

Role: Assistant Head Gardener	Region: South & West
Reports to: Head Gardener – The Hill House/Geilston Garden	Pay Grade: Grade 4 - £33,245 pro-rata, per annum
Location: The Hill House, Upper Colquhoun St, Helensburgh, G84 9AJ <i>(May be required from time to time to work on projects at Geilston Garden)</i>	Type of Contract: Permanent. Part-time, 32 Hours Per Week.
COST CENTRE: 3HIH	ACTIVITY CODE: GAZ

JOB PURPOSE

To support the Head Gardener in managing, maintaining and developing the Hill House Garden. A suitably skilled and motivated individual is required to work closely with the property team and volunteers to assist with preparing the garden for the exciting Mackintosh Illuminated project and subsequent restoration of key design elements within the garden and undertake future developments to enhance the garden horticulturally and for the enjoyment of visitors.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Ensuring the conservation and practical maintenance of the garden and policies – whether through delegation to other staff/volunteers, or personal participation - in terms of

- Practical horticulture (e.g. including managing trees and shrubs, herbaceous, annuals and bulbs; turf care; pest/disease/weed control; composting and soil improvement; hard-landscaping and path care; glasshouse care and plant propagation; produce sales management);
- Plantsmanship (e.g. the identification, knowledge and understanding of the plant collection, including recording [using Iris database], and labelling of individual plants.
- Research and development (e.g. research into historical records to inform proposed activities and projects; support to the planning, design and implementation of restoration and/or development projects);
- Interpretation (e.g. through the development and delivery of events such as introductory talks, presentations, guided tours or practical demonstrations and workshops, garden trails, digital media and contribution to guidebooks or leaflets), will take an active role in promoting the garden and property through digital media.

2. Ensuring an appropriate management regime of the garden and policies that includes the management of:

- staff and volunteers (e.g. recruitment, induction, direction, development, performance management) such that they are fully equipped, organised and motivated to undertake their duties to the required Trust standards;
- budgets (e.g. helping set future budgets, phasing, monitoring, pro-active and re-active adjustments to current budgets, managing project finance) such that the gardens' finances are in line with budget within the context of the wider property and project budgets;
- health, safety and the environment in line with stated Trust policies and approaches to ensure the health and welfare of staff/volunteers/visitors/contractors;

- machinery and equipment (e.g. ensuring timely and appropriate repairs, purchases and servicing) and its use (e.g. training, risk assessments and HAVS logs);
- recognition of the Trust's Environmental Policy with respect to sustainable gardening activities, including energy, water, peat & pesticide-use;
- daily, weekly, yearly and longer-term management and operational workplans and reporting in the context of the property's statements of significance, action plans and heritage garden management plan (and contribution to preparing these plans) to ensure that activities are prioritised and planned to optimise the use of resources;
- customer service and care from garden staff/volunteers, and in the broader sense of facilities and "visiting experience", to ensure that the properties' reputation for excellence is maintained and enhanced;
- administration to enable gardening activities to be undertaken and recorded efficiently;

3. Participating fully in the property's wider "management team", supporting the Operations manager & Visitor services manager strategically and practically with the operation of the property.

- May occasionally be required to duty manage the property
- Occasional weekend duty may be required following adverse weather, seasonal glasshouse requirements

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

Essential

- An HND/HNC level qualification in amenity horticulture or related subjects (equivalent to NVQ/SVQ level 3) supported by qualifications and experience, or demonstrably significant high quality directly relevant experience
- Demonstrable practical experience in general amenity – and heritage gardening
- Sound demonstrable plant knowledge and identification skills
- Knowledgeable of fruit and vegetable cultivation, glasshouse care and propagation skills
- PA1 and PA6a spraying certificates
- Sound knowledge of basic garden tools and machinery use, and maintenance
- Practical knowledge of Health and Safety processes and procedures and the ability to work effectively within these processes
- Driving Licence, valid for driving within the UK
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills; confident in interacting and dealing with a wide range of people, and able to represent the Trust
- Demonstrable experience of working with and supervising a mixed team that includes short-term/seasonal staff and/or volunteers
- Good organisational and time-management skills – including the ability to prioritise work where necessary and the ability to work using own initiative in the absence of direct line management.
- Eye for detail and finish to deliver exceptional visitor experience
- Competent IT skills sufficient for maintaining plant records, tree inspection records, health and safety records, use of email/internet/teams/SharePoint, raising purchase orders etc.

Desirable

- Experience of working in a garden open to the public
- Current first aid certification (or willingness to train and use)

- Basic tree inspection certification (or a willingness to train and use)
- Ability to coordinate, plan, design and execute projects (e.g. replanting)

DIMENSIONS AND SCOPE OF JOB

People Management

- Line manager of part-time Gardener and gardening Volunteers
- Will have daily interaction with colleagues and members of the public of all ages and abilities
- Will have frequent interaction with suppliers and contractors including their supervision

Finance Management

- Is not a budget holder
- Will regularly use finance system for raising purchase orders for the supply of goods and service relating to the garden

Tools / equipment / systems

- Will be a frequent user of powered tools such as mowers, strimmers, hedge-cutters etc.
- Will be a frequent user of hand-tools such as spades, forks, hoes, shears, secateurs etc.
- Will be a frequent user of IT equipment and systems

The Purpose, Context, Key Responsibilities, and Person Specification reflect the requirements of the job at the time of issue. The Trust reserves the right to amend these with appropriate consultation and/or request the post-holder to undertake any activities that it believes to be reasonable within the broad scope of the job or his/her general abilities.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants should forward their Curriculum Vitae (CV) or an Application Form to the People Department, The National Trust for Scotland, by email via workforus@nts.org.uk, by Friday 30th October 2026

- Please ensure your CV includes your full name and contact details
- The CV file sent to us should be titled with your first initial and surname
- When submitting your CV please state the position and job location of the vacancy you are applying for in the subject title or body of your email: For example, "Assistant Head Gardener – The Hill House"