one christening, a wedding and a second birthday princess party for a young mum who was a patient, took place in the large communal day unit space funded by the National Garden Scheme.

The National Garden Scheme's Gardens and Health Campaign remains a useful way to engage Macmillan staff and supporters in the wellbeing benefits of gardens and gardening, with Macmillan professionals finding it useful as a holistic support offering that they can promote to their patients. Macmillan teams were also instrumental in distributing partnership leaflets and 900 county booklets to Macmillan staff, volunteers and professionals further promoting the partnership and encouraging visitors to National Garden Scheme gardens.

£450,000 donated
in 2025 and over
£12 million since the
partnership
began in 1996



Staff and visitors enjoy the open day at Marie Curie Hospice, West Midlands as part of the annual National Garden Scheme opening



The National Garden Scheme has been supporting Marie Curie since 1996, with over £12 million donated in that time including £450,000 in November 2025.

Having a partner in the National Garden Scheme that allows Marie Curie unrestricted use of their donation is vital in funding their day to day operations alongside NHS commissioning and mass fundraising.

The lion's share of the National Garden Scheme funding enables Marie Curie nurses, healthcare assistants and support line officers, as well as bereavement services, researchers and campaigners to do the vital work needed to support those at the end of life.

To give an idea of the impact of the donation it is equivalent to:

- 44 days of full hospice costs
- 17,521 hours of nurse hospice at home care
- 10 nurse hospice at home posts for a year
- 15,500 hours of bereavement support by phone or webchat

During the year, £47,575 of the 2024 donation was spent directly on funding the National Garden Scheme Nightingale Challenge, a bespoke leadership challenge that caring services across Marie Curie can apply for to help their development, and which helps Marie Curie train the next generation of nursing leadership. 2025 saw the fourth cohort graduate, bringing the total number of graduates to 51 with 21 applicants accepted for the 2025/26 class.

The Nightingale Challenge continues to receive exceedingly positive feedback from graduates with 100% of respondents saying they would recommend the course to others. It is also an important way to help invest in the future of Marie Curie's healthcare staff.

Also in 2025, the Marie Curie hospice in the West Midlands opened its garden for the National Garden Scheme, welcoming the local community to engage with the hospice and to experience the tranquility of the gardens so beautifully managed by volunteers.

Marie Curie continues to engage it's staff in the partnership by encouraging them to visit National Garden Scheme gardens, and we look forward to celebrating 30 years of partnership in 2026.

Nursing and health beneficiaries



Parkinson's nurse, Sharon with National Garden Scheme garden owner Joss, who lives with Parkinson's

£450,000 donated
in 2025 and almost
£3 million since the
partnership
began in 2012



The National Garden Scheme has been supporting Parkinson's UK since 2012. In that time, we have donated almost £3 million to bring better care, treatments and quality of life for those living with Parkinson's. In November 2025, the National Garden Scheme donated a further £450,000 to Parkinson's UK.

2025 marked a pivotal moment for Parkinson's UK as they launched the public phase of their Nurse Appeal. They are incredibly grateful to the National Garden Scheme for the transformational support which has been instrumental in accelerating the appeal and helping more people receive the expert care they urgently need and deserve.

Thanks to the National Garden Scheme Parkinson's UK has been able to fully fund two additional Parkinson's nurse posts for two years, along with a dedicated Parkinson's speech and language therapist for 18 months through their pump-priming model. This will bring life-changing care to people who might otherwise go without.

These posts are:

- A Band 6 Parkinson's nurse at Whittington Health NHS Trust
- A Band 7 Parkinson's nurse at Livewell South West Trust
- A Band 7 speech and language therapist at Harrogate and District NHS Foundation

An estimated 1,100 people living with Parkinson's are now being supported through these three new roles.

National Garden Scheme funding was also used to enable Parkinson's UK to participate in The Big Give, the UK's largest matched giving campaign. £15,000 helped secure £15,000 in matched funding in a campaign that raised over £60,000 for the first time. The money was directed towards Parkinson's UK's ambitious research programmes, which aim to accelerate finding better treatments for Parkinson's and ultimately a cure.

Thanks to the National Garden Scheme's generous support, thousands of people living with Parkinson's have gained access to life-changing specialist care in the past year, and are no longer facing their diagnosis alone.



Queen's Nurses funded by the National Garden Scheme support patients at home across the UK



The National Garden Scheme was founded by The Queen's Institute of Community Nursing (QICN) in 1927, when 600 gardens opened at one shilling a head. The charities became independent of one another in 1980 with The QICN remaining a valued partner. The National Garden Scheme has donated over £7 million during their partnership and is the sole funder of Queen's Nurse activities.

During 2025 the majority of funding supported the Queen's Nurse network – a national community of nurses working in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. The QICN provides these nurses with professional development, learning events, and career opportunities to improve nursing care in the home and community. 510 nurses received the Queen's Nurse title, accepting their badges and certificates at the annual awards ceremony in London in November 2025. There are now nearly 3,500 Queen's Nurses.

National Garden Scheme funding also continued to support four professional networks ensuring these important networks continue and grow while The QICN develops its organisational membership.

£475,000 donated
in 2025 and
over £7 million since
the partnership
began

The networks funded in 2025 were:

- General Practice Nurse network
- Community Children's Nurse network
- Homeless and Inclusion Health network
- Long Covid Nurse Group

While it's impossible to quantify their precise impact, when nurses are connected, supported, and continually learning, patient care is known to improve. An estimated 4,500 nurses are reached each year through the networks.

Throughout the year National Garden Scheme support also funded these flagship activities:

- 12 fully funded places for suitably qualified applicants to join a selective cohort on the Leading Strategically Programme, developing senior leaders in community healthcare organisations.
- The NGS Elsie Wagg (Innovation) Scholarships focused on funding nurse-led gardens and health projects to help promote health and wellbeing in their communities.

You can read more about the scholarships on page 24.

£541,720
donated
to gardens and
health projects
in 2025



Gardens and health beneficiaries

Our Gardens and Health Programme raises awareness of the physical and mental health benefits of gardens and gardening for everyone. Celebrated in May each year with a dedicated Gardens and Health Week, we work to promote gardens and health throughout the year, linking service users from our beneficiaries with free garden visits, and funding gardens and health projects.

The charities we fund create gardens with health benefits and promote gardens and gardening as therapy. Each year additional smaller grants are made for one-off projects. We also give grants for community gardening projects that support the wellbeing of local communities and groups both through our Community Garden Grants and our NGS Elsie Wagg (Innovation) Scholarships with QICN. Our annual digital publication *The Little Yellow Book of Gardens and Health* shines a spotlight on the importance of gardens to everyone's health and wellbeing and links us to our beneficiaries and the important work they do in this field.

The following pages report on the impact of our gardens and health funding in 2025.

£80,000 donated
in 2025 and over
£880,000 since the
partnership
began in 2010



ABF beneficiary, Henry (11), his sister, Evie and mum, Natalie, joined CEOs of the Army Benevolent Fund and National Garden Scheme, and Chelsea Pensioners at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea to celebrate 15 years of funding supporting for soldiers, veterans and their families

**Army
Benevolent
Fund**

In 2025 the National Garden Scheme and The Army Benevolent Fund celebrated 15 years of partnership, marking an ongoing commitment to soldiers, former

soldiers, and their families. A donation of £80,000 continued to support members of the Army family through horticultural therapy and training, outdoor activities, and access to green spaces.

£24,450 funded seven individual horticultural grants, providing housing and education support. One beneficiary was Henry, the youngest child of Army Veteran, Lee who served in the 1st Battalion,

the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, for 14 years. Henry has a progressive medical condition which causes all his muscles to gradually weaken. Following an occupational therapy report a grant to meet the partial cost of an extension to their home was agreed with £13,500 covering the cost of bi-fold doors allowing access to the garden so that Henry can now play outside.

£55,550 also funded five charity grants for trusted horticultural charity partners who provide services that address the underlying causes of mental and physical issues, and provide horticultural therapy for veterans and their families. In total, these grants support 769 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Gardens and health beneficiaries

© Julie Skelton



In 2025 we marked ten years of funding for Horatio's Garden with our President Emerita, Dame Mary Berry at Horatio's Garden Stoke Mandeville

**Horatio's
Garden** 

Nurturing lives after spinal injury

£110,000 donated
in 2025 and over
£770,000 since the
partnership
began in 2015

2025 marked ten years of funding for Horatio's Garden, helping the charity create and care for beautiful, accessible gardens in NHS regional spinal injury centres. In 2018, the National Garden Scheme committed funding for the completion of gardens at all 11 spinal injuries units across the country and donated a further £110,000 in 2025 which contributes to the capital build of the Horatio's Garden in Sheffield. Including this one, the National Garden Scheme has now made grants to support the build of six gardens – Stoke Mandeville, Midlands, London & Southeast, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

In 2024-25 the National Garden Scheme donated £90,000 towards the seventh garden, Horatio's Garden Northern Ireland, the second of two donations pledged for the project. The funding was put towards capital build costs including soft landscaping, planting, greenhouse, garden benches, furniture, and fixtures.

Since opening, the garden has flourished and is extremely well utilised by both patients and staff, with the head gardener's home made pizza

evenings (using a new outdoor pizza oven) proving particularly popular and always filling the garden with people.

This peaceful sanctuary in Northern Ireland supports around 70 inpatients and 1,200 outpatients with spinal injuries annually from across Northern Ireland. The garden is open to use for people with spinal injuries, their friends and families and the NHS staff who care for them. Inpatients and outpatients at the Amputee Rehabilitation Unit also have access to the garden, as well as the unit's NHS staff and visitors.

In June 2025 the National Garden Scheme, along with its President Emerita, Dame Mary Berry, garden designer Joe Swift, patients and guests celebrated ten years of funding for Horatio's with a party at Horatio's Garden Stoke Mandeville. The event created a great opportunity to showcase the shared aims of both charities.

During the year, six Horatio's Gardens also held open days for the National Garden Scheme.

£125,000 donated
in 2025, almost
£775,000 since the
partnership
began in 2017



Garden designer and National Garden Scheme Trustee Arit Anderson (centre) joined the National Garden Scheme open day at Maggie's, West London and spoke about healing and gardens



The National Garden Scheme has been supporting Maggie's centres since 2017 helping the charity offer the best possible support free to anyone with cancer and their families who walk through their doors. For each centre, architects and interior and landscape designers work closely together to create a strong connection between the outside and inside space.

During 2025, a donation of £100,000 together with £22,272 from the RHS Chelsea show garden plant sale went towards the garden for the new Cambridge centre at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Planning permission has been received and the team are currently focused on raising the remaining funds to enable work - which includes the relocation of the National Garden Scheme's RHS Chelsea show garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith - to start on site in spring 2026.

Also in 2025 Maggie's opened the Newcastle annexe, Maggie's Northampton and the Cheltenham extension all supported by National Garden Scheme funding.

Previous funding has enhanced Maggie's gardens in Swansea and Oxford, and also supported new gardens in Yorkshire and Southampton. Each garden is enjoyed by thousands of service users every year and collectively these centres supported more than 78,000 visits from people with cancer, and those they love.

Fundamental to the partnership is the opening of Maggie's gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme and in 2025, five gardens at Maggie's centres opened. Garden designer and National Garden Scheme Trustee Arit Anderson spoke about healing and gardens as part of the West London opening in June. These popular openings help provide wider access to these wonderful spaces.

The donation of £125,000 made in November 2025 will go towards Maggie's Coventry which is being designed by Nigel Dunnett, a pioneer of a new ecological approach to planting gardens and public spaces, known for *Superbloom* at the Tower of London and *The Meadows* at Olympic Park. He will create an environment that increases biodiversity and wildlife habitat opportunities in the grounds of the busy, built-up campus of University Hospital.

Gardens and health beneficiaries



The Country Trust's Food Discovery programme helps reach children from areas of high social and economic disadvantage who typically have the least access to hands-on food and gardening experiences



In November 2024 the National Garden Scheme made its first donation of £25,000 to support The Country Trust deliver it's Food Discovery Programme to five schools across the country in London, Derbyshire, Cambridgeshire, Manchester and Northumberland. This meant that 240 children who would not normally get the opportunity to engage with where their food comes from were able to participate in an immersive journey through kitchen gardening and food.

The donation has been transformative for The Country Trust's Food Discovery Programme, directly enabling them to fulfill their core mission of 'connecting children with the land that sustains us all' in ways that would not have been possible otherwise.

Most significantly, this funding has allowed them to reach children from areas of high social and economic disadvantage who typically have the least access to hands-on food and gardening experiences.

Funding paid for 71 sessions totalling 3,251 hours of learning, directly supporting The Country Trust's mission to ensure that every child, regardless of background, has the opportunity to discover the connections between the food they eat, their own health and the health of the planet.

Gardening and outdoor activities formed a significant part of the programme and were consistently described by both pupils and staff as joyful, calming and confidence-building experiences. The children spoke with enthusiasm about planting and growing with the programme giving them real ownership and agency, making them more confident in their abilities. Feedback included the following comments: "It taught me that I am more helpful than I think." - "I'm actually really good at cutting and cooking." They also spoke about learning patience and perseverance - key elements of mental resilience.

A partnership hub was also created for the National Garden Scheme website in 2025 aimed at helping to spread awareness of The Country Trust's work. And we are delighted to announce increased funding for the Food Discovery Programme of £35,000 through 2026.

Support for gardeners

The National Garden Scheme raises money from opening exceptional gardens many of which are looked after by professional gardeners. As well as helping gardeners and others working in horticulture through our donations to Perennial, we also recognise that it is often hard for people to get started in a gardening career so we also fund a variety of training and apprentice schemes.

In November 2025, our donations in support of gardeners totalled £320,000 and were distributed to Perennial, the National Botanic Garden of Wales, the Professional Gardeners' Trust, the Garden Museum, English Heritage's outstanding Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme and Bankside Open Spaces Trust. These pages give a taster of how our donations are being used.



Graduates of English Heritage's Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme graduated at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire in August



In November 2025, the National Garden Scheme extended its funding to English Heritage in support of their Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme (HBGTP) beyond the original three year plan with a grant of £125,000.

The previous year's donation supported five trainees and two apprentices enabling them to take part in the Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme in the 2024-25 academic year.

Trainees are paid a salary of at least the National Living Wage, whilst being supported pastorally by the HBGTP manager, as well as the professional garden team at their placement garden, for whom management and mentoring training and guidance is also provided. At the end of the year trainees receive a Certificate of Completion at a graduation ceremony.

Through its major contribution to the programme, the National Garden Scheme donation indirectly

benefitted a further 14 trainees and apprentices, and over 36 trainee supervisors and mentors who were supported to develop their management skills through the programme. In addition, the many thousands of visitors to the gardens benefitted from the trainees' and apprentices' work. Long term, the funding will be impactful in the wider sector through passing on vital skills and creating passionate future gardeners.

The 2024-25 cohort supported by the National Garden Scheme were placed at Walmer Castle, Osborne House, Wrest Park, Audley End, Brodsworth Hall and Gardens, and Mount Grace Priory. In August the trainees graduated at Wrest Park, with National Garden Scheme trustee Debbie Thompson in attendance.

As part of the ongoing partnership in 2025 English Heritage also hosted exclusive, out of hours garden tours at nine of their properties in support of the National Garden Scheme. In 2026 the Open Garden programme will include events in counties where they have not previously been held including Eltham Palace, London, Witley Court, Worcestershire and Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire.

Support for gardeners

The Garden Museum



Garden Museum volunteers and trainees © Eva Nemeth

The National Garden Scheme has been funding the Horticultural Traineeship programme at The Garden Museum since 2013. 2024/2025 saw the eleventh trainee funded through the partnership and the twelfth trainee start at the end of 2025.

The funding supports the trainee's part time role onsite (four days a week), working under the head gardener, and facilitates their allocated 18 days on placement in gardens across the country and abroad, from Great Dixter, Gravetye Manor and Lowther Castle to gardens in Tuscany and the USA.

The £24,000 donation made in November 2025 by the National Garden Scheme brings total funding for the programme to over £150,000.

As well as the trainee, subsidiary beneficiaries include the 10-12 regular weekly gardening volunteers that the trainee supports and works with across their year at the museum, and those attending workshops run by the trainee.

The trainee also interacts with the museum's immediate community, supporting in particular those who garden in the new community garden which offers local Lambeth residents the opportunity to grow produce in raised beds, and receive cultivation advice from the trainee alongside the garden team. Beneficiaries in this capacity number around 50 a year.

The Garden Museum also holds an open day for the National Garden Scheme each year. In 2026 it will be the evening of 24 April.

National Botanic Garden of Wales



Apprentice Kate Cobley running a flower arranging workshop

The National Garden Scheme has been funding an apprenticeship in Botanical Horticulture at the National Botanic Garden of Wales since 2016.

To date, the National Garden Scheme has helped fund nine apprentices who have gone on to work in a variety of horticultural roles in Wales and around the world.

Current apprentice Kate Cobley (2024-26) took part in a number of initiatives including a professional case study film for the Welsh Government apprenticeship campaign. Future funding will support the new 'Growing a Gardener' initiative expanding the apprenticeship model to deliver year-long, earn-while-you-learn placements combining hands-on horticultural training with college-based study.

Funding supports the continuation of the NBGW Apprenticeship Programme, a two-year, structured horticultural training initiative developing future professional horticulturists. Recent donations enabled two funded positions (2023-2025 and 2024-2026 cohorts) with RHS Level 2 training, and professional development opportunities. Apprentices rotate through multiple horticulture zones - glasshouses, nurseries, outdoor planting, estates maintenance and external placements. They also contribute to VIP tours, educational visits, and community programmes and interact with over 200,000 garden visitors a year.

Bankside Open Spaces Trust



Work experience in Victoria Park, London

The Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) was awarded £21,000 in November 2024 for four students to complete its Future Gardeners programme.

The London-based programme aims to provide horticultural training to people who have been long-term unemployed or faced challenges in their lives and who would benefit from gaining confidence, skills and the opportunity of training and employment. Although the course is suited to a wide variety of people, it targets those with the most need, such as people not in education or training, those who cannot afford other horticultural courses, and people who have learning needs or disabilities.

Our funding helped four students complete the course which includes:

- A City & Guilds Practical Horticulture Level One qualification
- Practical experience in BOST community parks and gardens
- Work experience with horticultural industry leaders like The Royal Parks, Chelsea Physic Garden, Victoria Park, and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
- Research visits and workdays
- Talks by horticultural industry experts to inspire students about future careers
- CV building and help with applying for jobs
- One-to-one tailored mentoring aimed at building confidence

National Garden Scheme funding is seen as a great endorsement of BOST's work and crucial to the success of the programme. Funding for six more students will continue in 2026.

Perennial



© Anna Shvets/Pexels

The National Garden Scheme is Perennial's largest single donor having gifted over £2.4 million since the partnership began in 1986. In 2025 we donated a further £100,000.

Perennial works with individuals, partners, and communities to provide tailored support and services that make a lasting difference to the wellbeing of those in horticulture.

In 2025, National Garden Scheme funding helped Perennial:

- Write off £185,878 in personal debt reducing stress and improving financial futures
- Help people secure £259,262 in benefits that they were entitled to
- Support 950 unique callers to their helpline looking for advice and information
- Offer 87 people access to legal advice
- Provide £144,000 of direct financial support
- Deliver 25,978 individual interventions to overcome immediate problems and make a sustainable impact on long-term futures.
- Engage 17,677 people equipping them with the knowledge, tools and confidence to safeguard their future wellbeing

During the year three Perennial gardens, The Laskett, Fullers Mill and York Gate also held open days for the National Garden Scheme.

Both charities share a deep commitment to promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of gardens and the dedicated individuals who create and maintain many of these beautiful spaces. Our funding helps Perennial to focus on the physical and mental health of those designing, building, growing and maintaining green spaces across England and Wales. In 2026 we will celebrate 40 years of partnership.



Community Garden Grants

£288,876 donated
in 2025 funding
114 community
garden projects

As part of the charity's wider Gardens and Health programme the National Garden Scheme awards grants to help community gardening projects, celebrating with the presentation of a special plaque on completion of the work. In 2025 we funded 114 projects with a total of £288,876.

The funding for 2025 was announced in April to coincide with Community Gardens Week and was the first year that utilised the generous funding from the Julia Rausing Trust.

From social welfare and gardening projects that help the isolated, the disabled and the disenfranchised to support for community orchards, food banks and social prescribing projects at GP surgeries, the funding provides a much-needed boost to those working on or initiating community garden projects throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Danny Clarke - aka The Black Gardener - and National Garden Scheme ambassador says: "Participating in an allotment or community garden can give meaningful social connections which help to reduce loneliness and isolation. I have noticed how these spaces can bring people of all generations, cultures and backgrounds together, to happily share knowledge and traditions. It's wonderful to see the continuing generosity of the National Garden Scheme Community Garden Grants which are helping to fund these amazing spaces across the country and contributing so positively to social cohesion."

Many of the funded community projects in turn open for the National Garden Scheme completing a virtuous circle of giving and giving back. Some examples include:

The Pakistan Association Liverpool Wellbeing Garden – developed to create an inspirational space for the members to enjoy, grow vegetables, herbs and flowers. It's been made from recycled materials and plants, including bricks from the mosque floor and donated plants. It opens as part of the Canning and Toxteth Gardens, Liverpool on 14 June, 2026.

Rhubarb Farm, Nottinghamshire, a two acre horticultural social enterprise that provides training and volunteering opportunities to ex-offenders, drug and alcohol misusers, older people, school students, people with mental and physical ill health and learning disabilities opens for the National Garden Scheme on 18 June 2026.

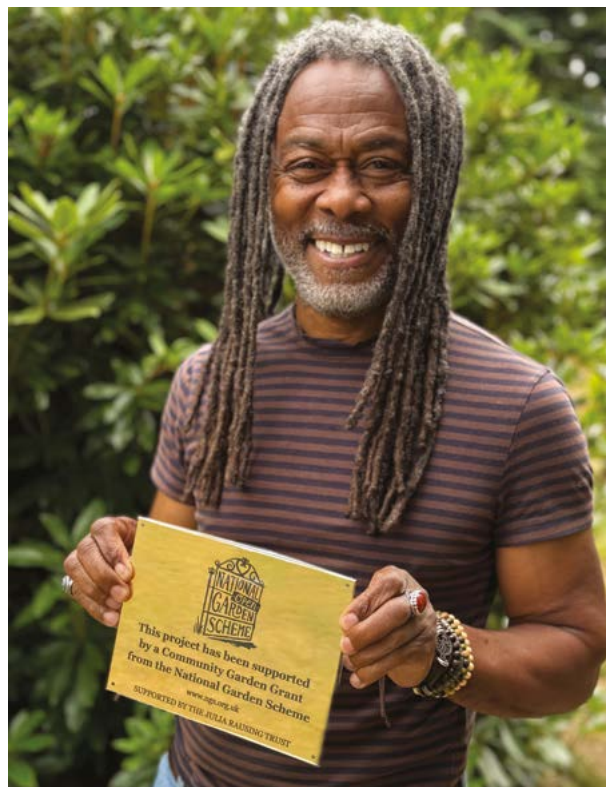
Ponthafren, Montgomeryshire is a registered charity that provides a caring community to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all. The garden will open on 25 July 2026.

Since the Community Garden Grants began, over £1,100,000 has been donated to more than 500 community projects.

Funding for the next tranche of grants which is being generously supported by the Julia Rausing Trust over the next four years, will be announced in April 2026.

These grants form part of the wider National Garden Scheme's Gardens and Health programme which in 2025 saw the total funding for Gardens and Health projects exceed £4.3 million.

To find out more about the Gardens and Health programme, including recent funding for nurse-led community projects visit our website [ngs.org.uk](https://www.ngs.org.uk)



Main picture: Grantee, Growing for Change, Organic Market Garden in Gwynedd is a community initiative supporting individual recovery from substance abuse or mental health issues through gardening © Gary Phillips. Above: National Garden Scheme ambassador, Danny Clarke with one of the commemorative Community Garden Grant plaques which is presented to grantees on the completion of funded work

Grants of £5,000 for innovative garden-related projects led by Queen's Nurses are changing lives



NGS Elsie Wagg (Innovation) Scholarships

In 2021, The Queen's Institute of Community Nursing (QICN) and the National Garden Scheme created a scholarship programme for community nurses, the NGS Elsie Wagg (Innovation) Scholarship. It is open to all nurses working in the community, with five scholarships available for the best applications each year. The projects, which receive £5,000 each are community gardens that promote the health benefits of gardening and garden visiting.

The scholarships are named after Elsie Wagg, the QICN council member who originally had the idea to open gardens to raise funds for charity which led to the creation of the National Garden Scheme in 1927. The QICN has a long track record of supporting nurses to develop and implement their own ideas to improve the nursing care of the people they care for in the community. Each scholarship comes with a year-long programme of individual and group support, as well as funding to implement the project to improve healthcare.

Since the Scholarship began £100,000 has supported 20 projects, including in 2024/25:

The Garden to Plate Project, London was designed to improve the mental health and wellbeing of individuals living in or accessing homelessness services through therapeutic gardening and communal, food-related activities. The project achieved its aim of utilising outdoor activity and routine to improve mental wellbeing, increase awareness of healthy eating and physical health, create higher engagement with healthcare services and strong participant ownership of the garden space. It also helped participants develop practical horticultural skills and reignited the project lead's passion for gardening and deepened their appreciation of its therapeutic value.

The GPN Community Growers Project, Staffordshire was developed as a wellbeing initiative for General Practice Nurses (GPNs) transitioning into practice. Responding to workforce pressures and pandemic-related stress, the project offered therapeutic activities that encouraged creativity, connection, and self-care. Three strands; Sew and Grow, Make and Paint, Bake and Share, formed the thematic basis for sessions, which were delivered during protected working hours to maximise accessibility. The project evolved over time to reflect participants' preferences and needs, engaging over 30 nurses and inspiring further initiatives.

The Growing Together Project, in Homerton, London aimed to transform a care home's outdoor space into a therapeutic garden benefiting staff, residents, and future volunteers. Key features included engagement with local school students, and the development of quick reference health resources for volunteers. The project also explored partnerships with local GP services to promote health and wellbeing. The garden became a hub for reflection, education, and community building. Initial activity focused on staff wellbeing, with future plans to involve youth volunteers in structured intergenerational activities.

The Space to Grow Project, Sutton transformed a neglected green space beside a church into a therapeutic community garden. Initially focused on people accessing homeless services, it evolved to include a broader local population, offering a welcoming space for all. The garden was co-designed with residents and homeless service users. Early momentum came from volunteers linked to Sutton Primary Care Networks and a local homeless clinic. While initial engagement fluctuated due to housing transitions and care needs, the team successfully re-engaged new participants through various health and wellbeing events.

The Healing Plot Project, Cheshire transformed an under-used outdoor space into a therapeutic garden designed for people with lower limb wounds and other health challenges. The garden aimed to improve patient outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, encourage sustainable practices, and build stronger links between community, healthcare, and local organisations. One service user with lower limb wounds engaged in the project reported difficulties with diet, footwear, and pain at the outset. Through involvement in the garden, they gained access to fresh produce, peer support, and meaningful activity. They went on to achieve a Level 1 food hygiene certificate, and now volunteer in the Wishing Well Café attached to their GP practice.

For a full report on the projects supported through this programme visit the National Garden Scheme or QICN websites.

Photo: Project lead, Queens Nurse Kendra Schneller (left) takes produce from the Garden to Plate Project in London to Manna Centre Chef Irena who makes meals for project service users

Special thanks ...



Across the year, garden owners and volunteers worked together to welcome visitors to 4,743 garden openings and helped raise awareness of the National Garden Scheme to diverse audiences

The success of the National Garden Scheme and the significant amounts of money that it donates to its beneficiaries would not be possible without the dedication and generosity of the charity's garden owners and volunteers.

In 2025, garden owners hosted 4,743 garden openings for the National Garden Scheme supported by 601 volunteers. The enthusiasm, expertise and joy of sharing that our garden owners and volunteers exhibit is at the heart of everything the charity achieves.

As well as helping to open gardens, National Garden Scheme volunteers also represented the charity at RHS Chelsea and regional flower shows, connected with beneficiary partners, led on local PR and social media and engaged new garden owners.

Across the year, garden owners and volunteers worked together to welcome visitors to gardens in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands enabling the charity to donate a record £3,875, 596 to its beneficiary charities.

Who's who

Patron

His Majesty King Charles III

President

Alan Titchmarsh CBE

President Emerita

Dame Mary Berry

Chairman

Rupert Tyler

Deputy Chairman

Sue Phipps

Honorary Treasurer

Andrew Ratcliffe

Chief Executive

Dr Richard Claxton

Trustees

Arit Anderson

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Vanessa Berridge

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Susan Paynton

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Vernon Sanderson

Debbie Thomson

Ambassadors

Emma Bridgewater CBE

Fiona Bruce

Danny Clarke

Alan Gray

Rachel De Thame

Anya Lautenbach

Joe Swift

Jo Whiley

Additional thanks

Core sponsor



We are extremely grateful to our core sponsor Rathbones who have supported the National Garden Scheme for over 30 years. Their long term support is so important to us, helping us to achieve our goal of opening exceptional gardens and successfully raising much needed funds for some of the UK's best loved nursing and health charities each year.

Our corporate partners

We are generously supported by a small group of corporate partners who help to raise awareness of our work, encourage more visitors to our gardens and make a financial contribution with an annual donation or through donations on the sale of selected products. They include:

GRIFFIN GLASSHOUSES
GREENHOUSES OF DISTINCTION

Agriframes
Garden Inspiration

CROCUS





Photo: 100 Knollys Road, London © Max A Rush



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The National Garden Scheme is a charity registered in the UK. Charity Number 1112664

We look forward to welcoming you to our gardens in 2026