

100



YEARS

OF PROTECTING OUR PARKS.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030





# Contents

Foreword .....3

A message from our Patron and our President..... 4

About Us.....5

Our Track Record .....6

Why these spaces need protecting.....7

Our Vision & Mission..... 8

Our Values .....9

Strategic Goals.....10

    Goal 1..... 11

    Goal 2..... 12

The way we will work..... 13

How we'll know we are making progress..... 14

The Centenary Pledge ..... 15

Our parks and green spaces are under threat. Act now to help us save our spaces for our future generations

**#protect our parks**



# Foreword

We are living through a time of compounding crises: a public health emergency, a growing climate crisis, rising inequalities, and an erosion of access to nature in our daily lives.

The UK is losing its green spaces to development at an alarming rate, just as their value to our collective health, wellbeing, and resilience becomes clearer than ever.

Across communities, green spaces that provide vital places for play, sport, exercise, relaxation, and social connection are under threat. Young people, especially in disadvantaged areas, are growing up without access to nature or safe places to be active. There is an urgent need to reverse this trajectory and reimagine green space as essential infrastructure.

These spaces are vital for mental and physical wellbeing, community cohesion, youth development, climate resilience, and biodiversity. Green space is not a luxury, it's a lifeline.

People really care about these places. They are the green hearts of our communities. And yet most people don't know there is no statutory protection, and they can be lost, until it's too late.

For over 100 years Fields in Trust had led the charge and using a proven legal model protected more than 3,000 parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces across the UK, offering guaranteed access to over 9 million people.

As we move into the next century we will focus on shaping policy, forging alliances, and further developing a proven model to safeguard green space for everyone, for ever.

This strategic plan builds on our legacy and outlines our vision, goals and objectives for the next 5 years to help ensure access to green space is a right, not a privilege.



Jo Barnett  
Chair of Trustees

## Field's in Trust protected space in Cambridge



1945

2023

Access To Green Space Is A Right Not A Privilege



# A message from our Patron and our President



“““

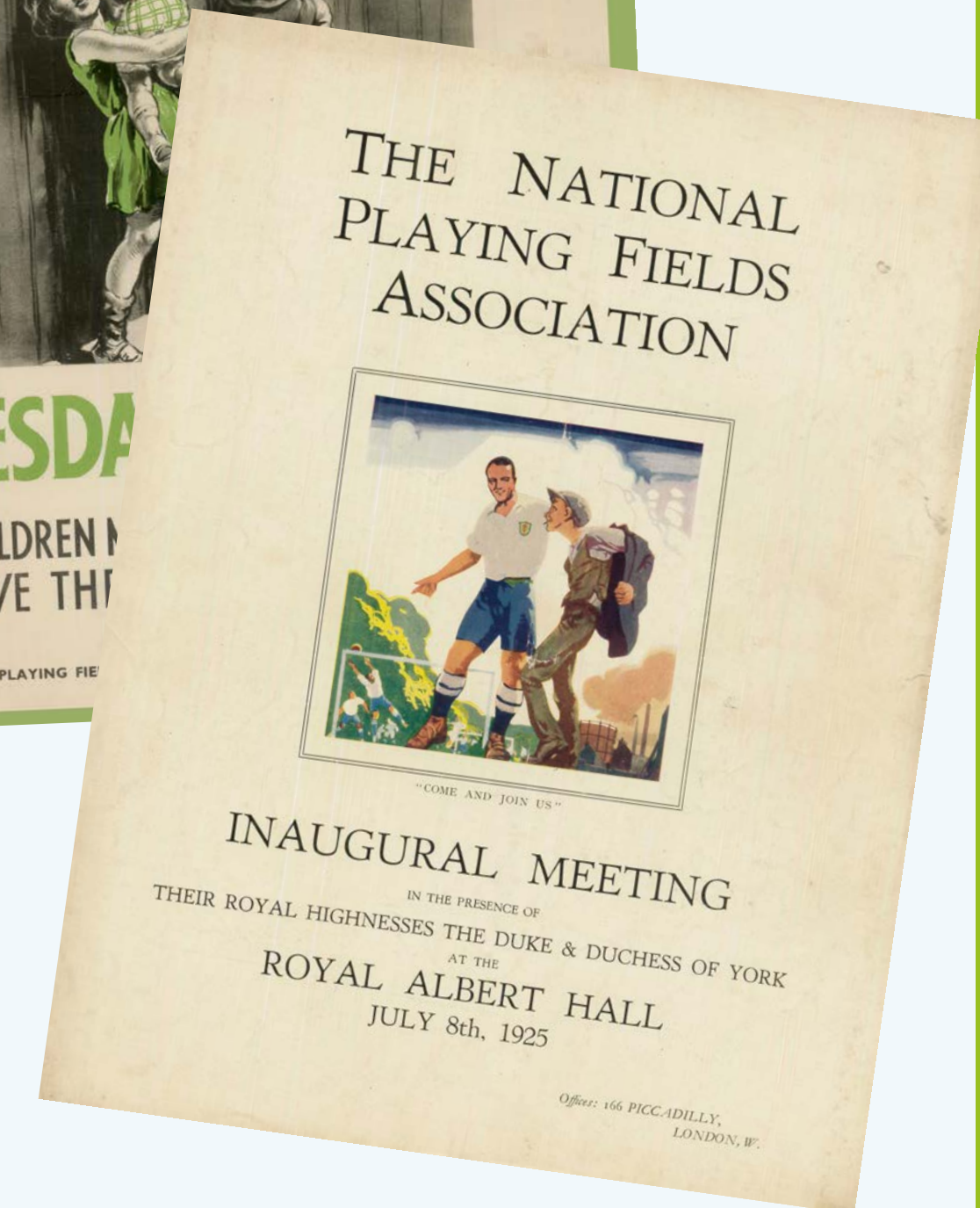
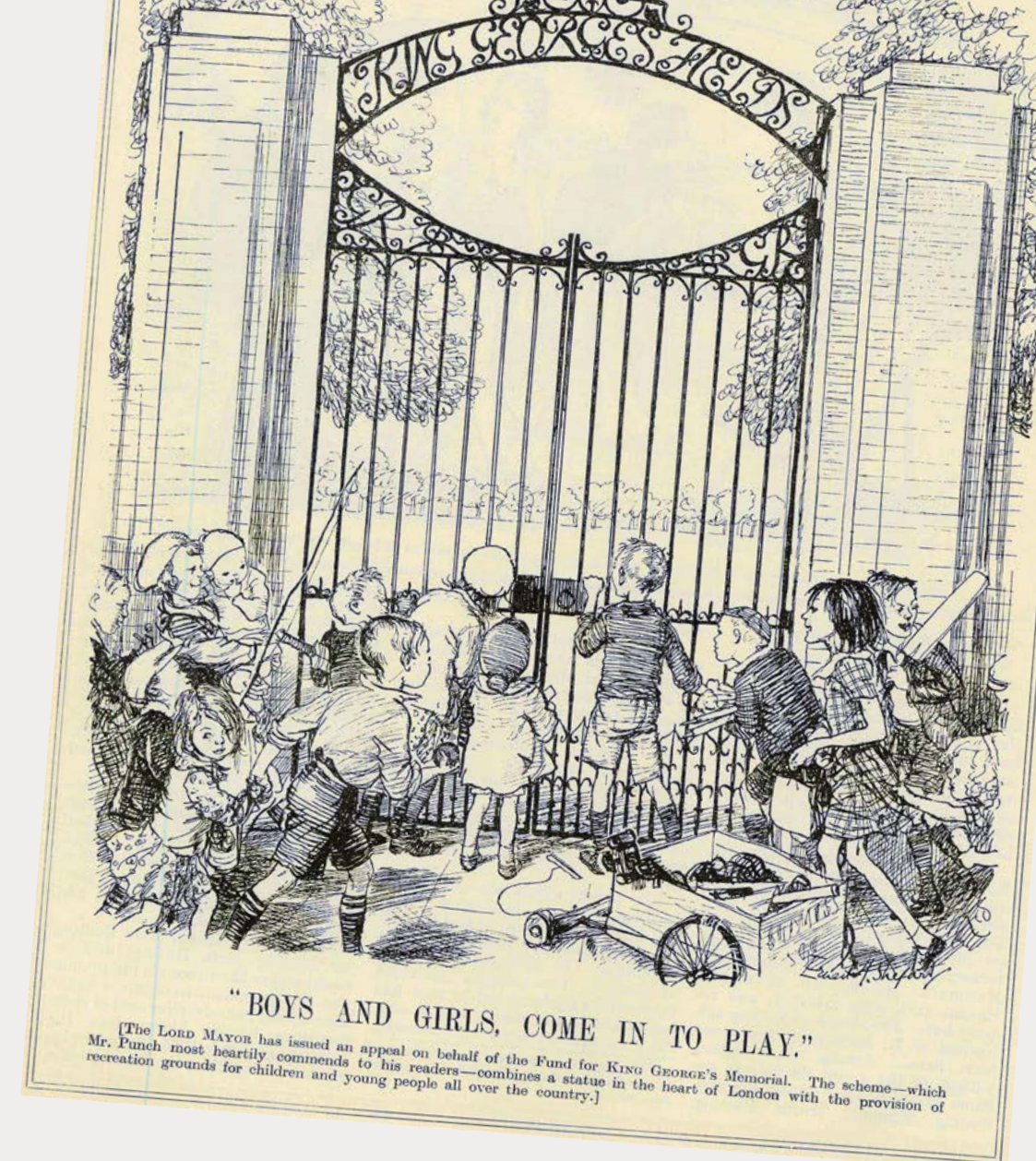
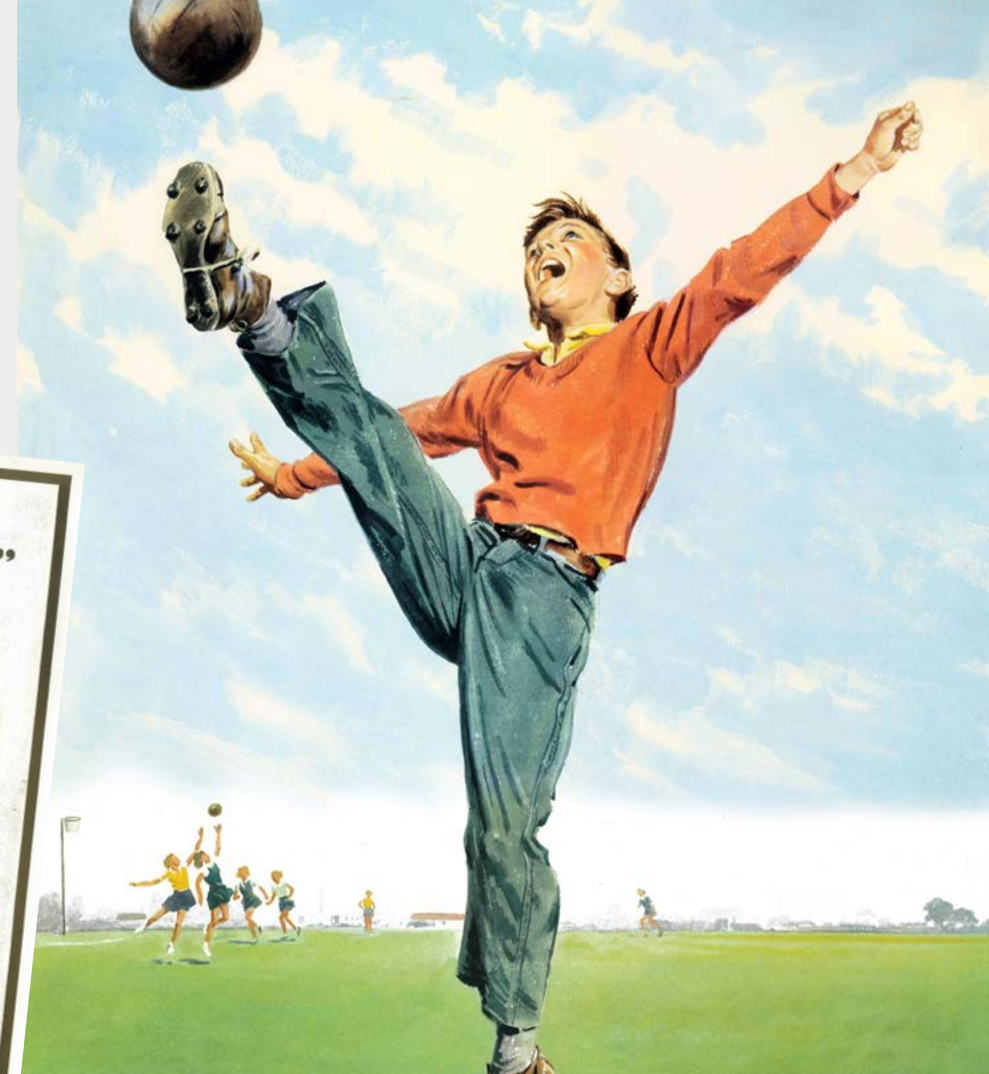
*As Fields in Trust marks one hundred years of protecting green spaces for the wellbeing of the people of tomorrow, I am delighted to see their continued work helping us all recognise how much these green spaces matter to the future of our villages, towns, and cities. They are essential to daily life, they are at the heart of our communities, boost wellbeing, reduce loneliness and help fight climate change. Despite the significant importance of these spaces, they are often undervalued and under threat. By supporting Fields in Trust's brilliant work, we can help ensure there are green spaces for future generations.*



“““

*My journey began on local pitches in Sunderland, and it was those community spaces that really enabled everything that followed. Without a park on my doorstep, I wouldn't have become an England footballer. But more than that, I've seen how sport and green spaces build confidence, friendships, and help young people discover what they're capable of. As President of Fields in Trust, I urge everyone to support and protect their local parks – to enjoy them, fight for them, and never take them for granted. Access to parks and green spaces should be seen as a right, not a privilege.*





## About Us

Back in 1925 a group of philanthropic families, companies and organisations had the foresight to recognise the need to protect playing fields, playgrounds and green spaces against the backdrop of rapid construction. They were concerned that the absence of statutory protection of these spaces and the pace of development of towns and cities in the UK meant that the least fortunate in our communities would be left with no places to play.

Led by The Duke of Sutherland a visionary purpose was set out; to ensure every community had access to parks, playing fields, and green spaces and our founders created the National Playing Fields Association, what we know today as Fields in Trust. A charity with the unique ability to protect our green spaces, legally, forever.

It's an extraordinary gift, and it safeguards the spaces for as long as we are in existence. A sobering thought when Fields in Trust receives no statutory funding and relies on generous donations to continue its work.

Today we are a proud Royal Charter charity operating through the UK to protect the future of parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces.

We act as long term stewards of the spaces protected, using the UK's only proven legal model and shape the future of green spaces through our approved standards and data tools, advocating for and influencing the creation of quality new spaces.

We believe everyone deserves a safe, high-quality green space within a short walk from home, regardless of income, background or postcode and our work is as compelling today as it was 100 years ago.

100 YEARS  
OF PROTECTING OUR PARKS.





# Our Track Record

**We are the only national charity with a mandate to protect the future of our parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces forever. We protect the places that change childhoods and sustain communities.**

## We focus resources to deliver the greatest impacts including:

- Working with over 500 landowners we have legally protected more than 3,000 green spaces across the UK guaranteeing access, forever, to over 9 million people.
- Fields in Trust has helped shape national policies and as a trusted advisor of Government contributed evidence to national commissions and work programmes. Our Green Space Index and Standards are cited by policymakers, councils, and NGOs as trusted sources.
- Our industry leading guidance the Fields in Trust Standards was first published as the 6 Acre Standard in 1936 and has influenced the creation of thousands of spaces in new developments across the country. The latest version of the Standards published in 2024 provides a practical and recognised framework ensure high quality green space is designed, delivered, valued and included in all new developments as a priority and not an afterthought.
- We invest in research and insight to improve provision and protection of parks and green spaces for all communities. Our Green Space Index provides robust location-specific data to help identify disparities and we are proud of our industry leading work to produce the first ever wellbeing valuation of parks and green spaces.
- We signpost communities to help protect and improve their beloved local spaces.



**3000 spaces protected between 1925-2025**



**9 million people with spaces protected within a 10 minute walk of home In the last 10 years.**



**1000s of quality green spaces created in new communities as a result of the Fields in Trust Standards.**



# Why these spaces need protecting

Over the last 100 years we have seen a phenomenal pace of change in our towns and cities. But one thing hasn't changed since 1925: parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces are still not a statutory service.

These spaces are the green infrastructure that is critical to creating liveable, healthy communities. They are still not valued by everyone as being as important as learning and health centres. Still not recognised as delivering a range of benefits: vital places for communities to connect, for children to develop physical, emotional and social skill, for playing sports or running, for wellbeing and contributing towards our national response to the nature and climate crisis.

A growing population, increased housing pressure and the decimation of local authority budgets has created a set of conditions where these spaces are more vulnerable than ever. Rising childhood obesity, an increase in mental health challenges and social isolation, as well as the prevalence of screen time, is impacting hardest on the most disadvantaged in society. Parks and green spaces have never been so important.

**The value of these spaces to our collective future transcends any single Government brief and that's why Fields in Trust fights to protect these spaces forever. Because once lost, they are lost forever.**



**1 in 3 children don't have a playground close to home**



**7/8 regions in England have below recommended quantum of green space**



**In the last 10 years over 800 playgrounds and parks have been lost**



**Green spaces provide over £34 billion in health and wellbeing benefits annually**





# Our Vision & Mission

**Our vision** – A future where parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces are free to access, safe to use and fit for purpose for everyone, for ever.

**Our Mission** – To make this a reality, our mission is to foster a national culture that recognises the value of our parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces to society and drive the change needed to protect their future.

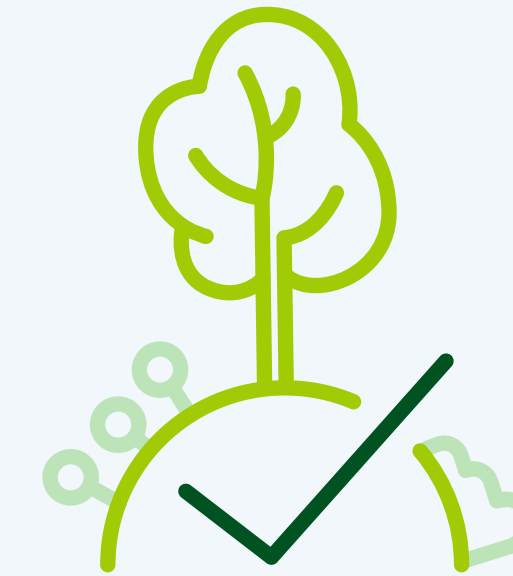




# Our Values

**Our values inform and shape all that we do and remain true to our founding principles.**

We cannot deliver our mission alone and need to pioneer new ways to address the ongoing challenges first identified by our founders.



**Partnerships:**  
We build relationships to increase our impact with those that share our vision.



**Innovation:**  
We challenge old assumptions and develop new tools to protect what matters.



**Equity:**  
We believe in equal access for everyone.



# Strategic Goals

The UK's parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces are underfunded, undervalued and under threat. Fields in Trust is responding to this challenge with a renewed purpose as we transition from quiet stewardship to bold, visible leadership.

Our strategic goals for the next 5 years will see us scaling our ambition, growing our voice, and strengthening our capacity to act.







**Goal 1:** Fight for the protection and long-term future of all existing parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces.

At least 1 million more people within a 10-minute walk of a protected park, playground, playing field or green space by 2030.

**Lead**

Lead and animate a national conversation on parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces as essential infrastructure to a happier, healthier and greener future.

**Influence**

Influence government and policy makers to drive the change needed to secure a protected and sustainable future for parks, playing fields, playgrounds, and green spaces.

**Protect**

Increase the number of parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces legally protected forever and work with landowners to ensure the effective long-term stewardship of the 3,000 spaces already protected.





**Goal 2:** Influence the creation of 20k hectares of new green space needed for 1.5 million new homes by 2030.

**New green space the equivalent of 20 Richmond Parks created by 2030.**

**Accredit**

Work directly with developers, planners, and house builders to ensure the Fields in Trust Standards are met and implemented making sure the best outcomes are achieved for communities.

**Partner**

Work in partnership with Local Planning Authorities to shape local decision-making and secure their endorsement and use of the Fields in Trust Standards.

**Research**

Lead on understanding the challenges and identify opportunities for parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces to thrive, providing evidence-based insights and the **Green Space Index**.



# The way we will work

To deliver this strategy we will need to grow our organisational skills and capacity, invest in digital infrastructure and develop new products and services to meet the needs of our stakeholders and diversify our income base.

We will be focussing on financial sustainability, measurable impact and scalable partnerships to influence how green spaces are revalued, protected and enjoyed for all our beneficiaries.

Our new strategy resets our ambition for our second century as we continue to advocate for everyone to have access to a protected green space close to home.

**Because if we don't protect these spaces for ourselves and for future generations, who will?**





# How we'll know we are making progress

Over the next 5 years a combination of all our activities will enable us to achieve our goals and ensure that everyone has a safe, high-quality green space within 10-minute walk of where they live regardless of income, background, or postcode.

## This is how we know we'll be making progress:

- More people to have access to a protected green space within a 10-minute walk of where they live.
- A growing number of endorsements and inclusion of the Fields in Trust Standards in local planning policy throughout the UK.
- An increasing cohort of powerful alliances with developers to create greater recognition around the importance of high-quality green space in new developments through the application of the Fields in Trust Standards and development of a new accreditation scheme.
- Positive shifts in policy and legislative change to fund and protect parks, playgrounds, playing fields and green spaces.
- An increase in the number of individuals, institutions and organisations committed to championing, using, and protecting our green spaces through our **Centenary Pledge** echoing our founding moment and inspiring a new generation of green space defenders.



# The Centenary Pledge

In 1925, a group of visionary philanthropists and community leaders came together to ensure that the rapid urbanisation of Britain didn't leave communities without space to play. One hundred years on, the need is just as urgent – and so we are asking individuals, institutions, and influencers to sign the Centenary Pledge.

## Why Sign?

- To stand up for children's right to play.
  - To ensure nature is part of daily life for every generation.
  - To protect the health, happiness, and resilience of communities.
- Join the growing coalition already committed to championing, using, and protecting our green spaces and help us ensure:
- Every child can play within walking distance of home.
  - Every community has access to nature and shared outdoor spaces.
  - Our playing fields and green spaces are protected and invested in forever.





# Let's not just celebrate 100 years – let's make the next 100 count.

## **Patron**

HRH The Prince of Wales KG KT

## **President**

Jill Scott MBE

## **Vice President**

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Christopher Laing OBE  
Gyles Brandreth  
The Lord Howard of Rising

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Jo Barnett

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Duncan Peake  
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Ian Ginbey  
Jeremy Hammond (Treasurer)  
Mark Campion

## **Chief Executive**

Helen Griffiths



Incorporated by Royal Charter  
Registered Charity No: 306070  
Registered Company No: RC000370  
OSCR No: SC040357

Email: [info@fieldsintrust.org](mailto:info@fieldsintrust.org)  
[fieldsintrust.org](http://fieldsintrust.org)