

REFORMS TO STATUTORY CONSULTEE SYSTEM Val Hepworth RESPONSE

Mrs Val Hepworth as YGT principal responder to planning consultations.

The following are my responses to what I thought are the relevant questions in the consultation.

Question 1 of the consultation:

Are there any other areas we should be considering in relation to improving the performance of statutory consultees?

This response comes from Mrs Val Hepworth Yorkshire Gardens Trust's (YGT) principal responder to planning consultations. I have been a trustee of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT) since inception in 1996. YGT is an independent volunteer-run educational charity with approx.250 members throughout Yorkshire. Like all the other independent County Gardens Trusts (CGT's) we work with The Gardens Trust (GT), our national body and charity, to help with the protection and conservation of historic parks and gardens in their role as Statutory Consultee. GT, formerly the Garden History Society, has been a statutory consultee since 1995 and responds to planning applications affecting sites on the Register at all Grades. However, the Gardens Trust is the **sole consultee for the Grade II sites that make up c. 65% of Registered sites**, and which include many **public parks, cemeteries and smaller historic parks and gardens that are much loved community assets**.

Many Registered Parks and Gardens are also important reservoirs for nature conservation and we are pleased to work with Natural England eg Duncombe Park, N Yorkshire, a grade I Registered park and Garden (RPG) is a National Nature Reserve – NE414 - and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated for the ancient and veteran trees and their associated wildlife; particularly insects.

We are also consulted by the Forestry Commission and by specific tree schemes such as White Rose Forest where felling and replanting is proposed in RPG's or their setting. This is also vital work for **Nature Recovery**.

The planning system currently respects the role of the GT and the advice that it gives to find solutions that enable RPG's to be protected whilst enabling development. **QUOTE**

From Matthew Peck at Rotherham MBC

I fully understand and share your concerns. My comments are as follows:

Listed Historic Parks and Gardens represent only a relatively small percentage of designated heritage assets, however, they are almost always highly regarded and often cherished by their local communities.

In Rotherham we are fortunate to have a number of highly graded Historic Parks and Gardens, including the Grade I Listed Sandbeck Park and Roche Abbey landscape and the Grade II* Listed Wentworth Park.

I very much value the specialist input from The Garden's Trust, which can shed a different professional light on applications affecting Historic Parks and Gardens. I think the loss of their advice would be detrimental to the historic environment and could lead to harm to historic landscapes from inappropriate development that may not be picked up by Local Planning Authorities, particularly as many do not have specialist Conservation staff.

I would be greatly saddened to see The Garden's Trust removed as a statutory consultee.

I hope this will be of assistance. I wish you all the very best and I do very much appreciate your advice.

We understand there is a need to improve the planning process, but we are concerned that removing the Gardens Trust as a Statutory Consultee will much reduce the valued conservation advice available to Local Planning Authorities and result in irretrievable damage.

The 'reform' proposals re RPG's are based on two fundamental misconceptions:

- a) Listed Buildings and RPG's are not direct equivalents.
- b) That GT and CGT's 'are not proactive or proportionate, and advice and information provided is not timely or commensurate with what is necessary to make development necessary in planning terms' and so we block or delay these applications. This is not true. **QUOTE.**

From Tony Wiles, Design and Conservation, Barnsley MBC

'As you know, we've had many useful discussions over years on the merit of a wide range of application proposals that affect our Registered Park and Gardens (RPG's) in Barnsley. In this regard, I'm particularly thinking of Wentworth Castle RPG – the only grade I RPG in South Yorkshire where we work closely with the National Trust, as well as Cannon Hall, Wortley, and Bretton Hall Parkland amongst others. As an expert body on the heritage significance of these important designated places, I feel the loss of the GT and YGT as a statutory consultee will reduce our ability to assess the impact of proposals in these places. I also feel we will lose a useful resource that helps LPA's negotiate changes to schemes that respect what is special about these places whilst finding solutions for applicants. I feel the YGT in our patch has always endeavoured to provide balanced and timely responses and I'm unaware of situations where consultation with the YGT has unduly held up the determination of applications. In summary, I feel losing the GT as a statutory consultee will potentially force LPA's to lean more on applicants to provide proportionate detail over significance (as per NPPF 207) and may ultimately result in proposals being of a lesser quality.'

a) Listed Buildings and RPG's are not direct equivalents.

Listing of buildings began just after WWII as a response to our loss of built heritage particularly in our bombed cities.

Historic Buildings Council later English Heritage (1984) began compiling the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* 1984- 1987. There were 1085 entries. Department of Environment Circular 8/87 para 15 enables the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission to compile a register of garden and other land in England...'

There are now 1,720 (November 2025) registered parks and gardens, a very low number in comparison to listed buildings (c.380,000) and scheduled monuments (c.20,000) but a very significant heritage asset. Unlike scheduled monuments and listed buildings, they are without a dedicated consent regime and currently without a statutory duty, instead relying solely on planning policy for their protection.

RPG's, whether urban or rural, are much larger and more complex than individual listed buildings, encompassing the manipulation of space and viewpoints using woodland, individual trees, clumps, shrubs, flowering plants, grassland, meadow, water, paths and drives, walls, garden structures of various kinds etc. Knowledge of soils, geology, ecology, horticulture, arboriculture and garden history are important in understanding their complex nature and how best to support and sustain them in the future. Neither Historic England (HE) nor Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) have sufficient expertise – at their admission, due to lack of funding to employ and train staff – to treat RPG's as their protective regime warrants. For

example, there is a lack of historic parks and gardens trained conservation staff in LPA's in Yorkshire and few LPA's have landscape architects. Within Historic England, Dr Kristof Fatsar is the sole Regional Landscape Architect covering the North (North West, North East & Yorkshire Regions); a very difficult task but one that YGT much appreciates for his skills and knowledge. In order to fill this gap GT undertakes the training of volunteers in garden history, planning and conservation, and rather than doing away with the GT as Statutory Consultee, funding should be made available to enhance their skills so that they can make an even more valuable contribution to the planned future of our historic parks and gardens. This would be an inexpensive way of assisting the planning process to make good judgements that secure the future of RPG's whilst not hindering the drive to build more and better homes, to enable the effective modernization of critical infrastructure, and to move to clean, carbon-negative energy from sustainable sources. England's health and well-being and or visitor economy would be enhanced.

b) That GT and CGT's 'are not proactive or proportionate, and advice and information provided is not timely or commensurate with what is necessary to make development necessary in planning terms'

This is fundamentally incorrect.

I will not repeat the evidence from the GT which can be found in their response and in the YGT response.

With a science degree, (University of Nottingham) postgrad (University of Durham) and later an MA in Conservation Studies, Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, I have been volunteering in conservation and planning in Yorkshire for approaching 30 years. I cannot remember a time when my responses to planning applications on behalf of GT/YGT were after the consultation deadline. Equally we have always given our measured and professional advice on all aspects of the conservation of historic parks and gardens in Yorkshire where we thought that it would be helpful for the planners to determine the application. We rarely object and only *in extremis*. And then it usually engenders a rethink eg an application in 2023 at Swinton Castle, Masham, for a solar array resulted in a much better scheme that we could support. (25/01962/FUL Installation of Ground Mounted Solar Panels, Landscaping and Associated Works. Land to The East of the Swinton Estate, Located to the East of Swinton Road and South of Masham Golf Course. Swinton Castle, Swinton, HG4 4JH)

QUOTE

From David Hornsby at Doncaster MBC:

'The Gardens Trust makes a most valuable contribution to the planning process particularly concerning applications which relate to very specialist areas of interest concerning designated Parks and Gardens. However, the role of the Gardens Trust is not solely in relation to these designated areas. The trust has a varied and unrivalled knowledge of matters relating to the history and archaeology of gardens in its widest sense to include graveyards and isolated gardens which have no formal designation. Some of these smaller gardens can have significant heritage interest particularly if intended to be gardens for the working class or were small gardens developed within urban areas. Sometimes these gardens become lost in a changing urban world, and it is possible to overlook past uses which if included within a scheme of development could add to the quality of the scheme. An increasing trend in recent years has been the subdivision of large houses, with schemes for conversion seldom giving any consideration for the preservation or enhancement of the former pleasure grounds and surrounding parkland. Without proper consideration of the significance of the gardens or parkland to the heritage asset significant loss of heritage value to the whole can be permanently lost. The Gardens Trust through being a Statutory consultee is able to provide invaluable advice which assists the local planning authority in terms of negotiating the best conservation outcome for a heritage asset. By removing the Trust from the list of statutory consultees there is a real risk that less than optimum outcomes are reached in planning negotiations and the public at large suffer. To sum up therefore the loss of the Gardens Trust as a Statutory consultee is a retrograde step which will lead to harm to the historic environment which is a shared asset enjoyed by all. Such a measure ignores the depth of knowledge and expertise which the Trust is able to provide adding to the value that can be gained in planning decisions and negotiations.

If you wish me to provide any further comments, or to provide personal comments direct please let me know. Hope commonsense prevails.'

In the year 1st Oct 2023-30th Sept 2024 YGT responded to c.125 planning applications including reconsultations and amendments.

In the year 1st Oct 2024- 30th Sept 2025 the number of responses was 55. In addition, we gave advice for tree planting within a 1km radius of the following RPG's: Hunslet Cemetery, Hunslet, Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds, Valley Gardens, Harrogate, The Long Walk, Knaresborough, Shroggs Park, Halifax, Rowntree Park, York, Hornby Castle. Wortley Hall, Allerton Park Estate and Temple Newsam and Roundhay Park both Leeds have had advice.

Question 2 of the consultation:

In exploring reforms to the system, we have so far focused more on key national statutory consultees. Is there more that government should do in relation to smaller scale and local statutory consultees?

I have touched on this issue in Q1a.

Yorkshire's 131 RPG's are distributed throughout Yorkshire: the largely rural North Yorkshire and East Yorkshire where we have 6 Grade I RPG's (Sites of exceptional interest at c.9% of RPG's), and with our concentration of public parks and designed cemeteries in our more urban centres, which also often have country parks on their periphery that have been donated to the community by estate owners in the past eg Lotherton Hall, near Aberford, Leeds City Council RPG Grade II donated by the Gascoigne family in 1969 and Temple Newsam also RPG Grade II also Leeds, both much loved and appreciated. (Grade II are Sites of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them; c. 65% of RPG's). What is urgently needed is :

- a) Funding: The GT and CGT's are reservoirs of scholarship and knowledge re RPG's and their expertise could be much more useful to planners if there was more support to enable the GT and CGT's to be more effective. This would strengthen the system enabling better and speedier advice to drive determinations and thus development. And it would be cost-effective. CGT's have in-depth local knowledge and can contribute to local government strategies and within the developing Mayoral systems.
- b) More trained and experienced historic landscape experts in LPA's to work with CGT's and developers so that work is done 'upstream' before a planning application is submitted. This would speed up the planning system and thus development.
- c) Better prepared applications - helped by b) above. The proposed meeting noted by the Minister for Housing and Planning to improve developers' understanding would be very helpful.

In light of the proposed mitigations, do you support the removal of The Gardens Trust as a statutory consultee?

Oppose.

Question 6 of the consultation:

Please see Q1 and Q2.

I strongly oppose the removal of both the national GT and their county partners the CGT's that includes YGT as Statutory Consultees. As evidenced by the quotes from our colleagues in LPA's in Yorkshire, we are trusted and highly regarded partners, making a positive contribution in a timely manner. We have skill sets developed and deepened over decades, and we 'plug' the significant skills gap in LPA's and at a National level.

Question 7 of the consultation:

Are there impacts of the removal of The Gardens Trust as a statutory consultee, or the proposed mitigations, that you think the government should take into account in making a final decision?

- The GT and CGT's unique knowledge of historic parks and gardens allows us to comment not only on their current state but also what was there in the past and what could be there in the future
- Yorkshire's 131 registered parks and gardens represent less than 1% of the land mass but they are the jewels in our towns, cities and rural areas
- If we lose these precious spaces, our cultural historic legacy and cohesiveness as a nation going forward would be irreversibly damaged.
- As reservoirs of wildlife they are also important for Nature Recovery; a very important aspect of their value. Eg the iconic lime avenues at Castle Howard (RPG Grade 1) are part of Vanburgh's original design. A handful of the original trees remain and are an important early clonal variety no longer commercially available but importantly the lime trees were considered an SSSI quality reservoir of saprophytic beetle (deadwood interest). Rather than clear-fell the trees and replant totally, funding allowed for some limited removals on H & S, others carefully pruned and some replaced. Here complex multi-objective skills were needed, and this ensured a valuable outcome for both the RPG and wildlife.

Removal of GT as statutory consultee (and therefore the local knowledge of CGT's) will:

- Not produce any planning gains or timeliness of decision
- Reduce the importance of RPG's within LPA's. Resulting in less incentive to engage planners with landscape experience.
- Damage the GT and CGT expert network.
- Lead to less informed and poorer planning decisions
- Reduce the community's trust in the planning system
- Likely damage our RPG's that are so well-loved by our communities and are such important reservoirs for nature, health and well-being. The value to the local and tourist economies will be eroded.

The GT and CGT's as consultee protect RPG's for everyone.

Setting

The quality of a historic designed landscape and garden are not just the sum of the land within the RPG boundary. But also of their surroundings be they 19th century public parks like Pearson Park in Hull (RPG grade II) where the design also included designing and building villas outside the immediate park boundary providing housing and the context for the park. It was much the same at most other public parks such as Roundhay Park in Leeds (RPG grade II), and also often for our designed 19th century cemeteries such as Sheffield's General Cemetery (RPG grade II*). I have responded to many applications over the years for the setting of public parks and cemeteries, throughout Yorkshire, giving advice which frequently results in a no objection. This is to help planners safeguard their public heritage assets whilst determining for development.

eg P/24/0610/2 Proposed demolition of Buildings 1-24 Henson Villas, Pearson Park, Kingston Upon Hull HU5 2SZ

24/04377/FU Single storey rear extension including enlarged terrace area above, balustrading and privacy screen; associated landscaping. 42 Park Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds, LS8 2JH,

Similarly, our more rural RPG's have often been designed to take in vistas outside the RPG boundary eg **25/04380/LB Listed Building Consent for the removal of internal walls to enable use of stores as additional living accommodation and changing external door to part glazed door. Ruffe House, Sawley, North Yorkshire HG4 3EA. Studley Royal.**

Here Ruffe House or Rough House, a farmhouse that was remodelled by William Aislabie of Studley Royal (RPG grade I and WHS) in the 1770's to form an 'eyecatcher' but now outside the RPG and but within the setting.

It would be very remiss of the planning system to not include the setting as a material consideration or that the setting could be left to the determination of individual LPA's. The boundaries of RPG's were originally determined by English Heritage – now Historic England since 2015 – as an urgent desk-based exercise for grant giving after the Great Storm that devastated swathes of England in October 1987. And English Heritage/Historic England have not had the capacity to review most of the RPG boundaries, despite much scholarly research indicating that some of the boundaries now in place are not the full design intention. Another reason why Historic England needs more capacity. But the GT/CGT's with their extensive knowledge and expertise can advise planners to help them safeguard our historic designed landscapes whilst determining for development within the settings. Eg:

2025/62/92782/E Land off Litherop Lane, Clayton West, Huddersfield, HD8 9LT Erection of stables and tackroom and use of land for equestrian purposes. Bretton Hall/YSP (RPG grade II)

We conclude that the proposal is at the lower end of less than substantial harm. We advise care is taken to ensure that the site blends into the setting on this part of the RPG. For continuity with the historic planting and sympathy with the designed landscape we recommend that several trees are planted in the screen hedge to reference the species present in the Park or the boundary woodland. We are copying this letter to Mr Mark Chesman, Head of Estates and Projects, Yorkshire Sculpture Park for information.

NY/2025/0016/73 Consultation on planning application for the purposes of the Variation of Condition No's 1,2,3,20,& 21 of planning permission ref. C6/19/00988/CMA to allow for the continuation of importation and placement of non-hazardous soil, amend the approved landform and date for final restoration, and removal of condition No23 on land at Allerton Park Landfill, Moor Lane (off A168), Knaresborough, HG5 0SD. FURTHER CONSULTATION

We are pleased that some of the points raised in our last consultation have been included, and the proposal is now to replace parkland planting with wood pasture. Although we agree that there should not be any boundary fencing, we still suggest that at the junction between the RPG and the landfill site, the RPG would benefit from some strengthening of the tree planting.

24/01376/FUL and 24/01377/LBC Listed building consent for demolition of existing bathroom extension and outbuildings and erection of a new single storey rear extension, exterior repair/replacement works and rebuilding of yard wall and gate | Bilham Lodge Street Lane Bilham Doncaster DN5 7DW Brodsworth Hall.

Here we were directly asked for advice by Pete Lamb, Principal Planner, Design and Conservation at City of Doncaster Council, as Bilham Lodge remains outside the Brodsworth RPG (Grade II*) yet part of the historic access.

From analysis of the 55 responses that were made in the year 1st Oct 2024-30th Sept 2025, 23 were for applications outside the RPG boundary ie within the setting so c.40%

Nature Recovery and Environmental Improvement Plan

I have already noted the significance of RPG's in delivering Nature Recovery and Environmental Improvement (Q1 and Q2). The YGT response addresses this too and I won't repeat here. We are always pleased to work with colleagues at Natural England:

Natural England's strategy for 2025-30 ([Natural England's Strategy: Recovering Nature for Growth, Health and Security - GOV.UK](#)) covers much of this ground and explicitly notes the criticality of the values of cultural landscapes, history and time depth.

Question 10 of the consultation:

**Are there other statutory consultees for which we should consider removal?
What evidence would support this approach?**

I am amazed with the assertion: ‘...we have focused on those that ... deliver on relatively narrow policy aims’.

It shows something of a lack of understanding – maybe over the years we have not explained the breadth of what we are trying to achieve.

Using their knowledge and advice the GT/CGT’s focus on RPG’s that deliver widespread heritage, economic, social and health benefits across the nation. Similarly for the other Statutory Consultees in this consultation. I have not seen any factual evidence in this consultation document. The facts seem to be based on anecdote, but I can give a quote from a colleague in an LPA that underpins why the GT/CGT should NOT be removed as statutory consultee. **QUOTE**

Maria Akers, Senior Estates Manager, Temple Newsam and Lotherton, Leeds City Council:

‘Having the Gardens Trust/Yorkshire Gardens Trust as the statutory consultee has brought benefits to the Estates of Temple Newsam and Lotherton through the ability to discuss proposals and obtain advice at the planning stage. Early advice ensures that applications are appropriate, accurate and comprehensive, which avoids wasting time and resources both for the applicant and for the planning authority. The in-depth knowledge that GT/YGT has built up as a result of this more collaborative approach has gone on to prove invaluable in terms of ongoing management of historic landscapes.’

15 Are there other actions that the government and/or Natural England should be taking to support their role as a statutory consultee?

Question 15 of the consultation:

Whilst often working closely with Natural England I know that their skill sets inhouse re historic designed landscapes are reduced and need to be better resourced and such skills recognised for the value that they bring to Nature Conservation and Nature Recovery.

Question 19 of the consultation:

Is there anything else we should consider in relation to the role of Historic England as a statutory consultee?

I have partially addressed this in Q 1 and Q1a):

The Gardens Trust is the **sole consultee for the Grade II sites that make up c. 65% of Registered sites**, and which include many **public parks, cemeteries and smaller historic parks and gardens that are much loved community assets**.

For very many years Historic England (HE) has not had the capacity to respond to planning applications relating to Grade II RPG’s. The GT/CGT’s fill this huge gap and if they are removed as statutory consultees then the effective protection of existing and future Grade II RPG’s will disappear, resulting in potentially poorer planning decisions and decades of constructive planning work being undermined. This is not a gain, it is a recipe for irretrievable damage to RPG’s through no fault of the planners.

HE has been understaffed since at least since 2010 (when they were English Heritage), when they lost a third of their budget. HE staff are excellent but there are not enough of them! Officers are pleased to work with GT/CGT’s as we help fill the critical gap in expertise.

Question 24 of the consultation:

**Is there anything further government should consider in relation to voluntary pre-application engagement and for any statutory consultees in particular?
What evidence supports this?**

Poor quality of applications.

Some applications are poorly documented in their submissions. There may insufficient detail or conversely unnecessary detail, padding out the submission. Both are time-wasting. RPG's can be ignored or dismissed in the documents submitted.

Some applicants fail to recognise the significance of the NPPF and as a result GT/CGT as consultee and of course the planning case officer, cannot properly consider the application. For the GT/CGT we cannot give proper advice. We simply say that the lack of recognition of the NPPF and significance of the impact on the RPG, means that we cannot comment fully. So, time wasted.

21/03171/REM Application for approval of reserved matters for housing on site of Former Mortuary, Skipton Road, Utley, Keighley BD20 6EJ. Previous approval 17/04999/OUT relates.

YGT made a site visit but we considered the application did not accord with NPPF

Pre-application

Where the applicant engages with the LPA and with statutory consultees – and this is particularly important with major developments – the application can go through the system unaltered reducing the overall time and resulting in a development outcome that satisfies all parties. YGT has recently been consulted on:

25/04193/OUTMAJ Outline application for erection of residential development of up to 120 dwellings, including associated infrastructure works. All matters reserved except means of access into (but not within) the site from Ripon Road, Killinghall Land Comprising Field at 428493 458961 Ripon Road, Killinghall, North Yorkshire– Ripley Castle RPG. Although the proposed development is within the distant setting of Ripley Castle (RPG Grade II), we had no comment to make as we considered that development was unlikely to have a harmful impact and therefore did not raise any NPPF RPG Heritage objections.

RB2024/0572- Paid pre app enquiry for proposed solar farm at land at Fullerton Road Canklow. Boston Park, Rotherham.

No objection. Conferred with Friends of Boston Park.

Local Plans

This is also related to lack of capacity and funding particularly for LPA's but also for the statutory consultees. Local Plans need to be truly local to encompass the diversity in building and landscape that make such a wonderful contribution to England, aiding communities and social cohesion. Local Plans therefore require a robust evidence base be it from Local Plan officers or amenity groups and statutory consultees to enable planners and developers to carefully consider proposals and to sustain local distinctiveness.

25 Is there anything further government should consider in relation to statutory consultee engagement in post-approval processes, such as agreeing that planning conditions have been fulfilled? What evidence supports this?

Question 25 of the consultation:

This needs more resource and training within LPA's. It is difficult under the present conditions for LPA's to ensure the conditions are complied with resulting in poorer outcomes.

Statutory consultee performance

26. Do you have suggestions for how government can effectively incorporate developer and local authority feedback into consideration of statutory consultee performance.

Question 26 of the consultation:

Developers vary in size and focus for their developments. LPA's in Yorkshire probably do not have the resource.

The role of local planning authorities

27. Do you agree with this approach?

No

Question 27 of the consultation:

As RPG's are each unique and a wide ranging resource this approach would engender unacceptable risks that would result in damage to this heritage asset and thus to the wide community as previously explained.

28. Is there anything else the government should be doing to support local planning authorities in their engagement with statutory consultees?

Question 28 of the consultation:

Provide funding for enough staff and training to deliver best outcomes.

29. Are there best practice examples from local authorities that help support statutory consultees and developers, eg checklists/proformas for environmental issues?

Don't know of any LPA's that have time to do this.

30. How might best practice be expanded to support statutory consultees, including reducing the volume of material which developers have to produce?

Question 30 of the consultation:

No comment.

31. How best can government and statutory consultees support the increase in capacity and expertise of local and strategic authorities?

Question 31 of the consultation:

Once again – it's funding for training and employment. Economic growth is dependent on good decision-making but currently due to lack of appropriately trained staff, that is hampered. We cannot know where we are going if we don't understand the past and where we are now and our heritage is a key driver.

In summary whilst I agree with some of Mr Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister for Housing and Planning steps, I underline that:

The Statutory requirement to consult is essential and necessary for planning applications affecting RPG's and their setting.

Consulting the GT as statutory consultee is not 'gold plating' – **the GT is the sole consultee for the Grade II sites that make up c. 65% of Registered sites**, and which include many **public parks, cemeteries and smaller historic parks and gardens that are much loved community assets**.

36. The government considers that these measures would have a deregulatory impact. Do you have evidence from engagement with statutory consultees under the current system of the impact this may have?

Question 36 of the consultation:

In terms of the GT/CGT's this would have an adverse impact and should be clear from my answers.

37. Based on the proposed changes to referral criteria, would statutory consultees expect to see performance improvements? Please explain your reasoning.

Strongly disagree.

Question 37 of the consultation:

I am dismayed that the government intends to consider removing the GT as a statutory consultee within the English planning system. This is likely to result in our planners not having the specialist advice to help them in their decision-making, and that the historic environment – and everyone’s enjoyment of it - will suffer for years to come. We should be passionate about the role that our world-famous historic parks and gardens can play in supporting positive economic growth, meeting the challenges of climate, nurturing healthy cohesive societies and in nature recovery. It is a fundamental that the skills of the GT’s as the statutory consultee should be allowed to do this.

.....