



NORTHERN IRELAND

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME (NI)

The National Garden Scheme (Northern Ireland) has evolved out of the National Trust's Ulster Gardens Scheme (UGS), which was established in 1960 as a sub-committee of the National Trust in Northern Ireland. The purpose of UGS was to arrange open gardens to raise funds for specific projects in National Trust gardens in Northern Ireland.

The link with the National Trust ended in 2019, but some members of the Ulster Gardens Scheme committee were keen to continue an open garden scheme as this had proved so popular with the public and had raised substantial funds over the years.

We are therefore delighted that a new link has been forged with the National Garden Scheme (NGS), an established charity operating in England and Wales. Open gardens may now continue in Northern Ireland under the auspices of the National Garden Scheme (Northern Ireland).

The operational model of NGS is broadly similar to that of the former UGS. The main difference is that funds raised are primarily donated to nursing and health charities, many of which are already operating in Northern Ireland. NGS also supports charities doing valuable work in gardens and health, and grants bursaries to help community gardening projects and support gardeners at the start of their career. Thanks to the generosity of garden owners, volunteers and visitors, the National Garden Scheme in England and Wales has donated over £60 million pounds to charity since 1927.

Given the well-known beneficial impact of gardens and gardening on health and wellbeing and the debt owed to our health care workers in the context of the ongoing pandemic, it is particularly appropriate that funds raised through NGS (NI) garden visits would be donated to charities focused on improving the quality of life of those living with ongoing health difficulties.

In view of the present restrictions related to the pandemic it is, however, unlikely that there could be a programme of open gardens in Northern Ireland in 2021. The committee are therefore planning ahead for the 2022 season.

WHY OPEN YOUR GARDEN?

By opening your garden for NGS (NI) you are not only giving people a great day out, you are also raising money to help change lives. What is more, you are joining a community of other like-minded garden owners and volunteers, all passionate about great gardens. Your garden will be included in the prestigious Garden Visitor's Handbook and on the NGS website, and the local NGS (NI) team of volunteers will offer lots of support in the run-up to your opening, and on the day. You can decide when you would like to open your garden, and how



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often. Whether your garden is big or small, if you think it has quality, character and interest, we would love to hear from you to arrange a visit.

Opening your garden to the public may seem daunting at first, but garden owners find it a very enjoyable experience and it is anticipated that many will continue to open their gardens year after year. You can choose to open once a year, although some owners may wish to open twice a year in order to show the garden in different seasons. Some dedicated owners may like to open in spring, summer, autumn and winter if each season offers something of special interest. It is completely up to you.

If you love your garden, why not share it with others whilst helping NGS (NI) to raise vital funds for health charities?

Our helpful and friendly committee of volunteers are available to help and support you with your garden opening.

NGS (NI) REGIONAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Margaret Orr, Sally McGreevy, Jackie Harte, Ross McGookin, Patricia Cameron, Fionnuala Cook, Trevor Edwards, Trevor Browne, Ann FitzSimons

Please Note:

NGS garden openings have comprehensive public liability insurance cover, details of which we are happy to provide to prospective garden openers.

If you are interested in opening your garden for NGS (NI), members of the committee will pay you a visit to confirm the garden's suitability and carry out the necessary risk assessment for insurance purposes.



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DETAILS OF THE NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME'S CHARITABLE BENEFICIARIES AND RECENT DONATIONS:

There is a core group of national nursing and health beneficiary charities which have received annual donations for many years (the first year is given with each). All of these charities are active in Northern Ireland.

- Queen's Nursing Institute (1927, the year the QNI founded NGS to raise funds for district nursing)
- McMillan Cancer Support (1985)
- Carers Trust (1996)
- Hospice UK (1996)
- Marie Curie (1996)
- Parkinson's UK (2012)

They receive in the region of 75% of annual donations.

The current main gardens and health beneficiary charities are:

- Horatio's Garden - the charity builds gardens for spinal injuries units. The current project is in Cardiff. The next project will be a garden for the Spinal Cord Injuries Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast
- Maggie's Centres

The current support for gardeners and training gardeners goes to:

- Perennial
- Professional Gardeners' Trust
- WRAGS
- National Botanic Garden, Wales
- Garden Museum

Since 2016 the National Garden Scheme has made annual donations to the beneficiaries totalling £3 million or more. This represents more than 80% of all funds raised at gardens. In 2020, because of Coronavirus, donations were reduced to £2.88 million and donations will also be reduced in 2021.

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