

HTA Annual Review 2021



Introductions from President and Chairman

Five key wins

- Garden centres in England defined as 'essential' during lockdown ensuring **£250m sales** safeguarded the industry
- Garden centres in devolved nations enabled to **open weeks before other retailers** thanks to HTA lobbying
- **£4m in savings** achieved for the industry as inspection fees deferred as a result of Brexit lobbying
- Bringing the horticultural supply chain together to commit to **removing peat**
- **Online training** has enabled double the number of members to access learning in the first six months of the year

President's Statement

In what sometimes feels like the blink of an eye, the end of my two-year term as President is here and what a whirlwind it has been! As I reflect on what we have achieved together, I see a game of four quarters: anticipating Brexit in the first quarter, catapulting into a pandemic and managing the impact of Covid for the second quarter, learning to live with both Brexit and Covid in the third and finally, as a result of that, celebrating 3 million new gardeners and the associated lift in the level of interest in horticulture alongside a renewal of the debate over peat use in our industry.

Tackling the challenges has resulted in strengthened connections across the different sectors of our world – we've grown real understanding of each other's needs – and organisationally, the HTA has developed important relationships with the GCA and GIMA as well as stakeholders like the NFU. This is hugely positive – collaboration is key and was a big contributor to our ability to weather the storm of Covid.

Brett Avery, my likely successor, has faced these same challenges himself and I've no doubt his experience of this will translate into fantastic support for the industry. I hope that, in turn, you will support him as we will need to continue in the same vein if we are to keep those 3 million people engaged with their new gardening hobby. It is up to us to work together to ensure we find ways to build a more sustainable industry; this includes working together to achieve the necessary government recognition and support for our Industry Futures project and realise the full potential of horticulture.

As I approach the end of my Presidency I extend my thanks to the Board, the Senior Leadership, Management and team at Horticulture House and the Council (which benefits from full membership at present) for all the support and encouragement they have shown me throughout the two years. Without exception, they have faced every challenge with a positive attitude and worked tirelessly on behalf of the membership.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Boyd DD".

Boyd Douglas-Davies
HTA President

Chairman's Statement

It has again been a year of extraordinary events: the pandemic, Brexit complexities, the ever-growing importance of sustainability and the sheer pace of change. Throughout it all, the HTA has strived to move forward and to lean into the issues facing us. As last year, I will review our performance against three key objectives:

Driving policy action on key issues for horticulture.

Having developed the team who coordinate our lobbying efforts, we have raised the profile of the sector and achieved some key wins. Garden centres were classified as 'essential retail' in England, and opened earlier than planned in the devolved nations, securing £250m that would otherwise have been lost to our sector.

We have brought clarity to the complexities and confusion of Brexit and the changes to the terms of trade with the EU and I'm delighted we could instigate the delay of inspection fees and postponement of the introduction of the IPAFF system, but there is much more to do – we want wholesale change to the inefficient import control environment and to assist with negotiations to free up barriers to exports.

The sustainability agenda is now centre stage for all our businesses and our Sustainability Roadmap, launched in November, offers support to develop Environmental Social Governance strategies and providing data and information for benchmarking and inter-industry collaboration on key issues and processes. Through the Growing Media Taskforce, we have coordinated the development of an industry-wide strategy for peat use and will continue to take an industry lead in the coming government consultation.

There have been many other touchpoints throughout the year with the team considering labour, access to water, and in particular developments around plant health.

Communication and engagement with Members.

Timely and effective communications is essential, and our weekly e-newsletter Member Update continues to be the primary tool for reaching you. This is complemented by regional and interest-led WhatsApp groups. The 'First Friday' forum has been a valuable information exchange and there is an ambition to make these even more relevant.

After a pandemic-induced pause on production of HTA News we have introduced a quarterly publication. Inside Horticulture gives a more in depth look at current issues. A website refresh should be complete by January 2022 and will be fully optimised for use on smart devices. Although Covid curtailed our events programme, we continue to build the quantity and quality of our webinars whilst planning for the APL awards, the Garden Press event, the plant show and autumn conference to return as face-to-face events.

Build our income to deliver more for members.

We have two primary sources of income: our membership subscriptions and the contribution from the National Garden Gifting Scheme.

In recognition of the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, we returned 25% of membership fees to all members in April last year, an action we repeated this year to those impacted by closure in the devolved nations. Membership income is consequently reduced.

Recruiting more members from all sectors of the industry (particularly growers) proved difficult amongst last year's distractions but I'm pleased to report membership numbers are up 5%

Lockdown saw gifting revenues impacted when consumers could not access garden centres, but our ambitions to deliver a more efficient and user-friendly system to both the gardening public and retailers remains at the forefront of our strategy; we recruited a new Director of Gifting to deliver this. We have had to delay implementation whilst we negotiate a change of supplier and bring our existing contract to a sensible conclusion.

The financial impact on the revenues and balance sheet will be set out in the going concern statement as part of our report and accounts and I urge you to read this. Naturally it sets out the worst-case scenario and the impacts may mean we need to proceed cautiously.

Outlook.

Our research showing lockdown inspired an additional 3 million people to take up gardening is an oft-quoted fact and though a few will be transitory I am confident our industry will continue to enthuse and engage with these new converts.

The pace of change will not slow. Revolutions in digital technology and the impact of climate change and Brexit, all accelerated by this pandemic, will bring about fundamental change.

I believe we are in a wonderful position to capitalise on many of these influences, something that's highlighted in the recently published industry growth strategy. We collaborated with the OHRG to contribute to this report which demonstrates that working together with government could see our sector's contribution to GDP rise from £28.8B to £41.8B - a 45% increase over the next 10 years. This will be a major driver of our activity for this year and next.

The level of natural disruption and regulatory change places us at the forefront of our members' desire for information and the need for us to influence government policy. Our role as a trade association in this uncertain world should be much bigger and we must become more agile and proactive in order to stay ahead. Having access to good data and having great research and technical capability is essential to our ongoing success.

The continued support of the membership, not just through subscriptions, but personal time given to provide information in support of our lobbying efforts, is incredible and I thank you. The HTA team itself has shown great fortitude throughout and on behalf of the President and the Board I congratulate the team for achieving financial results that have seen a further strengthening of our balance sheet.

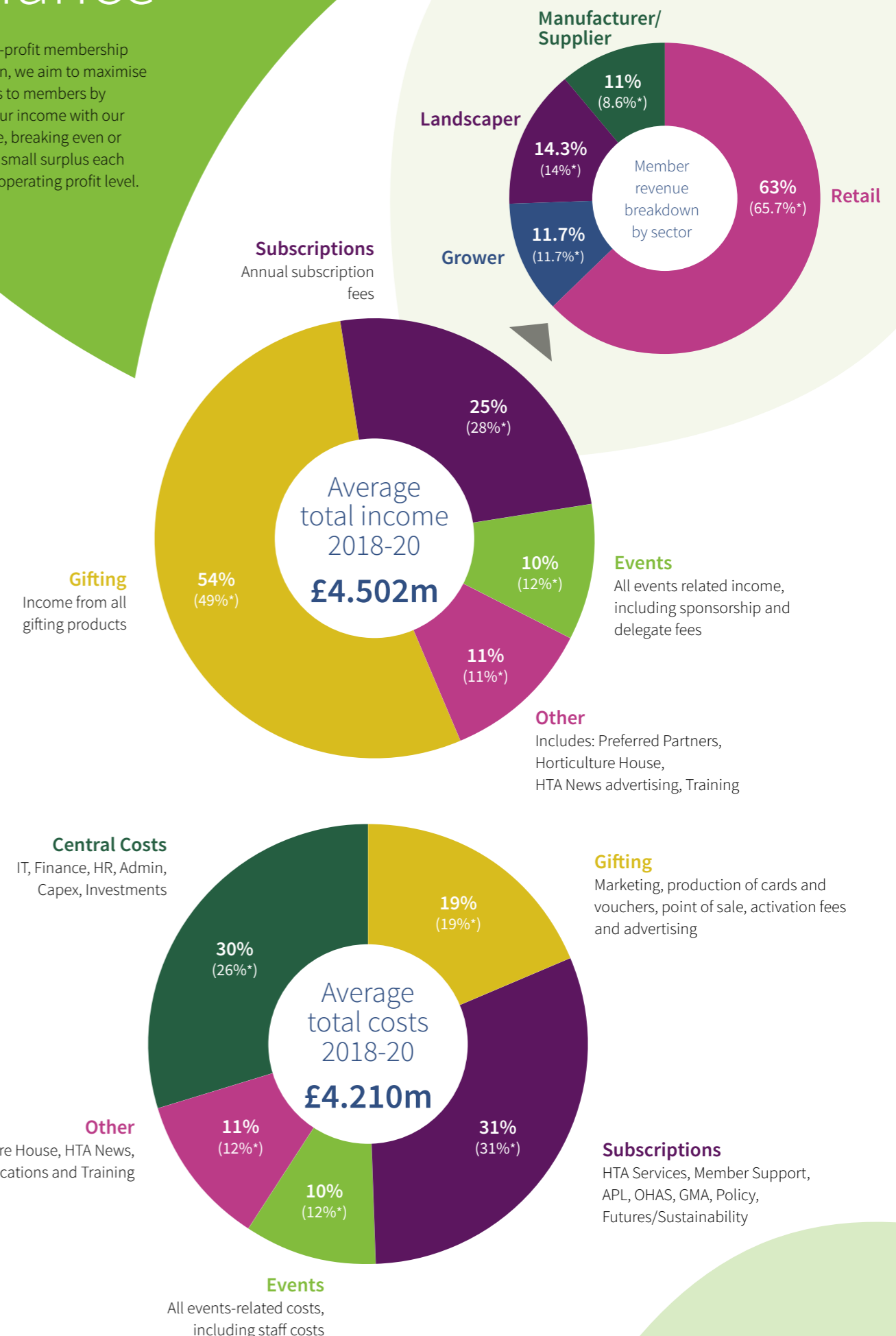
James Barnes

James Barnes
HTA Chairman



Finance

As a not-for-profit membership organisation, we aim to maximise the benefits to members by matching our income with our expenditure, breaking even or declaring a small surplus each year at the operating profit level.

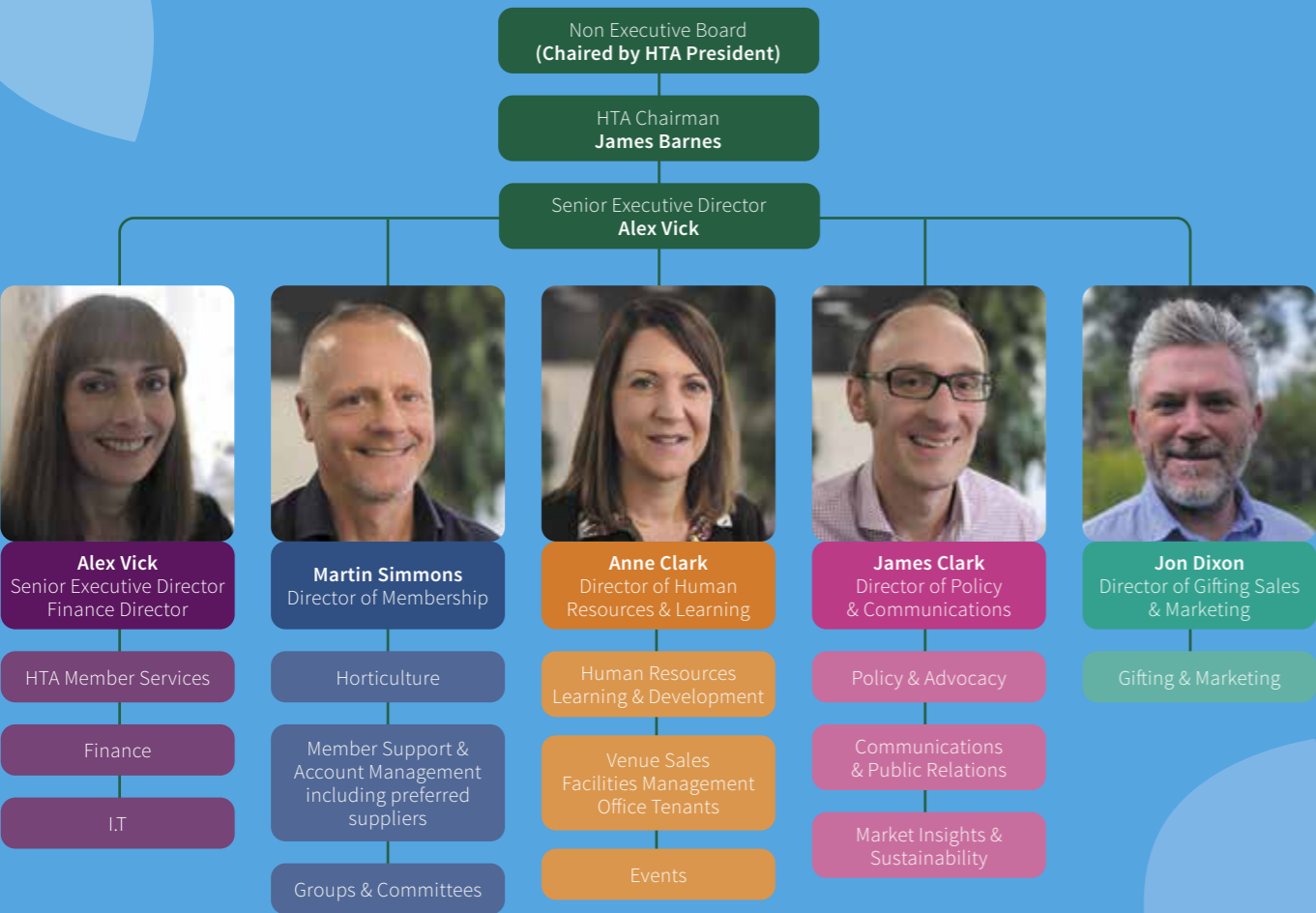
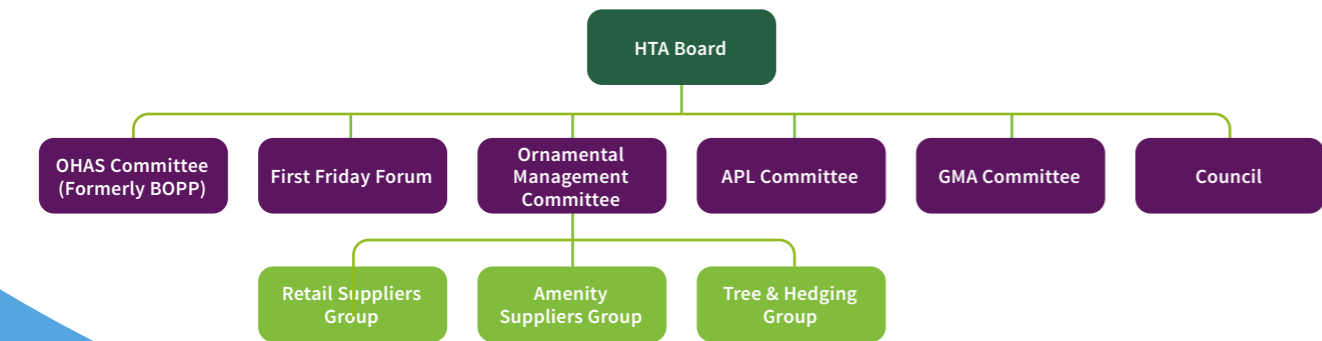


* These are 2020 percentages

Governance

We are the trade association for the UK garden industry. We help our members to flourish by representing, promoting and developing the garden industry through our key values; collaboration, innovation, influence and integrity.

Governance of the HTA is the responsibility of the HTA Board, who ensure we pursue our agreed objectives in line with the Memorandum and Articles of Association. These objectives are steered by the HTA Council, and sector-specific committees including the Ornamentals Management Committee and the Commercial Committee and specialist groups such as the Association of Professional Landscapers and the Growing Media Association.



The HTA Board

The HTA Board directs our affairs and is the guardian of members' interests. It ensures our business is efficient and accountable, complying with good practice and all legal and financial requirements. The Board comprises the President, the Immediate Past President, the Vice President, the Chairman, the Senior Executive Director and eight Non-Executive Directors.

Our Non-Executive directors are passionate about seeing the industry succeed. They have the same general legal responsibilities as any other director of a company but work in a voluntary capacity. Appointments are made by the Board, often from within the Council and sector-specific committees. They are made based on the individual's knowledge and experience across all sectors of the horticulture industry. Appointments are ratified at our AGM.

HTA Board

HTA President	Boyd Douglas-Davies	British Garden Centres
Immediate Past President	Adam Taylor	Taylors Bulbs
Vice President	Brett Avery	Farplants
HTA Chairman	James Barnes	
Non-executive directors		
	Brian Fraser	Oakover Nurseries
	Jane Lawler	Lawler Associates
	Ken White	Frosts Landscape Construction
	Matthew Bent	Bents Garden and Home
	Simon Fraser	Ben Reid Garden Centre
	Vicky Nuttall	The Garden Industry Manufacturer's Association (GIMA)
	Geoff Caesar	Ball Colegrave
	Neil Grant	Ferndale Garden Centre
HTA Senior Executive and Finance Director	Alex Vick	

HTA Council

The HTA Council is a body of 14 regional representatives who voice the views of all sectors of our membership to the HTA Board. They act as ambassadors providing a two-way flow of information and ideas. Representatives are elected by our members and work in a voluntary capacity, meeting three times a year.

With every seat on Council currently filled we have an enthusiastic group of industry experts. They regularly and honestly share their opinions, and that of their region, with the executive. Without them the quality of information flowing in to the organisation would be greatly reduced.

HTA Council

Chair (The HTA President)	Boyd Douglas-Davies	British Garden Centres
APL representative	David Sewell	The Gardenmakers
Central Southern England	Clare Norman	B&Q
Devon & Cornwall	Sarah Daniel	Pengelly Plant Centre
East Anglia	Gill Tacchi	Robin Tacchi Plants
East Midlands	Laura Jackson	Swarkestone Nursery
West Midlands	Mollie Higginson	New Leaf Plants
Essex	Tristan Bourne	Perrywood Garden Centre
London, Northern Home Counties	Rebecca Grant	Joseph Rochford Gardens
Northern Ireland	John Shannon	Inver Garden Centre
North West	Adrian Cornelissen	Burleydam Garden Centre
Scotland	Helen MacDonald	Merryhatton Garden Centre
South East	Alex Curran	Roots Plants
Thames & Chilterns	Alan Goold	Henry Street Garden Centre
Wales	Nicola Pugh	Pugh's Garden Village
West of England	Andy Campbell	Andy Campbell Consulting
Yorkshire & North East	Fiona Dean	Ravensworth Nurseries

Benefits of membership

Gifting contributes 50% of total revenue and accounts for less than 20% of total costs, adding up to a net benefit to all HTA members by helping to pay for services like these that add value every day.

Access to information & data

- Latest interpretation of government legislation
- Advance warning of pending regulation
- Industry news and its implications for your business
- Access to exclusive industry sales data from the HTA's Garden Retail Monitor system
- The latest market insight information from HTA surveys and third-party contributors

Access to Preferred Partners and FREE advice lines

- Discounts on utilities
- Discounts on insurance
- FREE advice lines covering a wide range of critical business issues

Since the launch of the HTA Preferred Partnership with Lloyds Cardnet in January 2018, **members have saved an estimated £750k on card processing fees**

There are now close to **300 members benefitting** from the partnership, **saving an average of £2.5k** per annum each

300

the number of participants we now have on the WhatsApp Community comms channels

The WhatsApp Community comms channels introduced for every Council area, specialist groups such as catering and Retail Suppliers and Amenity Suppliers for grower members. The WhatsApp groups have connected members with each other, generating mutual peer support and enabled HTA staff to answer member questions and send key news out in a quick and immediate way.



Access to National Garden Gift Voucher scheme

- Worth around £30million to the industry each year
- Key driver of footfall and increased spend
- A percentage of income from member and online sales is donated to the Greenfingers charity
- On purchasing, customers spend on average 23% more than the value of the voucher/card on other goods

57% more

Upon redemption, customers spend on average 57% more than the value of the voucher/card on additional goods

Representation of the industry

- To government and through the media
- Promoting the interests of horticulture and raising profile of its socio-economic importance to the UK
- Helping to input and shape regulations and legislation

95 Radio & TV

interviews between December and July that's equivalent to spending **£123,435** on advertising

Learning and Development

- 30+ courses and training resources on topics ranging from soft skills to compliance
- Free e-learning for new members
- Access to the HTA HUB and app give users access to exclusive content, designed for the industry, available online 24/7



Our lobbying campaign to get garden centres in the devolved nations re-opened in 2021

Management of the coronavirus pandemic varied greatly across the different nations of the United Kingdom, presenting us with several challenges as we worked to ensure the needs of the entire membership were represented. Through our government engagement, English garden centres had been able to trade without restriction since May 2020, but our members in the devolved nations faced multiple closures, reopenings and variations of this.

Keeping garden centres open in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland during lockdown 2, ensured approximately £170M in sales into the industry in November alone.

Three petitions calling for re-opening were launched by members and promoted by the HTA. In Wales 11,217 signatures and Scotland 8,941 signatures, NI 1,902.

Wales

The Welsh Government initially stated that garden centres would not be considered separately from other retailers for early re-opening. Thanks to the member-initiated petition and our engagement with government officials and Members of the Senedd, by February's Cabinet meeting garden centres were actively being considered as separate from other forms of retail - an important step in getting centres opened early. We kept the pressure on and by March they were re-opened.

Scotland

We met Ministers and officials responsible for our industry in the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government's initial approach proposed re-opening only the outdoor areas of garden centres, but thanks to our last-minute intervention this was scrapped and garden centres were allowed to re-open their full premises.

Northern Ireland

We met and had positive meetings with Ministers and officials. The different political make-up of the Northern Ireland Executive meant we had to successfully engage across the political spectrum to make sure our voice was heard and acted on.

Garden centres were re-opened 3 weeks before other retailers

In lockdown 3, we successfully enabled garden centres to reopen in every devolved country at least three weeks before any other retail sector.

We embarked upon a comprehensive government and media engagement campaign, meeting and briefing Ministers and officials in all three nations, putting forward solutions and evidence for reopening. We were successful in getting garden centres included in the first phase of reopening in every nation and were told our Safe Trading Guidance was fundamental to this success.

Re-opening Garden Centres in Devolved Nations

Garden centres call for early re-opening

Press and Journal (2nd February 2021)

The Press and Journal

John Shannon interviewed on Radio Ulster about garden centres re-opening in Northern Ireland

BBC Radio Ulster (6th April 2021)

BBC RADIO



Garden centres call for clarity on re-opening

Daily Mail (Scotland) (24th February 2021)

Daily Mail

Covid: Frustration as garden centres in Wales stay closed

BBC News (6th January 2021)

BBC NEWS



Stan Green, Chairman
of the Scotland Policy
Development Group



Brexit and post-Brexit trade with the EU

The HTA Policy team has worked tirelessly towards making cross-border trade with the EU as smooth as possible for our members. This includes reducing the regulatory and cost burden, both since the transition period ended on 1 January 2021 and post-Brexit.

We have engaged extensively with Defra and Scottish Government Ministers and senior officials, MPs and Peers to seek a better outcome from the restrictive regulations impacting our members.

In June 2021 we launched the 'Let Britain Grow' political and media campaign, highlighting member research showing the £25m-£30m additional costs and burdens put on the industry since Brexit. We provided solutions, calling for changes to the current plant import and export regime.

Our efforts have seen horticulture recognised at the highest level, with the Government's Brexit Minister, Lord Frost, recognising in Parliament the difficulties our industry is facing in relation to Brexit and trade to Northern Ireland. We continue to press Ministers across Whitehall to work with us on policy solutions.

Government and political engagement

Over the last 12 months we have continued to advocate for the horticulture industry and raise its profile by engaging with Ministers in Westminster and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We were the only business representative body invited to support Defra's COP26 climate change 'plant for our planet' initiative, building our profile with Defra Ministers. We have expanded our political networks across all parliaments, especially in the House of Commons and House of Lords, resulting in parliamentarians being better informed and briefed about our industry needs, growing our reputation on environmental matters. We have supported and facilitated numerous ministerial and MP member visits to ensure that politicians get to see what our industry is really about.



Rebecca Pow MP,
Defra Environment
Minister visiting a member

Wins we achieved for the industry include:

In 2020:

- Achieving at least £4m in savings for the industry from inspection fees being deferred until April 2021 (and then further extended until June 2021)
- Securing the agreement to maintain a four-hour import inspection window
- Ensuring one phytosanitary certificate could cover multiple drops on the same shipment for plant imports
- Introducing a temporary flexible Place of Destination system for import inspections

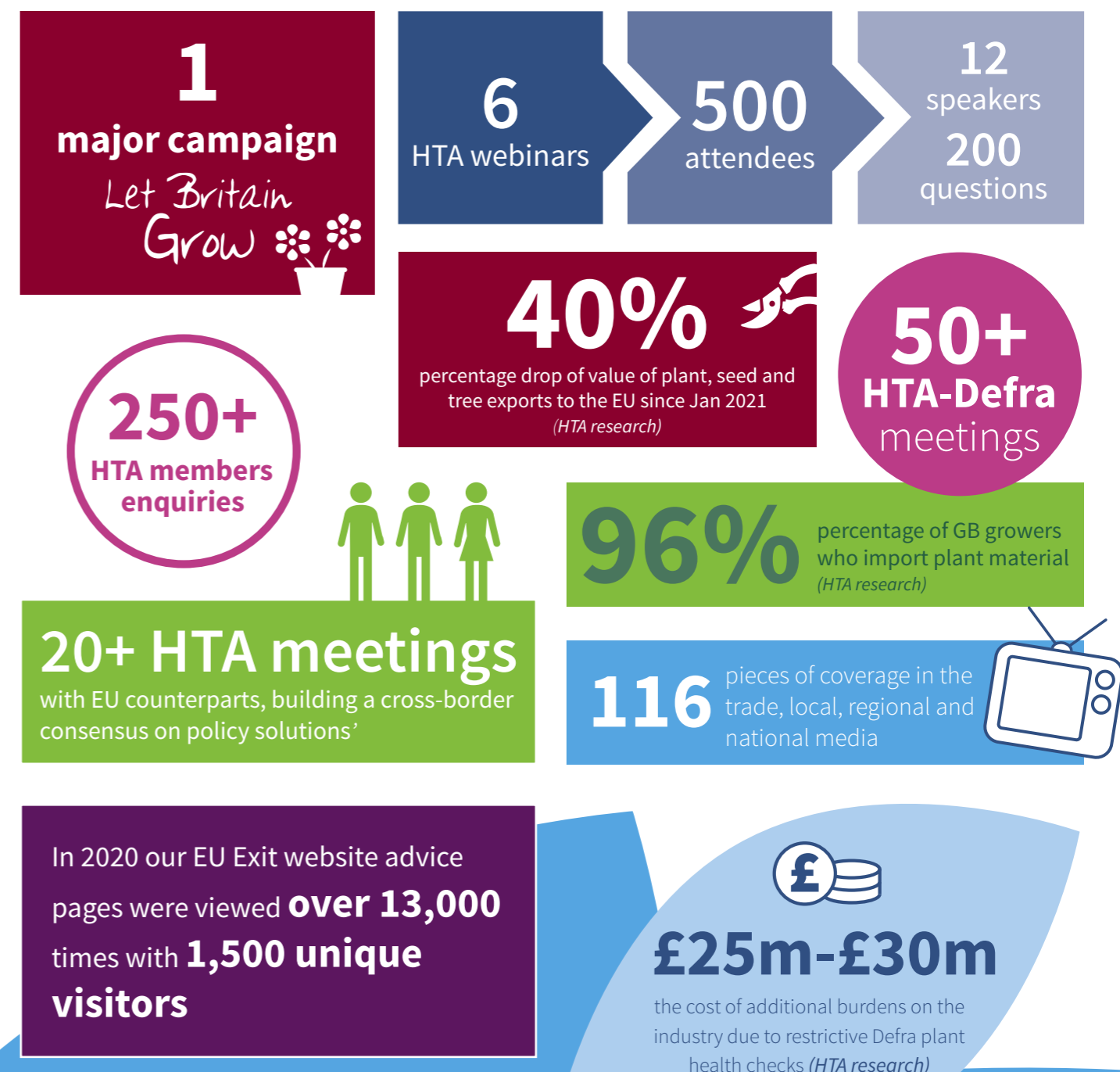
In 2021:

- An easement on plants being sent to Northern Ireland with soil attached
- Postponement of the plant import pre-notification IT system, IPAFFS, until it was 'fit for purpose' for our sector's use
- Defra agreeing to our calls for an inspection fee review – a review group has been set up and we have been invited to be involved

Dedicated support in engaging Holyrood

In April 2021 the HTA signalled our commitment to increasing our profile and influence in Scottish Government policymaking by bringing ex-HTA President Stan Green on board to support the policy team's engagement at Holyrood. As Chairman of the Scotland Policy Development Group, he has worked with the HTA team in strengthening our position with Scottish policymakers as the new Scottish parliament and Cabinet take shape.

Post-Brexit trade in numbers



Member comment:

"I have been impressed with the continuous work of the HTA Policy team. They have ensured our industry is fully represented at all levels of Government, have helped shape the process of trading in plants with the EU and have imparted invaluable advice in importing and exporting plants."

Rebecca Grant - Horticultural Development Manager, Rochfords

Marketing & Gifting



Gifting Performance

The performance of the National Garden Gift Card during 2020 and 2021 to date was strong considering the impact of Covid-19 and the closure of garden centres at various times across the UK during part of both years. During this lockdown time, we saw consumers utilise our online voucher offer. Upon the re-opening of garden centres, both garden gift card sales and redemptions in store grew at pace, as the pent-up demand for plant and gardening products benefitted the HTA gifting products. This continued throughout 2021 as plants and gardening, staycations and home improvement remain popular.

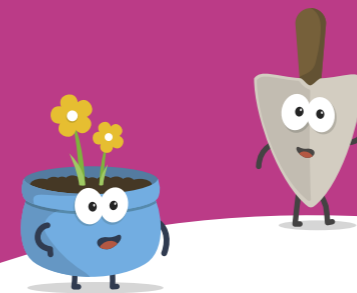
Strategy and Outlook

The wider UK Gift Card market continues to grow at over 12% per year and is valued at £6.9bn. The market has experienced strongest growth from digital e-giftcard products and expanding business to business markets. The HTA has been developing its own digital e-gifting products to be sold in both business to consumer and business to business channels. This was launched during the summer of 2021. During 2020 and 2021 we have seen consumers increasingly prefer gift cards, rather than vouchers and now account for 65% of all sales. The launch of e-giftcards will reinforce this move to 'cards' and provides us with a new market opportunity of a digital business-to-business offering.

A strategy of broadening our National Garden Gift Voucher gifting products, targeting new incremental markets such as digital and business-to-business and building on the existing market demand for both our voucher and UK gardening, indicates a bright future for both the HTA and our members.



Image supplied by Hayley Long



National Children's Gardening Week

National Children's Gardening Week aims to capture children's enthusiasm at the end of May, when the traditionally warm weather is a great time to see speedy results of seed sowing, planting and other gardening activities. Highlights from this year include:

- First collaboration with Peppa Pig and Hasbro
- 268 garden centres participated
- Almost 93k booklets distributed to garden centres. 300 booklets sent to Rainbows and Scouts groups
- 200% increase on web traffic to National Children's Gardening Week website compared to 2020
- GB Gill (from boy band JLS) photographed with his children with the Peppa Pig booklet in Hello magazine and posted about the campaign on social media twice. His 156k followers helped raise the profile of the campaign, including contributing to an estimated total of 71k engagements on our social media pages



Sustainability Roadmap

In 2021 we began implementing our five-year Sustainability Roadmap for the industry. The goal is to position UK horticulture and landscaping at the leading edge of sustainable business. The principle of the roadmap is to balance people, planet and profit impacts in order to help members build long term business resilience.

Under its auspices we convened a **growing media** taskforce to lead and coordinate an industry position on the future of growing media and peat-removal. With input from all sectors of our membership, we set out a position to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) for the conditions under which peat could voluntarily be removed from horticulture. This work has established a strategic approach to informing all UK government's future policy-making on peat.

We set up a partnership with **PlanetMark**, providing discounted access to the **PlanetMark** certification scheme for sustainability, which has received some fantastic endorsements.

The partnership has produced two free webinars and a podcast to enable members to become more sustainable. We have also published the first in our series of 'how to' practical guides to help members reduce their environmental impacts:

We aim for the full series to be downloaded by
over 300 members

We continue to develop our Preferred Partner services to help members become more sustainable, for instance in the areas of **LED lighting** and **waste management**.

Significant longer-term work is also underway building awareness of the industry among stakeholder groups and networks where our industry has historically had little profile. HTA presented the results of our first ever **Water Use in Ornamental Horticulture** survey at Waterwise's annual conference. This helped raise knowledge among a water company audience of the needs of our sector. We are now in discussion with different water companies about ensuring the unique needs for water of our sector are recognised in drought plans.



Peat

Key organisations from horticulture have committed to end the sector's use of peat, pledging to remove it from the retail market as early as 2025 and no later than the end 2028. For professional horticulture, the range is between 2028 and 2030. The horticulture industry **Growing Media Taskforce**, set up and led by the HTA, continues to bring the full supply chain together to a commitment to voluntary removal of peat from horticulture. This commitment is caveated with the principle of exemptions, availability of peat alternatives, and government support for the industry in making the transition.

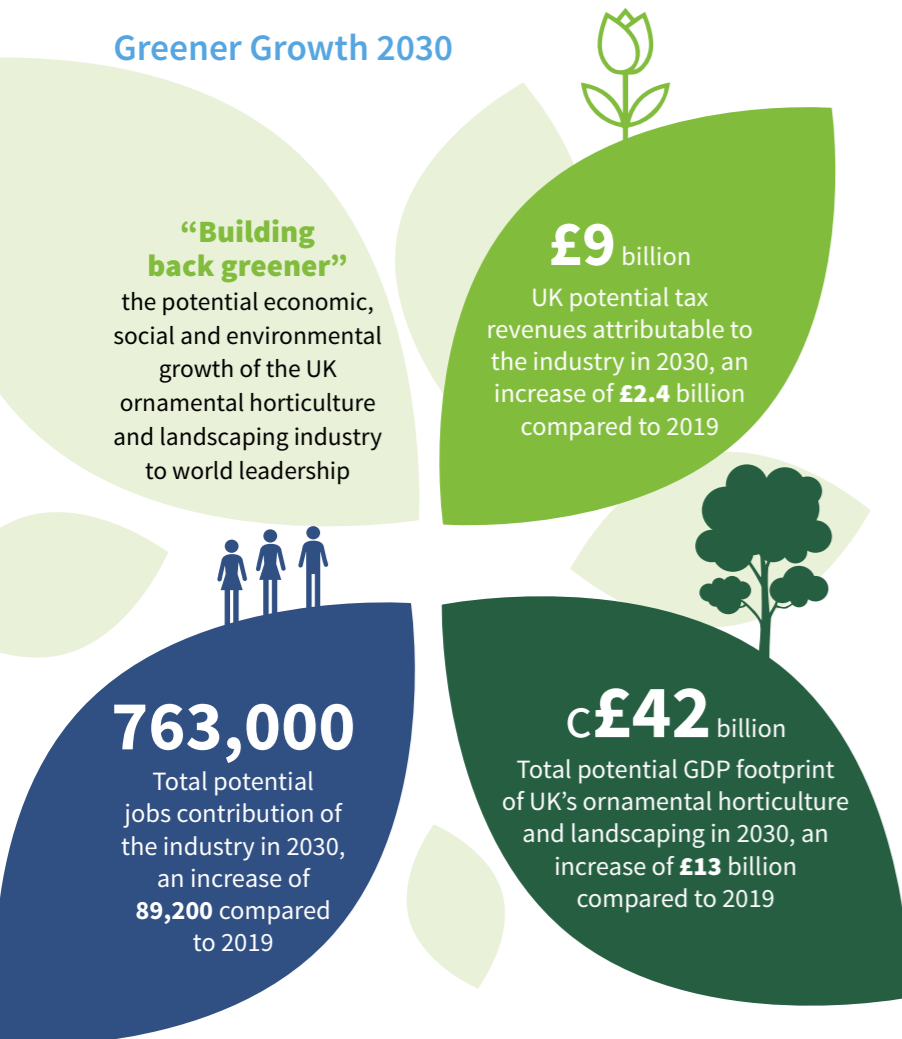
The task force continues to bring together organisations across horticulture including the GCA, RHS and NFU into dialogue with government. We continue to ensure that the government takes into account the huge economic and environmental contributions our industry makes which rely on high-performing responsibly sourced growing media.

Industry futures

OHRG industry growth strategy

We led an industry-wide, Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group (OHRG) project to show the economic growth potential to the year 2030. An independently commissioned report outlined the economic opportunity. This gives us the evidence and strategy to act in a coordinated way with other OHRG members, like the RHS, NFU and BALI and to raise our profile in engaging and lobbying across Westminster government departments and devolved governments and parliaments.

Greener Growth 2030



Labour/workforce benchmarking

We have resumed our service for members on wage benchmarking. This year, we introduced an online platform to make it easier for members to supply data on their workforces and receive near-instant online benchmarking reports. The data we collect will also enable us - for the first time - to report on the overall labour and employment situation in our industry. This will be able to provide data to better understand how to improve diversity and inclusion in the industry as part of careers promotion, as well as helping us make the case to government on our access to labour needs.

Our work to provide data-based business insight

We continue to innovate in order to obtain the best possible evidence, research and data with which to support our members. Our Garden Retail Monitor, which reports the latest sales changes, is expanding its retail coverage and provides the latest market intelligence exclusively for members. The monthly reports continue to be popular with members, consistently being one of the most downloaded resources we provide. It was quoted in a recent Guardian news article about the popularity of gardening and associated sales.

We have begun to pilot a new platform that in future years will enable members to conduct real-time online benchmarking in areas ranging from lead conversion rates in landscaping through to environmental benchmarking. We are also exploring collaboration with the water

industry to enable industry-wide mains water use data to identify the needs of our industry and foster collaboration on greater water resilience.

HTA research, which found that 3 million new gardeners were created because of a renewed interest in gardening following lockdown 1. This continues to be regularly quoted by national, trade and gardening media.



Communications

Media engagement

We utilise the media to highlight the key issues we are facing as an industry, informing the public and influencing policymakers. Using data, member case-studies and spotting hooks to link our stories with current events helped us support our policy objectives and achieve more than 1,000 pieces of coverage and build relationships with 100 journalists between December 2020 and July 2021.

Inside Horticulture

The pandemic required us to cease production of HTA News, presenting an opportunity to update and refresh the magazine and to create something with more of a business focus. In June, we launched Inside Horticulture, a magazine designed to bring you the latest industry news and trends and a host of features to inspire and inform your business every quarter.



Member Update

Each week we email a carefully curated newsletter to some 3,500 primary contacts across the membership. Member Update drops into mailboxes on a Friday morning and brings a summary of what we are doing to represent you to policymakers and through the media, changes in regulations impacting the industry plus notice of events and forthcoming activity you won't want to miss.

“I love the new format of Inside Horticulture. It's packed with interesting features, like the Forum which we found particularly useful because we are looking at introducing more sustainable products and input from experts you can trust, like Mr Plant Geek giving his advice on social media on the ‘Need to know now’ page.”

I did the HTA social media course a couple of years ago. It inspired to me start a Youtube channel, use videos on our social media and be more proactive”

Ruth Goudy, Kiln Farm Nursery

“A lovely magazine full of industry wide news and positive informative articles”

Jim & Maria Barr, Heathhall Garden Centre, Dumfries Scotland



Groups & Committees

'First Fridays' industry leaders Forum

The first Covid19 lockdown in March 2020 saw us begin facilitating a weekly online forum of key individuals within the industry to discuss issues, share concerns and to help steer HTA's response to the pandemic on behalf of the industry. The forum comprises of the HTA Board, the chairs of its main sector committees, representatives from leading retailers, growers and suppliers and the GCA and GIMA. It continues now as a monthly forum to share state of the industry issues and reflections on the marketplace.

Ornamentals Management Committee

Chair: Martin Emmett, Binsted Nurseries

The OMC represents ornamental growers supplying both retail and amenity markets and not only meets every quarter, but has convened several extra-ordinary meetings this year to discuss some of the key issues facing the sector and to feed into the HTA's policy work. Priorities have been to discuss the future R&D needs of the ornamentals sector following the result of the AHDB levy payers' vote and to play a key role in establishing the HTA's Growing Media Taskforce on removing peat from the supply chain. In addition, the future supply of quality seasonal labour has been highlighted, particularly as a potential limiting factor to the growth opportunities we have identified for UK ornamentals production.

Tree and Hedging Group

Chair: Steven Green, Johnsons of Whitley

A specialist group of tree production nurseries supplying the forestry and amenity markets, members continue to take a proactive approach to all matters of plant health and biosecurity. It will maintain a presence on the European Forestry Nursery Association (EFNA) to ensure the UK can continue to influence the policy agendas within the EU that will impact UK businesses. The group contributes to the lobbying activity of the HTA, CONFOR and the NFU, particularly on the shortage of labour and the consequences of this on the sector. Members have contributed to the consultation processes on the design of the Tree Production Innovation Fund and the scoping study for the Forestry Commission's UK wide-Nursery Notification Scheme (NNS). They publicly commented on Defra's tree action plan announcement. Individual members inputted into the briefing preparation for Brian Fraser's appearance in front of the House of Commons Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Select Committee inquiry into Defra's tree planting targets.



Growing Media Association (GMA)

Chair: Neil Bragg, Bulrush Horticulture

GMA members are committed to the provision of high-quality growing media for the millions of plants grown in pots and containers in the UK every year –both for the commercial and amateur markets. The group has been involved in the Defra-initiated taskforce to meet peat replacement targets for England since 2011 and has driven the development of the Responsible Sourcing Scheme which aims to ensure that commercial and retail users have access to clear statements on the environmental criteria of the products they are using.

Since January 2021 the GMA has been an integral part of the HTA's Growing Media Taskforce which coordinates industry responses and actions to address the challenges of phasing out peat use and ensures strong representation to Defra ahead of their consultation on peat and peatland strategy.



Top: Martin Emmett. Right: Steven Green. Bottom: Neil Bragg

Plant Health

OHAS

The Ornamental Horticulture Assurance Scheme (OHAS) is the HTA's independently audited assurance scheme for growers, packhouses and growing media.

During 2021 the Grower Standards were updated to incorporate much of the new Plant Healthy Certification Scheme (PHCS) standards. This will enable growers to better protect themselves and their suppliers against destructive plants and pests and meet any increased regulatory requirements.

Working with the GMA, the Growing Media Standards were updated to include the Responsible Sourcing Calculator and bring an updated set of robust standards to the industry. This will support producers of growing media and their clients to meet the challenges.

This positions OHAS and its scheme members at the forefront of current environmental, sustainability and biosecurity standards - meeting the needs of the industry and consumers.

Plant Health Certification Scheme (PHCS)

The PHCS was established by the HTA, Defra, Duchy of Cornwall, the RHS and many other representative bodies. It is designed to counter the threat from plant pests by making it easy to identify businesses that trade and grow plants to high plant health and biosecurity standard; to reduce the risk of introducing / spreading destructive plant pests via plant supply chains and to protect the horticulture industry, other cultivated plants and natural habitats.

A Pioneer stage, launched in February 2020, enabled several horticultural businesses to go through the certification process in the first twelve months and to provide feedback to improve the auditing process and scheme function.

Eleven UK nurseries were fully certified during this Pioneer stage and a further three are currently in application. Members interested in applying can register their interest via www.planthealthy.org.uk/



Learning & Development and Events

Learning & Development

Staff personal development and retention is as important as ever and recognising this, we have developed a range of resources to support our members with expert advice and the tools for ensuring continual growth. Taking training online has seen us almost double the number of members trained in the first six months of the year. 110 delegates have taken over 1,000 hours of training.



“The plant passport system ensures plants moved within Great Britain are both healthy and traceable to source. This Defra funded module is designed to help operators in complying with the plant passport system, to protect British businesses and our environment better from harmful plant pests and diseases.”

Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Minister for Biosecurity

New for 2021

- Two new year-long development programmes with live, online training each month, focusing on two areas that have huge potential to support growth and sales; Social Media Marketing and Visual Merchandising. The programmes enable delegates to grow – providing ongoing support through implementation, as well as tools for peer-to-peer critique and expert advice
- Four 4 and 5-week intensive online training courses in Social Media Marketing, Visual Merchandising, Digital Marketing and new for Autumn 2021, Customer Service
- Five Plant Healthy training modules launched in October as part of the International Year of Plant Health 2020. Our partnership with CPL Learning and our experience and expertise in learning technologies led to us supporting Defra and the Plant Health Alliance in building learning that is fundamental to the management of plant health and biosecurity in the UK

Coming soon

- New e-learning for APL will see a digital version of the former Landscape Award, starting with a hard landscaping training module on paving, sponsored by Bradstone
- A comprehensive basic level training tool for our Grower members, providing an induction for new starters and a knowledge check and development tool for existing staff. Designed to be unique within our industry with eight modules covering Pest & Diseases, Watering, Propagation, Plant Physiology, Growing Media, Pruning, Nutrition & Feeding and Weeding

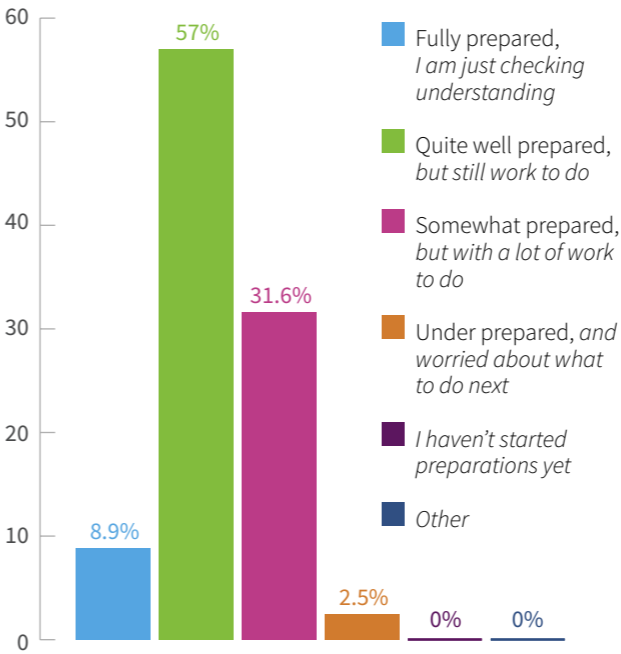


HTA webinars

The lockdowns of 2020 kickstarted a new approach to the way we engage with our membership and we turned to webinars to facilitate knowledge sharing. The AGM went online in September and since then we’ve run a further 10 webinar events on topics as broad as catering, post-Brexit trade and gifting. Member feedback tells us you appreciate being able to access short bursts of information on specific subjects either live or at a more convenient time via a recording of the event, so we’ll continue to build our experience to deliver a programme which meets your needs and expectations.



Feedback from members after December 2020 webinar on getting ready for Brexit:



“Today’s webinar has also been of great help and support. Good to see everyone’s pushing to make IPAFFS a success!”

Lois Koster, Syngenta

Virtual Events

The Garden Press Event (GPE) and the Association Professional Landscapers (APL) Awards ran as virtual events in 2021, both receiving positive feedback.

GPE Exhibitors and the industry press were able to network on the day using roundtables, live chats and business card drops. The New Product Awards attracted 62 entries, demonstrating industry innovation and creativity and providing a launchpad for products and companies at the first garden event of the season.

The National Plant Show 2021 was replaced by the Virtual New Plant Awards, providing the opportunity for 93 entries to be showcased. Allium ‘Lavender Bubbles’ from Fairweather’s Nursery ‘ was crowned Best in Show, also winning Best in Category for Herbaceous Perennials. The top 10 entries were put forward for the Visitor Vote, supported by Floramedia, in which 338 people voted and Polemonium ‘Golden Feathers’ from Allensmore Nurseries Ltd came out on top.

Virtual events worked well as an alternative during the pandemic, but we are really excited about the return of physical HTA shows and exhibitions in 2022. Plans are already underway for the Garden Press Event, APL Awards and the National Plant Show - the dates and details of which you can find on our website.



Association of Professional Landscapers

APL Awards

Our flagship event, the APL Awards could not happen as usual at The Brewery in London in March, but this provided the opportunity to try something different. The HTA Events team helped coordinate what has been referred to as the best virtual industry awards of the year and the ceremony, attended by 130 people, had all the tension of X factor, with the entertainment value of Eurovision. Winners were pre-recorded and live interaction came from presenters James Alexander-Sinclair and Phil Tremayne who provided slick, professional links live from a studio.



Hampton Court

12 APL members collaborated with main contractors and sponsors Kebur Garden Products/Landscapes to build APL's final part in this trilogy of gathering places "A Place to meet again".

We commissioned Mike Long, to design a space that matched the brief of combining landscape ingenuity and skill, horticultural excellence and somewhere people could gather and meet again after covid. Mike came up with an excellent design and added his own twist of focusing on recycling, upcycling and repurposing materials.

The garden impressed the judges, inspired and wowed the public and displayed what great design combined with talented landscapers can achieve. It was awarded a RHS Silver Gilt medal, Best in Category and People's Choice Award.

BBC Gardeners' World Live

The APL garden won Gold and the Best Construction Landscaper Award at BBC Gardeners World Live 2021.

At this year's show APL members built a vast educational piece - a 23m by 8m garden called "What Lies Beneath". Inspired by comments from members about how much of the general public simply don't understand that many of the costs involved in building a garden are hidden beneath the surface of the decorative veneer on top. The garden created an enormous amount of interest both with industry and the media.

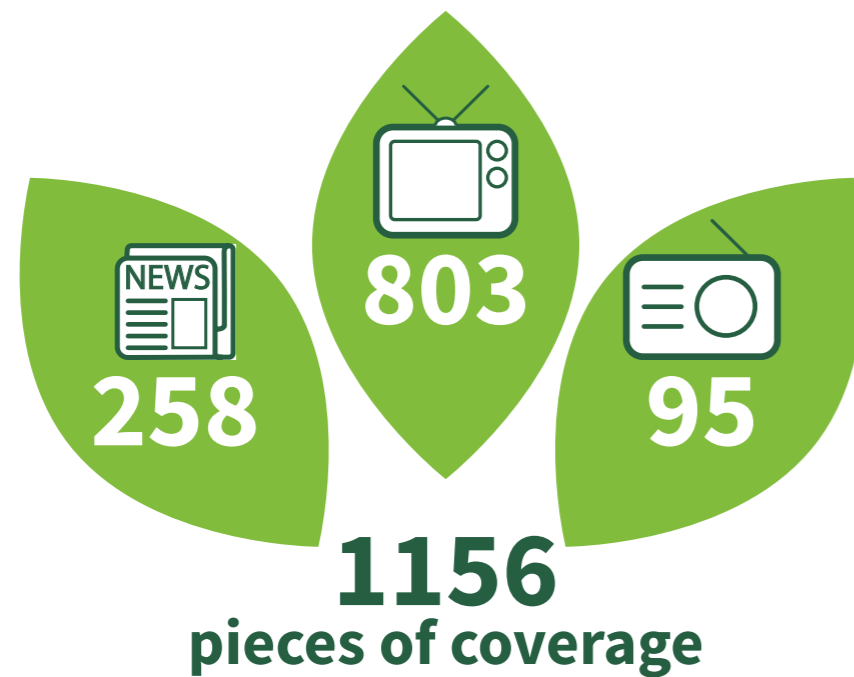
APL membership soars in 2021

The pandemic provided some real ups and downs through 2021; a major up for APL is its membership. Satisfaction of its members has never been higher and the community spirit never stronger, thanks to our fortnightly Zoom meetings, Facebook group and Whats App. This is evident in the numbers, with APL Accredited membership targets for 2021 already beaten at the six-month mark and Designer membership tripling in the same period. 2021 also saw the creation of a category for Professional Gardeners. This often-overlooked sector is now treated to the same level of scrutiny as the other groups and welcomes the same support.

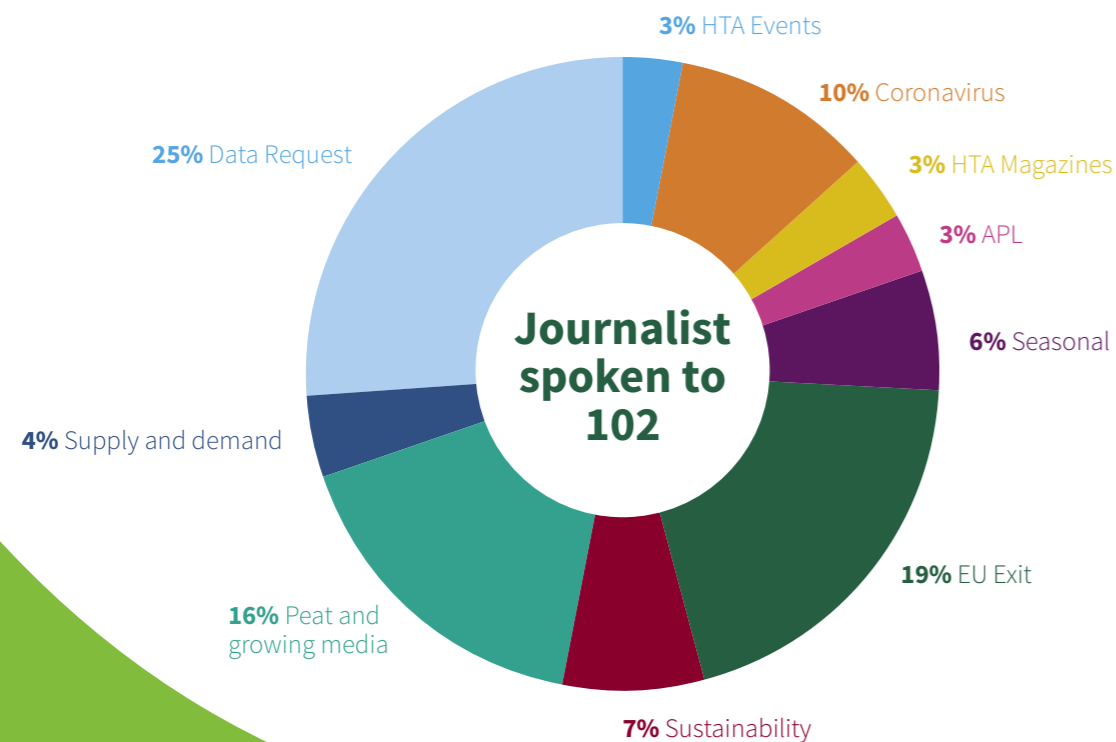


Media coverage

December 2020 - July 2021



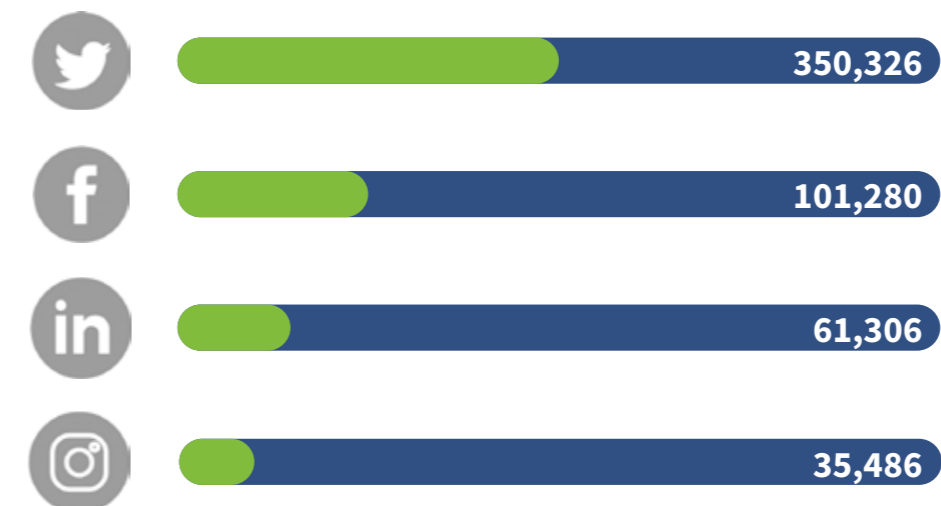
We've discussed...



We've appeared in...



How many people reached?



Total number reached 548,398

Some of our main announcements have included...

- Launch of our **'Let Britain Grow'** campaign
- Return of the HTA magazine - **Inside Horticulture**
- **Sustainability** - we teamed up with *Planet Mark*
- **Growing media** - we developed a roadmap toward a peat-free future
- **Hort-Talk**, the new HTA podcast, launched
- **The National Plant Show** will return in 2022



Horticultural Trades Association
Horticulture House
Chilton, Didcot
Oxfordshire, OX11 0RN

T 0333 003 3550
E info@hta.org.uk
W www.hta.org.uk

