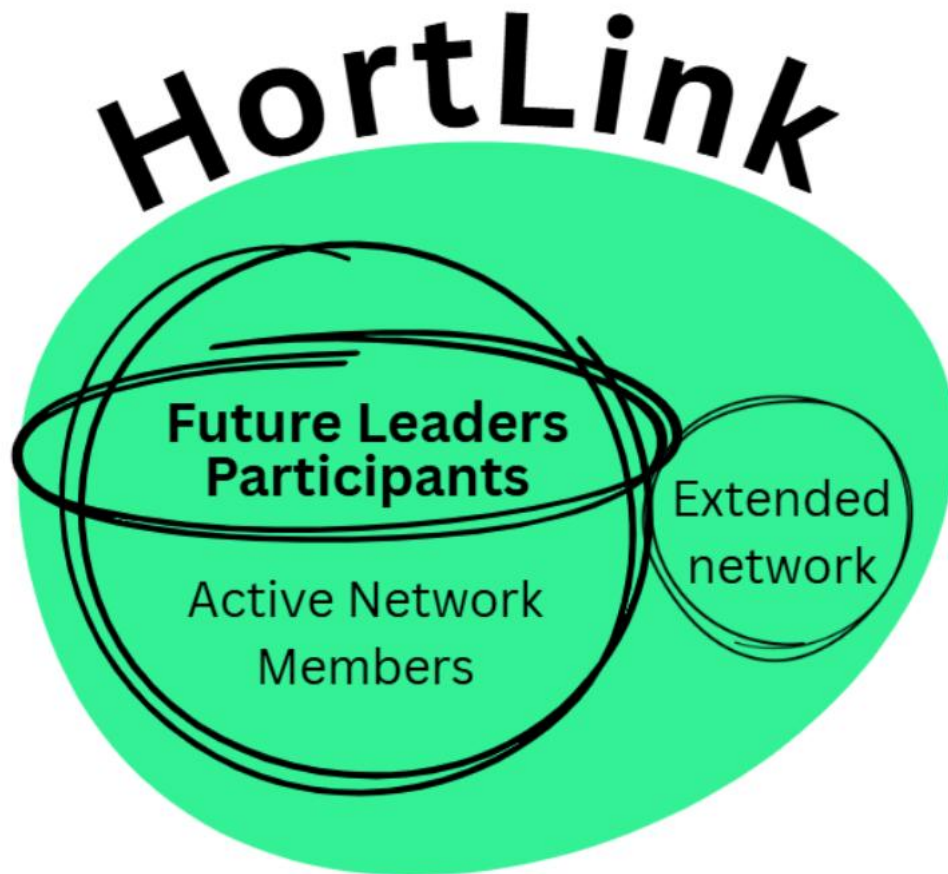


HortLink Charter

September 2026

1. Our Purpose



HortLink exists to strengthen the future of Irish horticulture by connecting growers who want to learn, share, collaborate and develop together.

We believe the strongest businesses are built when growers learn from growers.

HortLink provides a trusted environment where participants can:

- Build leadership capability
- Share practical experience
- Solve common challenges
- Learn from different perspectives
- Develop industry connections
- Support future generations of growers

- Strengthen the long-term resilience of Irish horticulture

The Future Leaders Programme is one part of HortLink, providing high impact, focused learning opportunities.

The network itself is the long-term asset.

The programme develops future leaders. The network connects them to the wider industry and gives members the opportunity to shape the future direction of the programme.

Future Leaders participants should:

- Work in, or have a clear pathway into, an Irish horticulture business
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in developing their leadership and commercial capability
- Be willing to participate actively in programme activities
- Be open to learning from people across different horticultural sectors and business models
- Respect the confidentiality and conduct requirements of the community
- Be willing to contribute to the wider HortLink network

2. Who We Are

HortLink is a community made up of three interconnected groups.

1. **Future Leaders Participants.** Members undertaking the development programme. These members are learners, contributors and future champions of the network.
2. **Active Network Members.** Growers, alumni and industry participants who actively contribute through peer learning, discussion, mentoring, hosting visits and sharing experiences.
3. **Extended Community.** People who support Irish horticulture through voluntary participation and contribution. This may include:
 - a. Experienced growers
 - b. Retired growers
 - c. Retail buyers
 - d. Industry experts
 - e. Researchers
 - f. Bord Bia specialists
 - g. Advisors
 - h. Alumni
 - i. Other invited contributors

3. Our Principles

Everything we do is guided by six principles.

1. **Trust.** We create an environment where members feel comfortable discussing challenges, opportunities and experiences. Trust is earned through consistency, respect and discretion.
2. **Practicality.** We focus on real-world learning and practical outcomes. Members should leave every interaction with something useful they can apply in their business.
3. **Generosity.** Members are encouraged to contribute knowledge, experience and ideas for the benefit of the wider community. Nobody is expected to know everything. Everybody has something valuable to share.
4. **Respect.** Different perspectives, business models and experiences are welcomed. We always engage professionally and constructively.
5. **Participation.** The strength of HortLink depends on active involvement. Members are encouraged to contribute in ways that suit their experience, confidence and availability. Participation may include: Sharing, Asking questions, Hosting, Mentoring, Supporting, Learning
6. **Continuous Improvement.** The network is never finished. Members play an active role in shaping the Future Leaders Programme, identifying emerging needs and improving the value delivered to the community.

4. How the Community Works

HortLink is a grower-led community.

Bord Bia facilitates and supports the initiative.

Members help shape it.

The community contributes to:

- Identifying learning priorities
- Recommending future programme topics
- Suggesting speakers and experts
- Hosting activities
- Sharing experiences and lessons learned
- Supporting future participants

The Future Leaders Programme is therefore informed by the ongoing needs and insights emerging from the network.

5. Confidentiality and Trust

HortLink depends on trust, discretion and responsible participation. Members may discuss experiences, challenges and lessons learned, but nobody is expected or encouraged to disclose confidential, personal or commercially sensitive information.

Participants remain responsible for deciding what information they are comfortable and authorised to share.

Members therefore agree to the following principles:

- What is shared in HortLink stays in HortLink
- Members may share lessons and themes outside the community but should not attribute comments, opinions or experiences to an individual without their permission
- Respect commercial sensitivities
- Members will not disclose commercially sensitive information belonging to another participant
- Ask before sharing
- Photographs, quotes, presentations or examples should only be shared externally with the agreement of those involved including Bord Bia
- Protect relationships
- Members will engage in ways that strengthen trust rather than undermine it
- Trust is the foundation of the network

6. What we will not discuss

HortLink is not a forum for sharing commercially sensitive information.

If there is uncertainty, the discussion should pause and the facilitator should redirect it to an appropriate sector-level or capability-building topic.

The community will not facilitate discussion relating to:

- Individual customer negotiations
- Pricing agreements, discounts, trading terms
- Commercially sensitive trading information
- Confidential business information, including those received from a customer, supplier or another participant
- Information that could negatively affect fair competition
- Intellectual property (IP) owned by your business

Where discussions move into commercially sensitive territory, facilitators may redirect the conversation.

7. Expectations of Members

Members are encouraged to:

- Be Curious
- Ask questions
- Seek different perspectives
- Remain open to new ideas
- Be Generous
- Share experiences honestly
- Support fellow members where appropriate
- Be Present
- Contribute actively during meetings, discussions and visits
- Be Respectful
- Listen to different viewpoints.
- Challenge ideas constructively
- Give Back

As experience grows, members are encouraged to contribute to future cohorts and community activities.

8. The Member Journey

HortLink is designed to develop contributors, not simply programme graduates.

Members are encouraged to progress through a journey of increasing involvement.

- **Learn.** Participate in the programme and engage with the network.
- **Mentee.** Set development goals and be open to feedback
- **Connect.** Build relationships across the industry.
- **Contribute.** Share experiences and support discussions.
- **Lead.** Become actively involved in shaping activities and supporting others.
- **Mentor.** Support future participants and contribute to the long-term success of the community.

9. Success Looks Like

We will know HortLink is successful when:

- Growers regularly learn from each other
- Knowledge flows between generations
- Members feel comfortable sharing challenges
- Relationships extend beyond formal events
- Future Leaders participants remain engaged after the programme
- Alumni continue contributing
- New industry leaders emerge from the network
- Growers see practical value from participation
- The network becomes a recognised source of leadership, learning and support within Irish horticulture

10. Our Commitment

As members of HortLink, we commit to:

- Building a trusted community that strengthens Irish horticulture through leadership, collaboration and practical knowledge sharing
- Learning from each other
- Supporting the next generation
- Contributing to something larger than our own businesses
- Helping shape the future of Irish horticulture together

