



# Impact Report 2020



*A year of crisis and innovation*



## About us

The National Garden Scheme gives visitors unique access to over 3,500 exceptional private gardens in England and Wales, and raises impressive amounts of money for nursing and health charities through admissions, teas and cake.

Thanks to the generosity of garden owners, volunteers and visitors we have donated a over £60 million to nursing and health charities since we were founded in 1927, and in 2020, despite the challenges we all faced, we made total annual donations of £2,884,710 from our 2019 season.

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 and The Queen's Nursing Institute.

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 fund projects which promote gardens and gardening as therapy, and in 2017 launched our annual Gardens and Health Week to raise awareness of the topic. We also support charities doing amazing work in gardens and health and grant bursaries to help community gardening projects.

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 made in 2020 and how our beneficiaries use those donations to support thousands of people across the UK.

Photo (left): Thakeham Place Farm, West Sussex © Vicky Flynn

## Contents

Page 2	About us
Page 3	Chairman & CEO review
Page 4	Who's who
Page 5	2020 in numbers
Page 8	Our donations in 2020
Page 9	Help Support Our Nurses
Page 12	Reports
Page 13	Nursing & health beneficiaries
Page 19	Gardens & health beneficiaries
Page 22	Guest beneficiary
Page 23	Grants & bursaries
Page 25	Donation summary
Page 26	Our thanks to ...

**Front cover image:**  
Tracy McWilliams, Marie Curie nurse in full PPE, photograph taken at the Marie Curie Hospice, Belfast, April 2020

*"I was amazed to discover that the National Garden Scheme is Marie Curie's largest single funder and has given the charity nearly £10 million over 25 years. Their continued support makes such a difference to me and all Marie Curie Nurses on the frontline of the coronavirus crisis, as we continue to provide expert care and support to people at end of life."*

Photo © Brian Morrison/Marie Curie

# Chairman's and Chief Executive's review



Chief Executive, George Plumpton and Chairman, Martin McMillan

2020 has been an extraordinary, challenging year. For the National Garden Scheme the news that the country was to go into lockdown at the end of March, because of the coronavirus pandemic, was devastating. Overnight our garden gates closed with absolutely no certainty of when they might open again.

This had an impact that reached into every part of our charity's activities, not least the donations to our beneficiary charities. These are made annually on the basis that we always give away in one year all net income from total funds raised in the previous year. 2019 was a record year with the gardens raising more than £4 million for the first time ever, which would have enabled record donations of £3.3 million.

However, faced with our gardens closed for an indefinite period and in the knowledge that these openings produce 85% of our total income, we had to make a painful decision to reduce donations in order to survive. In the event we donated a total of £1.3 million to beneficiaries in April. Smaller donations were paid in full, a number of our core beneficiaries receiving 50% and our two largest beneficiaries, Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie, receiving no funds.

In this unprecedented situation we must put on record our thanks for the extraordinarily supportive and understanding response we got from all beneficiaries when we imparted the depressing news. Most are charities who, at that time, were being expected to maintain services on the front line of the pandemic whilst the sources of funds that supported them were being drastically reduced. Their response has been heroic.

These events made us determined to do all we could to get to a position later in the year when we would be able to consider further donations. This involved extensive cost-saving and looking at how to raise funds by other means while our gardens could not open. And so, just two weeks after lockdown, our Virtual Garden Visits programme was born. With the help of our wonderful, resourceful and passionate garden owners, we began to release weekly portfolios of virtual garden visits; short films that opened the gates to gardens large and small across England and Wales.

At the same time we launched our Help Support our Nurses fundraising campaign, urging people who watched the videos to make a donation. We had little idea what impact these films would have but the benefits soon became clear. By the end of June we had passed our target of raising £100,000 online. In all, the campaign raised more than £250,000. (See page 10).

At the beginning of June we were allowed to start reopening gardens, but it was very tentative. In an atmosphere of national caution gardens opened in limited numbers, with visitors having to book online in advance, purchasing a ticket for a timed slot.

The rewards to both garden owners and visitors were immediately apparent. Owners were delighted to welcome visitors once again, visitors were more than ever thankful for the chance to visit a garden. Many told owners that their visit was the first time they had left home since the start of lockdown; they felt safe in a garden and it offered something uniquely special.

By the time the last gardens were opening at the end of October ticket sales had raised a total of £450,000. In addition to this and the donations made for the Virtual Garden Visits campaign, our fundraising was swelled by great generosity from our garden owners, many of whom gave donations in lieu of what they would have raised at the opening they were not able to hold. There was also great ingenuity, in particular in the form of plant sales which raised another £117,000.

Thanks to these combined initiatives we head towards the end of the year in a far healthier position than we could have imagined in April and able to announce further donations to our beneficiaries the details of which can be found on page 8. This means that many intended donations have been paid in full, with the remaining group of our core

beneficiaries receiving 85% of the intended total, with the balance being held over for payment in 2021.

Coronavirus, with its inescapable combination of disruption, anxiety and in many cases real tragedy, has shone a bright light on the benefits that access to gardens and outside green space offers to everyone. Time and time again this message was articulated by our garden owners, visitors and the audience at home who watched our videos. It has enabled us to put out messages and content of reassuring positivity that people have greatly appreciated. We have been shown that many people regard the National Garden Scheme and all it stands for with affection and respect. That is a source of great pride at such a time.

Throughout the pandemic we have had unwavering support, not least from our Patron, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales who generously gave us a video message for our campaign. Another high point of the year was the recent announcement that our President, Mary Berry, had been made a Dame.

We know that 2021 will bring further challenges. But we go into it reassured by the commitment of our volunteers, the support of our garden owners who have registered in large numbers to open, and confident in the strength of our beneficiary partnerships.

*A Martin McMillan OBE, Chairman (2014 - Nov 2020)  
George Plumpton, Chief Executive*

## Rupert Tyler: new Chairman of the National Garden Scheme

After six years as Chairman of the National Garden Scheme, Martin McMillan, was succeeded by Rupert Tyler on 18th November.

Martin spent nine years as a Trustee before his appointment as Chairman in 2014 and, during his term of office, saw both garden income and donations reach record levels.

A Trustee since 2014, Rupert has enjoyed a 35 year career in the city at Brewin Dolphin. Originally a relatively small, private client stockbroking house, Rupert has been part of the team that has transformed it into one of the UK's leading wealth managers. He has managed a wide range of private client portfolios including Trusts, Personal Pensions, Charities and Private Charitable Trusts and held a wide variety of positions within the organisation

## Who's who

### Patron

HRH The Prince of Wales

### President

Dame Mary Berry

### Chairman

Martin McMillan, OBE (to November 2020)

Rupert Tyler (from November 2020)

### Deputy Chairman

Sue Phipps

### Hon Treasurer

Andrew Ratcliffe

### Trustees

Atty Beor-Roberts

Richard Barley

Peter Clay

Susan Copeland

Maureen Kesteven

Susan Paynton

Mark Porter

Vernon Sanderson

Sir Richard Thompson KCVO

Alison Wright

### Chief Executive

George Plumpton



including Head of the London Office, Head of Regional Directors and Head of Charities. Latterly, he has also focussed on Brewin's ESG policies and set up the Diversity and Inclusion Committee from a standing start; he also chairs the firm's Corporate Responsibility Committee.

Hugely passionate about gardening, he and his partner have opened their garden for the National Garden Scheme for the last 14 years.



**£2.88 million**  
Donated in **total** to  
all our beneficiary  
charities in 2020



**158**  
Hospices across the UK  
supported with the supply  
of PPE to protect frontline  
staff during the pandemic



**18,130**  
unpaid carers supported  
through funding for  
Carers Trust



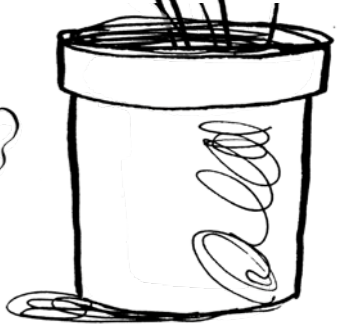
**44**  
Community garden  
projects received  
support



**£2.587 million**  
donated to nursing  
and health charities



**1,420**  
Queen's Nurses  
supported by our  
funding



**127**  
New Queen's Nurses  
received the prestigious  
title in 2020 bringing the  
total number to 1,420



**20,000**  
Visits a year supported  
by Maggie's centre  
Southampton



**300**  
Additional people living with  
Parkinson's able to access  
the support they need to  
manage their condition



**124**  
Inpatients supported by the  
Y Bwthyn NGS Macmillan  
Specialist Palliative  
Care Unit in Wales



Our donation of £2.88 million was generated from the opening of 3,552 gardens, supported by 556 National Garden Scheme volunteers during the 2019 season. These are just some of the incredible things that the money raised has supported.



As part of our ongoing commitment to Horatio's Garden we helped fund the new Horatio's Garden at the London Spinal Unit at Stanmore, designed by Tom Stuart-Smith  
Photo © Lucy Shergold

# Our donations in 2020

Originally set up in 1927 to support district nurses, the National Garden Scheme now raises millions for nursing and health charities each year. We also support charities doing amazing work in gardens and health, grant bursaries to help community gardening projects and support gardeners at the start of their careers.

In 2020 we donated a total of £2,884,710 and 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.

## Main beneficiaries:

Macmillan Cancer Support	£425,000
Marie Curie	£425,000
Hospice UK	£425,000
Carers Trust	£340,000
The Queen's Nursing Institute	£370,000
Parkinson's UK	£157,500

## Guest charity:

Mind	£80,000
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## Gardens and health:

Horatio's Garden	£75,000
Maggie's	£100,000
Patchworking	£20,000
Greenfingers at St Oswald's	£15,000
Well Halton	£75,000
ABF The Soldier's Charity	£80,000

## Support for gardeners:

Perennial	£85,000
WRAGS	£65,000
National Botanic Garden of Wales	£20,000
Professional Gardeners' Trust	£20,000
Garden Museum	£10,000

## Community gardening projects:

£97,210 was allocated to 44 projects in 2020 under our Community Gardens Award scheme, but because of Covid-19 some will not take up their donations until 2021.

The funding supports community allotments and gardens, rehabilitation and regeneration projects, as well as gardens designed to support mental health and wellbeing, and training and development for young people.

For more information on National Garden Scheme bursaries and Community Gardens Award visit our website at: [ngs.org.uk](https://www.ngs.org.uk)

# Help Support Our Nurses

In a normal, non-Covid year, the National Garden Scheme relies primarily on the income generated at its gardens to support the charity's ongoing commitments to nursing and health beneficiaries. With the gardens forced to close for much of the key garden visiting season in 2020 between April and June a new fundraising campaign was devised to help make up the predicted 85% shortfall in income.

On April 9, National Garden Scheme President, Dame Mary Berry launched the 'Help Support Our Nurses' campaign with a new Virtual Garden Visits programme designed to give people access to our gardens, albeit virtually, during lockdown. This was followed in September with the inaugural Great British Garden Party fundraiser. Together, these events generated almost £300,000 in much needed donations during 2020 with the latter now forming part of the National Garden Scheme's annual fundraising programme.



"Throughout the pandemic, we have seen a huge amount of support for nurses from the general public, as they witness the professionalism and hard work that goes into delivering health and social care.

The work of the Queen's Nursing Institute nurses and the National Garden Scheme shows how determined people are to show their support. We wish them every success with their socially safe Great British Garden Party as they use that event to raise money for the Help Support Our Nurses campaign."

Dame Donna Kinnair  
Chief Executive and General Secretary of the RCN

"The support of Hospice UK and the National Garden Scheme has been invaluable to hospice nurses across the country whilst we've been battling the coronavirus crisis. The National Garden Scheme's Help Support Our Nurses campaign will enable Hospice UK, and in turn hospices such as Derian House to continue providing vital end of life and respite care to 400 children and young adults from across the North West. Thank you."

Katie Turner  
Perinatal Nurse at Derian House Children's Hospice



## Virtual garden visits

With the help of our wonderful, resourceful and passionate garden owners we began to release weekly portfolios of virtual garden visits during the first lockdown; short films that opened the gates to over 180 gardens large and small across England and Wales.

Hosted on our YouTube channel the audience quickly grew with viewers from across the world tuning in to see them each week. By the end of June there had been over 600,000 views and donations soon followed.

We were especially grateful for the support of our Patron, The Prince of Wales, who recorded a video for us which reconfirmed the vital role of gardens for everyone's health and wellbeing, especially in a time of crisis.

Celebrity supporters also joined the campaign. Alan Titchmarsh shared a virtual visit to his garden in support of the National Garden Scheme and during what would have been RHS Chelsea we released films from gold medal winning designers Bunny Guinness Tom Stuart-Smith, Julie Toll, Robert Myers and Marcus Barnett. Comedian and actor Miranda Hart lent her support and National Garden Scheme ambassador, Rachel de Thame, led our Gardens and Health week film releases in May.

The Virtual Garden Visits raised more than £250,000 and helped us reach an unprecedented potential audience of 300 million people through the associated press campaign. Feedback from our viewers, beneficiaries and donors also provided strong evidence of the importance of gardens - real or virtual - to mental health and wellbeing and was the stimulus for our *Gardens and Coronavirus Report* published in September (see page 12).



Photo © Chris Jackson



"National Garden Scheme Virtual Garden Visits tapped into the theme that we all know to be so important; that gardens are good for everyone's health and wellbeing. This link between gardens and our health has never been more relevant - especially as we ensure the challenges of the confined circumstances in which we find ourselves, in many cases beset with anxiety and, I am afraid to say, often with personal tragedy."

HRH The Prince of Wales - Patron

"My garden became a lifeline, it offered me a sense of promise for the future. That glimmer of optimism kept me going through my treatment for cancer. While people are unable to visit gardens in person the National Garden Scheme's Virtual Garden Visits enable you to enjoy the restorative and therapeutic effects of viewing these beautiful gardens and, it is hoped, make a donation to the nursing and health charities that the charity has been supporting since 1927."

Rachel de Thame - Ambassador

"Garden owners have recorded videos of their gardens to make a series of 'virtual visits' and invite everyone who might have visited a garden to watch a virtual visit instead, and you think of giving a donation to the charity. I think it's a fantastic idea, typical of the resourcefulness which has kept the National Garden Scheme going for over ninety years and I urge you to support the campaign generously and enjoy the stunning gardens."

Alan Titchmarsh - Supporter

# Help Support Our Nurses



Photo credit: Narratives / Sussie Bell / Selina Lake

## Great British Garden Party

Despite the challenges that September brought in terms of restrictions to socialising - namely the rule of six - the National Garden Scheme's first ever Great British Garden Party fundraiser illustrated just how resourceful and innovative people can be. From National Garden Scheme President, Dame Mary Berry to garden owners, visitors, friends and family, small events took place up and down the country raising almost £40,000 for the Help Support Our Nurses appeal.

The Great British Garden Party is an exciting step forward for the National Garden Scheme as it reaches out to everyone with a clear message that whatever kind of garden or outdoor space you have, however big or small, tidy or untidy, it is a source of joy and reassurance and we aim to encourage people to celebrate that with friends and family by having fun and raising funds for vital nursing charities.

While many held small, socially distanced events - some with timed arrival slots - in South Wales one small street created displays from their gardens in celebration of their gardens in lockdown. Despite the progressing season and tight restrictions they had a beautiful display of flowers and produce to share.

"Our gardens have meant a lot to us during the last few months and have brought us all closer together,

even if this has been online," said organiser Rhian James. "We have been sharing plants, produce and garden know-how with each other. Some of us have been attempting to grow our own food for the first year and some of us are experts. Our Great British Garden Party was a culmination of this lockdown community spirit and a chance to share our experiences of gardening this year. It was a great lift before we go into the winter months."

The event will now run every September, but people can host a Great British Garden Party whenever is best for them.



# National Garden Scheme reports

The National Garden Scheme commissions and produces reports as part of its advocacy and awareness raising strategy. In 2016 we commissioned the Kings Fund Report 'Gardens and Health' which has become the seminal work on the subject and we continue to champion gardens as places of rest, relaxation and recovery. We also work with our beneficiaries to advocate for change within community nursing and healthcare in the UK.

This year we published two reports: *Gardens and Coronavirus 2020: The importance of gardens and outdoor spaces during lockdown* and *Health charities and the NHS. A vital partnership in peril?*

## Gardens and Coronavirus 2020: The importance of gardens and outdoor spaces during lockdown

Written and published by the National Garden Scheme this report brought together the anecdotal evidence we had gathered from viewers and supporters of our Virtual Garden Visits during the summer (see page 10) - that supported the view that even a virtual visit to a garden could be good for your mental wellbeing - and online survey results from over 2,400 participants.

Our findings showed that 92% of respondents felt that their gardens and outdoor spaces were 'extremely important' to them during lockdown in terms of health and wellbeing. 87% said that a key benefit gained from access to their garden or outdoor space 'helped relieve stress' while 69% said that it 'kept them fit and contributed positively to their physical fitness'.

The report received widespread attention in the regional and garden press and enjoyed strong social media engagement helping to position the National Garden Scheme as a champion of Gardens and Health and promoting the charity and visits to its gardens.

## Health charities and the NHS A vital partnership in peril?

This report was commissioned by the National Garden Scheme via LSE Consulting and involves our core nursing beneficiaries: The Queen's Nursing Institute, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK and Parkinson's UK. It has been produced in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and highlights the crucial contribution of these charities to the national health and care



systems, especially relating to community and end-of-life, but sets this against the enormous financial pressures they have been subjected to by the pandemic.

The authors consulted widely with National Garden Scheme beneficiary charities who contributed case studies. These are used to highlight the need for a supportive policy framework in which these leading and innovating care providers can support national priorities in this area.

This report offers an insight into the value being provided by health charities, through normal and abnormal times, and against some of the most pressing policy priorities. It highlights the operational qualities demonstrated by the charities that are often not evident in other areas of the health and care system. It demonstrates how the charities are very often the most innovative and pioneering exponents of national health policy, yet they are rarely, if ever, consulted or involved in the policy-making processes.

The UK has important aspirations to make progress in each of the priority areas covered. This is, however, within the context of rising need and severely strained public finances. Ambitious visions to improve wellbeing, recruit and retain a well-motivated workforce, tackle inequalities laid bare by the pandemic, and improve the experience of ageing, and of dying can only realistically be realised in partnership with appropriate recognition of and engagement with charities by policy makers. Charities are leading the way on service innovation and value, yet seem to be neglected in the policy discourse and this needs to change if future demands are to be met.

Due for publication in December, this report is intended to influence policy makers, especially in the areas of nursing workforce, community health and end of life care.



# Nursing and health beneficiaries

## Macmillan Cancer Support

The National Garden Scheme is Macmillan Cancer Support's longest standing partner having donated over £17 million since our partnership began 36 years ago. In 2020 we made a donation in November of £425,000.

This year's donation is the third instalment of five earmarked for the new Y Bwthyn NGS Macmillan Specialist Palliative Care Unit in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Wales. The National Garden Scheme has committed £2.5million in total between 2018 and 2022 to help build and support this purpose-designed unit providing inpatient care, specialist day centre care and palliative medicine outpatient services. The new unit opened to patients on 28 September 2019, enabling people living with cancer to receive the right care and support in one place.

Special features of the build include private terraced areas for each inpatient accessible from their bedrooms and intimate landscaped gardens giving patients and their families an outside space for tranquil reflection.

When fully operational, the unit will be able to support approximately 177 inpatients and 719 day patients each year.

While Covid-19 has caused disruption, this special building has adapted quickly and continues to help cancer patients and their families. Macmillan could not have done this without the commitment of the National Garden Scheme.

Previous National Garden Scheme donations continue to support thousands at the NGS Macmillan Unit in Chesterfield and the NGS Wellbeing Centre in Bristol. In addition, the 150 Macmillan Nurses and other Macmillan professionals funded by the National Garden Scheme have enabled the charity to reach even more people and to provide the very best support from diagnosis on. In 2019, Macmillan reached 1,029,000 people affected by cancer through Macmillan Nurses, of which the majority - 947,000 - were people living with cancer.



The purpose built rooms at Y Bwthyn NGS Macmillan Specialist Palliative Care Unit in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Wales with doors out to their own private garden space © Macmillan Cancer Support

## Marie Curie



Full PPE as standard for the nursing staff at all Marie Curie Hospices during the pandemic © Philip Hardman/Marie Curie

The National Garden Scheme has been supporting Marie Curie since 1996, donating over £9.5 million in that time, making us one of their highest-value partners. In 2020, the National Garden Scheme made a donation of £425,000 in November to help Marie Curie continue to provide their national end of life community nursing service, nine hospices, and information and support service and helpline.

As the UK's leading end of life charity operating on the frontline of the Covid-19 crisis, the pandemic presented a huge challenge. Just as Marie Curie's services were needed more than ever, they faced a huge drop in income and the delayed donation from the National Garden Scheme meant that a number of key services could not be supported.

However, the money received in November will help support Marie Curie into 2021 which will be a pivotal year for the charity as they continue to rapidly adapt and future-proof their services enabling them to be there for more people at the end of their life, and support those who are bereaved.

Despite the later than usual donation, Marie Curie continued their support and promotion of the partnership with the National Garden Scheme throughout 2020 achieving significant social media reach and press coverage. Their support of our Help Support Our Nurses campaign and promotion of our Virtual Garden Visits and Great British Garden Party events, and the reopening of our gardens all helped spread the word and raise awareness and funds at a critical time.

Sadly, Covid-19 restrictions also prevented the opening of Marie Curie Hospice gardens to the garden visiting public - events that provide the charity with an opportunity to engage with the local community and talk to a wider audience about their work. These National Garden Scheme open days are a highlight in the calendar allowing passionate and hard-working volunteer gardeners to showcase their achievements.



# Nursing and health beneficiaries

## Hospice UK



Hospice nurses in PPE at Trinity Hospice, Blackpool. Photo © Trinity Hospice

The National Garden Scheme has supported Hospice UK since 1996, donating over £5 million during that time. In 2020, the National Garden Scheme donated £425,000 - £250,000 in April and the remainder in November. This funding enabled the charity to continue supporting over 200 hospices in the UK who have been at the forefront of the battle against Covid-19, reducing pressure on the NHS by dealing with thousands of additional patients while continuing to care for people facing terminal and life shortening illnesses.

Since March 2020, Hospice UK's work focused almost exclusively on the Covid-19 pandemic. Work that was not Covid-19 related or time-critical was either postponed or moved to a virtual setting. Making sure that everyone gets the care and support they need at end of life simply couldn't have been done without the support of the National Garden Scheme this year.

The initial donation of £250,000 was used to support hospice care nurses and frontline staff, both as people and professionals during the emergency response to the Covid-19 crisis. This included ensuring hospices had funds to support patients, providing emotional support for frontline workers, securing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for hospice staff and sharing expertise, best clinical practice and developing guidance to maintain high standards of care.

Part of this work saw Hospice UK supporting the wider sector by calling on the UK Government for urgent help to sustain critical services and to ensure that hospices could continue to play their part in the wider health and care system at such an important time. Intense negotiations led by Tracey Bleakley, Hospice UK CEO resulted in £200 million of government funding to enable the NHS to purchase extra support from hospices across England. Further work also helped secure additional funding for the devolved nations.

£100,000 of the National Garden Scheme donation was used to support frontline workers with a comprehensive physical and emotional support package. This included 'Our Frontline' a round-the-clock service offering one-to-one support from trained volunteers through to written resources from experts, tips and ideas to look after mental health. A bereavement support line also helped provide counselling and trauma support for NHS and social care staff supporting patients and their families.

£25,000 went towards securing adequate PPE for hospice staff with £2,300 funding the delivery of two months' supply of PPE for 158 hospices across the UK, and £125,000 supported the sharing of expertise, best clinical practice and developing guidance to maintain high standards of care.

## Carers Trust

The National Garden Scheme has been supporting Carers Trust since 1996, having donated over £4 million in that time to help the charity raise the profile of carers' issues, and enabling them to further their reach and support to even more unpaid carers. In 2020, the National Garden Scheme donated £340,000 to Carers Trust.

The impact of the pandemic meant that this year the charity received just over half of the promised donation in April and the remainder in November. Along with the initial £220,000, Carers Trust decided to use the underspend from their 2019 grant from the National Garden Scheme - just over £33,000 - for Carers Fund and Carers Emergency Fund grants.

The main donation was allocated to the charity's core work which includes policy, research and campaigns, communications work and supporting their network of local carers services to deliver top quality support to a growing network of carers. Thanks to the National Garden Scheme, Carers Trust has been able to help 18,000 unpaid carers access the support they need, raise issues of carers' needs to local authorities and government, as well as design a new programme that will improve what the charity can offer carers around the UK.

£19,398.95 of Carers Fund grants were also made benefitting 78 individual carers to help support their immediate needs including household items, a

break from caring, upskilling, training or transport. A further 52 individual carers benefitted from £13,664 of Carers Trust Emergency grants providing them with essential support to help them through the coronavirus crisis.

These grants can have an immediate and sometimes life-changing impact. Aisha (below) cares for her elderly mother, Meena, who has Parkinson's and Lewy body dementia. Her caring role has increased significantly over the past few months as Meena's health has deteriorated. Aisha does not have any family support and feels exhausted and often unable to cope with the level of demand on her. She lives in a rented property and needs to maintain the garden, as well as her mum's garden. She was worried about how she would do this and who she would borrow money from to buy the necessary equipment. Thanks to the generous donation from the National Garden Scheme, Aisha was awarded a £300 Carers Emergency Fund grant towards the cost of a lawn mower and strimmer to maintain her own and Meena's garden.

Aisha said: "Being able to maintain both gardens means that me and mum have a nice space to relax in and to look at from the window. What a difference it will make."

In total, 2020 funding has helped support 18,130 unpaid carers across the UK.



© Carers Trust. All library photos posed by models. Identities and photos of carers have been changed in the interest of privacy

# Nursing and health beneficiaries

## Parkinson's UK

The National Garden Scheme has been supporting Parkinson's UK since 2012, donating over £1 million in that time to help drive better care, treatments and quality of life for those living with Parkinson's. In 2020, the National Garden Scheme donated an initial sum of £92,500 in April followed by £65,000 in November.

The initial donation helped fund a new nursing post in Hambleton, Richmond and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), one of Parkinson's key priority target areas. This will ensure around 300 people living with Parkinson's will have access to the support of a Parkinson's Nurse.

When funding new posts Parkinson's work with CCGs by pump-priming these roles with funding for the first two years after securing the commitment from the CCG to take the role afterwards as part of their longer-term budget planning.

A full-time Parkinson's nurse will have a caseload of around 300 patients and in 2018 National Garden

Scheme funding helped fund three nurse posts in three priority target areas in South Tyneside, Vale of York and Halton. With this support, around 900 people living with Parkinson's have been able to directly benefit from accessing the help they need to manage their condition this year. Funding in 2019 supported three further posts in Bradford City, Bradford District CCGs and a part-time post in Orkney supporting a further 450 people living with Parkinson's.

Parkinson's active promotion of their partnership with the National Garden Scheme included sharing the story of Alison Jordan, a volunteer Assistant County Organiser and garden opener with the National Garden Scheme who is living with Parkinson's. This powerful story, telling how important her garden is in helping her manage her condition, created widespread engagement both as a Virtual Garden Visit on our website and as a press piece placed by Parkinson's UK in Yours Magazine.



Photo © Parkinson's UK

## The Queen's Nursing Institute



QNI nurse Liz Alderton with patient. Photo © Kate Stanworth

The National Garden Scheme was founded by The Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) in 1927 when £8,191 was raised by opening 609 gardens at one shilling a head. We became independent of the QNI in 1980 but the charity has remained a valued partner and, over our 92 years together, we have raised more than £4.5 million to support them. In 2020 the National Garden Scheme donated £235,000 to the QNI in April, topping it up to £370,000 in November.

The donation has been used to continue building the Queen's Nurse network. This national network of highly qualified nurses works in the community across England, Wales and Northern Ireland and has increased from 1,200 nurses in 2018 to 1,420 today.

The National Garden Scheme is the single source of funding for the Queen's Nurse programme. In 2020, £200,000 was dedicated to supporting the Queen's Nurse network with 127 new nurses receiving the title this year. Through the care these nurses deliver they improve the lives of countless people through

service improvement, role modelling and professional development, networking and sharing of innovations, and the propagation of these improvements throughout the organisations they work for.

The network of Queen's Nurses has become the go to place for senior nurses to gather information from expert nurses about a wide variety of policy issues relevant to caring for people in their own homes and communities.

This year's funding also allowed the QNI to produce important top level reports including the annual District Nurse Education Report which is vital for the QNI's campaign strategy around nurse education and also for universities and service planners.

Three Queen's Nurses had planned to open their gardens for the National Garden Scheme in 2020 and plans to organise garden visits for service user groups all had to be cancelled. However, Queen's Nurses continued to raise awareness of garden visiting during lockdown by sharing garden selfies.



Patient and nurse in  
Horatio's Garden, Salisbury  
© Russell Sach

## Horatio's Garden

Horatio's Garden is one of the National Garden Scheme's gardens and health charities which receive funding for work which promotes the physical and mental health benefits of gardens and gardening.

We have been supporting Horatio's Garden since 2015 and have donated £330,000 to date to help the charity create and care for beautiful, accessible gardens in NHS regional spinal injury centres. In 2019, the National Garden Scheme committed funding for the completion of gardens at all eleven spinal injury centres in the UK.

In 2020, a grant of £75,000 was allocated for the creation of Horatio's Garden, London. This is the second of two donations pledged in support of this project. The donations have helped build the garden which will support the mental health, wellbeing and rehabilitation of those affected by spinal injury. The 40 beds at the unit receive over 300 referrals with nearly 1,500 outpatients treated each year.

Designed by Tom Stuart-Smith, the garden at the London Spinal Cord Injury Centre at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore, opened in September thanks to a committed workforce who kept working safely outside during lockdown. Appointed in July, new Head Gardener Ashley Edwards worked with his volunteer team to fill the garden with 10,000 plants.

Since 2015 the support of the National Garden Scheme has helped Horatio's Garden reach 8,480 patients as well as their families friends and NHS staff. This includes 800 inpatients and 4,000 outpatient appointments at Stoke Mandeville, 380 inpatients and 1,500 outpatients at Oswestry and the above mentioned referrals and patients at Stanmore.

The National Garden Scheme's ongoing commitment to the charity will support the creation of the sixth Horatio's Garden at the Welsh Spinal Care Injury Rehabilitation Centre at University Hospital Llandough. The centre will have 26 beds and will admit on average 100 patients a year and see 900 outpatients. A small section of the garden will also be available just for patients in the hospital's neurological ward.

## Maggie's

Maggie's centres 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 from the start of the project to ensure a strong connection between the outside and inside space. The landscape architects are asked to use plants that will add colour, scent and interest throughout the year. Maggie's has now grown into a network of centres built beside NHS hospitals across the UK.

In 2020 the National Garden Scheme made a donation of £100,000 towards Maggie's gardens.

Initially allocated for the Newcastle extension and Oxford gardens the impact of coronavirus on both projected income and service delivery meant Maggie's had to refocus on areas of greatest need. Although the Newcastle extension and Oxford garden are still key projects, they were likely to face delays.

Having already broken ground at the Maggie's centre in Southampton the charity was determined to push forward with the project despite knowing they would be faced with inevitable delays during the worst of lockdown. This meant that the National Garden Scheme donation to help build the centre's garden was a top priority.

While Maggie's Southampton aimed to open for visitors in November, the garden still requires some finishing touches. Once complete Maggie's expects to support 20,000 visits a year from people needing tailored emotional, practical and social support in the Southampton area. Below is a schematic of how the finished garden will look.



## Gardens and Health case study: Accessibility for all

A grant of £20,000 from the National Garden Scheme has helped The Patchworking Garden Project make its outdoor spaces more accessible with the creation of a path completed during the first lockdown. Established in 2014 to bring positive change to people's lives through the benefits of friendship and gardening, one supported volunteer, Sarah-Jane Grace, shares the impact that the new path has had on her life.

There is a profound sense of loneliness when living with chronic illness, both with physical disability and mental health issues. The life I thought I'd have dried up and withered away. My life stood still many years ago. Doing 'normal' in a wheelchair just isn't possible for many things as the world isn't built for wheelchairs. So, being in a wheelchair requires a willingness to accept the fact that the world isn't accommodating for someone like me.

But, I've been going to the Patchworking Garden for about eighteen months and I've felt so welcomed and comfortable. Everyone is so accepting and so friendly, and it became a little oasis of connection in a life of medicalisation and isolation. It's as though the walls block out the humdrum buzz of everyday life so for those few hours each week I become me again. It's an oasis and sanctuary, a place where I don't have to 'be' anyone or do anything in particular, I can just enjoy the space, the company and the camaraderie.

Sadly the garden's paths were very difficult to access in my wheelchair (or even with my walker) so I got used to staying in the first part of the garden, wondering where everyone went in the sessions to weed or dig, trying to imagine what the garden in its entirety looked like. I have a good imagination, but it was hard at times to feel like a part of the group when they were talking about parts of the garden I hadn't even seen.

Although I loved being at the garden, I had to push myself through my pain and dysfunction to make it to the group area as the paths were so difficult to navigate. When the garden closed for the first lockdown I felt my world becoming smaller once again as the weekly connection faded away. So, when the news came that the garden was re-opening I felt a sense of excitement tinged with trepidation as I was using my wheelchair even more and wondered how I would manage moving round the garden.

In many ways, returning from the spring lockdown was the start of a new chapter for me. I arrived in my powered wheelchair and I rolled through the magic wooden gate into the garden where, for the first time, I was able to freely explore the whole garden! The new path gently meandered through the middle

of the garden and it felt like a welcoming hug as I no longer had to struggle, get flustered or manage more pain just to make it to the covered area for tea and coffee. I felt truly liberated to be able to do a complete tour of the garden, to zig zag around the paths and to see the hard work put in by so many. In many ways, it felt like it was my first visit as I meandered around the paths seeing the different areas I'd only previously been able to imagine. It was as though I was seeing the garden with fresh eyes as every flower, every bee and every sound was magnified and vibrant. For the first time, I felt like I truly belonged. The experience was so uplifting, I carried the joy with me for days afterwards!

Since the path has been laid I've felt excited to roll through that magic wooden gate as the garden is still a place of novel wonder for me. Being able to sit in different parts of the garden, I've had the opportunity to start appreciating the little things once again, which are actually great big things, from listening to the birds singing in the garden, watching the flowers sway in the breeze and resting more consciously in the moment. I'm able to relax, to laugh and to finally feel a part of such a special place...



The new paths at The Patchworking Garden Project have made a special place accessible for Sarah-Jane Grace

## Mind



Guest charities are part of the National Garden Scheme's nursing and health donations, and are a beneficiary for two to three years. Charities are selected and shortlisted by volunteer county teams. Following presentations by the shortlisted group of charities, the trustees select the successful beneficiary.

Mind has been the National Garden Scheme's guest charity since 2019 and this year received an initial donation in April of £40,000, topped up in November to £80,000.

Despite the challenging imperative of digital delivery that arose this year, the funding was used for the growth and development of Mind's core peer support work helping to ensure that no one experiences a mental health problem alone.

Since last year's report Mind have also been able to deliver Peerfest 19. Peerfest is a national event designed to celebrate the importance and diversity of peer support. This was the largest Peerfest to-date and attracted over 200 attendees, including eight

brand new community peer support groups who were involved in its delivery.

The Friends in Need Toolkit, that was published in April 2019, has been used to showcase this model of support to 30+ local Minds. Each group is unique and the 30+ groups currently running reach 640 people. Growing this network is a priority for Mind.

As part of supporting the Friends in Need network, Mind also wanted to integrate and upskill members from across their networks through the innovative GetUpSetUp peer support training workshops. They aim to extend this offer to 10 more local Minds who will go on to deliver good quality peer support locally.

Each GetUpSetUp event can be attended by 12 people. Each of these individuals will be engaged in peer support to a minimum of 6-10 people meaning that 72-100 people will be reached through peer support from each event. If Mind are able to deliver this to all 10 local Minds, this will enable them to reach between 720-1000 people across the year.

# Grants and bursaries

As well as supporting our main beneficiaries, guest charity and gardens and health beneficiaries the National Garden Scheme donated £262,210 to support community garden projects and trainee gardeners in 2020.

From supporting those looking for a change of career and getting into horticulture for the first time to supporting gardens that help rehabilitate ex-servicemen or reduce social isolation, our funding provides a positive introduction to gardening. In 2020, despite the difficult economic climate, we continued to fund Community Gardens Awards in memory of Elspeth Thompson, and apprenticeships for trainee gardeners.

## Case study: Helping to keep Britain's gardens great

Since 2017 the National Garden Scheme has supported the Professional Gardeners' Trust, a charity that provides gardeners with the opportunity to acquire skills and gain qualifications through part-time courses and work placements. This enhances their careers and benefits the horticulture profession as a whole. In 2020, they received a donation of £20,000 from the National Garden Scheme.

Britta Horsthemke's horticultural career is a good example. Her introduction to professional gardening came from working in private domestic gardens and this experience provided the foundation from which to commence her Professional Gardeners' Guild Traineeship at Beth Chatto Gardens in Essex in 2018. Britta was very keen to learn and improve her horticultural knowledge and skills and she quickly become a valuable member of the garden team. This experience built on her previous year at Waterperry Gardens, where she obtained her RHS Level 2 Diploma in Practical Horticulture.

Britta, currently in her second year of a three-year Professional Gardeners' Guild traineeship and based at Chatsworth Gardens for twelve months, applied to the Professional Gardeners' Trust (PGT) for funding for a distant learning online garden design course with the English Gardening School in Chelsea. Her ambition was to be a well-rounded gardener who can not only design a garden for somebody but also build it, plant it and nurture it. With insufficient funds to pay for the course on her own, Britta applied to the PGT for financial help and happily the charity was able to assist.

Britta says "I started my first module of the design course at the end of June. I decided to start with 'Introduction to Garden Design' with Hilary Thomas.

"It was a very steep learning curve as we learnt how to draw patterns and then eventually had to design and draw a garden design plan using a drawing board, set squares, measurements to scale etc, and I would work all day and then come back to my little room and spend about two hours every evening drawing.



Britta Horsthemke received a bursary via the National Garden Scheme to help continue her studies

Tiring, but I loved every minute of it! And although I struggled a bit in the beginning, my final assignment got a 'Very well done and congratulations on an excellently produced design'.

"I took a month off while moving to Chatsworth and settling in here, and I am now on my second module - Professional Planting Design - where we learn all about the role plants play in a successful design, and I'm on lesson three and busy with assignment three... plant choice. I am enjoying this module just as much; the tutors are very good at giving feedback and the assignments are really challenging. I'm loving it!"

The Professional Gardeners' Trust exists to distribute the generous donations from organisations such as the National Garden Scheme to worthy beneficiaries such as Britta. British gardens are greatly admired and rightly so, but they require educated gardeners to work within them and to maintain them to the very high standards we've come to enjoy. It's thanks to the National Garden Scheme that gardeners are getting the training they need to keep Britain's gardens the envy of the world.

## Perennial

The National Garden Scheme is Perennial's largest single donor having donated more than £1.85 million since the partnership began in 1986 when Perennial was the Royal Gardeners' Benevolent Fund. This contribution makes a huge difference to the lives of thousands of people who are working, or have worked, in the horticulture industry in the UK, and their families.

In 2020, an initial donation of £50,000 in April helped fund the equivalent of one and a half Perennial caseworkers, supporting c.150 people and their families. This meant that each of these service users could receive their own dedicated caseworkers who worked with them for as long as they needed help.

In this year of crisis, of job losses and work restrictions, caseworkers helped provide emergency

food parcels, energy payments and emergency accommodation. Laptops were provided for children who had no way to continue their studies from home, iPads helped people to continue with their counselling sessions on Zoom and domestic appliances were provided to families who could not afford to replace a cooker or washing machine.

In addition, caseworkers helped arrange emergency financial support, food or housing, working to access grants available to them, access health services or provide training to support them in the long term.

The annual donation from the National Garden Scheme, which was topped up to £85,000 in November is the cornerstone of Perennial's fundraising activities and encourages many other donors to offer support.

## John's Story - "it's heaven to be warm again"

In the summer of 2013, John\* was made redundant from his job as an estate gardener. After 33 years he was without the career he loved and without income. He battled for many years to cope, unable to work because of poor health and relying on his partner's income. But, by the end of 2018 she was forced to stop working for health reasons. Unable to pay bills, feed themselves, heat their home or get the veterinary treatment their dog badly needed they became increasingly anxious and contacted Perennial.

"We were facing the prospect of a hard winter without hope. We felt so isolated, not wanting to talk about our problems with anyone in our community. It was so stressful. Then we got in touch with Perennial and haven't looked back.

"Perennial provided food and fuel for heating to help us over the colder months which was such a relief. Our caseworker, Vicki, and debt adviser, Ged, helped us by speaking to creditors on our behalf and gave us support with budgeting so that we could take control of our money. Thanks to the brilliant team at Perennial we were successful with our application for benefits and our income recovered. Something we would never have been able to sort out ourselves. They also helped us to successfully apply for a new boiler and central heating system after we had all but



given up. Having reliable heating for the winter has made such a difference - it's just heaven to be warm again.

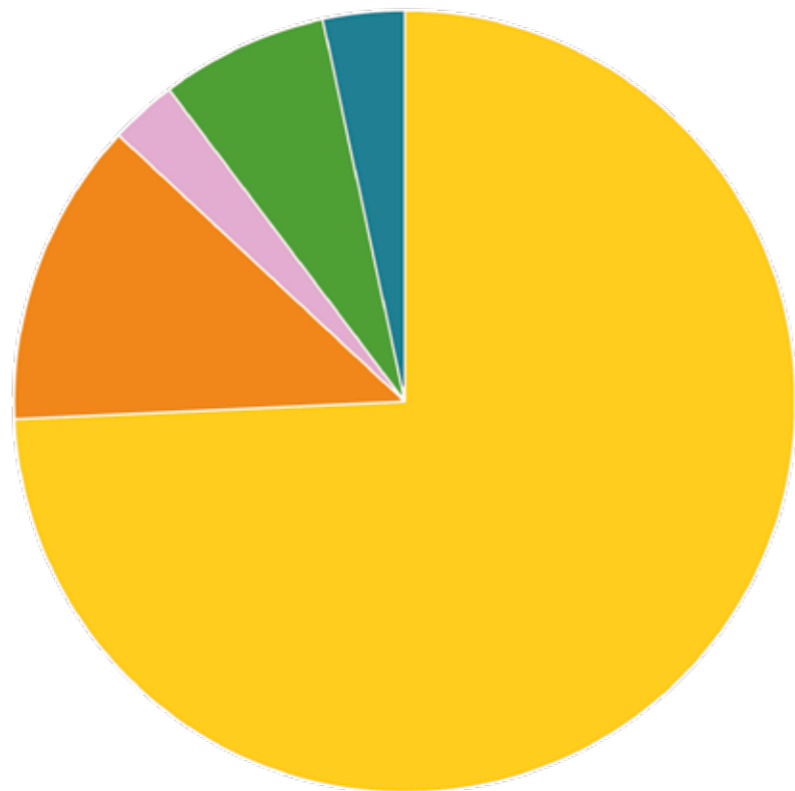
"We feel so grateful to Perennial. It is such a relief to feel happy with our finances and more positive now that we have real hope for the future."

\*Name changed to preserve anonymity

# Donation summary

The donations we made in 2020, as detailed below, amounted to 72% of funds raised at our gardens in 2019.

	£
Nursing and Health Beneficiaries	2,142,500
Gardens and Health	365,000
Guest Beneficiary - Mind	80,000
Grants and Bursaries	200,000
Community Gardens Award	97,210
	<hr/>
	2,884,710
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- Nursing and Health Beneficiaries 74%
- Gardens and Health 13%
- Grants and Bursaries 7%
- Guest Beneficiary 3%
- Community Gardens Award 3%

# Our thanks to ...

## Special thanks

The National Garden Scheme is built on a strong volunteer foundation. Without our 560+ volunteers, and the garden owners who voluntarily share their gardens with us and thousands of visitors, we could not deliver the impacts highlighted in this report. In 2020 we are especially grateful to the garden owners who filmed their gardens and shared them as part of our Virtual Garden Visits campaign that helped raise £250,000 when our beneficiaries need was greatest. Our sincere thanks to all who volunteer their time and their gardens to the National Garden Scheme.

Thank you also to the supportive video production teams, journalists and media outlets that helped communicate our story, raising funds and awareness so effectively for the National Garden Scheme during lockdown.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Martin McMillan who ended his tenure as our Chairman in 2020. During his six



Martin McMillan OBE, Chairman 2014-2020

years as Chairman Martin increasingly made his mark, whether in his leadership of the Trustees or in the public perception of the charity. During his term of office a number of major innovations were launched, notably the Gardens and Health programme in 2016 and the new branding in 2017. Martin's role has also been decisive in his leadership of our partnerships with beneficiary charities. The National Garden Scheme has been very fortunate to have had such a dedicated person as Chairman.

## Core sponsor

We are extremely grateful to the valuable contribution from Investec Wealth & Investment which has supported the National Garden Scheme for over 22 years and is our core sponsor.



## Our corporate partners

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*Photo: South Wood Farm, Devon © Ellen Rooney*