

Cross-Party Group on Gardening & Horticulture

Tuesday 18th November 2025

Present

MSPs

Rachael Hamilton MSP

Sharon Dowey MSP

Alex Rowley MSP

Jim Fairlie MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Stan Green

Katie Neenan

Simon Fraser

Helen MacDonald

Dougal Philips

Jennifer Pheasey

Neil Cummings

Amy Cobbett

Ann Steele

Fiona Thackeray

M.T. O'Donnell

Lewis Normand

David Knott

Caspian Richards

Niall Evans

Donald Gray

Barry Fisher

Claire McFadden

Christopher Walker

Amy Lawson

Emma Henderson

Agenda item 1

Welcome and apologies: The convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting

Agenda item 2

Fiona Thackeray from Trellis gave a presentation of their recent work.

Jennifer Pheasey from the Horticultural Trades Association provided an overview of the Scottish Horticulture industry including statistics, trends and a marketing update on sales performances and other factors impacting the industry. Members were told that it has been a strong year for HTA members, helped by a warm spring, with 80% of businesses ahead of or on target but rising costs, especially increases to the minimum wage and the National Living Wage are creating 'perfect storm' of pressures.

HTA recently published their Value of Gardens report which outlines key research findings including:

- trees can cool concrete surfaces by 12°C
- Lawns are incredibly effective at slowing water runoff, absorbing 99% of rainfall and reducing flood risk.
- a one-metre dense hedge is capable of absorbing the pollution of a car travelling 500 miles in just seven days.

The Strong Roots project was a collaboration between Woodland Trust, Horticultural Trades Association, National Trust and Royal Horticultural Society which explored the key barriers to domestic tree production and identified solutions to increase the availability of homegrown trees, producing evidence-based recommendations for improved governmental support for the sector.

Agenda item 3

Stan Green, on behalf of the Horticultural Trades Association, presented the HTA's 2026 manifesto which focused on three core themes - protecting and supporting communities, creating the conditions for growth, and driving productivity, employment, and investment.

Members discussed their support of the manifesto proposals, how the proposals would improve their businesses and operations, and what can be done to build on the manifesto.

Agenda item 4

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, Jim Fairlie MSP opened a Q&A session with the group. Question topics included promotion of community growing activities; the importance of garden tourism to the Scottish economy; improving recognition of gardening and horticulture jobs and skills; building on cross-departmental recognition of environmental horticulture; and potential changes to supply and sale of peat for horticulture in Scotland.

Agenda item 5

There being no other business, Rachael closed the meeting following a photo of the CPG.