

The benefits of being a Chartered Horticulturist



ELIZABETH THE SECOND

by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING!

WHEREAS the Institute of Horticulture ("the existing Institute"), an unincorporated association registered as a charity in England and Wales (Registration Number 293069), has by its humble Petition prayed that We would be graciously pleased to grant it a Charter of Incorporation under the name of "The Chartered Institute of Horticulture";

AND WHEREAS We having taken the said Petition into Our Royal Consideration are minded to accede thereto;

NOW THEREFORE KNOW YE that We, having taken the said Petition into Our Royal Consideration, are pleased, by virtue of Our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, to grant and declare, and do hereby for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, grant and declare as follows:

1. The Corporate Members and Non-Corporate Members of the existing Institute at the date hereof, and all other persons who shall pursuant to this Our Charter and the Bye-Laws become the Corporate Members and Non-Corporate Members of the Corporation hereby constituted, are hereby created and henceforth for ever shall be one Body Corporate by the name of "The Chartered Institute of Horticulture" (hereinafter referred to as "the Chartered Institute") and by the same name shall have perpetual succession and a Common Seal with power to alter, vary, break and make anew the said Seal from time to time at their discretion and by the same name may sue and be sued in all Courts in all manner of actions and proceedings and shall have power to do all other matters and things incidental or appertaining to a Body Corporate.
2. The charitable object for which the Chartered Institute is incorporated ("the Chartered Institute object") shall be that of the existing Institute, namely to advance the education of the public in Horticulture and to promote the practice, research, science and art of Horticulture and the better education and training of horticulturists for the benefit of the public.



CHARTERED HORTICULTURIST

Immediate Past President **Owen Doyle** summarises and highlights responses to the recent survey of Chartered members.

In an article in the Spring 2018 issue of this journal I described the evolution of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture from its earliest days as the Horticultural Education Association (founded in 1902), to the establishment of the Institute of Horticulture (1984) and onwards to the Chartered Institute of Horticulture (CIH, 2014). The attainment of a Charter by our Institute permits our professional body to grant individual chartership to members. The qualification (CHort) is the pinnacle of a member's professional achievement and complements their academic qualifications and/or work experience.

Survey

Recently the CIH undertook a survey of chartered members and asked them to describe the benefits to them of being a Chartered Horticulturist. In her reply to this survey Glynis Maynard stated: "Chartership to me is reaching the pinnacle of horticulture. It meant a lot to me to be awarded chartership and I feel that all my hard work to develop my career in the industry ... has been recognised and makes me feel proud of my achievements".

Sarah Byrne put it simply when she said: "Great to have, makes me proud" and Lynn Stevens echoed that sentiment when she said: "Although I had to wait until the end part of my career for the opportunity to become chartered, I still wanted to reach that goal for my own satisfaction and to continue to help where I can to raise the profile of our industry for future generations".

Professor Patrick Loh reinforced this sentiment of professionalism and recognition when he said: "The prestigious and reputable chartered title (CHort) denotes the high standards of professionalism, recognition, respect and integrity in the conduct of my academic teaching, scientific research, commercial practice as well as corporate advisory portfolios. It is an honour and privilege to be a qualified Chartered Horticulturist".

While there is a category of membership in the CIH available to all horticulturists, individual chartership is open to those professional horticulturists who can prove sufficient competence, commitment and experience in their field. While at present just less than 10% of our membership are chartered, I know that there are many well-qualified members who could be and should be chartered but are unsure as to the benefits of individual chartership. The vast majority of Chartered Horticulturists who participated in the recent CIH survey, highlighted the benefits that they received from being chartered. However, some horticulturists may question the benefits of undertaking the chartership process and paying a yearly fee to have additional letters after their name. While not the only benefit of becoming chartered, to many, this is important. "It means extra nominals after my name that gets me noticed and makes people ask about the CIH. It has meant extra credibility at work and extra

kudos for my opinion in meetings and reports. I value my chartered status highly and others have been impressed by it", said Brian Thomas Reece.

Benefits of chartership

The three most significant benefits of becoming chartered are, the recognition of competence – that is your credibility; the commitment to continuous learning and finally an enhanced profile and networking within and outside our industry, whether nationally or internationally.

At a local level Martin Latimer highlighted this benefit of chartership: "I have been in local government all my career working alongside other senior management and it was good to be seen on equal terms, both professionally and financially during that time". Gordon Eastham highlighted the benefits of recognition of his credibility when he said: "In my role I work alongside many colleagues who are members of chartered institutes which represent their own disciplines, such as surveyors, mechanical and electrical engineers. As a professional horticulturist, to be a member of a chartered institute gives me and the profession more parity with other roles/disciplines within an organisation".

For Ian Barnes chartership "has helped provide a professional standing amongst other professionals and helps provide an even footing during design meetings and conversations". Patrick Hegarty has similar views: "Chartership allows me to demonstrate my professional standing as part of an institute with a focus on professionalism. It adds credibility to working alongside other professions and, when dealing with the public, I have found people appreciate that you can speak with authority on your subject".

Internationally, Ching Tin Yu put it very well when he said that being a "Chartered Horticulturist means the recognition and affirmation of horticultural knowledge. As a Chartered Horticulturist, I have gained the recognition and respect both from my customers and colleagues for my horticulture knowledge and work, but also I have won the recognition and affirmation in my unique career". Stephen McCallum identified the benchmark that is chartership when he said that chartership "sets a defined standard and brings a valued recognition

of professionalism to horticulture".

In relation to networking and recognition within and outside of our profession being a member of the CIH and being chartered is indeed beneficial. Richard Wassel captures these benefits well when he said: "I have only recently become chartered but have been a member of the Institute since the late 1980s. In the early years it definitely helped advance my career through networking and working with more experienced people 'in the know' within the amenity horticulture sector. More recently it is important that professional work as a consultant is backed up by membership of a recognised body for the industry".

Peer-reviewed assessments

Horticulturists who obtain chartership gain an acknowledged credibility, not only demonstrating professional experience and skills but also expressing a dedication to the profession and to maintaining high standards of work. To become chartered an individual will have been assessed by a panel of their peers and have demonstrated that they meet and maintain a high standard of competence and commitment. Individual chartership is a great personal achievement and will lead to higher self-esteem. Ian Mc Dermott who works in Urban Forestry said: "Chartered status in horticulture ... carries a lot of weight in my professional life and I am proud to have the post-nominal". While David Gregor stated that "It has given me a professional standing comparable with other organisations and is recognised by other consultants, with whom I do business". Likewise for Mark Chester: "Chartership matters. It places one on a par with those of other professionals such as planners, engineers etc. It gives my expertise more credibility. It has been a highlight professionally for me. People take me more seriously".

Enhanced opportunities

Evidence of skill and experience improves your CV, potentially making you more employable and opening up a wider range of career opportunities. Gaining chartered status can also increase your earning potential. The recognition of expertise and competence, validated by the award of chartership, can translate across borders, allowing



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STEVE ARNOLD



you to become part of an international community of experts. This encourages networking and the sharing of information, knowledge and research. Dr Margaret Norton recognised the value of chartership when she said that CHort is “a very useful extra qualification which emphasises current ability and that the holder is up-to-date in knowledge and experience. I am currently doing consultancy work so this is highly beneficial”. Chartership can increase your profile and access to new opportunities as Emanuel Flecken has found: “Chartership has helped me with securing positions in the horticulture sector. It has also helped me with building trust with customers”, while John Weir found “chartership an essential link for my current post as Chairman of the IAgRE Horticultural Engineering Group”.

Company kudos

Employing Chartered Horticulturists can benefit a company or organisation by increasing customer confidence and giving the company greater technical and managerial credibility. Chartered Horticulturists hold a recognised title and employers can be confident that their chartered employees have a personal obligation to abide by a code of professional conduct and that they maintain their professional knowledge by completing mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

This could lead to increased business or new contracts, raising the company's profile and allowing it and its employees to prosper. Formal and informal CPD may include workshops, courses, mentoring, writing papers, policy documents or technical notes. Mark Shaw emphasised the importance of CPD when he said: “My interest still remains as strong as ever within an industry in which you never stop learning”. Mark Evison also emphasised this sentiment: “I have worked harder on my personal development as a result of chartership”.

CPD was also highlighted by Gerry Edwards' statement that: “Being a chartered member of the CIH means a huge amount to me. It means that my peers have considered that my professional

horticultural knowledge and skills are at a level worthy of chartered status and by virtue of this status it is my professional duty to keep abreast of all issues affecting the horticultural world and to impart my skills and knowledge to others”.

Positive effects

If employers assist their horticulturists through the chartership process this support for employees can have a positive impact on recruitment and retention of staff. It demonstrates that the company has a commitment to the development of their employees. While the costs of paying chartered membership fees may put some people off, good employers often pay these fees. Steve Arnold has one such employer: “I was fortunate to be able to continue working in my subject field, for an employer who supported my continued personal development for all these years. Being awarded the chartership is for me the culmination of that career and I am immensely proud of it”. John Shropshire highlighted both the personal development and the opportunities to develop others that chartership provides when he said that chartership was “recognition of the work I've put into learning and development for myself and for my team and the contribution I have made to the horticultural industry as a whole”.

Many members have the required competences but have shied away from applying. The application process is straightforward and is explained on the CIH website (www.horticulture.org.uk/membership/chartered/). The process requires the completion of some forms and their submission for review by the Chartership Review Panel. I know some of you will have started the application process and found it challenging to complete but the few hours effort in completing the documentation will I am sure be rewarding and a revelation to you to see the career progress and successes you have obtained to date.

So to those members who have meant to apply or have not yet completed the forms please do so now. Remember, this is an iterative process in which the application is reviewed and if required

Top left: Declan Gallagher.

Left: Marcus Forster.

Above left to right: Richard Wanless (Twigs Gardens), Gerald Abrahams (GA Landscapes), Sophie Leguil (Plant Heritage) Andrew Gill (one of the Institute's first six Chartered Horticulturists) and Rocky Coles (Well Planted).

additional information will be requested. If you need help many existing chartered members are willing to assist you.

I will leave the last words on this topic to Leigh Morris one of our past Presidents: “I was CIH President when we achieved chartership and my belief remains that chartered status denotes excellence and professionalism. I am currently based on St Helena Island delivering consultancy for its Government, who promote the fact that I am a Chartered Horticulturist – it means something to them. I believe that chartership could be useful to me going forward, however, the greater impact of chartership will be enjoyed most by future generations of horticulturists as and when the wider horticulture sector (and those accessing our services) gain an increased awareness of the CIH and what a Chartered Horticulturist means. This starts with far more horticulturists joining us and achieving chartered status”.

So do not delay, start the application process and please apply for your individual chartership qualification now.

Owen Doyle B.Agr.Sc, PhD, MIBiol, FCIHort, CHort

Owen holds an RHS General certificate, a certificate in Commercial Horticulture from ACOT, a first class honours degree in horticulture from University College Dublin (UCD) and after postgraduate study at UCD and Cornell University a PhD in Plant Pathology. He worked in the biotechnology industry and is now Associate Professor and Head of the Horticulture Landscape and Sportsturf degree programme. Also, he teaches in the South China Agriculture University, Guangzhou, China, is a Council member for Ireland and an internal auditor of the International Society for Horticultural Science.

