

Scotland's **GARDENS** Scheme OPEN FOR CHARITY

Scotland's Gardens Scheme's purpose and vision is to raise money for charity through encouraging, promoting and supporting garden openings, whilst making the whole experience inspiring, rewarding and enjoyable for all involved.

We are a Scottish registered charity regulated by OSCR, No SC 001137 and our President is the Duchess of Rothesay.

Who Benefits?

Scotland's Gardens Scheme (SGS) was established in 1931 to support the Queens Nursing Institute of Scotland. At this time, SGS provided much needed pensions and training opportunities for these district nurses at a time when no National Health Service existed. By the 1950's and the formation of the NHS, other beneficiaries, including The National Trust for Scotland's Garden Fund; and later Perennial (The Gardener's Royal Benevolent Society) and Maggie's Centres were added.

In the early sixties, it was decided that up to 40% of a garden opening's gross proceeds could be donated to a charity of the Garden Opener's choice and now each year over 200 different charities benefit, many of these small and local. We are very proud of the huge number of charities that we help each year. It is then from the remaining funds raised and enhanced by donations, sponsorship and advertising revenues that the administrative costs of SGS are deducted and after which the balance of funds is distributed to SGS's selected beneficiaries. Since we were founded, Scotland's Gardens Scheme has raised over £6.5 million for charity.

Beginning in 2018, 60% of the garden gate takings can be designated for the Garden Opener's nominated charity. This recent change reflects the charity's commitment support Scotland's local communities and the concerns of its Garden Openers.

How are We Organised?

At the core of Scotland's Gardens Scheme is about 150 organiser volunteers. Scotland is divided into 25 Districts each run by a District Organiser(s) who is supported by Area Organisers. District and Area Organisers are responsible for selecting gardens to open and ensuring that these Garden Openers have all the support needed for a successful opening. District Organisers also assist in promoting and marketing their programme of openings, supported by the Head Office who also promote and arrange for promotional materials to be printed and distributed. Each District also has its own Treasurer who is responsible for the timeous collection of open garden takings and their remittance to Head Office and to the charity(s) nominated by the Garden Opener.

Currently about 1200 Garden Openers are active with some gardens opening every year and others opening every other year or less frequently. District and Area Organisers are encouraged to facilitate a variety of opening opportunities including private openings, smaller garden and village garden openings, special events such as Trails and Festivals, all of which are well received by the public.

The Garden Openers, Volunteer organisers, and the business are supported by Head Office staff including a National Organiser, Office Manager and Marketing Officer. The charity is overseen by a Board of Trustees who oversee the charity's financial performance and strategic vision.

How can you Help?

The easiest way that you can help us is by visiting our beautiful open gardens! This is, after all, how we raise our funds for charity. Visit our website www.scotlandsgardens.org and/or buy a guidebook to find hundreds of gardens across Scotland open to visit.

If you would like to participate in some voluntary charity work, we are always happy to welcome new helpers. We have committees across Scotland and are looking for volunteers with various skills including: organisational, accounting, media and promotion, social media, and more. If you would like to know more about volunteering with Scotland's Gardens Scheme, please contact the office at info@scotlandsgardens.org or 0131 226 3714.

And of course, you can open your garden with us!

Why Open your Garden with Us?

When you open your garden with Scotland's Gardens Scheme you join a long tradition of helping your community through both charitable funding and the pleasure of visiting beautiful gardens. We are looking for all types of gardens of horticultural interest: large and small gardens, allotments, villages, kitchen gardens, snowdrops, autumn colours, winter walks, and so on...

You will also benefit from our 87 years of experience in opening gardens and receive our promotional support which includes:

- Listed in our Guidebook (10,000 copies distributed each year) as well as on our website (www.scotlandsgardens.org).
- Listed in our District and Regional free flyers and calendars
- Posters for your opening, available in a variety of sizes
- Various road signage (arrows and banners) to advertise your opening day
- Useful signage and materials to support the actual opening
- Social media – Facebook (corporate & local), Twitter and Instagram.
- Press releases and editorial opportunities
- Donation collection buckets or cans.

And, you will be invited to attend our Conference along with other Garden Openers and Volunteers. The format includes a morning of workshops followed by lunch and in the afternoon talks from supported charities, the presentation of annual awards and an address by a guest speaker. As well, you will learn of private openings and social events with other Garden Openers. We also hold Regional Meeting get-togethers in alternative years.

Find Out More

Scotland's Gardens Scheme office is located in Edinburgh at 23 Castle Street, EH2 3DN. Please visit our website www.scotlandsgardens.org and/or call us at 0131 226 3714 to find out more.