Charity registration number 800540

Company registration number 02277427 (England and Wales)

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Co-Chairmans:	Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight
Vice chairman:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Stephanie Berry
Membership secretary:	Elizabeth Lewis
Trustees and directors (In addition to those named above)	Mr Paul Faulkner Ms Jane Knight Ms Sue Beardsmore Mr Peter Bieneman Mr Ian Smith Mr Hugo Bugg (elected 09/10/2025) Ms Elizabeth Lewis (resigned 09/10/2025)
Patron:	The Earl of Devon
President:	Vacant
Vice-Presidents:	Mrs Janet Anderson Dr Eric Durrance Mr Peter Hunt Mr Steven Pugsley
Company secretary:	Vacant
Conservation officer:	Mr Jonathan Lovie
Newsletter editor:	Vivien Rands
Journal editor:	Dianne Long
Charity number:	800540
Company number:	02277427

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Registered office:	Queensgate House 48 Queen Street Exeter Devon England EX4 3SR
Correspondence address:	Queensgate House 48 Queen Street Exeter Devon England EX4 3SR
Accountants:	Streets Bush Limited Melrose House Pynes Hill Exeter EX2 5AZ
Bankers:	NatWest Bank plc 59 High Street Exeter Devon EX4 3DL
Investment brokers & custodians:	Brewin Dolphin Limited Vantage Point Woodwater Park Pynes Hill Exeter EX2 5FD

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

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DEVON GARDENS TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTOR'S REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026.

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 pages 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.

Sue Beardsmore has decided to step down as Trustee with effect of the date of the AGM, having served for two years. We thank her for the contributions that she has made as Trustee, specifically in the area of governance.

Achievements and performance

Since our last AGM at Lukesland in early October 2025, DGT Trustees, Committees and many other volunteers have had a busy year delivering on the key focus areas which were agreed by Trustees at our first meeting after the AGM. This report summarises the work in each of these areas.

1. Simplified organisation to focus on project delivery

DGT is a small organisation and we felt that the Committee structure - with the need for a Chair and formal meeting attendance and minutes - was unnecessarily onerous. We now **work in teams or project groups** with a Trustee lead for each project/area, in addition to our ongoing work on planning.

Whilst appreciating the responsibilities of running a Charity, we minimised our 'governance' workload by implementing only **essential policies**; work that has been ably led by Trustee, Sue Beardsmore. To ensure complete transparency, these can now be seen on our website (devongardenstrust.org.uk/about-us/policies).

This has been the second year of operating with Co-Chairs who have divided the necessary oversight of our teams, based on skills and location. We still seek a 'Chair' but, in the meantime, this approach has allowed the DGT to continue delivering its objectives. Trustees' biographies are now available on the website at the following link (devongardenstrust.org.uk/about-us/people).

2. Support the education and lifelong learning of gardeners and students at every level

We have maintained momentum on several initiatives that were piloted last year:

- Continuing to build the **Professional Gardeners' Network** has been a priority and two professional development days were held again this year – in September 2025 at Dartington Hall and February 2026 at RHS Rosemoor – with nationally recognised speakers. Both days were well attended, and our growing network is now more than 100. A further event will be held at Dartington on 24th September.
- The professional gardeners' network events have helped promote DGT's **adult education programme and bursaries** and eleven bursaries have been awarded this year, a significant increase from the three awarded last financial year.
- Last year we 'piloted' support of a WRAGS trainee at Nethercott. This has been successful and Ben Choy will complete his 12-month placement in November. We will be seeking to continue this support, and possibly extend to a second placement.
- Last year's **photography competition** helped to raise awareness of DGT and this year it has been promoted in secondary schools – particularly in art departments - as a way of engaging this hard-to-reach group. This year's theme is 'Light in the Landscape' and both prize money and the number of categories for young people have increased so we are optimistic that, by the extended closing date of 31st October, we will have more engagement and quality entrants.
- This year we have also supported the work of Exeter-based **'Food for Thought'** who work with primary school children throughout the county.

3. Make our research and archives accessible then reinvigorate research projects

This year the review and rationalisation of the DGT archive has been successfully completed, led by our Honorary Archivist, Clare Greener, overseen by Trustee lead, Paul Faulkner, and assisted by a dedicated group of volunteers from our membership and external organisations. DGT research archives and library are now in the safekeeping of the Devon Heritage Centre where they can be accessed by all. The list of files held can be viewed at this link: DGT Archive Index. The 'cover sheets' with table of contents can also be viewed on the DGT website in a way that they can be easily 'searched' and will over time be added to each site record in our Parks and Gardens database.

Completion of this epic task has also allowed us to give up the lease on DGT's rather unsuitable 'office'/store at Exeter Community Centre and our registered address has been moved to the Exeter Business Hub.

We are now keen to develop opportunities for wider volunteer engagement through clearly defined research projects. One of these is to develop a video archive - recording the people and place of Devon's historic gardens – and are hoping to enlist volunteers to get involved in this project.

4. Seek conservation projects to allow our funds to make a positive impact

We were delighted in February this year to receive a legacy of £210K from the estate of the late Mrs Maureen James and The Kildare James Will Trust. These are unrestricted funds that can be used at the discretion of Trustees to further DGT's charitable objectives.

Despite our best efforts to promote grant giving opportunities through our updated website and e-News, there have been **few conservation grant** applications during the year and we are actively seeking projects to support. In particular, we are keen to support the work of existing "Friends of" groups in historic parks and community gardens through advice or small grants.

Inspired by a Gardens Trust initiative, in October 2025 we **launched a community grants scheme** to fund projects up to £5,000 and in May this year made our first two awards. To Newton Poppleford Primary School – £356 for the purchase of an irrigation system for the school allotment – and £4,980 to Grow Well Devon CIC – for the essential infrastructure to create a sustainable heritage kitchen garden at Totnes St John's Primary School. Trustees and members of the Conservation Group have also offered advice to 'Friends' groups as well as public and private owners.

At **Oldway Mansion Gardens in Paignton**, we have continued to collaborate with the Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group and the site owners, Torbay Council. The mansion is currently undergoing extensive restoration work, mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. We have agreed to work together to develop a project for the gardens – focused on the grotto and rock garden area - that will allow DGT's Wilson Fund to help leverage an additional bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to make an impact. Just before Christmas 2025, we all met Historic England to look specifically at the area however action was precipitated by Storm Chandra in late January 2026 which caused a huge pine tree to fall and crash through the grotto. The grotto has now been disassembled, and council consultants are looking at options for recovery of the area.

5. Engage with the national debate on planning policy and adapt to change

Currently, the national Gardens Trust (GT) is a statutory consultee in the planning process, and our Conservation experts work closely with them to respond to planning applications affecting Devon's historic parks and gardens.

Central government proposals to streamline the planning system threatened GT's role as a statutory consultee and – despite objections from DGT, DGT members, county garden trusts, and lobbying of decision makers, in mid-August 2026 it was announced that **GT's role as a statutory consultee in the English planning system is being removed.** Thanks to the collective efforts of GT and the county garden trusts, some protection for historic parks and gardens will still be provided by GT being notified of planning applications within parks and gardens but it is of deep concern that this will not include applications affecting the setting of these special places. It is likely that this legislative change will be in place by end-2026. This is, of course, disappointing and concerning however, it does not affect DGT's ability to comment and advise on planning applications, and we will continue to do this.

This potential change, together with the resignation of our Conservation Officer, Jonathan Lovie, and Dianne Long's wish to step-back from her longstanding role as Chair has prompted a re-think of how we approach this important aspect of conservation. Dianne and Trustee-lead, Jane Knight, will now split review and advice on planning applications – with Dianne taking Exeter, north and east and Jane taking Plymouth and Torbay with the south and west.

The Conservation Report includes details of work carried out in this area with highlights:

- Working with the Gardens Trust, respond to consultation on revised National Planning Policy Framework, due summer 2026, and Government's proposals for new town developments around Plymouth and Exeter.
- Liaise with local authorities on *Devon Local List* sites.
- Review, respond and advise on to some 55 planning applications of complexity.
- Consult with National Trust on reducing visitor impact at Saltram (Grade II*) and improvements to visitor facilities at Arlington Court (Grade II*).
- In Plymouth, there have been a number of consultations related to the The Hoe (Grade II) and the re-development of the Civic Centre (Grade II) which includes the landscape designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe.
- Larkbeare House, Exeter (gardens are now Grade II) is in the process of being sold by Devon County Council and DGT have had pre-application discussions on site with the potential owner/developer to learn more about their plans.

DGT responses on planning applications can now be viewed on our website in the Planning Casework Log (devongardenstrust.org.uk/conservation/planning-case-log). This keeps our knowledge-base on registered and locally listed parks and gardens up to date and is a valuable addition to our digital archive.

6. Member engagement through active and varied events

DGT's small events team is now led by trustee, Peter Bieneman, supported by Shane Cormie, who continues to organise many of our events. This year, key highlights were:

- Professional photographer, Jason Ingram, joined us at DGT's **Christmas lunch** at the Hartnoll Hotel, Tiverton. Jason shared his experience and beautiful images of his work as well as judging our photo competition and handing out awards to the winners.

- In 2025, members enjoyed eight garden visits and it was agreed that **earlier publication of annual events calendar for 2026** would help members plan. A programme of eight garden visits was drawn up for spring and summer 2026 and included visits to several contemporary gardens; inviting discussions on future heritage.
- Integration of academic/expert introductions to **enhance garden visits**. Talks, in preparation for visits, were held over the winter and on all visits, we are guided by the head gardener and/or owner to give members a unique insight into the evolution and contemporary challenges of gardening in a heritage setting.
- DGT welcomed **new members** at an event at Brinshill in early May 2026.
- We are hoping to organise **training events and workshops** to attract new volunteers to get involved with our work – particularly in research and recording.

7. Improve communications with members and raise awareness of DGT

DGT membership has grown by 9% this financial year and, as of April 2026, stands just short of 300 (296); we numbered 272 at the same point in 2025. We are pleased that our membership has continued to grow since year end.

Improving how we communicate is important to keep members informed and to raise awareness of all DGT does. Analysis of activity on our website revealed that most 'hits' did not dwell for long, suggesting visitors were not engaged with the content or did not find what they were looking for. Led by new Trustee, Hugo Bugg, this led to a series of workshops to review content and structure to clearly communicate strategic aims to prospective members and volunteers. This has resulted in a number of **changes to the website** to make it easier to navigate, with further improvements planned.

We continue to post regularly on **Instagram**, sharing updates on our events and other relevant news, and are pleased to have over 750 followers (up from 590 this time last year).

Volunteer, Viv Rands, puts together DGT **e-News** which provides a monthly update on events and news, and includes beautiful garden images taken by **volunteer photographer Liz**, who we thank once again. This now reaches 770 subscribers including our members, the professional gardeners' network and others interested in our work. The focus for this year has been on developing more engaging content. We are also planning to reinstate some 'longer reads' in the form of a printed newsletters and hopefully a journal, and content for this is sought.

8. 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 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.

We send our thanks again to Jonathan Lovie for sharing his in-depth knowledge of Devon gardens and garden history as well as his hard work and dedication in fulfilling the role of Conservation Officer over the last six years.

Financial Report

As of 31 March 2026, the Trust's reserves amounted to £555,818 (2025: £340,622) of which £143,948 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 are continuing to work with the Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group and Torbay Council to develop a 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 (£59,884). The total Unrestricted Funds balance carried forward is £411,870.

Following a review of charity funds, a transfer has been made from the Designated Fund to the General Fund. This is to present a carried forward balance of £78,000 in the Designated Fund. The identification of this balance of funds is to set aside funds specifically for the budgeted spend in the next 12 months on education bursaries, conservation grants and research publication. Any excess has been transferred back to the General Fund for use on any other activities carried out by the Trust in order to fulfil its charitable objectives. One of the objectives being to invest the monies of the Trust not immediately required for its purpose in or upon such investments.

The balance of the Unrestricted Funds carried forward is £333,870. This is in excess of the reserves policy by £273,986 and is predominantly due to the large legacy received in the year. The excess in reserves is being held in investments generating further income for the Trust in line with its objectives.

The Trust is monitoring reserves very carefully and is working hard to proactively promote its objectives so that reserves can be spent in a timely manner. One of the ways this is being done is through the grants programme mentioned below.

The Trust has launched a new, simplified grants and bursaries programme to encourage wider participation and is working to proactively promote the funds available to applicants. 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 £215,196 (2025: deficit of £5,447). Both income and expenditure for the year were globally in line with 2025 apart from legacy income and increased spending on education - both bursaries and the professional gardeners' network. The surplus this year versus the deficit in 2025 was directly driven by the £210,000 of legacy income received from the Edmund Kildare James Will Trust and the Estate of the late Maureen Elizabeth James deceased, and £24,382 in additional gains from the investment portfolio which grew by 13.2% year over year.

Detailed reports from each Group are included below.

Governance Report
Trustee Lead: Sue Beardsmore

During the year, review and updating of policies continued and the Policy Management Schedule was updated.

Due to number of trustees, a separate committee for Governance was disbanded, and relevant matters were brought to full board each quarter.

The organisation document was updated with a specific task list for 2025/26.

Efforts continue to recruit new trustees. Hugo Bugg was elected as a trustee at the AGM 2025. Elizabeth Lewis's term of office ended on that date.

The Trustee Induction Agreement and process was reviewed and updated.

The Reserves Policy, was reviewed to recognise the current level of funds held by the Trust.
The Grants Policy was developed in support of the revised Grants structure. The Trust remains committed to dispersing agreed funds in support of projects which align with its aims and objectives.

The current arrangement of a joint Chair continued as agreed at the Trustees Meeting 25th October 2024.

Co-Chairs Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight with areas of oversight:
SB – Governance & Finance, Research & Recording, Communication & PR
JK – Conservation, Education & Training, Membership Engagement and represent DGT locally.

Education Team Report
Trustee Lead: Mr Ian Smith

The Education team includes Ian Smith, Jane Knight, Peter Bieneman, Sue Minter, Penny Hammond, Hugo Bugg and Patrick Welch.

Strategic Objective - Promote and support education (primary, secondary and tertiary), life-long learning and continuing professional development in historic designed landscapes.

It has been another successful year for education within the Devon Gardens Trust. To meet our strategic objectives, we have continued to award bursaries and grants for educational and professional development courses. We have awarded eleven bursaries to a value of £7,766 to professional gardeners and an £8,000 grant to support a WRAG's trainee placement at Nethercott House, Farms for City Children.

The Professional Gardeners' Network has continued to be successful and has engaged with over 100 professional gardeners working in Devon and we plan to continue and build on this success.

Further details of this year's work are described below;

2025/26 Bursaries

Rob G, £380 RHS Level2 Hort
Rupert W, £740 RHS Level3 Hort online
Tracy R, £471 Garden design at Bicton College
Kate R, £750 RHS Level2 Hort
Ben C, £750 RHS Level2 online. Ben is a WRAGs trainee at Nethercott House. Part of DPGN
Louise B, £445 Level2 Forestry
Christopher L, £750 RHS Level3 online
Ella M, £1,000 RHS Mhort. Ella is a gardener at Buckfastleigh Abbey. Part of DPGN
Erin W, £750 Garden Design course at Great Dixter
Christopher Y, £1,000 RHS Mhort. Chris is a team leader at RHS Rosemoor
William P, £725 Chainsaw and brushcutter courses.

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.

'Carbon in the Garden': on the 19th Sept 2025, 50 professional gardeners listened to Dr Mark Gush and John Little discuss how gardeners can respond to climate change.

'**Spring Forward**: Views on a Resilient Future' with Joshua Sparks and Dusty Gedge at RHS Rosemoor on the 13th Feb 2026 was a great success. It was attended by over 60 gardeners and the atmosphere and feedback back were very positive.

The next event with a theme of '**TREES'**, will be at Dartington Hall on Thursday 24th September including talks and a tour of the iconic trees within the estate.

Supporting WRAG's trainee placements at Nethercott House
The Devon Gardens Trust is proud to have supported a successful WRAGS trainee placement at Nethercott House, Farms for City Children. Funding of £8,000 allowed the trainee to work for two days a week for one year. The trainee will complete his placement in November.

Future Initiatives for 2026/27
The education committee are continually looking to see how best to meet their objectives.

- Bursary applications have increased and we have already awarded £10,000 so far in 2026/27
- The professional gardeners' network continues to build and make better links with gardeners.
- Primary school support has been helped by supporting 'Food for thought' (£2,000)
- Secondary School links are being built by the photographic competition
- Two community grants have been awarded to support primary school community gardens
- Support another WRAGS trainee placement at Nethercott House starting in November 2026. Also investigating another placement opportunity within the gardens of Devon to support a trainee to learn from a head gardener for two days a week, over twelve months.

Conservation Committee Report
Chair: Dr Dianne Long
Trustee Lead: Jane Knight

This has been the first full year of slightly amended arrangements for responding to planning applications affecting registered sites. Whereas previously the Trust had responded on behalf of the Gardens Trust as statutory consultee for all consultations in Devon, now DGT advises the Gardens Trust, which then responds; occasionally DGT will also respond where it believes the proposals may significantly impact the historic landscape.

Early in 2025 the government announced an enquiry into the future of the statutory consultee status of several bodies, including the Gardens Trust, as part of its review of the planning system in England. DGT submitted evidence to the Gardens Trust to inform its response to government. The Gardens Trust is the only statutory consultee for cases affecting Grade II designated landscapes, which are the majority of historic designed landscape locally (36 sites) and nationally (Historic England only responds for Grade I and Grade II* landscapes). Following consultation to which DGT contributed via the Gardens Trust, the government is also expected to publish a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework in summer 2026. We have more recently responded to a consultation by The Gardens Trust regarding the Government's proposals for new town developments which include Plymouth and the area around Rockbeare to the east of Exeter.

Following our review of all *Devon Local List* sites, letters were sent out to all local authorities detailing the *Local List* sites in their area. We received positive feedback resulting in a training session for officers in South Hams and West Devon and a meeting with East Devon on their priority areas, which helps DGT to prioritise its work.

During the year there have been some 55 planning applications varying in complexity on which the Trust (via the Gardens Trust) has been consulted and in some cases, we have been involved at pre-application stage thus potentially being able to influence submitted planning proposals. There have been several consultations affecting Saltram (Grade II*) (National Trust) both in respect of the country park being developed in the wider parkland, in part to reduce footfall on the core gardens by dog walkers, cyclists etc. and improvements to the visitor reception areas. The National Trust have also been looking to improve visitor facilities at Arlington Court (Grade II*) again to reduce some of the pressure on the current historic core of the estate by creating an outdoor hub just outside the registered landscape near to Woolley Lodge on the A39.

Plymouth City Council have sold Pounds House and its immediately surrounding gardens at the northern end of Central Park. The Trust is pleased that the new owner of Pounds House (Grade II) has been restoring the house and its gardens, and a school for special educational needs and disability (SEND) will be occupying the house thus giving it a viable use.

There have been a number of consultations in relation to the The Hoe (Grade II) including the siting of an observation (Ferris) wheel, where we advised the GT that the proposed wheel would have a major adverse impact on the registered landscape and the conservation area which we did not think was adequately addressed in the supporting documentation. Installation of a Ferris wheel in Princess Gardens, Torquay, was approved, but is currently not operating. Also on The Hoe were the installation of a sculpture in the Peace Garden, a temporary artwork on the Bowling Green to commemorate the 100th birthday of the artist, Beryl Cook, and alterations to the Marine Biological Laboratory building.

In Plymouth city centre the Trust has been consulted on the re-development of the Civic Centre (Grade II) to include educational use, residential and building alterations; whilst this new use for the building and its landscape introduces elements to meet the new use and current building regulations, we considered that the proposals were in keeping with the historic building and the landscape designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe and would bring the building back into use after many years unoccupied.

Following the registering of the gardens at Larkbeare House, Exeter, at Grade II, the property is in the process of being sold by Devon County Council. We have had pre-application discussions on site with the potential owner/developer to learn more about their plans for both the unlisted house and possible development within parts of the Grade II garden. Subsequently we also held a meeting of the Conservation Committee on site with the developer's representative. Both meetings were open and constructive, although we await the submission of a planning application to assess the impact on the historic gardens.

The F W Meyer designed grotto/cave in the gardens at Oldway (a Grade II Listed structure within the Grade II historic landscape) sustained substantial damage from the uprooting of a Monterey pine during Storm Chandra in January 2026. While the damage was severe, it revealed important detail regarding the construction of the grotto/cave which will inform any potential reinstatement. Further trees in the area have been removed and a full survey undertaken prior to removing soil and stonework, a necessary precursor to restoring the area. Torbay Council have now commissioned consultants to develop a series of options for the area and will keep DGT informed of the outcome. The overall aim is to work with the council, Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group and Historic England on a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration and improvement of the grotto area using DGT's Wilson Fund (the legacy states that conservation of Oldway gardens is the priority) to leverage more substantial funds and a larger and more impactful project in this public park.

We attended a meeting along with the Teignbridge Conservation Officer and Historic England with the owner of Mamhead House and his landscape consultant to discuss how to secure the gardens from deer and to deter trespassers. It was a constructive meeting, and we look forward to seeing what proposals are brought forward. Whilst there we urged that a CMP be developed. The Mamhead estate is a classic example of the threats to an historic landscape in multiple ownership: for example, the owner of Mamhead House owns only a relatively small area of the registered park and garden yet within sightlines from the house and garden are other properties which in the past have been allowed inappropriate development, and the adjoining property, The Orangery, as far as we could see, has had little management for some time.

The Trust supported a successful application by Torbay Council to NLHF for funding to produce condition surveys, CMPs, cost plans and user reports for Chapel Hill Woods, Torquay and Victoria Park, Paignton. Understanding the historic development of these two public pleasure grounds will help to determine their significance, inform future management for public benefit and may also lead to one or both parks meriting inclusion on the *Devon Local List*.

Unfortunately, there have been few conservation grant applications during the year except for one from The Garden House for the replacement of windows in the old stable, for which a grant of £2,000 was approved.

Events Team Report
Trustee Lead: Mr Peter Bieneman

The general programme of events in the twelve months since the last AGM at Lukesland in October 2025 has followed a similar pattern to that previously, with a few more frequent events in the summer.

Christmas meeting
The Christmas lunch was held again in 2025 at the Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham near Tiverton as this venue works well for members from almost all parts of the county. Jason Ingram, the renowned garden photographer, provided a wonderful talk on his work and gave many tips on how to set about obtaining the perfectly lit shot. Jason then adjudicated the photography competition. After lunch the annual award for Innovation, Creativity and Sustainability in an historic Devon Garden was presented to Coleton Fishacre.

Talks in 2026
Between Christmas and Easter a series of talks took place at Clyst St Mary and The Mint, Exeter.
Tuesday 27th January 2.30pm Stella Exley, RHS Gold winner talked about her passion for Camassias as holder of a National Collection, working with Chris Beardshaw and winning a gold at Chelseas.
Tuesday 24th February 2.30pm Ian Trought, Head Gardener at Overbeck's, talked about working at Wisley, planting the Piet Oudolf's design at Wisley and his work at Overbeck's in the previous 12 months.
Tuesday 10th March 2.30pm Jonathan Lovie, DGT Conservation Officer, spoke about the history and landscape of Rumleigh House near Tavistock.

Garden Visits in 2026
Between Easter and the end of July a series of visit took place to some very varied gardens and landscapes, located across the county. In almost all cases we very fortunate in having either the owner or the Head Gardener or both lead our visit, so giving us a much greater insight into the original design, development and conservation of these wonderful places.

Tuesday 14th April 2.00pm Plaz Metaxu
Tuesday 21st April 2.00pm Hartland Abbey
Tuesday 5th May 2.00pm Castle Hill
Tuesday 19th May 2.00pm Overbeck's, Salcombe
Tuesday 2nd June 11.00pm The Garden House 2.00pm Wildside
Tuesday 16th June 2.00pm Little Dartmouth
Tuesday 30th June 2.00pm Middle Well, Stoke Gabriel
Tuesday 28th July 2.00pm Sidbury Manor

Autumn 2026
There are two dates for your diary in the autumn.
Visit to Tuesday 13th October 2.00pm Dunley House to see the wonderful autumn colours.
Talk on Thursday 12th November at 2.00pm Ann Treneman, The Times Gardens Correspondent, will discuss her new book "The Garden Cure".

Research Projects Report
Trustee Lead: Paul Faulkner

The office lease at Exeter Community Centre was relinquished at the end of May 2026.

All the site files and subject files from the office have been taken to the Devon Heritage Centre (DHC), combined with existing DGT files and packaged according to DHC's requirements. All cover sheets (indexes) detailing file contents have been updated to reflect the file content. The relevant cover sheets will also be added to the gardens listed on the DGT website providing a comprehensive record of the data we hold.

Six files containing modern sale catalogues, which do not have an associated DGT site file, have been deposited in the DHC to be combined with their own sale catalogues deposit. A list of the catalogues has been kept for DGT reference.

The DGT site files have been indexed for DHC's on-line catalogue. The cataloguing has been completed, and the DGT files are now listed on the Devon Heritage Centre's on-line catalogue and will be available to all to view subject to their opening hours and regulations. Details of our files are held in Accession Number 5422G and the information they contain can be seen by using the link DGT Archive Index. Further material can, if necessary, be added to the DGT deposit once a year.

As it has been impossible to find a home for our Library where all books can be kept together and still be easily available to members, the library has been split into two. The most important books needed for local research are in the home of the Honorary Archivist. The remainder have been assessed as being of limited value in terms of garden research and will be disposed of in due course. The mechanism for disposal is still being considered by Trustees.

Any members requiring a book for research are welcome to contact the Research Group.

Research Projects volunteers are currently working on a desk-top search for information on sites which may be important historically, but which currently have very few records.

The Research Group met in Totnes on 1st June to discuss existing and future subjects for investigation, and potential research. Future informal meetings will be held across Devon to enable a local focus on participation. Anyone wishing to explore a gardens related subject is welcome and encouraged to get in touch.

Honorary Archivist's Report
Hon Archivist: Dr Clare Greener

The project to check, amalgamate and repackage DGT's files in the Devon Heritage Centre (DHC) is now complete. DGT volunteers have also catalogued our material on behalf of the DHC which ensured that all DGT material held in the Heritage Centre was listed on their on-line catalogue by the end of June 2026 and can now be viewed here: DGT Archive Index

Thank you to the team of dedicated volunteers who have helped with this project: Caroline Fox, Jenny Tozer, Pippa Ferguson and Paul Auchterlonie, led by Clare Greener and Paul Faulkner. We have also been helped, on two separate occasions, by MET Office volunteers.

The DGT library has now been split into two; essential books incorporating local books and those helpful for research and recording; and more generalised works currently held by Clare Greener and Paul Faulkner respectively on a temporary basis.

Over the last year we have had several new volunteers offer their help. Some have been involved in the project at the DHC, others are helping with desktop surveys of properties near where they live in order to see whether any further in-depth research should be undertaken where we have a small file, but limited information.

Enquiries continue to come in on diverse areas of garden history and are answered by members of the Research Group and the Conservation Committee.

I will be standing down as Archivist from this AGM and wish to thank all the volunteers with whom I have worked over the last few years. I look forward to meeting them at future research meetings and DGT events.

Membership Report
Secretary: Mrs Elizabeth Lewis

Membership numbers at April 2026 were 296 (272 in 2025). Our membership is increasing and we are grateful to all our members for their continued support.

We give a special welcome to our new members who we continue to meet whenever they are able to attend talks and garden visits. Phil and Anthea Clinch again hosted our visit to Brinshill to meet members who joined since 2024. This is always a great success, and we thank Phil and Anthea for opening their beautiful garden again for our new members' 'meet and greet'.

Sadly, we have lost the following longstanding DGT members during the past year: Mrs Rosemary Howell of Lukesland, Mr John Borron, Mrs Rachel Jackson and Mrs Edna Dathan have died since our last AGM and we send our condolences to all their friends and families.

Trustees
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 2025-26 there were 7 Trustees, a combination of existing members and those elected or re-elected at the Annual General Meeting on 9th October 2025. 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 trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

.....

Ms S Berry
Trustee

Date: 20/10/2026

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

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 operation.

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

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF DEVON GARDENS TRUST

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Devon Gardens Trust (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or

3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or

4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

S. Truran

S Truran FCCA FCA
Streets Bush Limited

Melrose House
Pynes Hill
Rydon Lane
Exeter
Devon
EX2 5AZ

Dated: 21.10.2026

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total 2026 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	**2**	210,051	-	210,051	-	-	-
Incoming resources	**3**	9,846	-	9,846	9,295	-	9,295
Investments	**4**	7,037	2,260	9,297	5,681	2,528	8,209
Total income		226,934	2,260	229,194	14,976	2,528	17,504
Expenditure on:							
Resources expensed	**5**	38,868	903	39,771	23,314	1,028	24,342
Net gains/(losses) on investments	**8**	19,507	6,266	25,773	963	428	1,391
Net movement in funds		207,573	7,623	215,196	(7,375)	1,928	(5,447)
Fund balances at 1 April 2025		204,297	136,325	340,622	211,672	134,397	346,069
Fund balances at 31 March 2026		411,870	143,948	555,818	204,297	136,325	340,622

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

The notes on pages 19 to 28 form part of these financial statements.

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2026 £	2025 £	2025 £
Fixed assets					
Investments	**11**		534,796		337,928
Current assets					
Stocks	**12**	777		827	
Debtors	**13**	2,148		1,730	
Cash at bank and in hand		26,991		5,850	
		29,916		8,407	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**14**	(8,894)		(5,713)	
Net current assets			21,022		2,694
Total assets less current liabilities			555,818		340,622
Income funds					
Restricted funds	**15**		143,948		136,325
Unrestricted funds - general					
Designated funds	**16**	78,000		152,407	
General unrestricted funds		333,870		51,890	
			411,870		204,297
			555,818		340,622

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)

AS AT 31 MARCH 2026

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

The director acknowledges his responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 7th September 2026

.....

Ms S Berry
Trustee

Company registration number 02277427

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Devon Gardens Trust is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Queensgate House, 48 Queen Street, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3SR, England.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland” (“FRS 102”) and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Computers	25% Straight Line

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Fixed asset investments

Fixed asset investments are initially measured at transaction price excluding transaction costs, and are subsequently measured at fair value at each reporting date. Changes in fair value are recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year. Transaction costs are expensed as incurred.

Restricted investments indicate investments held at market value as at the year end, as a result of the restricted legacy income received.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell. Cost comprises direct materials and, where applicable, direct labour costs and those overheads that have been incurred in bringing the stocks to their present location and condition. Items held for distribution at no or nominal consideration are measured the lower of replacement cost and cost.

Net realisable value is the estimated selling price less all estimated costs of completion and costs to be incurred in marketing, selling and distribution.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

2 Legacies

	Unrestricted funds general 2026 £	Total 2025 £
Legacies received	210,051	-

During the year, the trust received unrestricted legacies totalling £210,051 as follows:

The estate of the late Mrs Maureen Elizabeth James	95,046	-
The E K O James Will Trust	115,005	-
	210,051	-

3 Incoming resources

	2026	2025
	£	£
Subscriptions	4,194	3,825
Gift aid	802	1,167
Donations	388	23
Events, including AGM	4,457	4,248
Book sales	5	32
	9,846	9,295

4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds general 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total 2026 £	Unrestricted funds general 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Income from listed investments	7,037	2,260	9,297	5,681	2,528	8,209

5 Resources expensed

	2026	2025
	£	£
Administration	-	288
Office rent & service charge	1,949	1,834
Publicity & marketing	2,016	1,287
Bursaries & grants	11,766	1,866
Conservation - grants awarded	2,500	500
Conservation - committee expenses including officer	3,776	4,264
Research & recording	890	13
Events, including AGM	8,607	5,008
Publications - journal & newsletter	575	1,299
Subscriptions & sundries	220	204
Insurance	671	692
Accountancy	3,087	2,307
Investment management fee	3,714	3,340
Legal & professional fees	-	1,440
	39,771	24,342
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds - general	38,868	23,314
Restricted funds	903	1,028
	39,771	24,342

6 Trustees

£295 of expenses were reimbursed to Trustees during the year for undertaking charitable activities (2025: £125).

No remuneration was paid to any members or directors during the year (2025: £Nil).

There were no other disclosable related party transactions during the year.

7 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2026 Number	2025 Number
	6	5

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

8 Net gains/(losses) on investments

	Unrestricted funds general 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total 2026 £	Unrestricted funds general 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Revaluation of investments	16,482	5,294	21,776	(685)	(305)	(990)
Gain/(loss) on sale of investments	3,025	972	3,997	1,648	733	2,381
	19,507	6,266	25,773	963	428	1,391

9 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

10 Tangible fixed assets

	Computers £
Cost	
At 1 April 2025	6,816
At 31 March 2026	6,816
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2025	6,816
At 31 March 2026	6,816
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2026	-
At 31 March 2025	-

11 Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £
Cost or valuation	
At 1 April 2025	337,928
Additions	238,819
Valuation changes	25,771
Disposals	(67,722)
At 31 March 2026	534,796
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2026	534,796
At 31 March 2025	337,928

Fixed asset investments revalued

All investments are listed on a recognised stock exchange.

At the year end, cash held as part of the investment portfolio was £14,374 (2025 £2,630). This is included in cash at bank on the balance sheet.

11 Fixed asset investments **(Continued)**

12 Stocks

	2026	2025
	£	£
Stock	777	827

13 Debtors

	2026	2025
Amounts falling due within one year:	£	£
Prepayments and accrued income	2,148	1,730

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2026	2025
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	8,894	5,713

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

		Movement in funds			Movement in funds		
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2025	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 March 2026
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Wilson Conservation Fund	134,397	2,956	(1,028)	136,325	8,526	(903)	143,948

This fund represents a legacy and must be utilised for the restoration and conservation of important Devon gardens, with priority given to the restoration of Oldway Mansion Paignton's original landscape design by Achille Duchêne.

16 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2024	Transfers	Revaluations, gains and losses	Balance at 1 April 2025	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2026
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Designated Fund	156,774	(5,196)	829	152,407	(74,407)	78,000
	156,774	(5,196)	829	152,407	(74,407)	78,000

This fund had previously represented investments owned by the Trust, initially purchased following the receipt of a legacy. This fund had been set aside for conservation and education grants and for the publication of research.

After a review of the Trust's funds, it was decided that to aid transparency, all investments of the Trust that are unrestricted should form part of the general reserves therefore, a transfer has been made out of the designated fund.

The balance in the designated fund moving forward relates to the budgeted spend on education bursaries, conservation grants and research publication over the next 12 months. This fund will be reviewed annually by the trustees.

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2026	Restricted funds 2026	Total 2026	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted funds 2025	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2026 are represented by:						
Investments	404,788	130,008	534,796	233,880	104,048	337,928
Current assets/(liabilities)	7,082	13,940	21,022	(29,583)	32,277	2,694
	411,870	143,948	555,818	204,297	136,325	340,622

Charity registration number 800540

Company registration number 02277427 (England and Wales)

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Co-Chairmans:	Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight
Vice chairman:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Stephanie Berry
Membership secretary:	Elizabeth Lewis
Trustees and directors (In addition to those named above)	Mr Paul Faulkner Ms Jane Knight Ms Sue Beardsmore Mr Peter Bieneman Mr Ian Smith Mr Hugo Bugg (elected 09/10/2025) Ms Elizabeth Lewis (resigned 09/10/2025)
Patron:	The Earl of Devon
President:	Vacant
Vice-Presidents:	Mrs Janet Anderson Dr Eric Durrance Mr Peter Hunt Mr Steven Pugsley
Company secretary:	Vacant
Conservation officer:	Mr Jonathan Lovie
Newsletter editor:	Vivien Rands
Journal editor:	Dianne Long
Charity number:	800540
Company number:	02277427

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Registered office:	Queensgate House 48 Queen Street Exeter Devon England EX4 3SR
Correspondence address:	Queensgate House 48 Queen Street Exeter Devon England EX4 3SR
Accountants:	Streets Bush Limited Melrose House Pynes Hill Exeter EX2 5AZ
Bankers:	NatWest Bank plc 59 High Street Exeter Devon EX4 3DL
Investment brokers & custodians:	Brewin Dolphin Limited Vantage Point Woodwater Park Pynes Hill Exeter EX2 5FD

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

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DEVON GARDENS TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTOR'S REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026.

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 pages 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.

Sue Beardsmore has decided to step down as Trustee with effect of the date of the AGM, having served for two years. We thank her for the contributions that she has made as Trustee, specifically in the area of governance.

Achievements and performance

Since our last AGM at Lukesland in early October 2025, DGT Trustees, Committees and many other volunteers have had a busy year delivering on the key focus areas which were agreed by Trustees at our first meeting after the AGM. This report summarises the work in each of these areas.

1. Simplified organisation to focus on project delivery

DGT is a small organisation and we felt that the Committee structure - with the need for a Chair and formal meeting attendance and minutes - was unnecessarily onerous. We now **work in teams or project groups** with a Trustee lead for each project/area, in addition to our ongoing work on planning.

Whilst appreciating the responsibilities of running a Charity, we minimised our 'governance' workload by implementing only **essential policies**; work that has been ably led by Trustee, Sue Beardsmore. To ensure complete transparency, these can now be seen on our website (devongardenstrust.org.uk/about-us/policies).

This has been the second year of operating with Co-Chairs who have divided the necessary oversight of our teams, based on skills and location. We still seek a 'Chair' but, in the meantime, this approach has allowed the DGT to continue delivering its objectives. Trustees' biographies are now available on the website at the following link (devongardenstrust.org.uk/about-us/people).

2. Support the education and lifelong learning of gardeners and students at every level

We have maintained momentum on several initiatives that were piloted last year:

- Continuing to build the **Professional Gardeners' Network** has been a priority and two professional development days were held again this year – in September 2025 at Dartington Hall and February 2026 at RHS Rosemoor – with nationally recognised speakers. Both days were well attended, and our growing network is now more than 100. A further event will be held at Dartington on 24th September.
- The professional gardeners' network events have helped promote DGT's **adult education programme and bursaries** and eleven bursaries have been awarded this year, a significant increase from the three awarded last financial year.
- Last year we 'piloted' support of a WRAGS trainee at Nethercott. This has been successful and Ben Choy will complete his 12-month placement in November. We will be seeking to continue this support, and possibly extend to a second placement.
- Last year's **photography competition** helped to raise awareness of DGT and this year it has been promoted in secondary schools – particularly in art departments - as a way of engaging this hard-to-reach group. This year's theme is 'Light in the Landscape' and both prize money and the number of categories for young people have increased so we are optimistic that, by the extended closing date of 31st October, we will have more engagement and quality entrants.
- This year we have also supported the work of Exeter-based **'Food for Thought'** who work with primary school children throughout the county.

3. Make our research and archives accessible then reinvigorate research projects

This year the review and rationalisation of the DGT archive has been successfully completed, led by our Honorary Archivist, Clare Greener, overseen by Trustee lead, Paul Faulkner, and assisted by a dedicated group of volunteers from our membership and external organisations. DGT research archives and library are now in the safekeeping of the Devon Heritage Centre where they can be accessed by all. The list of files held can be viewed at this link: DGT Archive Index. The 'cover sheets' with table of contents can also be viewed on the DGT website in a way that they can be easily 'searched' and will over time be added to each site record in our Parks and Gardens database.

Completion of this epic task has also allowed us to give up the lease on DGT's rather unsuitable 'office'/store at Exeter Community Centre and our registered address has been moved to the Exeter Business Hub.

We are now keen to develop opportunities for wider volunteer engagement through clearly defined research projects. One of these is to develop a video archive - recording the people and place of Devon's historic gardens – and are hoping to enlist volunteers to get involved in this project.

4. Seek conservation projects to allow our funds to make a positive impact

We were delighted in February this year to receive a legacy of £210K from the estate of the late Mrs Maureen James and The Kildare James Will Trust. These are unrestricted funds that can be used at the discretion of Trustees to further DGT's charitable objectives.

Despite our best efforts to promote grant giving opportunities through our updated website and e-News, there have been **few conservation grant** applications during the year and we are actively seeking projects to support. In particular, we are keen to support the work of existing "Friends of" groups in historic parks and community gardens through advice or small grants.

Inspired by a Gardens Trust initiative, in October 2025 we **launched a community grants scheme** to fund projects up to £5,000 and in May this year made our first two awards. To Newton Poppleford Primary School – £356 for the purchase of an irrigation system for the school allotment – and £4,980 to Grow Well Devon CIC – for the essential infrastructure to create a sustainable heritage kitchen garden at Totnes St John's Primary School. Trustees and members of the Conservation Group have also offered advice to 'Friends' groups as well as public and private owners.

At **Oldway Mansion Gardens in Paignton**, we have continued to collaborate with the Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group and the site owners, Torbay Council. The mansion is currently undergoing extensive restoration work, mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. We have agreed to work together to develop a project for the gardens – focused on the grotto and rock garden area - that will allow DGT's Wilson Fund to help leverage an additional bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to make an impact. Just before Christmas 2025, we all met Historic England to look specifically at the area however action was precipitated by Storm Chandra in late January 2026 which caused a huge pine tree to fall and crash through the grotto. The grotto has now been disassembled, and council consultants are looking at options for recovery of the area.

5. Engage with the national debate on planning policy and adapt to change

Currently, the national Gardens Trust (GT) is a statutory consultee in the planning process, and our Conservation experts work closely with them to respond to planning applications affecting Devon's historic parks and gardens.

Central government proposals to streamline the planning system threatened GT's role as a statutory consultee and – despite objections from DGT, DGT members, county garden trusts, and lobbying of decision makers, in mid-August 2026 it was announced that **GT's role as a statutory consultee in the English planning system is being removed.** Thanks to the collective efforts of GT and the county garden trusts, some protection for historic parks and gardens will still be provided by GT being notified of planning applications within parks and gardens but it is of deep concern that this will not include applications affecting the setting of these special places. It is likely that this legislative change will be in place by end-2026. This is, of course, disappointing and concerning however, it does not affect DGT's ability to comment and advise on planning applications, and we will continue to do this.

This potential change, together with the resignation of our Conservation Officer, Jonathan Lovie, and Dianne Long's wish to step-back from her longstanding role as Chair has prompted a re-think of how we approach this important aspect of conservation. Dianne and Trustee-lead, Jane Knight, will now split review and advice on planning applications – with Dianne taking Exeter, north and east and Jane taking Plymouth and Torbay with the south and west.

The Conservation Report includes details of work carried out in this area with highlights:

- Working with the Gardens Trust, respond to consultation on revised National Planning Policy Framework, due summer 2026, and Government's proposals for new town developments around Plymouth and Exeter.
- Liaise with local authorities on *Devon Local List* sites.
- Review, respond and advise on to some 55 planning applications of complexity.
- Consult with National Trust on reducing visitor impact at Saltram (Grade II*) and improvements to visitor facilities at Arlington Court (Grade II*).
- In Plymouth, there have been a number of consultations related to the The Hoe (Grade II) and the re-development of the Civic Centre (Grade II) which includes the landscape designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe.
- Larkbeare House, Exeter (gardens are now Grade II) is in the process of being sold by Devon County Council and DGT have had pre-application discussions on site with the potential owner/developer to learn more about their plans.

DGT responses on planning applications can now be viewed on our website in the Planning Casework Log (devongardenstrust.org.uk/conservation/planning-case-log). This keeps our knowledge-base on registered and locally listed parks and gardens up to date and is a valuable addition to our digital archive.

6. Member engagement through active and varied events

DGT's small events team is now led by trustee, Peter Bieneman, supported by Shane Cormie, who continues to organise many of our events. This year, key highlights were:

- Professional photographer, Jason Ingram, joined us at DGT's **Christmas lunch** at the Hartnoll Hotel, Tiverton. Jason shared his experience and beautiful images of his work as well as judging our photo competition and handing out awards to the winners.

- In 2025, members enjoyed eight garden visits and it was agreed that **earlier publication of annual events calendar for 2026** would help members plan. A programme of eight garden visits was drawn up for spring and summer 2026 and included visits to several contemporary gardens; inviting discussions on future heritage.
- Integration of academic/expert introductions to **enhance garden visits**. Talks, in preparation for visits, were held over the winter and on all visits, we are guided by the head gardener and/or owner to give members a unique insight into the evolution and contemporary challenges of gardening in a heritage setting.
- DGT welcomed **new members** at an event at Brinshill in early May 2026.
- We are hoping to organise **training events and workshops** to attract new volunteers to get involved with our work – particularly in research and recording.

7. Improve communications with members and raise awareness of DGT

DGT membership has grown by 9% this financial year and, as of April 2026, stands just short of 300 (296); we numbered 272 at the same point in 2025. We are pleased that our membership has continued to grow since year end.

Improving how we communicate is important to keep members informed and to raise awareness of all DGT does. Analysis of activity on our website revealed that most 'hits' did not dwell for long, suggesting visitors were not engaged with the content or did not find what they were looking for. Led by new Trustee, Hugo Bugg, this led to a series of workshops to review content and structure to clearly communicate strategic aims to prospective members and volunteers. This has resulted in a number of **changes to the website** to make it easier to navigate, with further improvements planned.

We continue to post regularly on **Instagram**, sharing updates on our events and other relevant news, and are pleased to have over 750 followers (up from 590 this time last year).

Volunteer, Viv Rands, puts together DGT **e-News** which provides a monthly update on events and news, and includes beautiful garden images taken by **volunteer photographer Liz**, who we thank once again. This now reaches 770 subscribers including our members, the professional gardeners' network and others interested in our work. The focus for this year has been on developing more engaging content. We are also planning to reinstate some 'longer reads' in the form of a printed newsletters and hopefully a journal, and content for this is sought.

8. 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 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.

We send our thanks again to Jonathan Lovie for sharing his in-depth knowledge of Devon gardens and garden history as well as his hard work and dedication in fulfilling the role of Conservation Officer over the last six years.

Financial Report

As of 31 March 2026, the Trust's reserves amounted to £555,818 (2025: £340,622) of which £143,948 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 are continuing to work with the Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group and Torbay Council to develop a 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 (£59,884). The total Unrestricted Funds balance carried forward is £411,870.

Following a review of charity funds, a transfer has been made from the Designated Fund to the General Fund. This is to present a carried forward balance of £78,000 in the Designated Fund. The identification of this balance of funds is to set aside funds specifically for the budgeted spend in the next 12 months on education bursaries, conservation grants and research publication. Any excess has been transferred back to the General Fund for use on any other activities carried out by the Trust in order to fulfil its charitable objectives. One of the objectives being to invest the monies of the Trust not immediately required for its purpose in or upon such investments.

The balance of the Unrestricted Funds carried forward is £333,870. This is in excess of the reserves policy by £273,986 and is predominantly due to the large legacy received in the year. The excess in reserves is being held in investments generating further income for the Trust in line with its objectives.

The Trust is monitoring reserves very carefully and is working hard to proactively promote its objectives so that reserves can be spent in a timely manner. One of the ways this is being done is through the grants programme mentioned below.

The Trust has launched a new, simplified grants and bursaries programme to encourage wider participation and is working to proactively promote the funds available to applicants. 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 £215,196 (2025: deficit of £5,447). Both income and expenditure for the year were globally in line with 2025 apart from legacy income and increased spending on education - both bursaries and the professional gardeners' network. The surplus this year versus the deficit in 2025 was directly driven by the £210,000 of legacy income received from the Edmund Kildare James Will Trust and the Estate of the late Maureen Elizabeth James deceased, and £24,382 in additional gains from the investment portfolio which grew by 13.2% year over year.

Detailed reports from each Group are included below.

Governance Report
Trustee Lead: Sue Beardsmore

During the year, review and updating of policies continued and the Policy Management Schedule was updated.

Due to number of trustees, a separate committee for Governance was disbanded, and relevant matters were brought to full board each quarter.

The organisation document was updated with a specific task list for 2025/26.

Efforts continue to recruit new trustees. Hugo Bugg was elected as a trustee at the AGM 2025. Elizabeth Lewis's term of office ended on that date.

The Trustee Induction Agreement and process was reviewed and updated.

The Reserves Policy, was reviewed to recognise the current level of funds held by the Trust.
The Grants Policy was developed in support of the revised Grants structure. The Trust remains committed to dispersing agreed funds in support of projects which align with its aims and objectives.

The current arrangement of a joint Chair continued as agreed at the Trustees Meeting 25th October 2024.

Co-Chairs Stephanie Berry and Jane Knight with areas of oversight:
SB – Governance & Finance, Research & Recording, Communication & PR
JK – Conservation, Education & Training, Membership Engagement and represent DGT locally.

Education Team Report
Trustee Lead: Mr Ian Smith

The Education team includes Ian Smith, Jane Knight, Peter Bieneman, Sue Minter, Penny Hammond, Hugo Bugg and Patrick Welch.

Strategic Objective - Promote and support education (primary, secondary and tertiary), life-long learning and continuing professional development in historic designed landscapes.

It has been another successful year for education within the Devon Gardens Trust. To meet our strategic objectives, we have continued to award bursaries and grants for educational and professional development courses. We have awarded eleven bursaries to a value of £7,766 to professional gardeners and an £8,000 grant to support a WRAG's trainee placement at Nethercott House, Farms for City Children.

The Professional Gardeners' Network has continued to be successful and has engaged with over 100 professional gardeners working in Devon and we plan to continue and build on this success.

Further details of this year's work are described below;

2025/26 Bursaries

Rob G, £380 RHS Level2 Hort
Rupert W, £740 RHS Level3 Hort online
Tracy R, £471 Garden design at Bicton College
Kate R, £750 RHS Level2 Hort
Ben C, £750 RHS Level2 online. Ben is a WRAGs trainee at Nethercott House. Part of DPGN
Louise B, £445 Level2 Forestry
Christopher L, £750 RHS Level3 online
Ella M, £1,000 RHS Mhort. Ella is a gardener at Buckfastleigh Abbey. Part of DPGN
Erin W, £750 Garden Design course at Great Dixter
Christopher Y, £1,000 RHS Mhort. Chris is a team leader at RHS Rosemoor
William P, £725 Chainsaw and brushcutter courses.

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.

'Carbon in the Garden': on the 19th Sept 2025, 50 professional gardeners listened to Dr Mark Gush and John Little discuss how gardeners can respond to climate change.

'**Spring Forward**: Views on a Resilient Future' with Joshua Sparks and Dusty Gedge at RHS Rosemoor on the 13th Feb 2026 was a great success. It was attended by over 60 gardeners and the atmosphere and feedback back were very positive.

The next event with a theme of '**TREES'**, will be at Dartington Hall on Thursday 24th September including talks and a tour of the iconic trees within the estate.

Supporting WRAG's trainee placements at Nethercott House
The Devon Gardens Trust is proud to have supported a successful WRAGS trainee placement at Nethercott House, Farms for City Children. Funding of £8,000 allowed the trainee to work for two days a week for one year. The trainee will complete his placement in November.

Future Initiatives for 2026/27
The education committee are continually looking to see how best to meet their objectives.

- Bursary applications have increased and we have already awarded £10,000 so far in 2026/27
- The professional gardeners' network continues to build and make better links with gardeners.
- Primary school support has been helped by supporting 'Food for thought' (£2,000)
- Secondary School links are being built by the photographic competition
- Two community grants have been awarded to support primary school community gardens
- Support another WRAGS trainee placement at Nethercott House starting in November 2026. Also investigating another placement opportunity within the gardens of Devon to support a trainee to learn from a head gardener for two days a week, over twelve months.

Conservation Committee Report
Chair: Dr Dianne Long
Trustee Lead: Jane Knight

This has been the first full year of slightly amended arrangements for responding to planning applications affecting registered sites. Whereas previously the Trust had responded on behalf of the Gardens Trust as statutory consultee for all consultations in Devon, now DGT advises the Gardens Trust, which then responds; occasionally DGT will also respond where it believes the proposals may significantly impact the historic landscape.

Early in 2025 the government announced an enquiry into the future of the statutory consultee status of several bodies, including the Gardens Trust, as part of its review of the planning system in England. DGT submitted evidence to the Gardens Trust to inform its response to government. The Gardens Trust is the only statutory consultee for cases affecting Grade II designated landscapes, which are the majority of historic designed landscape locally (36 sites) and nationally (Historic England only responds for Grade I and Grade II* landscapes). Following consultation to which DGT contributed via the Gardens Trust, the government is also expected to publish a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework in summer 2026. We have more recently responded to a consultation by The Gardens Trust regarding the Government's proposals for new town developments which include Plymouth and the area around Rockbeare to the east of Exeter.

Following our review of all *Devon Local List* sites, letters were sent out to all local authorities detailing the *Local List* sites in their area. We received positive feedback resulting in a training session for officers in South Hams and West Devon and a meeting with East Devon on their priority areas, which helps DGT to prioritise its work.

During the year there have been some 55 planning applications varying in complexity on which the Trust (via the Gardens Trust) has been consulted and in some cases, we have been involved at pre-application stage thus potentially being able to influence submitted planning proposals. There have been several consultations affecting Saltram (Grade II*) (National Trust) both in respect of the country park being developed in the wider parkland, in part to reduce footfall on the core gardens by dog walkers, cyclists etc. and improvements to the visitor reception areas. The National Trust have also been looking to improve visitor facilities at Arlington Court (Grade II*) again to reduce some of the pressure on the current historic core of the estate by creating an outdoor hub just outside the registered landscape near to Woolley Lodge on the A39.

Plymouth City Council have sold Pounds House and its immediately surrounding gardens at the northern end of Central Park. The Trust is pleased that the new owner of Pounds House (Grade II) has been restoring the house and its gardens, and a school for special educational needs and disability (SEND) will be occupying the house thus giving it a viable use.

There have been a number of consultations in relation to the The Hoe (Grade II) including the siting of an observation (Ferris) wheel, where we advised the GT that the proposed wheel would have a major adverse impact on the registered landscape and the conservation area which we did not think was adequately addressed in the supporting documentation. Installation of a Ferris wheel in Princess Gardens, Torquay, was approved, but is currently not operating. Also on The Hoe were the installation of a sculpture in the Peace Garden, a temporary artwork on the Bowling Green to commemorate the 100th birthday of the artist, Beryl Cook, and alterations to the Marine Biological Laboratory building.

In Plymouth city centre the Trust has been consulted on the re-development of the Civic Centre (Grade II) to include educational use, residential and building alterations; whilst this new use for the building and its landscape introduces elements to meet the new use and current building regulations, we considered that the proposals were in keeping with the historic building and the landscape designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe and would bring the building back into use after many years unoccupied.

Following the registering of the gardens at Larkbeare House, Exeter, at Grade II, the property is in the process of being sold by Devon County Council. We have had pre-application discussions on site with the potential owner/developer to learn more about their plans for both the unlisted house and possible development within parts of the Grade II garden. Subsequently we also held a meeting of the Conservation Committee on site with the developer's representative. Both meetings were open and constructive, although we await the submission of a planning application to assess the impact on the historic gardens.

The F W Meyer designed grotto/cave in the gardens at Oldway (a Grade II Listed structure within the Grade II historic landscape) sustained substantial damage from the uprooting of a Monterey pine during Storm Chandra in January 2026. While the damage was severe, it revealed important detail regarding the construction of the grotto/cave which will inform any potential reinstatement. Further trees in the area have been removed and a full survey undertaken prior to removing soil and stonework, a necessary precursor to restoring the area. Torbay Council have now commissioned consultants to develop a series of options for the area and will keep DGT informed of the outcome. The overall aim is to work with the council, Oldway Gardens Volunteer Group and Historic England on a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration and improvement of the grotto area using DGT's Wilson Fund (the legacy states that conservation of Oldway gardens is the priority) to leverage more substantial funds and a larger and more impactful project in this public park.

We attended a meeting along with the Teignbridge Conservation Officer and Historic England with the owner of Mamhead House and his landscape consultant to discuss how to secure the gardens from deer and to deter trespassers. It was a constructive meeting, and we look forward to seeing what proposals are brought forward. Whilst there we urged that a CMP be developed. The Mamhead estate is a classic example of the threats to an historic landscape in multiple ownership: for example, the owner of Mamhead House owns only a relatively small area of the registered park and garden yet within sightlines from the house and garden are other properties which in the past have been allowed inappropriate development, and the adjoining property, The Orangery, as far as we could see, has had little management for some time.

The Trust supported a successful application by Torbay Council to NLHF for funding to produce condition surveys, CMPs, cost plans and user reports for Chapel Hill Woods, Torquay and Victoria Park, Paignton. Understanding the historic development of these two public pleasure grounds will help to determine their significance, inform future management for public benefit and may also lead to one or both parks meriting inclusion on the *Devon Local List*.

Unfortunately, there have been few conservation grant applications during the year except for one from The Garden House for the replacement of windows in the old stable, for which a grant of £2,000 was approved.

Events Team Report
Trustee Lead: Mr Peter Bieneman

The general programme of events in the twelve months since the last AGM at Lukesland in October 2025 has followed a similar pattern to that previously, with a few more frequent events in the summer.

Christmas meeting
The Christmas lunch was held again in 2025 at the Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham near Tiverton as this venue works well for members from almost all parts of the county. Jason Ingram, the renowned garden photographer, provided a wonderful talk on his work and gave many tips on how to set about obtaining the perfectly lit shot. Jason then adjudicated the photography competition. After lunch the annual award for Innovation, Creativity and Sustainability in an historic Devon Garden was presented to Coleton Fishacre.

Talks in 2026
Between Christmas and Easter a series of talks took place at Clyst St Mary and The Mint, Exeter.
Tuesday 27th January 2.30pm Stella Exley, RHS Gold winner talked about her passion for Camassias as holder of a National Collection, working with Chris Beardshaw and winning a gold at Chelseas.
Tuesday 24th February 2.30pm Ian Trought, Head Gardener at Overbeck's, talked about working at Wisley, planting the Piet Oudolf's design at Wisley and his work at Overbeck's in the previous 12 months.
Tuesday 10th March 2.30pm Jonathan Lovie, DGT Conservation Officer, spoke about the history and landscape of Rumleigh House near Tavistock.

Garden Visits in 2026
Between Easter and the end of July a series of visit took place to some very varied gardens and landscapes, located across the county. In almost all cases we very fortunate in having either the owner or the Head Gardener or both lead our visit, so giving us a much greater insight into the original design, development and conservation of these wonderful places.

Tuesday 14th April 2.00pm Plaz Metaxu
Tuesday 21st April 2.00pm Hartland Abbey
Tuesday 5th May 2.00pm Castle Hill
Tuesday 19th May 2.00pm Overbeck's, Salcombe
Tuesday 2nd June 11.00pm The Garden House 2.00pm Wildside
Tuesday 16th June 2.00pm Little Dartmouth
Tuesday 30th June 2.00pm Middle Well, Stoke Gabriel
Tuesday 28th July 2.00pm Sidbury Manor

Autumn 2026
There are two dates for your diary in the autumn.
Visit to Tuesday 13th October 2.00pm Dunley House to see the wonderful autumn colours.
Talk on Thursday 12th November at 2.00pm Ann Treneman, The Times Gardens Correspondent, will discuss her new book "The Garden Cure".

Research Projects Report
Trustee Lead: Paul Faulkner

The office lease at Exeter Community Centre was relinquished at the end of May 2026.

All the site files and subject files from the office have been taken to the Devon Heritage Centre (DHC), combined with existing DGT files and packaged according to DHC's requirements. All cover sheets (indexes) detailing file contents have been updated to reflect the file content. The relevant cover sheets will also be added to the gardens listed on the DGT website providing a comprehensive record of the data we hold.

Six files containing modern sale catalogues, which do not have an associated DGT site file, have been deposited in the DHC to be combined with their own sale catalogues deposit. A list of the catalogues has been kept for DGT reference.

The DGT site files have been indexed for DHC's on-line catalogue. The cataloguing has been completed, and the DGT files are now listed on the Devon Heritage Centre's on-line catalogue and will be available to all to view subject to their opening hours and regulations. Details of our files are held in Accession Number 5422G and the information they contain can be seen by using the link DGT Archive Index. Further material can, if necessary, be added to the DGT deposit once a year.

As it has been impossible to find a home for our Library where all books can be kept together and still be easily available to members, the library has been split into two. The most important books needed for local research are in the home of the Honorary Archivist. The remainder have been assessed as being of limited value in terms of garden research and will be disposed of in due course. The mechanism for disposal is still being considered by Trustees.

Any members requiring a book for research are welcome to contact the Research Group.

Research Projects volunteers are currently working on a desk-top search for information on sites which may be important historically, but which currently have very few records.

The Research Group met in Totnes on 1st June to discuss existing and future subjects for investigation, and potential research. Future informal meetings will be held across Devon to enable a local focus on participation. Anyone wishing to explore a gardens related subject is welcome and encouraged to get in touch.

Honorary Archivist's Report
Hon Archivist: Dr Clare Greener

The project to check, amalgamate and repackage DGT's files in the Devon Heritage Centre (DHC) is now complete. DGT volunteers have also catalogued our material on behalf of the DHC which ensured that all DGT material held in the Heritage Centre was listed on their on-line catalogue by the end of June 2026 and can now be viewed here: DGT Archive Index

Thank you to the team of dedicated volunteers who have helped with this project: Caroline Fox, Jenny Tozer, Pippa Ferguson and Paul Auchterlonie, led by Clare Greener and Paul Faulkner. We have also been helped, on two separate occasions, by MET Office volunteers.

The DGT library has now been split into two; essential books incorporating local books and those helpful for research and recording; and more generalised works currently held by Clare Greener and Paul Faulkner respectively on a temporary basis.

Over the last year we have had several new volunteers offer their help. Some have been involved in the project at the DHC, others are helping with desktop surveys of properties near where they live in order to see whether any further in-depth research should be undertaken where we have a small file, but limited information.

Enquiries continue to come in on diverse areas of garden history and are answered by members of the Research Group and the Conservation Committee.

I will be standing down as Archivist from this AGM and wish to thank all the volunteers with whom I have worked over the last few years. I look forward to meeting them at future research meetings and DGT events.

Membership Report
Secretary: Mrs Elizabeth Lewis

Membership numbers at April 2026 were 296 (272 in 2025). Our membership is increasing and we are grateful to all our members for their continued support.

We give a special welcome to our new members who we continue to meet whenever they are able to attend talks and garden visits. Phil and Anthea Clinch again hosted our visit to Brinshill to meet members who joined since 2024. This is always a great success, and we thank Phil and Anthea for opening their beautiful garden again for our new members' 'meet and greet'.

Sadly, we have lost the following longstanding DGT members during the past year: Mrs Rosemary Howell of Lukesland, Mr John Borron, Mrs Rachel Jackson and Mrs Edna Dathan have died since our last AGM and we send our condolences to all their friends and families.

Trustees
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 2025-26 there were 7 Trustees, a combination of existing members and those elected or re-elected at the Annual General Meeting on 9th October 2025. 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 trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

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Ms S Berry
Trustee

Date: 20/10/2026

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

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 operation.

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

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF DEVON GARDENS TRUST

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Devon Gardens Trust (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or

3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or

4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

S. Truran

S Truran FCCA FCA
Streets Bush Limited

Melrose House
Pynes Hill
Rydon Lane
Exeter
Devon
EX2 5AZ

Dated: 21.10.2026

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total 2026 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	**2**	210,051	-	210,051	-	-	-
Incoming resources	**3**	9,846	-	9,846	9,295	-	9,295
Investments	**4**	7,037	2,260	9,297	5,681	2,528	8,209
Total income		226,934	2,260	229,194	14,976	2,528	17,504
Expenditure on:							
Resources expensed	**5**	38,868	903	39,771	23,314	1,028	24,342
Net gains/(losses) on investments	**8**	19,507	6,266	25,773	963	428	1,391
Net movement in funds		207,573	7,623	215,196	(7,375)	1,928	(5,447)
Fund balances at 1 April 2025		204,297	136,325	340,622	211,672	134,397	346,069
Fund balances at 31 March 2026		411,870	143,948	555,818	204,297	136,325	340,622

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

The notes on pages 19 to 28 form part of these financial statements.

DEVON GARDENS TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2026 £	2025 £	2025 £
Fixed assets					
Investments	**11**		534,796		337,928
Current assets					
Stocks	**12**	777		827	
Debtors	**13**	2,148		1,730	
Cash at bank and in hand		26,991		5,850	
		29,916		8,407	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**14**	(8,894)		(5,713)	
Net current assets			21,022		2,694
Total assets less current liabilities			555,818		340,622
Income funds					
Restricted funds	**15**		143,948		136,325
Unrestricted funds - general					
Designated funds	**16**	78,000		152,407	
General unrestricted funds		333,870		51,890	
			411,870		204,297
			555,818		340,622

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)

AS AT 31 MARCH 2026

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

The director acknowledges his responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 7th September 2026

.....

Ms S Berry
Trustee

Company registration number 02277427

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Devon Gardens Trust is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Queensgate House, 48 Queen Street, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3SR, England.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland” (“FRS 102”) and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Computers	25% Straight Line

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Fixed asset investments

Fixed asset investments are initially measured at transaction price excluding transaction costs, and are subsequently measured at fair value at each reporting date. Changes in fair value are recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year. Transaction costs are expensed as incurred.

Restricted investments indicate investments held at market value as at the year end, as a result of the restricted legacy income received.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell. Cost comprises direct materials and, where applicable, direct labour costs and those overheads that have been incurred in bringing the stocks to their present location and condition. Items held for distribution at no or nominal consideration are measured the lower of replacement cost and cost.

Net realisable value is the estimated selling price less all estimated costs of completion and costs to be incurred in marketing, selling and distribution.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

2 Legacies

	Unrestricted funds general 2026 £	Total 2025 £
Legacies received	210,051	-

During the year, the trust received unrestricted legacies totalling £210,051 as follows:

The estate of the late Mrs Maureen Elizabeth James	95,046	-
The E K O James Will Trust	115,005	-
	210,051	-

3 Incoming resources

	2026	2025
	£	£
Subscriptions	4,194	3,825
Gift aid	802	1,167
Donations	388	23
Events, including AGM	4,457	4,248
Book sales	5	32
	9,846	9,295

4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds general 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total 2026 £	Unrestricted funds general 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Income from listed investments	7,037	2,260	9,297	5,681	2,528	8,209

5 Resources expensed

	2026	2025
	£	£
Administration	-	288
Office rent & service charge	1,949	1,834
Publicity & marketing	2,016	1,287
Bursaries & grants	11,766	1,866
Conservation - grants awarded	2,500	500
Conservation - committee expenses including officer	3,776	4,264
Research & recording	890	13
Events, including AGM	8,607	5,008
Publications - journal & newsletter	575	1,299
Subscriptions & sundries	220	204
Insurance	671	692
Accountancy	3,087	2,307
Investment management fee	3,714	3,340
Legal & professional fees	-	1,440
	39,771	24,342
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds - general	38,868	23,314
Restricted funds	903	1,028
	39,771	24,342

6 Trustees

£295 of expenses were reimbursed to Trustees during the year for undertaking charitable activities (2025: £125).

No remuneration was paid to any members or directors during the year (2025: £Nil).

There were no other disclosable related party transactions during the year.

7 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2026 Number	2025 Number
	6	5

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

8 Net gains/(losses) on investments

	Unrestricted funds general 2026 £	Restricted funds 2026 £	Total 2026 £	Unrestricted funds general 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Revaluation of investments	16,482	5,294	21,776	(685)	(305)	(990)
Gain/(loss) on sale of investments	3,025	972	3,997	1,648	733	2,381
	19,507	6,266	25,773	963	428	1,391

9 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

10 Tangible fixed assets

	Computers £
Cost	
At 1 April 2025	6,816
At 31 March 2026	6,816
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2025	6,816
At 31 March 2026	6,816
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2026	-
At 31 March 2025	-

11 Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £
Cost or valuation	
At 1 April 2025	337,928
Additions	238,819
Valuation changes	25,771
Disposals	(67,722)
At 31 March 2026	534,796
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2026	534,796
At 31 March 2025	337,928

Fixed asset investments revalued

All investments are listed on a recognised stock exchange.

At the year end, cash held as part of the investment portfolio was £14,374 (2025 £2,630). This is included in cash at bank on the balance sheet.

11 Fixed asset investments **(Continued)**

12 Stocks

	2026	2025
	£	£
Stock	777	827

13 Debtors

	2026	2025
Amounts falling due within one year:	£	£
Prepayments and accrued income	2,148	1,730

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2026	2025
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	8,894	5,713

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

		Movement in funds			Movement in funds		
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2025	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 March 2026
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Wilson Conservation Fund	134,397	2,956	(1,028)	136,325	8,526	(903)	143,948

This fund represents a legacy and must be utilised for the restoration and conservation of important Devon gardens, with priority given to the restoration of Oldway Mansion Paignton's original landscape design by Achille Duchêne.

16 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2024	Transfers	Revaluations, gains and losses	Balance at 1 April 2025	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2026
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Designated Fund	156,774	(5,196)	829	152,407	(74,407)	78,000
	156,774	(5,196)	829	152,407	(74,407)	78,000

This fund had previously represented investments owned by the Trust, initially purchased following the receipt of a legacy. This fund had been set aside for conservation and education grants and for the publication of research.

After a review of the Trust's funds, it was decided that to aid transparency, all investments of the Trust that are unrestricted should form part of the general reserves therefore, a transfer has been made out of the designated fund.

The balance in the designated fund moving forward relates to the budgeted spend on education bursaries, conservation grants and research publication over the next 12 months. This fund will be reviewed annually by the trustees.

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2026	Restricted funds 2026	Total 2026	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted funds 2025	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2026 are represented by:						
Investments	404,788	130,008	534,796	233,880	104,048	337,928
Current assets/(liabilities)	7,082	13,940	21,022	(29,583)	32,277	2,694
	411,870	143,948	555,818	204,297	136,325	340,622