

ST GEORGE'S HOUSE



nurturing wisdom



dynamic

trust

insight



Chaucer once commented: 'I warne yow wel, it is no childes pley'.

St George's House holds Consultations where serious people come together for serious discussion about serious matters.

open

respect

## ST GEORGE'S HOUSE

# our house

St George's House was founded in 1966 by H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh and the then Dean of Windsor, Robin Woods, as a place where people of influence and responsibility in every area of society can come together to explore and communicate their views and analysis of contemporary issues.

The House is located within Windsor Castle and forms part of the fourteenth century foundations of the College of St George. The heart of the College is St George's Chapel, where three times a day, every day, prayer is offered for the nation. That tradition of prayer, established in 1348 by King Edward III, has extended for more than six hundred years. It is precisely this tradition that gives the House its impetus and its wider theological context. The offering of prayer in the Chapel finds a practical expression in Consultations, where the House offers space for nurturing Wisdom.

Today our Consultation programme focuses on three distinct areas: contemporary issues, service to the Church and hospitality for groups who, understanding the ethos and core objectives of the House, bring to us their own Consultations. Taken together our annual programme is varied, rich, and intellectually challenging.

The Duke of Edinburgh believes that, as the College is hidden away within the Castle walls, it is particularly suitable to attract people in positions of leadership within government, industry, commerce and the churches as a place for discrete discussions of mutual and national interest.



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*Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.*

Albert Einstein

honesty



justice



transform

peace

'The pawns are the soul of the game'.

So wrote Philidor the French chess player and composer. Nobody can master chess without understanding the strategic possibility of pawns. Strategy that leads to Wisdom is what the House is all about.

wisdom



William Vertue, Master Mason, depicted in the West Window of St George's Chapel

# our ambition

Our aim is to effect change for the better in our society by nurturing Wisdom through dialogue.

The values of the House are openness, honesty, trust and respect. People from all areas of society, holding diverse views, opinions and beliefs come here to debate freely. The art of Consultation seeks to nurture Wisdom and open up the possibility of a different and better world.

The Wisdom we seek to nurture affirms and encourages, questions and surprises. It searches out new possibilities and desires the best for all our people and our planet. It is forward-looking and free from contemporary idols. It fosters personal and community transformation. The practical result of such Wisdom is trust, justice, equality and peace.

It is Wisdom based on knowledge, understanding, good judgement and far-sighted decision-making. It is Wisdom for our time.

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*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference*

Reinhold Niebuhr

influence

In chess the two most important pieces are the king and the queen; their influence is felt across the board. Our guests are specially invited to this House because they can effect change.



experience



equality

leadership

diversity



# our guests

St George's House brings together key people from all backgrounds and opinions in a spirit of intellectual challenge and stimulation. Our guests are diverse in age, background, race, religious affiliation, and occupation. Very often we bring together people who might not otherwise meet. All our guests are encouraged to offer their opinions and to enter into wholehearted debate and honest conversation.

The House provides a physical and intellectual space open to all those who wish to tackle significant subjects seriously. We welcome people who are prepared to speak cogently and listen carefully, people prepared to persuade and be persuaded. Through open, frank and confidential discussions we hope participants advance their own understanding and better appreciate the diversity of debate around the topic in question.

We seek to invite people of influence and experience as well as people in leadership positions. Our guests include representatives from government, non-governmental organisations, charities, business, education, health, environment and many other sectors besides.

Participants in our Consultations should leave the House thoughtful, questioning, refreshed and optimistic about their part in enhancing the world they inhabit and influence.



The Quire of St George's Chapel

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*The wisest mind has something yet to learn.*

George Santayana

debate

In chess one bishop operates on light squares, the other on dark. Like our guests, despite their different expertise, when working together they can be a formidable team.

networking

# dialogue



questioning

rigour

# the art of consultation

At the heart of a successful Consultation is the tried and tested approach of bringing people together for deliberation and conversation in a relaxed, yet rigorous manner. Participants work hard within the Consultation structure, underpinned by the belief that there is much to be gained from expertise, dialogue, formal conversation, and informal networking. The format is considered but flexible, an unobtrusive scaffolding beneath which the warp and weft of conversation happens. This approach actively encourages listening, sharing, questioning and argument. In this way, perspectives are broadened, learning enhanced and Wisdom is nurtured.

In all Consultations, you will find expert speakers who set the framework for discussion. You will encounter people who hold radically different opinions. Discussions will take place in plenary sessions and in breakout groups. Conversation will occur also in the margins, over lunch, at dinner, even while you explore the grounds of this most regal setting. It is through such debate and conversation that participants grow towards a deeper knowledge of the issues at hand and a more realistic understanding of their own perspective.

People often ask about the outcomes of our Consultations. We are wary of measuring outcomes as indicators of success or failure. Such a focus can constrain creativity and intellectual endeavour. There are many and various outcomes from our Consultations but the most important one is the process itself, the process of nurturing Wisdom.

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*It is the province of  
knowledge to speak  
and it is the privilege of  
wisdom to listen*

Oliver Wendell Holmes



One of the buildings in Canons' Cloister

meaning

mind-changing

endeavour

courage

listening



At the centre of the board the knight offers serious challenges to the current position. Here at the House we welcome challenge and the unexpected. The House is a place for risk-taking and brave thinking; it is not a place for the faint-hearted.

# high quality disagreement

A Consultation at St George's House begins with a theme, a topic for discussion, an opening gambit. From that point onwards participants get beneath the surface of that headline to unravel the layers of meaning, the nuances that are the grist of debate. A good Consultation is underpinned by a vigorous exchange of views, open discussion, intellectual rigour, new thinking and crucially, a willingness to listen.

The most successful Consultations take seriously the different opinions represented by the participants. The tension in such disagreement creates space for creative and innovative thought. For precisely this reason the House promotes high quality disagreement.

We do not seek disagreement for its own sake but we want people to think the unthinkable. We look to participants to develop new concepts and solutions, and to have the courage to admit that cherished opinions just might be wrong. Anyone who comes to St George's House should be prepared to change their mind.

The commitment to explore a subject in depth is essential and the outcome of such exploration can last far beyond the period of the Consultation itself. We want participants to take their discoveries - made at the House - back to the daily world in which they operate. Conversations begin here but grow to fruition in society at large. Participants take with them nourishment, an enrichment and a capacity to make a difference that comes from getting beneath the surface of things.

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*Knowledge comes,  
but wisdom lingers*

Alfred Tennyson



The crest of a Garter Knight in the Quire

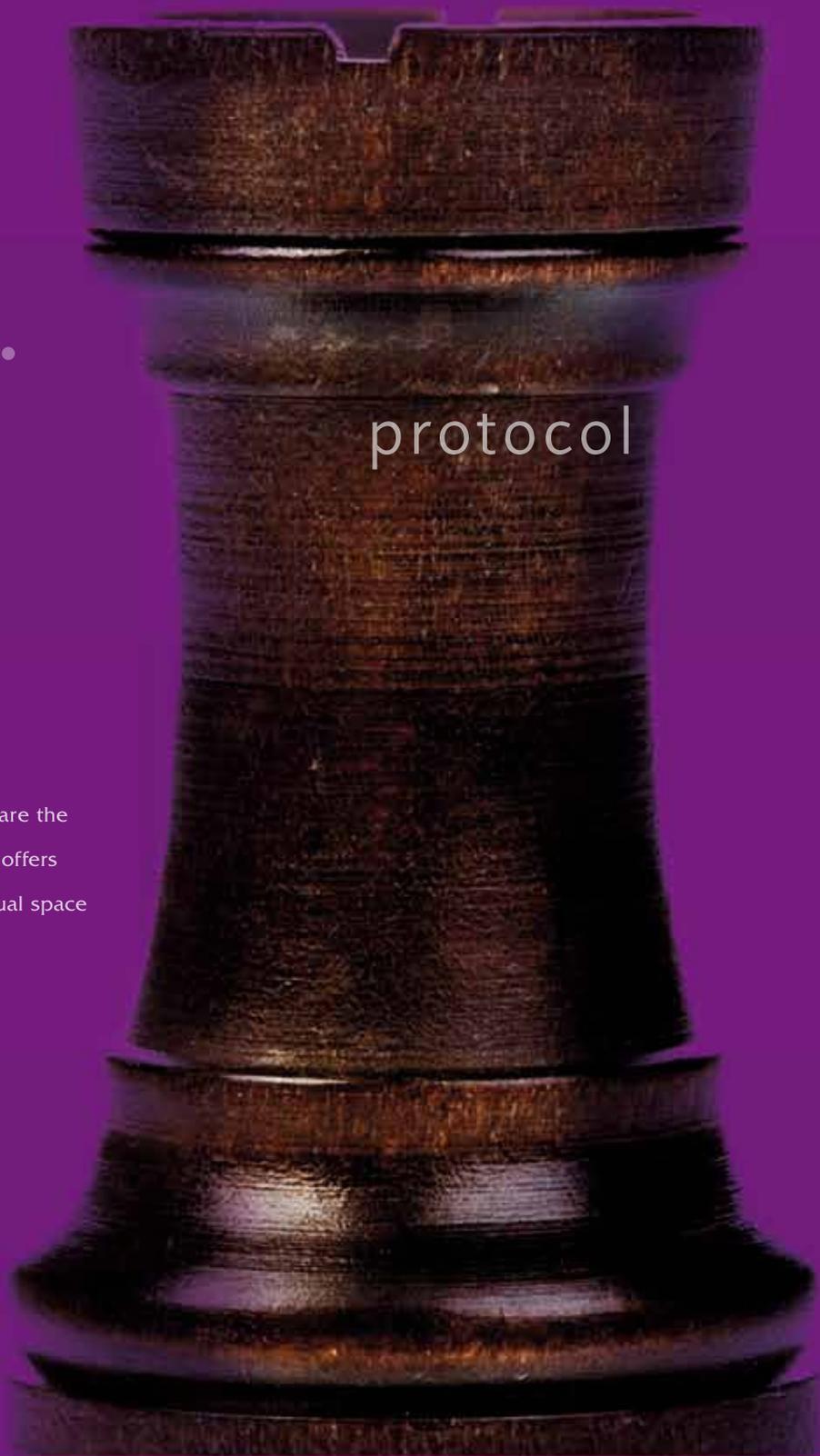
risk

privacy

protocol

On a chessboard rooks offer security; they are the pieces that obviously offer protection. Our House offers protection of a particular kind: it is a safe intellectual space in which to express ideas.

safe



space



# our protocol

St George's House is a space rooted in the narrative of history but its focus is firmly on the future. Here is a safe haven, an environment receptive to new ideas, to taking risks, to living at the intellectual edge. The House is a sanctuary, away from the pressures of everyday life, where the topic to hand takes precedence. It is this focus that encourages creative thinking, informed debate and imaginative engagement. Participants look to the future. You are in a place where a real contribution to society can be made, where personal enrichment and social progress are mutually compatible, a place where Wisdom is nurtured.

In order to offer a safe and secure intellectual space our Consultations are run on the understanding that all debate and conversation takes place under the House Protocol.

## St George's House Consultation Protocol

- You are free to use information received while at a Consultation
- You may not divulge the identity of speakers or participants
- Reports of Consultations are published only if that is the collective decision of the participants
- You are encouraged to speak openly
- You are encouraged to listen carefully
- Respect must be shown to all participants at all times
- You must be open to the possibility of changing your mind

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*We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility of the future.*

George Bernard Shaw

The Round Tower, Windsor Castle







## supporting you

During a St George's House Consultation you can enjoy being within the Castle. The surroundings of the College within the Castle are there for you to explore and we hope you will find our recently refurbished accommodation comfortable.

The House comprises twenty-five en suite bedrooms and a variety of meeting rooms for lectures, workshops, large and small group discussions and presentations. The House has a Wi-Fi network and a full range of audio-visual equipment.

Although our Consultations work best with numbers ranging from twenty-two to twenty-nine, we can facilitate larger groups. Group facilitation can be arranged for individual Consultations and reports can be prepared and published, if desired.

The chef and his team are here to cater for your needs and to ensure that all food and refreshments are provided to the highest standard.

Our administrative team is able to offer advice on all technical and practical requirements prior to your Consultation and will be on hand throughout your stay with us.



*The invariable mark  
of wisdom is to see  
the miraculous in  
the common*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

# ST GEORGE'S HOUSE



If you would like to find out more  
about Consultations at St George's House,  
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