

Trust Times

Autumn 2025
Issue 08

YOUR HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB TRUST NEWSLETTER

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Welcome!

Welcome to the latest *Trust Times*. Since we last wrote, it's been a year of continuity as well as change – but our core aim of preserving the character of this special place remains as much of a priority as ever.

In this issue, we are looking ahead to the future, with a keen eye on the past and our origins. We'd like your views on the potential future of land around Central Square – and we have various features on the Suburb's unique history.

Inside you'll find a piece on the Suburb's roofs, and you'll also find a refresher and update on our tree work guidance and processes.

We'll also take a moment to check in with new Chief Exec Will Hawkins and find out how he's found leading as unique an organisation as the Trust since he started back in January. See page 2 for more.

We hope you find this *Trust Times* informative and interesting. We welcome your feedback and comments – please let us know via mail@hgstrust.org.

Taking action to further protect the Suburb's wonderful trees

It is stating the obvious to say that trees are important to the Suburb. Their contribution to the amenity and biodiversity of the local area, and to our physical and mental wellbeing, is invaluable.

They've been a significant feature since before the first brick was even laid in 1907. Raymond Unwin was careful to incorporate existing, mature oak trees and others in his initial plans for the Suburb, and it is thanks to his foresight

that to this day we have some magnificent trees around almost every corner.

The Trust's own Suburb Tree Survey, completed in 2016, revealed that a

Continued on page 8



In this issue

- 3** Recent repair works to the Grade II-listed Great Wall
- 4** Travels with Pevsner – take a walk with Joe Mathieson
- 9** Grants Committee member Ron Finlay on our donations to local worthy causes
- 10** Public consultation – we want your views on the future of Central Square



Follow the Trust's new Instagram account @HGSTrust – see page 6 for more info.

A year of change – and continuity

Our core aims of preserving the character of this special place have not changed – it is the constant force underlying everything we do. But there are always smaller changes from time to time and this year has brought a new chief executive and a new chair. Now nine and twelve months into their respective roles, Will Hawkins and Richard Townley have found their working partnership to be productive and fruitful. Will joined us with energy and a new perspective ready to lead the Trust, and with relevant experience gained while working with the Royal Institute of British Architects previously.

Will says he has found the Trust's unique constitution and goals have given him a lot to learn, but he has hit the ground running, modernising our IT systems and paving the way for a new way for us to interact with Suburb residents in the future.

Will explains: "What struck me from the beginning was the extraordinary place that the Suburb is – both a living community and a site of real architectural importance, admired across the world. That continuity is what makes the Trust's work so important.

Over the past months I have been getting to grips with our constitution and systems, modernising our IT and starting to shape new ways of engaging with residents. These practical changes matter because they help us serve the community better while protecting what makes the Suburb special.

My role is to balance the weight of history with the life of the present – so that the Suburb remains as remarkable for the future as it has been for the past century."

And Richard Towley stepped into the role of chair after last year's AGM and the departure of Raymond Taylor. Richard's role as trustee goes back nearly six years, and he has been closely involved in the improvements and eventual takeover of Central Square by the Trust in recent years.

Richard says, "I am grateful to my fellow trustees, our staff team, and – perhaps most of all – the residents who support and engage with the work of the Trust."

Will and Richard's partnership continues with our AGM in September – more details on the back page – and we invite all Trust Members to join us.

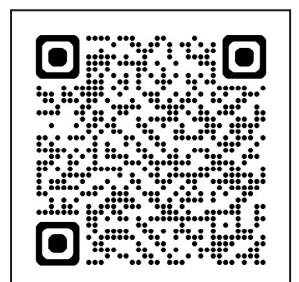


Chair Richard Townley and CEO Will Hawkins

Tennis court update

Our Central Square tennis courts continue to prove popular – and we recently had them resurfaced and repainted which means they're in even better condition. To use them just go to clubspark.net/hgstrust or scan the QR code on the signs at the gates (and right).

Our courts are available for Suburb residents to use, but we don't permit them to be used for professional coaching.



Great Wall repairs

In April to May 2025, the Trust undertook repair works to a section of the Grade II-listed Great Wall that stretches along part of the Heath Extension. Inspired by medieval German fortified towns, the wall was designed by Charles Paget Wade in 1909. The Trust last repaired a different part of it in 2014.

This section of wall had been patchily repointed in the 1970s with hard cementitious mortar. This sort of pointing often leads to brickwork damage. After preliminary surveys, the Trust decided this should be raked out by hand and repointed with lime mortar. Where the original lime mortar was still intact, it

was judged it should be left alone. The Trust considered strengthening the masonry with helibars – thin steel bars that fit around the bricks and are pointed over – but ultimately felt that the wall was structurally sound as it is.

The job was carried out over a few weeks by contractors and supervised by the Trust's consultant architect, Monica Knight. 'Biscuit' samples of buff lime mortar were prepared and approved (1 part lime, 1.5 part sharp sand, 1 part plastering sand) and the pointing carried out carefully. The work is an example of 'minimal intervention' repair and it should ensure the wall is in good condition over the next few decades.



Old pointing has been 'raked out' on the lower and upper courses of brickwork. The bottom left shows a section of brickwork after it has been cleaned



Approved lime mortar 'biscuit' sample



A newly cleaned and repointed section of the Great Wall

Travels with Pevsner

Joe Mathieson is one of the Trust's Architectural Advisers. Here, Joe describes the walk on Nikolaus Pevsner he led for Proms at St Jude's in 2024.



The Trust often refers to the historian Nikolaus Pevsner when he names

Hampstead Garden Suburb as 'the most nearly perfect example' of its kind. While Pevsner wrote up many famous examples of town planning during his career, his knowledge of the Suburb was particularly deep. As well as documenting the area, he led the post-war charge to reappraise early twentieth-century architecture that has given it the lauded status it rightly deserves today. In June I ran a walking tour for Proms at St Jude's exploring this history, called 'Travels with Pevsner', after the 1990s BBC series of the same name.

We began the walk at Queen's Court, where I explained how Pevsner cut his teeth. Born in Leipzig in 1902, he trained in architectural history at several German universities and achieved a doctorate at Leipzig University in 1924. He moved to England as an émigré in the 1930s, having been put on a German blacklist for his Jewish heritage.

By 1936 Pevsner had written one of his most famous books, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, where he esoterically tracked the development of the 1930s modernist movement from its apparent origins in the work of William Morris. After the war he began work on his comprehensive *Buildings of England* series, charting the major architecture and town planning of each English county. This project would occupy most of his time until its completion in 1975. It is an invaluable historical record and reference for heritage professionals to this day.

We soon moved to Central Square where I fervently waved my 1951 copy of the *Buildings of England: Middlesex* to a bemused crowd. In this short book Pevsner gives the Suburb an unusually generous five page spread and refers to it as the peak of a movement that began with Bedford Park, West London in the 1870s. We noted his description of St Jude's, 'one of Lutyens' most successful buildings', with a spire reminiscent of 'Byzantine and early Tudor brickwork'.

As we reached Meadway I referred my audience to the 1975 *Hampstead Garden Suburb Design Study Group* guide, whose foreword Pevsner wrote. Here Pevsner explains that in the early 1960s he advised on the strategic local

listing of buildings in the Suburb in the hope of protecting the area as a whole. 'The scheme worked, and the listing was done'.

By 1967 the Civic Amenities Act gave local authorities the power to formally designate conservation areas, and the Suburb was established as one the following year. The establishment of the Suburb as a protected area (and relatedly the formation of the New Trust) must be understood in the context of Pevsner's original efforts to document and recognise the Suburb as an area of particular significance to the architecture of the UK.

Pevsner's academic work was generally formalistic or style-based in a way that attracts much criticism by today's academics, in neglecting various social and political dimensions of architecture that are a mainstay of contemporary discourse. But Pevsner was a man of his time, and without his work and that of other European historians, we might not have had architectural history as a formal discipline in Britain at all.

We ended the walk at Sunshine Corner, where I pointed my audience towards his blue plaque on Wildwood Terrace, next to the Heath and just off the Suburb. You can imagine him following our own route, as indeed he gave tours himself.



Pevsner outside Queen's Court with the Victorian Society in 1962, probably pointing at the first Suburb houses

Always look up – a Proms walk on Suburb roofs

For this year's Proms at St Jude's festival, Trust Architectural Advisers Calum Orr and Joe Mathieson led a heritage walk focusing on the Suburb's roofs, looking at their details, overall effect, and importance to the character of the Suburb, in anticipation of their forthcoming Roofing Guidance.

While not an aspect of the Suburb's architecture that always receives the attention it is due, a closer look at the roofs and their story enables a fuller appreciation of another of the area's charms.

"In all these buildings and in the groups of dwellings the remembered impression made on the eye is their roofs. The warm sweep of an enveloping, well designed roof was one of the main objectives of the English revival of the early years of this century. Great technical skill was brought to bear on the problem, at once so practical and so full of artistic possibilities, and at Hampstead the luxuriance and variety of roofs is an unending source of interest."

Christopher Hussey, *Country Life*, 1936

The walk began at Willifield Way, taking in the groups of houses and Arts-and-Crafts details of the Artisans' Quarter, before moving to the dominating roofs of the Central Square churches. The group then proceeded to view some eccentric patchwork tiling on Meadway, and ended with the colourful interwar fashions of Neville Drive.

Along the way, Calum and Joe explained the basic structures of tiled roofs, and difference between plain tiles and pantiles. Sample tiles were brought for everyone to view, including some new tiles, old tiles, and, for contrast, some inappropriate modern machine-made tiles.

Throughout the walk, the sources of the inspiration for the roofs were discussed. The original architects drew from vernacular buildings of the counties around London and the south-east, their clay tiled roofs having mellowed with age into a charming variety of earthy tones.

Subtle details, which many residents had not before noticed on their own roofs, were pointed out, such as sprockets, kneelers, undercloaks, and valleys. Many of these are not simply attractive and visually satisfying, but serve a practical

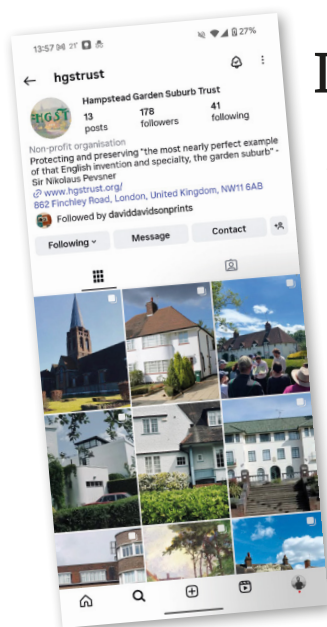
purpose, and have evolved over a thousand years of clay tile roofing in England.

The wider roofscape, its homogeneity and importance to the character of the Suburb becomes apparent when you notice how much of views of the streets are taken up by the mass of red, ochre and brown tiles, and that almost all houses are unified by their roofs of the same colour, texture, and scale.

The Trust helps to keep this traditional practice alive by working with roofers, architects, tile manufacturers and residents to maintain the appearance of the roofs when work to them is carried out, by matching new tiles to the originals, and ensuring that the original details are replicated. Part of this work includes writing guidance for homeowners and contractors, and we are aiming to publish our new roofing guidance online later this year.



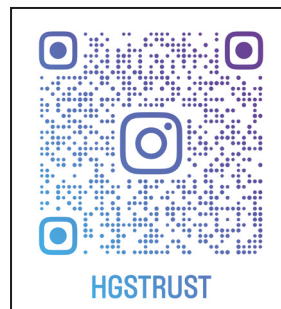
Calum Orr and Joe Mathieson lead the Proms heritage walk focusing on Suburb roofs



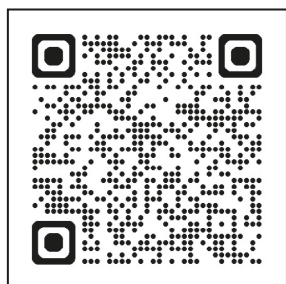
Instagram – follow us today!

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is now actively posting on Instagram (@hgstrust). If you are strolling through the Suburb share your POV on Instagram and tag us. Join us in creating an active page that captures the Hampstead Garden Suburb in all its peculiarities and beauty. We would like our Instagram page to be engaging and are open to feedback. Get in touch with us @hgstrust and let us know what kind of content you find interesting.

We hope to engage with the Suburb community to create meaningful interactions through shared interests. We want our Instagram feed to be a forum where people outside of the Suburb can also come together over shared interests and creativity. Our Instagram page is there to create inspiration, to educate and to hopefully build a community on collaboration. We want to discover topics that inspire you. Our desire for our Instagram account is to create a discussion on architecture, horticulture, town planning, Trust Archives and the importance of conservation. We are extremely excited about this new digital chapter and hope you would like to join us on this creative journey.



Suburb architects exhibition



A few years ago, we put together an exhibition on several of the Suburb's original architects. It drew upon the research and materials we've gathered over the years and hoped to shed some light on their work, their lives, and their connections to other places beyond Hampstead Garden Suburb.

That exhibition originally only had a limited run at Fellowship House, but did you know the panels can be viewed online in the HGS Heritage Virtual Museum? Follow the link (scan the QR code on the left) to take a closer look and learn more about Freud, Bunney, Soutar, Wade, and many others.

We hope to add to this exhibition with the addition of more panels and to re-display it at a local venue. We'll keep you posted when that happens.



The Suburb Architects exhibition (seen here at Fellowship House in 2021) is online

Portrait of the architect Michael Bunney



In June this year, an oil portrait was donated to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust. The painting is of a young man in a grey suit studying a drawing. He is seated in front of a fireplace in a comfortable sitting room. The man in the painting is the architect, Michael Bunney, and it was painted by his wife, Edith Adelaide Bunney in 1908. The sitting room depicted is in Bolton House, Hampstead, a large Georgian terraced house where the Bunneys lived before moving to the Suburb in 1909, into a house designed by Michael at No. 13 Meadway. Keen gardeners, the Bunneys' laid out a cottage garden at the rear of their now house, featuring rustic pergolas and grass paths.

Bunney built some of the most interesting groups of houses in the early Suburb. As well as a large group on Meadway, he designed Linnell Close and many cottages in Erskine Hill. Morland Close, Wild Hatch, Willifield Way and Bigwood Road also contain his work. A number of his houses in Heathgate were attributed to Lutyens in the statutory List of 1965.

He built everything from modest terraced cottages to large detached houses, happily designing in picturesque vernacular or more formal, Georgian styles. His work was informed by the study of old buildings. His 1905 book, *English Domestic Architecture of the XVII and XVIII Centuries*, illustrated examples of houses throughout the country, many now demolished or altered beyond recognition.

The Bunney portrait was presented to the Archives Trust by Margaret Catran, wife of the late John Nicholas Bunney, grandson of Michael. It is currently hanging in the Trust's meeting room.



Examples of Bunney's Suburb work



Taking action to further protect the Suburb's wonderful trees *continued*



Tree planting on Central Square for the Institute

remarkable 55% of the so-called 'Unwin oaks' identified on his early plans for the Suburb appear to have survived into the 21st century.

But trees are constantly under threat and we have recently updated our Tree Works Policy and introduced a formal application process for tree removal to strengthen our existing powers.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal adopted jointly by the Trust and the London Borough of Barnet in 2010 sets out the following: "The maturity of planting in the Suburb results in many fine, specimen trees in gardens enhancing the general streetscapes... the quality and quantity of trees in the public and private realm are essential components of the balance between built and natural environment that is integral to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area."

We have the benefit of restrictive covenants preventing work to trees on private property with the consent in writing of the Trust.

Our approach:

- The Trust will aim to preserve the quality and quantity of trees in the private realm and on Trust-managed land on the Suburb.
- There shall be a presumption in favour of retaining existing trees and for works which accord with good arboricultural practice.
- The Trust's consent for tree works should only be granted if there are compelling reasons for the work to be carried out.
- The following reasons should not ordinarily be appropriate reasons to grant consent for tree works:
 - Shading of property/gardens,
 - potential to damage buildings,
 - the cost of maintenance.
- In the event of consent for removal being granted, the Trust may where appropriate require specified new tree plantings, with a view to the renewal and enhancement of the arboricultural landscape.
- Consent shall only be granted to the owner(s) of a tree.
- The definition of a tree is not explicitly defined in Tree Preservation Order legislation, but it is generally understood to include any plant with at least one woody stem and the potential to grow to a height of at least 5 metres.

And our new application process for tree removal has been set in place to bolster our already strong controls to protect trees.

As before, for any works to trees on private property within Hampstead Garden Suburb, the owner must contact us to make an appointment for the Green Estate Manager, Frank Hawkins, to visit and assess the tree and the proposed work. If the work is routine and non-contentious, we will then send a tree report giving our permission for the work as described.

But where there is a request or intention to remove a tree, this must now be put through a more rigorous application process. Applications to remove a tree will be charged at £75 and will go through a similar process to planning applications made to the Trust, with additional documentation potentially requested, and with the decision to be made either by Trust Council or by Trust staff under delegated powers.

We hope that these changes will make us even better able to protect the Suburb's majestic trees.

Improving our quality of life

Ron Finlay, member, Grants Committee

One of the great – and unusual – things about Hampstead Garden Suburb is the existence of a body that funds community projects to improve the quality of life for residents.

The HGS Trust, based on recommendations from the Grants and Amenities Committee, distributes about £25,000 a year to local good causes. This funding comes from its own capital rather than from the annual Management Charge paid by freeholders.

In the last year, one beneficiary was Proms at St Jude's, which the Trust funded to help run its Family Festival on Central Square and its lunchtime concerts at St Jude's Church.

"Thanks to the Trust, lots of Suburb children had a fantastic time one summer afternoon," said Kate Webster, Proms Chair. "They could experiment with all sorts of musical instruments, see youth orchestras performing, meet famous children's authors, get their faces painted, have fun and become inspired. The Trust's grant also permitted us to offer free entrance to all our lunchtime concerts, which are hugely appreciated by Suburb residents, especially those who prefer to avoid a long journey into town to hear such good quality performances."

Other causes the Trust has recently supported include:

- **Britain's Biggest Living Garden** – to establish a wildlife area around the Lyttleton Fields Community Orchard and conduct a biodiversity survey
- **Garden Suburb Junior School** – to help repair the school pond and improve its wildlife garden
- **Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue** – to cover the costs of external renovations to synagogue buildings
- **Northway Garden Organisation** – to continue to plant and maintain the Northway Gardens rose garden and Fletchers Garden
- **St Jude's Church** – to help restore its most badly damaged murals

The Trust can fund activities provided they are carried out (wholly or partly) in Hampstead Garden Suburb and for the benefit of its inhabitants. Only organisations are eligible – not individuals – and those organisations must either be registered charities or have objects that are charitable, as defined by the Charity Commission.

If you are involved with an organisation that could be interested in receiving a grant, you just need to complete and return an application form that you can download at the Grants Committee page on our website. The Grants Committee meets twice a year to assess applications, and the next deadline for bid submissions is 26 September 2025. Recommendations are made to the trustees of the HGS Trust, which makes the final decisions.

The Grants Committee is made up of individuals who are committed to the welfare of Suburb residents and is chaired by a Trustee – currently Tye Blackshaw. The Committee is looking for new members, and if you'd like to apply, please email Simone at mail@hgstrust.org, with a brief CV and an explanation of your interest.

Details of grants given in previous financial years can be found in our *Annual Report and Accounts* and editions of *Trust Times*.



All images © Michael Eleftheriades



Proms at St Jude's Family Festival on Central Square

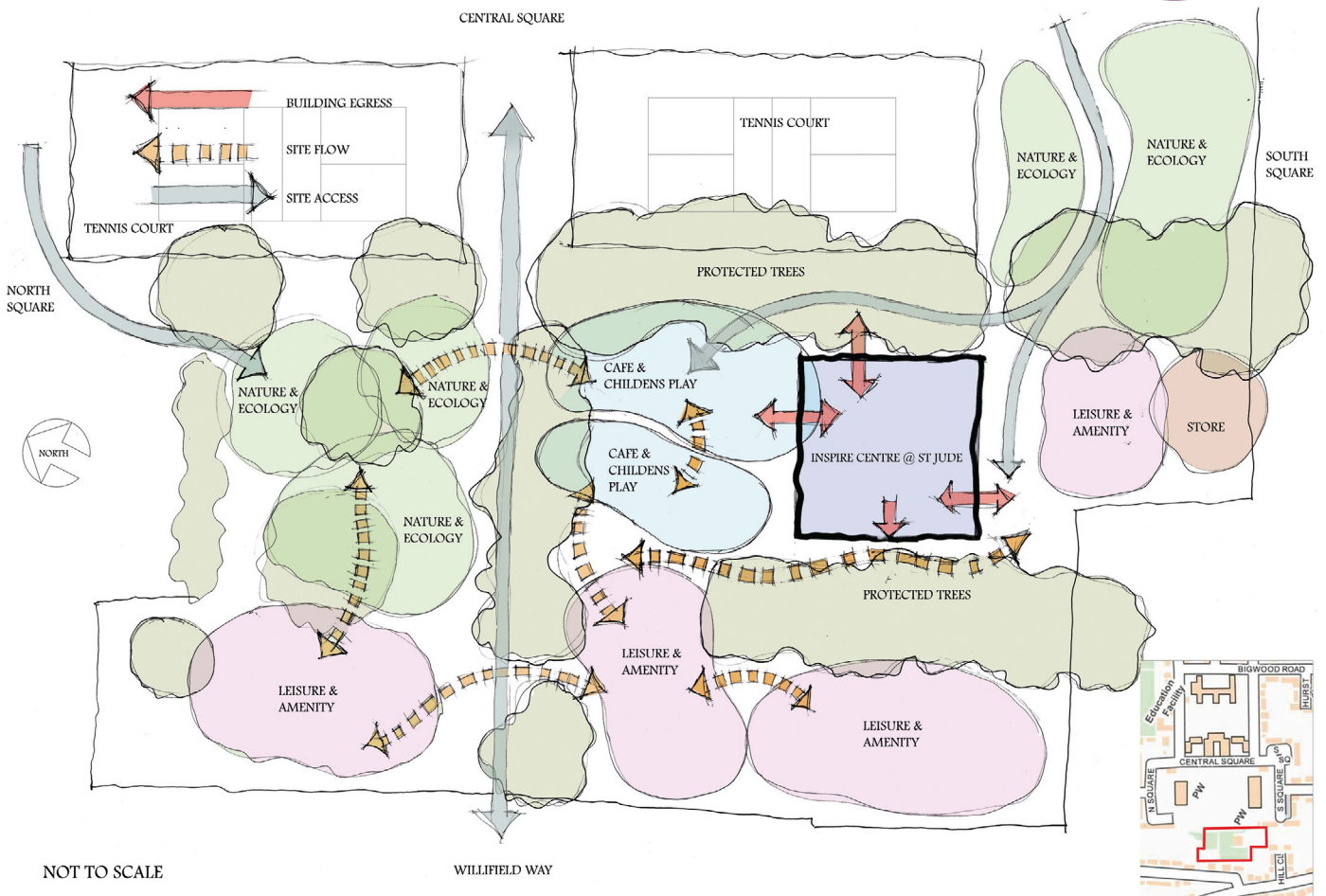


Central Square consultation

We are exploring ways to improve the under-used space to the west of Central Square, behind the tennis courts (see area map below). This consultation seeks the views of residents and other users of the Square on a set of early ideas for how the space might be enhanced. These proposals are exploratory, and your feedback will help shape the next stage of planning.

Please take a look at our three themed concepts below and opposite and tell us what you think. Your feedback will help shape the future of this shared space.

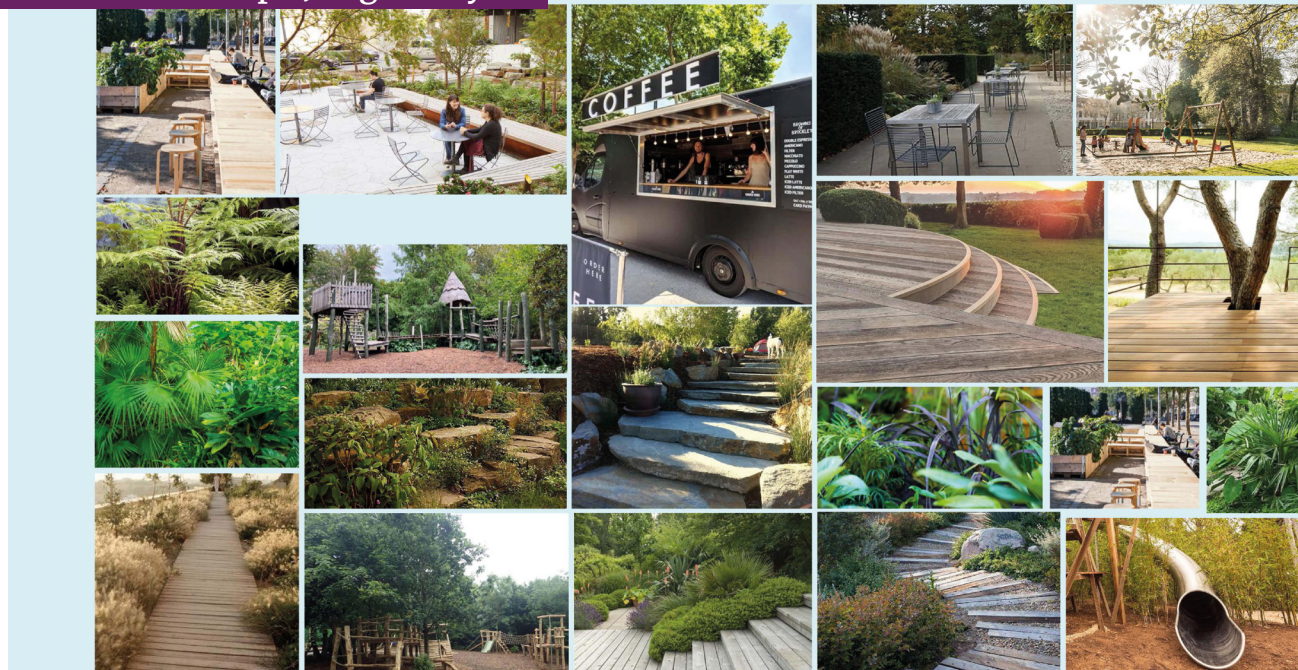
**We want
your views**



Leisure & Amenity



Café and Treetops Jungle Play

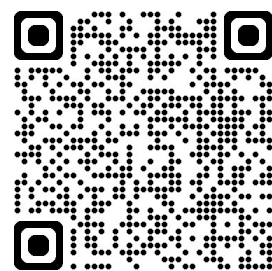


Nature and Ecology



Complete the survey...

Scan the QR code or visit www.hgstrust.org/csqcon to complete the survey and send us your feedback.



Trust Membership

You've received this *Trust Times* as we're sending you a statement relating to your property. But it's not a sign of Membership of the Trust. That is a separate process, and is open to any adult resident of the Suburb (and we realise you may not be, despite owning a Suburb property and being sent this).

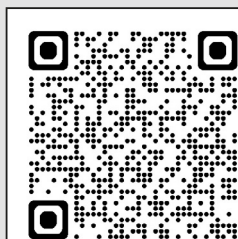
If you've received this and you do not live on the Suburb, we'd be grateful if you could pass on a copy to those who do live in your Suburb home – they are more than welcome to become Trust Members, and to learn more about our work.

If you are already a Member of the Trust, you have our thanks for your support and deeper interest in the work we do in protection of Hampstead Garden Suburb. You'll find details of the AGM below, and all Members will be sent full information by post very shortly, along with details of how to see this year's Annual Report & Accounts.

If you're not already a Member – or you're not sure whether you are – please just send an email to paul@hgstrust.org, or visit www.hgstrust.org/membership or scan the QR code below and fill in the form. If you're not already a Member you'll receive an email confirming you now are – and if you already were, we will reply to confirm either way.

Trust Membership is free. It is completely separate to payment of management charge or ground rent, and is not the same as membership of the HGS Residents' Association.

If there is an election for a new Trust Council Member, residents have until Friday 19 September to become a Member and receive ballot papers for voting.



AGM – Monday 29 September

Our AGM this year is on the evening of Monday 29 September. We hope as many Members as possible can join us at the Free Church Hall on Northway. There will be an opportunity to speak to Trust staff, and to raise questions related to the Annual Report and our work over the last year.

Trust Members will receive a full agenda for the AGM shortly by post, along with details of the Annual Report & Accounts for 2024-2025.



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HGS Trust AGM at the Free Church Hall

Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust

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