

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

GCA moves HQ to Chester but retains close HTA links

THE GARDEN Centre Association (GCA) has announced this month (November, 2016) that it has moved its head office to Chester following the relocation of the Horticultural Trade Association (HTA) to Chilcot.

The GCA says the recent decision by the HTA to move offices gave it the impetus to find an alternative headquarters too but that the rapport and bond between both organisations remains robust.

Iain Wylie, the GCA's Chief Executive, explained: "We originally moved our offices to be within those of the HTA in 2013 as industry-body partners and we felt that it would be mutually beneficial to do so and it has been a tremendous success for both parties.

"We will still have a solid working relationship with the HTA, despite the separate locations we now both have. In fact we recently announced a new collaboration with the HTA with regards our Garden Retail Online Workshops (GROW) e-training programme and this represents a significant milestone in our on-going close connection.

"We also have a room at their new offices in Chilcot, which we will be using for meetings and other activities, and this will also mean our ties will be maintained and strengthened."

HTA members will now be able to access the GCA's GROW e-learning package*. This will help provide greater access to industry training opportunities.

Iain added: "This a fantastic opportunity for the GCA and HTA to collaborate to bring benefits to our industry. GROW, as existing users will know, is a great resource to deliver staff training. The flexibility offered by GROW helps the individual user and their garden centre employer."

The HTA's decision to move offices came at an opportune moment for the GCA.

GCA Chairman, Julian Winfield said: "I am delighted that we have been able to relocate the GCA office to Chester. We've been discussing how we could make arrangements easier for our head office team and to allow Iain greater time in the office and increased flexibility for members.

"This represents not just a more convenient location for Iain, who lives in the area, but also provides a more central location for members who are spread as far afield as Scotland, Northern Ireland, across in Lincolnshire and down in Cornwall. This will

allow Iain to have a greater amount of time in the office as he will not have to travel so far to work but it will also allow him to have more time visiting and supporting our members.”

The GCA’s new address is: 4 Marcher Court, Sealand Road, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 6BS.

For further information, please visit www.gca.org.uk, log on to www.facebook.com/pages/GardenCentreAssociation or follow the organisation on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GC_Association.

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For further media details, please call Porcupine PR on 01278 446801 or email Rachel@porcupinepr.co.uk. Alternatively, please contact Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive on 07843 633408 or email Iain@gca.org.uk.

Notes to editors:

*The GROW package will be available to those HTA members that are not GCA members at a preferential rate for an unlimited number of users for an annual subscription fee.

The GROW Package has over 90 training modules on all aspects of retail, customer service, horticulture, health and safety and food hygiene with units are being added all the time. Each module should take less than half an hour to complete.

This complements the HTA Academy launched last year, which provides garden retailers with choice on how they wish to receive training, be it e-learning, workbook or workshop. Focusing initially on the principles in Horticulture retail subjects including customer service, visual merchandising and plant area care provide sales assistants with industry standard training.

HTA Chief Executive Carol Paris commented: “We are delighted to be able to announce this partnership to provide greater access to training for all of our member businesses. Working alongside our HTA Academy resource, this will really help to provide the sector with a suite of options.”