

National Trust Properties

Philipps House

Dinton woman hoping to be first tenant-custodian on National Trust Council

A LOCAL woman is hoping to become the first tenant-custodian to sit on the National Trust Council, giving tenants of National Trust properties more of a say in how things are managed.

The National Trust was set up nearly 100 years ago after Octavia Hill campaigned for access to open spaces for the poor and 80 per cent of the properties owned by the National Trust have tenants but tenant-custodians have always been prevented from standing for the council.

Cristina George, the tenant-custodian of Philipps House in Dinton, hopes to change that. Cristina and her husband were chosen to be tenant-custodians of the property in 1997 and spent ten years restoring the house and gardens, and developing a wedding business and three flats.

The mother-of-three said: "When we opened Philipps House to the public for the first time in 1998 we were committed to making visits welcoming and relaxing - no ropes, few signs, lots of dogs and children, and a lived-in feel. We instinctively implemented, from the beginning, many strategies now being adopted by NT. I think this informality is the way forward. The NT also needs to lead the way in making properties more sustainable and reduce some its rather wasteful practices."

Ballot papers will be mailed to National Trust members in the early autumn with the trust's magazine and the results will be announced at the trust's annual meeting on October 30.

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