



BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Chair's Informal Update April to September 2026

I am pleased to bring you up to date with what has also been going on this year from April to September 2026. Many of you have joined us on our visits and I do hope that many more of you will be with us for our visit to Englefield and our AGM on Wednesday October 7th from 10.00am.

A number of important changes have occurred since the beginning of April which are reported in the Trustees' Report. I will not go into these again here:

- Our proposed appointment of The Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle, Phil Jones and his wife as BGT's Joint Presidents;
- Our revised policies for the Small Grants Scheme and Data Protection;
- The Government's decision to remove the Gardens Trust from the list of Statutory Consultees.

Finance: Hugh Simon will bring us up to date.

Events: A key part of our activities is the programme of events. This year, as a 'thank you' to our speakers and garden owners, we have again invited them as special guests to our AGM and lecture. Hopefully you will be able to meet some of them. Thank you also for the kind messages from attendees saying how much you have enjoyed the visits.

The six wonderful places we have visited this year:

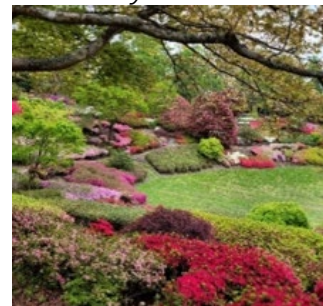
Spring in Windsor Castle in April



Talk by John Anderson and guided tour of Savill Garden in April



Guided tour of the Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park in May



Talk from Megan Aldrich and guided visit to Caversham Court in June



Guided tour of Waterperry Gardens in August



Guided tour of Royal Holloway University in September



Upcoming winter Zoom lectures and talks 2026: We will be restarting the Zoom lectures on Tuesday 10th November at 7.00pm. Landscape historian Sarah Rutherford will give an illustrated talk on her emerging book on the history of grottos including Ascot Place, Berkshire.

Our **2027 programme** is progressing nicely with a Zoom talk in January from the National Trust Sissinghurst's Senior Gardener, Richard Gravett, on the exciting new projects at the gardens; a Zoom talk from Sian Thomas in February, following her very successful tour for us of the Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park this year; and further talks by Zoom and in person to be arranged. We will be visiting West Woodhay, West Green, Rooksnest, the Wormsley Estate and a London venue, with a special **Members only** visit to Windsor Castle in June. Keep an eye out for our emails to you and the website for further information about next year's programme.

Membership: The membership has dropped from 81 at 31 March 2026 to 70 this year. Thank you to all our members for your loyal support. Do continue to encourage your friends to join as members and to spread the word on how important the health and quality of our historic parks and gardens are to us all.

Sponsorship: We have not awarded any grants or sponsorship so far this year. Do let us know if you know of any suitable projects that would meet our objectives as set out in the Small Grants Scheme guidance.

Planning matters have again been a bit quieter in the last six months with 16 cases. Of particular interest in Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG) have been:



Development proposals within **Park Place** Grade II* at Remenham still keep rolling in. We are still trying to minimise the impact on the RPG.

Park at **Alexandra Park, Windsor**: the Council have listened to our concerns and those of the local people and refused the details sent into discharge conditions for construction of ice rink and attractions annually from October to January in 2026, 2027 and 2028.



Proposed 11 storey residential development at **Forbury Retail Park** (behind the church in the photo) opposite the Abbey Quarter and the Grade II **Forbury Gardens**. We submitted that the development would significantly harm the setting of the RPG and Abbey Quarter.

A large extension to the listed Church Lodge within the Grade II park at **Aldermaston Court**. We asked for it to be reconsidered as it impacted on the RPG.



Retrospective permission required for new extensive intrusive fencing and razor wire on the listed walls around **Broadmoor Prison** in the RPG whilst a new developer/owner is sought. We asked for it to much reduced.

Wishing you all the best for the forthcoming year.

Bettina Kirkham

Chair of the Berkshire Gardens Trust