



**Devon Gardens Trust
Annual General Meeting 2025
Thursday 9th October 2025
Lukesland Gardens, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0JF**

Dear Member

19 September 2025

We have great pleasure in inviting you and your guests to the Devon Gardens Trust AGM 2025 at 11:00 am on Thursday 9th October 2025 at Lukesland Gardens, Ivybridge.

The AGM will be followed by lunch in the Old Billiard Room, and in the afternoon a tour of the gardens by the owners John and Lorna Howell.

Programme

From 11:00 am Arrival and registration, coffee/tea
11.30 am Annual General Meeting

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM 2024, held on 20th August 2024 (Page 3)
3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the last AGM not covered elsewhere on the Agenda
4. Annual Report of the Chair and the Trustees (Page 7-10)
5. Election of the Trustees for 2025-26 (Page 22)
6. Presentation of the Trust's key initiatives in 2024/25 and plans for 2025/26
7. Any other business (Items for inclusion to be sent to the Chair to arrive by Monday 6th October 2025).

After the official business, there will be a brief period for questions and informal discussion.

1.30 pm Lunch (booking for lunch is essential. See Booking Form*)
2.30 pm **Tour of Lukesland Gardens with the owners**
4.00 pm Depart

IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND, PLEASE BOOK TICKETS EITHER ONLINE via the link in the latest DGT ENews OR please return the enclosed Booking Form with your remittance to arrive by **Thursday 2nd October 2025**.

* DGT members may attend the AGM without charge, but attendance of the subsequent garden tour and lunch is only for those who have booked.

No dogs please.

Enquiries by EMAIL to events@devongardenstrust.org.uk

With kind regards,

Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight, Co-Chairs

Devon Gardens Trust

Minutes of the Thirty-Seventh Annual General Meeting

held on Tuesday 20th August 2024 at Tapeley Park Gardens, Westleigh, Bideford, North Devon

37.1 Members present: Stephanie Berry, Peter Bieneman, Clare Campbell-Lamerton, Shane Cormie, Peter Davies, Mary Fourt, Michael Gee, Francis Gilbert, Penny Hammond, Michael Hickson, Anne Inman, Jane Knight, Liz Lewis, Dianne Long, Jonathan Lovie, Sue Minter, James Perriam, Jan Uden, Andrew Underhay, Helen Whitmore, Letitia Letman, Andrew Young, and Gina Richards.

37.2 Proxy votes received: Jeryl Andrew, John Borron, Philip Darch, Susan Harwood, Jane Jerrard, David and Carolyn Keep, David Lewis, Barbara and Stuart Moul, Vivien Rands, John Watt, Linda and Alan Williams.

37.3 Welcome and Introduction: The Chair announced she would be retiring as it was her 'end of term' and stressed that a new Chair should feel free to develop a brief different to predecessors but as agreed by fellow trustees.

37.4 Apologies: Janet Anderson, Jeryl Andrew, Lady Arran, John Borron, Peter and Joan Breach, John Clark, Lady Nicola Clinton, James Davies, Philip Darch, Sandra Dean, The Earl of Devon, Caradoc Doy, Eunice and Eric Durrance, Paul Faulkner, Susan Harwood, Carol Hughes, Jane Jerrard, Carolyn and David Keep, Andy Lethgoe, Barbara and Stuart Moul, Julia Neville, Vivien Rands, Ruth Saltmarsh, Ian Smith, Richard Soans, Adrian Symons, John Watt, Linda and Alan Williams and Rosemary Yallop.

37.5 The Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 12th September 2023 at Shilstone, Modbury.

Minutes had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. The Minutes were proposed as an accurate record by Shane Cormie and seconded by Jane Knight and approved by the meeting nem con. The Chair of the Council of Management then signed a copy as an accurate record of the proceedings.

36.6 Matters arising from those Minutes: there were no matters arising.

37.7 Report of the Chairman of the Council of Management and the accounts:

The Chair's Report including details of the Trust's activities for the year up to March 31st 2024 had been circulated with the AGM papers, along with the accounts. The Chair thanked the Committee Chairs for all their work and the reports. Acceptance was proposed by Penny Hammond and seconded by Liz Lewis and passed nem con but with the abstention of Barbara and Stuart Moul.

37.8 Appointment of Auditors:

The appointment of the auditors Bush and Co. for the year 2024/5. Acceptance was proposed by Dianne Long and seconded by John Reeves and passed nem con but with abstention by Barbara and Stuart Moul.

37.8 Presentation of the Trust's key initiatives in 2024 and plans for 2025.

In support of the written reports to explain new initiatives and advertise forthcoming events, a Powerpoint presentation was shown (with thanks to Stephanie Berry).

The presentation included a look back at some events and a Chair's update which listed:

- * the success of funding a Conservation Management Plan for Oldway
- * the success of gaining listing of Peamore as a site registered by Historic England.

- * the identification and listing of parks and cemeteries in Devon with the aim of producing a statement of significance for each and potentially to support cash-strapped local councils in their conservation.
- * the New Initiatives Group looked to developing links with 'kindred spirit' organisations eg the new regional group of the Georgian Society
- * a proposal to develop a photographic competition/exhibition annually for Xmas.
- * On publications:
 - Viv Rands was congratulated for the success of the ENews
 - Grace Lindsay-Smith has produced the first newsletter for 5 years.
 - Dianne Long has co-ordinated the publication of our latest Journal
- * There had been a new members event at Brinshill
- * the tree records were now returned to the DGT office and it had been agreed that they were to be retained as a 20 year 'snapshot' of the county's significant trees with future recording to be combined with site recording
- * Thanks were given to Michael Hickson who is retiring after a long reign as our President; and also to the Earl of Devon for support as our Patron, including his fund-raiser.
- * A new office would be needed after the end of May 2025 as the current lease would then expire and it had been agreed that a new office would need to be near public transport and large enough to accommodate research volunteers and allow members to consult the library
- *We had attended Toby's Garden Festival and it was hoped we could offer a talk in 2025 to generate awareness and membership.

*Two DGT | Awards have been made:

- to the Oldway Garden Volunteers Group for their devotion and creativity in maintaining the gardens in a sustainable way.
- to Wood MediSpa for their work on restoring the Thomas Mawson garden and to the novel adoption of 'zero carbon' soil management in the walled garden.

There then followed an update on conservation by Jonathan Lovie, Conservation Officer to the Trust.

- 1) Torbay Council have now commissioned a structural report on the grotto (part of the largest Meyer rock garden in Devon) which could well lead to some grant awards by the DGT.
- 2) Peamore had been added to the HE Register which should deter an ongoing application for a landfill site nearby which would affect views of the picturesque, designed landscape.
- 3) Concern was expressed over the North Devon windfarm proposal near Lundy where the land-based infrastructure required could affect listed Saunton Court.
- 4) With the change of government, a consultation on the proposed revision of planning policy was underway via The Gardens Trust. There were to be new ways of working with The Gardens Trust also.

Following the presentation and there being no AOB the meeting was opened to members questions.

Helen Whitmore queried why no conservation grants had been given in the reported year; whether any work had been done to disperse monies to Head Gardeners or via the Womens' Farm and Garden Association and what support was given to assist gardeners at venues which were not listed as much was needed.

In reply the Chair stated:

It was our aim to disperse more funds but 'we could not give money if people did not apply for it' This is despite there being a simple application system. We needed to get better known which is why we advertised our grant-giving capacity to the c 100 Devon garden owners in the NGS Yellow Book and also made personal approaches to potential recipients. Three grants for training had been given this year and the trustees were looking at making a financial award to the annual DGT awardees. The Professional Gardeners' Network had held a training day on machinery in spring and a workshop on writing to publicise gardens is proposed for the autumn. There was to be a second look at funding WRAGS trainees.

Thanks to the outgoing Chair was proposed.

This concluded the official business of the Annual General Meeting which ended at 12:15 hours.

Signed by Chair

Date



**Devon Gardens Trust
Annual Report
2024-2025**

Championing Devon's garden heritage

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Legal and Administrative Information Year Ended 31 March 2025

Patron	The Earl of Devon
President	Vacant
Vice-Presidents	Mrs Janet Anderson Dr Eric Durrance Mr Peter Hunt Mr Steven Pugsley
Co-Chairs	Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight (appointed 25 October 2024)
Treasurer	Stephanie Berry (appointed 28 April 2021)
Membership Secretary	Elizabeth Lewis (appointed 1 March 2020)

Trustee and Directors

Ms Sue Beardsmore (elected 20 August 2024)
Mrs Stephanie Berry (elected 1 September 2021)
Mr Peter Bieneman (elected 20 August 2024)
Mr Paul Faulkner (elected 7 December 2022)
Ms Jane Knight (elected 7 December 2022)
Mrs Elizabeth Lewis (elected 24 September 2022)
Mr Ian Smith (elected 20 August 2024)

Conservation Officer	Jonathan Lovie
E-News	Vivien Rands

Registered Company Number 2277427

Registered Charity Number 800540

Registered Office and Correspondence Address

Exeter Community Centre
17 St David's Hill
Exeter
EX4 3RG

Accountants

Bush & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants
2 Barnfield Crescent
Exeter
EX1 1QT

Bankers

National Westminster Bank Plc
59 High Street
Exeter
EX4 3DL

Investment Brokers and Custodians

Brewin Dolphin Ltd
Vantage Point
Woodwater Park, Pynes Hill
Exeter
EX2 5FD

Devon Gardens Trust

Trustees' Report

for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing documents, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and Activities

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and governed by Articles of Association. The Trust is also a Registered Charity.

The Objects of the Trust are to:

- Promote, for the public benefit, the protection, conservation, enhancement, research and understanding of the Designed Landscapes of Devon and
- Promote the education of the public on the arts, crafts, sciences, and all other matters connected with the heritage of those landscapes.

In fulfilling this purpose, the Trustees have complied with the duty in Section 1(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the guidance published by the Charities Commission on public benefit.

The Directors and Trustees

The Trustees and the Directors are shown on the page above. They are Trustees for the purposes of the Charities Act and are proposed from the body of the Membership and were elected formally at the AGM and the EGM.

Liz Lewis has decided not to stand for re-election as Trustee having served for one term which ended on 23 September 2025. We thank her for the contributions that she has made as Trustee and are delighted that she will continue to serve as Membership Secretary.

Main Activities and Achievements during the year 2024-25

Since our last AGM, DGT Trustees, Committees and many other volunteers have had a busy year delivering on the key focus areas agreed by Trustees at our first meeting after the AGM. This report summarises the work in each of these areas.

1. Education: increase DGT support to gardeners and students

To engage and support professional gardeners and respond to their interests, we organised a symposium with eminent speakers on biodiversity and gardens - 'Let's go Wild' - at RHS Rosemoor in February and we were delighted that this attracted more than 70 participants. This will be followed up with a climate change focused event - 'Carbon in the Garden' – in September at Dartington and we hope to report that this has been similarly successful. The Education Committee, led by Ian Smith, plans to continue to build the Devon Professional Gardeners' Network.

During the financial year and subsequent period until the AGM, DGT has awarded seven bursaries to gardeners for continuing professional development courses to a value of £4,217. We have also pledged a grant of £8,000 to support a WRAGS trainee placement at Nethercott House, Farms for City Children, and applicants are being sought with the help of the WRAGS regional co-ordinator.

2. Encourage more grant applications:

A major review of our grants programme was launched to simplify the application process and criteria and to encourage more applications. Trustees have approved a consolidation to three grant categories that have now been published on our website:

- **Community grants:** a new category aimed at supporting the conservation and development of gardens in community spaces and schools
- **Education, Study and Research bursaries** focused on people and learning
- **Conservation grants** to enable the restoration of historic gardens

3. Consolidate and improve access to DGT's research archives and library:

Over the years the Trust has carried out research on the many important designed landscapes across Devon. These sites, either on the Historic England Register or the Devon Local List, are listed in the Parks and Gardens database on our website but much of the research material is still only available in our physical archives. The archives are intended for the benefit of members as well as the Conservation Officer and are also periodically used by other researchers. A key focus this year has been to make these documents easier to consult by reviewing and rationalising them. We also have many books in the DGT library available for consultation.

We are delighted that Clare Greener accepted the role of Honorary Archivist and has taken the lead on this major project along with Paul Faulkner, Chair of Research and Recording and a team of volunteers. Excellent progress has been made and once the project is completed, the DGT archives will be accessible at the Devon Heritage Centre and the library catalogue will be referenced on our website.

4. Attract new members and volunteers by raising awareness of the work of DGT:

We are always seeking opportunities to raise awareness of DGT and our work as well as attracting new members and volunteers.

In May, DGT took a stand at **Toby's Garden Festival** at Powderham. Sue Minter gave a talk in the main marquee which brought some additional visitors. Nine new members were signed up during the event.

We launched the **DGT Photography Competition** – with advice from Norfolk Garden Trust who had a similar initiative. This is open to everyone, taking photos of Devon's parks and gardens in the categories of architecture, atmosphere and activity and with cash prizes!

Our **ENews** is published monthly to members and a growing mailing list of over 560 subscribers. It aims to share the work of each of our committees, as well as upcoming events of interest to members, and promote aspects of our designed landscapes thanks to the lovely photos taken by our volunteer "roaming" photographer Liz.

We continue to regularly post on **Instagram** and now have **590 followers** - please follow us!

We advertised again in the NGS Yellow Book to build awareness with those who visit gardens regularly.

Trustees and Members continue to give talks to garden societies and other groups.

Facilitated by Historic England, the **Gardens Trust** has conducted a series of consultation events with County Garden Trusts to see how the relationship could be strengthened and supported. This has been an interesting opportunity to network with other groups, swap ideas and learn more about how they respond to similar challenges.

5. Website usability enhancements & parks & gardens database clean-up

Our aim with the website updates is to offer better functionality for members and broader scope and depth of subject matter.

This year, we have continued to improve the accuracy and consistency of the data held in our Parks and Gardens database. As we complete the consolidation of our research archives, we will add further information of interest.

6. Member and volunteer engagement through an active and varied event calendar:

DGT membership is currently 290 (up very slightly from 286 in 2024) including 4 student members. Altogether, 24 new members joined in the year ending 31 March 2025, some of whom also volunteered to help with our ongoing projects. We are pleased to report that the majority of our annual subscription members have renewed.

We have had a busy programme of events starting with a series of **winter talks and a successful Christmas lunch**. 164 members & visitors have learnt about a variety of topics from contemporary approaches to the design of historic gardens and landscapes to a historic view of Devon's cemeteries.

We have made the most of spring and summer in our glorious county by **enjoying visits to public and private gardens**. These are planned to offer a unique perspective on the properties and gardens we visit, and we have benefitted from the insights of owners, head gardeners or specialist guides. This year, a total of 186 members and visitors have joined these tours.

Those signing up for events will have noticed that we are using a **new on-line booking system** which seems to be working well and is less costly to operate.

7. Continuing focus on conservation activities:

Engaging with the planning process allows us to ensure designed landscapes are protected and to identify those that may be 'at risk.' This year, our knowledgeable and experienced Conservation Officer and Conservation Committee have reviewed and commented on over 40 planning applications and our input has highlighted key issues that had not been fully considered in applications and, in addition, we have offered constructive comments and design changes to improve proposals. As an example, we worked closely with Exeter Civic Society leading to the Veitch villa garden at Larkbeare House being awarded a Grade II listing.

The Conservation Committee works closely with the national Gardens Trust (GT) who are statutory consultees in the planning process. This could change as a result of central government's proposed streamlining of the planning system which would remove the GT as statutory consultee. DGT, along with the GT and other County Garden Trusts, are lobbying to raise awareness of our role and the value of our designed landscape heritage.

Two grants, each of £500, have been awarded for research featuring aspects of Devon parks and gardens to be included in books, scheduled to be published in 2026.

8. Good Governance:

Underlying all our work is ensuring the charity's good governance and financial management. Under the leadership of trustee, Sue Beardsmore, a complete review of our policies, Charity Commission and Companies House requirements is underway. To ensure complete transparency, we plan to make these available through our website.

Finally, our **thanks go to all our volunteers** – who dedicate countless hours to the Trust and allow us to do everything that we have described. We would like to give a particular mention to Clare Greener - our Honorary Archivist - who has been recognised by the Gardens Trust as their '2025 long service volunteer award winner'.

We would love more of you to **get involved** with our projects and work or the organisation of DGT. Suggestions for visits and talks are always welcome. All volunteers get a huge amount out of what they do for DGT so if you have spare time and have been excited or inspired by anything we have mentioned, please come and speak to us.

Each of our Committee Chairs has provided detailed reports on their activities which are included in the Appendix.

Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight, Co-Chairs

(Our division of responsibility reflects our location, skills and expertise and is outlined in the Governance section of the Appendix).

Financial Report

As of 31 March 2025, the Trust's reserves amounted to £340,622 (2024: £346,069) of which £136,325 are Restricted Funds (Wilson Conservation Fund).

The Restricted Funds originate from the John Wilson legacy designated to be used for the restoration and conservation of important Devon gardens with priority to be given to the restoration of Oldway Mansion, Paignton's original landscape designed by Achille Duchêne. Trustees met the enthusiastic Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group (DGT Award winner 2024) in April this year to get a better understanding of the Oldway gardens. Excitingly, DGT and the OGVG are now working with Torbay Council to explore a potentially major project to enhance the gardens and disburse the Wilson Conservation Fund.

The balance of Unrestricted Funds is to be used for the normal activities of the Trust. The Trust's expenditure on operating costs is stable but always exceeds its income. To ensure that DGT has sufficient operating funds and is able to respond to any unforeseen challenges the Trust maintains a level of reserves of twice the average annual expenditure in the General Fund of the Unrestricted Funds (£51,890). The balance of the Unrestricted Funds (£152,407), held in the Designated Fund, is available for expenditure in line with the Trust's objectives.

The Trust is currently launching a new, simplified grants programme to encourage wider participation. It aims to spend approximately 20% of its funds each year on education as well as conservation and restoration projects. Actual expenditure will depend on relevant, good quality applications that align with the Trust's aims and objectives.

The summary income and expenditure account, produced for circulation to members, is included on the following page. The activities for the year generated a net movement in funds of £(5,447) deficit (2024: surplus of £19,905). Both income and expenditure for the year were globally in line with 2024. The deficit this year versus the surplus in 2024 was directly driven by the movement in the investment portfolio valuation (investment gains of £1,391 compared to gains of £27,545 in 2024).

For the financial year to 31st March 2025 the investment portfolio increased on a total return basis (income and capital growth) by just 2.8% reflecting a dip in the first months of 2025, although calendar year 2024 performance was strong standing at 10.7%. Markets and our investment portfolio have since recovered from the high level of uncertainty following President Trump's first weeks in office.

Statement Of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Devon Gardens Trust for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

DEVON GARDENS TRUST**SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	2025	2024
	£	£
Income		
Subscriptions	3,825	3,935
Gift aid	1,167	1,394
Donations	23	1,726
Events, including AGM	4,248	2,622
Book sales	32	66
Income from Investments	8,209	8,330
Total Income	<u>17,504</u>	<u>18,073</u>
Expenditure		
Depreciation and impairment	-	284
Administration	288	572
Office rent & service charge	1,834	1,662
Publicity & marketing	1,287	2,949
Bursaries & grants	1,866	1,696
Conservation - grants awarded	500	-
Conservation - committee expenses including officer	4,264	3,175
Research & recording	13	397
Events, including AGM	5,008	2,470
Publications - journal & newsletter	1,299	2,398
Subscriptions & sundries	204	189
Insurance	692	711
Accountancy	2,307	2,315
Investment management fee	3,340	3,125
Book expenses	-	530
Legal & professional fees	1,440	3,240
Total Expenditure	<u>24,342</u>	<u>25,713</u>
Gains/(Losses) on Investments	<u>1,391</u>	<u>27,545</u>
Net Movement in Funds	<u>(5,447)</u>	<u>19,905</u>
Funds Brought Forward	<u>346,069</u>	<u>326,164</u>
Funds Carried Forward	<u>340,622</u>	<u>346,069</u>

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Bank current account	3,220	8,656
Brewin Dolphin account	2,630	30,947
Investments at Market Value	337,928	308,290
Stock	827	1,509
Prepayments	1,730	2,730
Accruals	(5,713)	(6,063)
	<u>340,622</u>	<u>346,069</u>

Notes

1. The Trust is a Company limited by guarantee, with charitable status.
2. This abbreviated financial statement is produced for circulation to the Members. A copy of the full accounts prepared in accordance with the requirements of the FRS 102, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006 is held by the treasurer

Appendix

Reports from Committee Chairs

2024-2025

Governance Committee Report

Chair: Sue Beardsmore

Sue Beardsmore, elected as a trustee at the AGM, was elected Chair of Finance and Governance Committee in October.

Since then, there has been an ongoing review of policies, Charity Commission and Companies House requirements, with input from Trustees, Chairs of Committees and Committee members.

A Policy Management Schedule has been updated. Policies are being reviewed and adopted in sequence, and in order of priorities identified.

In particular work is ongoing on an Archive and Library Policy to support the strategy suggested by the Honorary Archivist and the review of premises requirements. The current lease ends in May 2026.

A review meeting for all trustees and chairs was held with Brewin Dolphin (Investment Managers) to assess the Trusts investment portfolio, performance and strategy. The Investment Policy was subsequently reviewed and adopted, to include ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) outcomes.

The Reserves Policy, reviewed annually, was updated to recognise the current level of funds held by the Trust.

A Grants Policy has been drawn up in support of a revised, simplified grants structure which has been developed. The Trust committing to dispersing agreed funds in support of projects which align with its aims and objectives.

We are working to recruit new Trustees and have one candidate to propose for election at the AGM and a second currently being considered by Trustees. The current arrangement of a joint Chair continues as agreed at the Trustees Meeting 25th October 2024.

Co-Chairs Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight with areas of oversight:

Stephanie – Governance & Finance, Research & Recording, Communication & PR, Membership

Jane – Conservation, Education, Events and representing DGT locally.

Education Committee Report

Chair: Mr Ian Smith

We support education (primary, secondary and tertiary), life-long learning and continuing professional development in historic designed landscapes by offering bursaries and grants for educational courses, fees for conferences, training and other professional development courses.

We awarded three bursaries in the financial year 24/25:

Elliot S, £390 to study the RHS L3 theory course online with B.E.S.T. in Horticulture. Elliot is a gardener at the University of Exeter. The bursary was awarded in April 2024 and he has now

successfully passed this qualification. (part funded with the Professional Gardeners Trust)

Susan B, £750 to study the RHS Level 3 practical at Bicton College. Susan is a psychologist working with children and families that aspires to move into therapeutic horticulture.

Anna C, £726 to study garden design online with the British Academy of Garden Design. Anna is the head gardener at NT Castle Drogo and hopes the garden design course will help her to further understand the designed landscape that she currently cares for.

And in recent months four more bursaries have been awarded:

Rob G, £380 to study the RHS Level 2 online (part funded by the Giles Trust)

Rupert W, £750 to study the RHS Level 3 online. Rupert is a gardener at NT Arlington and applied for a bursary after attending the Devon Professional Gardeners' event in February

Tracey R, £471 to study garden design at Bicton College. Tracey is a self-employed gardener working in a private historic garden in Devon and applied for the grant after attending the Devon Professional Gardeners' event in February.

Kate R, £750 to study RHS Level 2 online. Kate is currently beginning her horticultural career as a gardener but already volunteers at a NT garden.

Devon Professional Gardeners' Network

The aim of this initiative is to help professional gardeners working in Devon (ideally working in historic gardens) and will include bursaries and grants for improving their ability to care for the historic designed landscape in Devon, including mentoring and holding events to encourage gardeners to network and share ideas.

The focus of our 2025 events was, 'contemporary issues facing gardeners and horticulturalists with the aim that - by making informed choices - we can all be part of the solution of the overlapping challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and the health & wellbeing crisis'.

'Let's Go Wild' - a day of learning and sharing ideas about biodiversity, was the first event in February at RHS garden Rosemoor. Jane Knight gave an introductory talk with other speakers from Heligan - where beavers have been released, the National Wildflower Centre at Eden Project and James Hitchmough speaking about his research and work on plant communities and applying them to planting design. The group was then given a tour of RHS Rosemoor by Alex Paine looking at current practical gardening practices that have a strong emphasis on biodiversity. This was a great success! With over 70 gardeners attending and giving very positive feedback.

'Carbon in the Garden' – a day to discuss how gardeners can respond to climate change, is to be the second event in September at Dartington Hall. Speakers will include Jane Knight - freelance landscape architect - introduction to the theme of the event, Dr Mark Gush – Head of Environmental Horticulture with the RHS - talk on research supporting gardening in an era of climate change, John Little - Grassroot Company and Care not Capital - talk on designing a new open mosaic landscape (the potential of the complex). Followed by a garden tour of Dartington.

The committee will continue trying to find more gardeners to add to the network and enhance the benefits to the professional gardeners. We have already been contacted and are assisting two other County Garden Trusts (Suffolk and Wiltshire) who are now keen to learn from our success. If you know of any gardeners who would benefit from being part of our network, please contact PGN@devongardenstrust.org.uk

Supporting WRAGS trainee placements at Nethercott House

In March the education committee visited Nethercott House to meet with Farms for City Children and the Devon WRAGS co-ordinator. We were impressed by the work being done there and feel that a traineeship at Nethercott would be a good way to both help a worthy children's charity and create an opportunity for a gardening trainee to gain horticultural training in a historic garden in Devon. The placement would not be possible without funding from the DGT. The WRAGS trainee scheme has been running for the past thirty years and is part of the WFGA organisation which has a 125-year tradition of nurturing Britain's gardening talent. The cost for a one-year trainee placement will be approximately £8,000 based on the trainee being paid the predicted National Living Wage of £12.21 per hour for the two days per week. This has been approved by the trustees and FCC and WRAGS are actively searching for an appropriate trainee. This trainee placement helps the trainee, the charity and the many primary and secondary children who are helped by Farms for City Children.

The education committee would like to continue similar support for a trainee at other Devon historic gardens in future years.

Future Initiatives for 2026

The education committee are continually looking to see how best to meet their objectives and hope that next year will be even more successful, with emphasis on simpler and more effective bursaries, the professional gardeners' network and developing better ways to engage with primary and secondary education.

Conservation Committee Report Chair: Dr Dianne Long

The Trust's conservation team has had a busy year, advising owners and managers, examining local plans and has responded to over 40 planning applications, most of which are not contentious.

Two examples of major complex consultations that have required considerable scrutiny were the proposed landfill site at Lower Brenton Farm, Kennford, its northern boundary adjoining the registered boundary of Peamore Park, for which consent has since been refused and the proposed land terminal for the White Cross off-shore wind farm located off the North Devon coast near Lundy potentially affecting Saunton Court. While assessing the White Cross application it became very clear that the developer had not taken adequate account of the likely visual impact of the off-shore elements of the scheme on nationally and locally designated designed landscapes including Tapeley Park (II*), Clovelly Court and the Hobby Drive, Hartland Abbey, the Villa on Lundy, and the long, designed views from Castle Hill (I). Furthermore, the Marine Management Organisation, the Government body which in effect acts as the marine planning authority, did not consult either The Gardens Trust in its role as statutory consultee, or DGT on the wind farm applications. It is unclear what criteria (if any) pertain to consultations by this body where on-shore heritage assets are or may be affected by marine proposals. We advised The Gardens Trust to raise this issue with the planning authority and applicant.

In response to several applications relating to Mamhead (II*) including the erection of a new deer fence around the entire land in the applicant's ownership (the vast bulk of the registered site), and the planting of hedges to mitigate the visual impact of the new fence, we advised that proposals would be better brought forward within the context of an over-arching CMP, advice which was echoed by Historic England. We also advised that the proposed fences and hedges would harm the setting of the Grade I mansion and Grade II* Castle.

Having been involved in pre-application discussions with Stover School on the proposed redevelopment of school buildings adjacent to the mansion (II*), stable block (Clock House – II*) and walled garden, we were satisfied that the locations chosen for the buildings concentrated their impact in one area of the designed landscape; alternative schemes set out during the pre-application consultation would have seen these impacts spread through a much wider area of the designed landscape. We therefore supported the application which will provide the Listed buildings and landscape with a beneficial use which will (hopefully) allow further investment in the conservation of structures such as the old stables (II*) and the temple and terraces (II).

The Gardens Trust (TGT) made several changes to the way in which it informs county gardens trusts (CGTs) of statutory and non-statutory planning consultations, and responses are made. DGT is now having to advise TGT on all consultations whereas hitherto for most cases DGT had responded on behalf of DGT and the GT. This is because TGT must be seen to be responding to demonstrate the number of responses in order to substantiate their grant funding.

During the year, the government announced an enquiry into the future of the statutory consultee status of several bodies, including The Gardens Trust. TGT has launched a campaign to explain its role and canvass support from MPs and members of the House of Lords. The government consultation on the issue is expected in autumn 2025. In the event that TGT ceases to be a statutory consultee, there will be implications (as yet not clear) for our own conservation work, and that of other CGTs.

We were pleased that following DGT's application, Historic England added Peamore Park to the *Register of Parks and Gardens in England of Special Historic Importance* at Grade II, although we were perturbed that Historic England chose to draw the site boundary along the A379 road, thus excluding from the designated area the lake and former productive gardens, all integral elements of the eighteenth-century designed landscape which lie to the east of the road, which leaves these vulnerable to unsympathetic change of development pressure. Also, the Trust was consulted and provided evidence that led to Larkbeare House, Exeter, being added to the *Register* at Grade II; in this case we worked closely with Exeter Civic Society and although we were very pleased that the significance of the Veitch villa garden has been recognised, it was disappointing that neither the house nor the eighteenth-century prospect tower which was incorporated into Veitch's design were Listed.

Very encouraging progress has been made by the Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group to implement the recommendations of the Garden Management Plan (proposed and funded by the Trust) and the Conservation Management Plan especially in respect of opening up key views. We are pleased that Torbay Council have secured funding and have started restoration work on Oldway mansion. The Trust pressed for pruning to be undertaken on the Lime Avenue and for a structural survey of the grotto, the latter as a first step to help ascertain options for restoration or at least stabilisation of the grotto so that the Trust could evaluate whether this might be an appropriate recipient of a major grant from the Trust from the Wilson Fund.

We advised the National Trust on the historic significance of Half Moon House at Manaton, at the time being offered for sale by the NT, and the desirability of a conservation management plan being prepared on the Picturesque walks through Manaton Rocks. We also advised the Dartmoor National Park Conservation Officer to ensure that the designed landscape is included on the Dartmoor Historic Environment Register.

Following the review undertaken by members of the Conservation and Research teams of the Devon Local List, the list of entries has been updated on the website and sent to Devon Historic Environment Register. The review also identified priorities for research, particularly to inform planning consultations and consideration of applications to Historic England. However, it was recognised that the current paucity of active research volunteers meant that it might be some

time before such research could be achieved.

Two grants, each of £500 were offered during the year for research costs on book publications scheduled to be published in 2026 and both featuring aspects of Devon parks and gardens.

Events Committee Report

Chair: Mr Shane Cormie

It has been a varied year of talks and visits. Where possible we have arranged venues and sites in different parts of our large county. Since last year's AGM our programme has included:

Our **Christmas event** at the Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham including an entertaining and informative talk by Tim Richardson, author, journalist and founder of the Chelsea Fringe. (36 attendees).

Winter talks:

Silk, water, iron and smoke, gardens of industrial improvement by a previous DGT Chair, Dr Dianne Long (35 attendees).

Devon Dead and Buried by Hugh Mellor in association with the Devonshire Association (54).

Creating gardens with a sense of place with Hugo Bugg of award-winning Harris Bugg Studio (39).

Garden visits this spring and summer nearly all 'sold out' and took us to:

- Nethercott House walled garden, venue for Farms for City Children (20 attendees).
- Buckland Abbey with a tour from the Head Gardener (12 attendees).
- Italian Garden at Great Ambrook (in support of Rowcroft Hospice) (30 attendees).
- Stover School and Park (27 attendees).
- The Pig at Combe with a tour from the Head Gardener (24 attendees).
- Holcombe Rogus (32 attendees).
- Marwood Hill Gardens (16 attendees).
- Bickham House, hosted by a DGT founding member (25 attendees).
- Creative Art in the Landscape at Sandridge Park- sadly cancelled due to low bookings.

In all cases we were guided by either the owners of the properties and/or the Head Gardener. Their knowledge and expertise added much to our enjoyment. We thank all our hosts, speakers and others who made these events memorable.

The programme has been made possible via contacts within the **Professional Gardeners' Network**, suggestions and contacts via members. A big thank you to our volunteers who have helped organise and deliver these events on the day including Vivien Rands for ensuring the ENews, highlighting events, is sent out on a regular basis.

Trustee **Peter Bieneman** has taken a leading role in organising the programme and his background and knowledge has helped drive the programme forward.

During the year, we changed our ticketing platform to **eventbookings.com** which provides a similar service to our previous provider but at a more competitive rate. Thank you for your patience during this period of transition.

Publicity

We continue to raise the profile of DGT, and our main effort was attending **Toby's Garden Festival** in May. Learning from our attendance the previous year, in conjunction with the Italian Garden at Great Ambrook, we had a larger display with plants for sale, produced a new display banner and accepted credit card payments for sales, memberships and donations. Sue Minter gave a talk in the main marquee which resulted in more footfall to our stand. Nine new members were signed up during the event and of course it was lovely to catch up with a number of members who attended.

Thanks go to all our volunteers who helped over the two days and with the setting up etc.

We continue to regularly post on **Instagram**. Posts include information from The Gardens Trust and other County Gardens Trusts as well as news on our events and general items on Devon's historic landscapes. Thanks to our volunteer photographer, Liz, who has supplied many images for our publicity. If you are not one of our 590 followers, please follow us.

Thank you to everyone who has helped display/distribute DGT leaflets, given talks about DGT's work and other subjects. Your enthusiasm is greatly appreciated and helps raise our profile in the county and beyond.

Honorary Archivist's Report

Hon Archivist: Dr Clare Greener

The main thrust of work in the office this year has been updating the research file cover sheets which detail the material held within the files. Having updated the majority of files in the office we are now in the process of amalgamating the files with those held in the Devon Heritage Centre. Files require sorting, removing plastic wallets and packaging the material we hold in acid free folders to comply with DHC's current policy.

We have also been in the process of consolidating and reducing our library to concentrate on books which are most useful for research, particularly those that contain information about Devon sites or on research techniques.

In addition to the above we have also opened the office for researchers who are looking for further information. This year we have had requests to view the files of Veitch and Lucombe and Pince, both well-known Exeter nurseries, as well as sharing information on asylum landscapes.

A big 'thank you' to all the volunteers who have helped over the past year whether in a part-time capacity or on a regular basis. There is a lot to be done to ensure that the current project is finished before the office is closed next year and more volunteers would be welcome whether on a once a month or a couple of hours a week basis. If anyone is interested in helping with this project, please let me know.

Membership Report

Secretary: Mrs Elizabeth Lewis

Our membership at end March 2025 was 272. This is a reduction from 286 in 2024 but we are pleased to report that numbers have since recovered to 290. We have three Bursary Student members and one Student member who previously received a Bursary. 24 new members have joined in the year ending 31 March 2025, some of whom also volunteered to help with our ongoing projects. Welcome to all our new members!

We are pleased to report that the majority of our annual subscription members have renewed their membership this year and thank everyone for continuing their support.

We are sad to report the deaths of longstanding and valued members and send our condolences to their families: Derek Smith, Mrs Juliet Sutton-Scott, Lady Williams (Pippa), Revd. Dr. David Keep and Mrs Joy Williams MBE.

Our thanks to Joy Williams' family and friends for the donations to DGT raised in her memory.

Trustees for 2025-26

Under the terms of the Trust's Articles of Association there shall be at least 5 and not more than 15 Trustees. For the year 2024-25 there were 7 Trustees, a combination of existing members and those elected or re-elected at the Annual General Meeting on 20th August 2024. The Articles require that any Trustee who has served their term of three years must retire at the next Annual General Meeting that occurs nearest to the expiry of their term. A retiring Trustee may be re-elected for a maximum of two consecutive terms of office including their initial term.

The following served as Trustees during the past year:

Ms Sue Beardsmore	Elected 2024
Mrs Stephanie Berry	Re-elected 2024
Mr Peter Bieneman	Elected 2024
Mr Paul Faulkner	Elected 2022
Ms Jane Knight	Elected 2022
Mrs Elizabeth Lewis	Elected 2022
Mr Ian Smith	Elected 2024

Trustees eligible for re-election

Mr Paul Faulkner (first term ends 6 December 2025)

Ms Jane Knight (first term ends 6 December 2025)

Retiring 2025 after one term:

Mrs Elizabeth Lewis (3-year term ended 23 September 2025)

One new Trustee is proposed for election and has indicated their willingness to serve as Trustee for the period 2025-2028. Their biography is included overleaf.

Other candidates can be considered for election at the AGM if the Chair receives written nominations in advance of the meeting, together with confirmation from the candidates of willingness to stand. If anyone wishes to make nominations, or be considered for nomination, please contact chair@devongardenstrust.org.uk.

The Trustees will appoint the Trust's officers at their first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

**Devon Gardens Trust
Nominations for Appointment as Trustee 2025-26
Nominee Biographies**

Hugo Bugg



Hugo Bugg is an award-winning garden and landscape designer and co-founder of Harris Bugg Studio, with studios in Devon and London. A graduate of Falmouth University, he first gained recognition as RHS Young Designer of the Year in 2010 and went on to become the youngest ever Gold Medal winner at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2014.

Since then, Hugo has led significant projects across the UK and internationally, from botanic gardens in Sweden and Jordan to major UK public landscapes such as RHS Garden Bridgewater, named European Garden of the Year 2022. He and Charlotte Harris most recently won Gold and Best in Show at Chelsea 2023 for Horatio's Garden.

Hugo's work is characterised by a rigorous design approach, an emphasis on storytelling and place, and a commitment to sustainability. He leads Harris Bugg Studio's sustainability work group and is currently leading on a number of ecologically sensitive rural projects across Devon.

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

DGT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025 BOOKING FORM

Thursday 9th October 2025 at 11:00am

at

Lukesland Gardens

Ivybridge

Devon

PL21 0JF

We would encourage our members to book online via the link in the latest E-News. This helps us not only to monitor ticket sales more effectively, but also helps to manage our limited resources within our small volunteer team.

Of course, if you would prefer not to book online, please complete and return this form with your cheque to:

AGM, DGT Office, Exeter Community Centre, St David's Hill, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3RG

Email events@devongardenstrust.org.uk

Tickets (for lunch and garden tours)

_____ £25.00 (DGT Members) _____ £35.00 (Guests/Non-members)

Please state if you have any dietary requirements

I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to **DEVON GARDENS TRUST**.

Name: _____

Email: _____ Tel. _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

BOOKING REQUIRED BY Thursday 2nd October 2025.



PROXY VOTING FORM
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Thursday 9th October 2025 at 11:30am

The Devon Gardens Trust AGM 2025 will be held at Lukesland Gardens, Ivybridge, PL21 0JF. Members who do not wish to attend in person are encouraged to exercise their votes by appointing the Chair of the meeting as their proxy to vote on their behalf. By voting you will be helping us to ensure that there is a quorum for the meeting.

I _____(your name)

Of _____(your address)

a member of Devon Gardens Trust and entitled to one vote, hereby appoint the Chair of the meeting as my proxy to vote for me and on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the Trust to be held on Thursday 9th October 2025 at 11:30am and at any adjournment thereof, as follows.

Resolution	For	Against	Abstain
1. To approve the Minutes of the AGM 2024 held on 20 th August 2024			
2. To receive the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year to 31 st March 2025			
3. To re-appoint Bush & Co as independent examiners and the Trustees to fix their remuneration.			
4. Election of Trustees for 2025-26 i) To re-elect Jane Knight and Paul Faulkner as Trustees for a further three-year term from the end of their current term on 6 December 2025 ii) To elect Hugo Bugg as a Trustee for a three-year term			

Signature _____

Date _____

Notes

1. Please place an X in the box representing your vote for each resolution.
2. If you do not wish to vote on a particular resolution, please put your X in the Abstain box.
3. If you do not complete a box for a particular resolution, your vote will be noted as an abstention. Note that an abstention is not a vote in law and therefore cannot be counted in the calculation of votes for or against a resolution.

This form must be **completed, signed and dated and sent to arrive no later than Thursday 2nd October 2025** either **by post** to AGM, Devon Gardens Trust, Exeter Community Centre, 17 St David's Hill, Exeter, EX4 3RG or **by email** as an attachment (including signature) to **membership@devongardenstrust.org.uk**