HEAD GARDENER

Further Particulars

St Hilda’s College has one of the most picturesque gardens of any Oxford College and the and grounds provide a recreational space for all its members whilst also used for a wide variety other of purposes. Visitors to the college include those attending concerts, conferences, and educational schools and seminars. The 4-acre site is bounded by the River Cherwell to the north-west and is populated by a variety of buildings serving various purposes.

It has a mature treescape, established gardens, a formal rose-garden, an historic Victorian rockery, new beds and borders, a roof garden, and several historic garden features. The College is also responsible for managing a wildflower water meadow.

The main college lies within the St Clement’s and Iffley Road Conservation Area, and the College owns satellite student accommodation units in east Oxford which also have grounds that require care and maintenance.

The Head Gardener is responsible for the day-to-day management and development of the gardens and grounds and is responsible for the garden staff. They will report directly to the Head of Buildings and Projects who is responsible, in association with the Gardens Committee, for setting strategic objectives and long-term planning for the grounds.

There is an expectation that the Head Gardener will work with other College teams to deliver high quality college gardens and to present the site in the best possible way.

The post holders’ role is to deliver high standards of horticultural maintenance in a cost effective, and efficient manner and to advise the Head of Buildings and Projects and the Gardens Committee on potential improvements that will contribute to the evolutionary development of the college gardens.

Two key duties are the development and enhancement of biodiversity in our grounds and to deliver high quality training to the gardens team, specifically any apprenticeships offered by the College.

Primary Responsibilities

- To deliver garden and grounds maintenance in an efficient manner, making effective use of existing financial, staff, and infrastructure resources.
- To contribute to the development of the gardens and grounds and support any strategic plans determined by the Gardens Committee or Governing Body.
- To showcase the gardens in the best interests of the College, to provide information for publicity purposes including undertaking tours of the gardens and grounds in support of any open days or other garden viewing occasions.
- With a strong focus on forward planning and the anticipation of future needs, the Head Gardener will be expected to lead, motivate, and develop the garden team.
• In addition to management of the garden team, gardens, and grounds, carry out practical hands-on work alongside the existing members of the garden team when appropriate.

Garden Management
• To agree strategic objectives for efficient grounds and garden maintenance with the Head of Buildings.
• Agree and implement seasonal work programmes with the Head of Buildings.
• Report weekly operational activities to the Head of Buildings.
• To plan and develop operational activities to improve the quality of plantings, grass maintenance, tree care, to deliver a high standard of maintenance.
• Plan seasonal planting for borders and containers.
• Monitor tree health on a regular basis, report defects to Head of Buildings, and liaise with Arboricultural contractor.
• Order materials in a timely way to enable seamless grounds maintenance.
• To advise the Head of Buildings on the procurement of suitable horticultural equipment to deliver maintenance efficiently and effectively.
• Prepare termly reports for presentation to the Gardens Committee.
• Prepare annual budgets for discussion with the Head of Buildings and Projects.
• Maintain effective records of work undertaken, pesticide register (if appropriate) and other hazardous substances.
• Be available for emergency out of hours calls in case of storm or flood or other grounds related issues.
• To perform or schedule weekend maintenance duties, such as watering, as deemed necessary by circumstance or as requested by the Head of Buildings and Projects.
• Ensure a daily inspection of the gardens, removing litter, emptying bins, and other debris, and reporting any maintenance or cleaning issues in a timely manner.

Garden Development
• With an interest in and knowledge of plant and practical gardening skills, contribute to the development of the gardens in close collaboration with the Head of Buildings and Gardens Committee.

College Events
• To represent the Gardens Team at internal, inter-Collegiate and external meetings such as Heads of Department, Health and Safety, Joint Coordination Committee and Equality Committee, when requested.
• To contribute to the regular planning and delivery of “open house” events e.g. National Gardens Scheme, Open House Oxford, Oxford in Bloom etc.
• To engage with alumni and visitors to the Gardens and undertake tours of the gardens as required.
• To ensure the gardens are fit for purpose by all users and for all e.g. College Ball, commercial events and weddings, and make recommendations as to the implementation of periods of recovery and respite.

Garden Committee
• To advise the Garden Committee, providing suggestions and recommendations in the planning and development of all aspects of the College gardens.
• To project manage enhancements to the gardens, both on and offsite, which have been approved by the Garden Committee, using the College gardens team and external contractors as appropriate.
• Regular reporting to the Garden Committee via the Head of Buildings with regard to the gardens maintenance programme, both completed and planned.
• To ensure good value for money in all purchasing decisions, ensuring appropriate levels of stock as relevant.

Security
• The post holder will be responsible for the security of garden buildings, equipment and materials.
• The Head Gardner is responsible for monitoring boundary fences around all College property and advising the College Surveyor where breaches have occurred or are at risk of occurring.

Staff
• To allocate work to, and monitor the performance of the gardening team on a daily basis.
• To train, instruct, and develop skills of members of the team on an ongoing basis, including providing training for any gardening apprenticeships offered by the College.
• To liaise with external apprenticeship training providers and ensure the smooth operation of any apprenticeship offered by College.
• To identify additional training needs, secure appropriate training for staff and to report and agree those to the Head of Buildings and Projects.
• To agree out of hours work rotas with the garden team to ensure the delivery of gardening services.
• To participate in the recruitment of new staff in association with college officers.
• To manage the performance of the gardens team to ensure a high-quality service for the College.

Health and Safety
• Adhere to the College’s Health & Safety policy.
• Ensure that all tasks are Risk Assessed and that adequate records are maintained and made available for inspection on request.
• Ensure that staff are aware of Health & Safety issues relating to each task that they are asked to perform.
• Ensure that they have the necessary Personal Protective Equipment, and that they understand how to use it, and are using it appropriately.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
Essential
The successful candidate for this position must satisfy the following criteria:
• Minimum of 5 years experience in a senior garden management or horticultural role.
• RHS level 3 or RHS Diploma or equivalent professional training in horticulture or similar.
• Certification in the use of chain saws, fungicides and herbicides.
• NPTC Spraying qualifications PA1 and PA6.
• An essential part of this role is that the candidate is able to take on physically demanding work such as moving and carrying heavy compost bags, deliveries, plants etc. Good physical fitness is required.
• Proven ability to operate relevant machinery.
• Experience in fine turf management
• Experienced in all aspects of pruning wall shrubs, roses and ornamentals.
• Experience of management of gardens/grounds staff.
• Some experience of the management of budgets.
• Knowledge of Microsoft Office suite, including Word, Excel, Outlook and databases.
• Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (oral and written).
• Ability to set and work to deadlines.
• Ability to work with little supervision and under pressure.
• Ability to organise work and prioritise effectively.
• Willing and able to work outside in all weathers.
• Ability to use initiative.
• Excellent attention to detail.
• Clean UK driving licence.

Desirable
Additional desirable criteria include:

• An interest and creative ability in the development of the gardens.
• A demonstrable interest in facilitating biodiversity and environmental enhancement
• Ability to work well in a small team, with a positive and helpful attitude towards work and colleagues.
• Experience of, or a strong willingness to impart, on the job training to an Apprentice Gardener.
• Ability to communicate effectively with College members including staff, students, fellows, guests and members of the public.
• Emergency First Aid at Work qualification.

FURTHER DETAILS
Note, the details outlined here will be confirmed or clarified in any Contract of Employment.

Salary
The starting salary for this post will be on Grade 7 of the University Pay Scales currently £32,817 - £44,045 per annum.

Hours of Work
This post is full time, 40 hours per week, 8:00am to 4:30pm with 30-minute unpaid lunch break. College is open on Bank Holidays and staff are expected to work or take annual leave. The exception is Christmas when College is also closed for an additional 5 days which must also be taken as annual leave.
Occasionally it will be necessary to work outside of these hours. This is managed on a flexible working basis by the Head Gardener in discussion with the Head of Buildings.

Benefits
• Membership of a contributory pension scheme.
• Optional contributory health and dental care scheme.
• Interest free travel pass loans
• Free lunch when on duty (if the kitchen is operational and lunches are available).
• 38 days annual leave (to include public holidays).
• College branded workwear is provided including safety boots and wet weather gear.
Applications
Applications for this post, using the required forms and providing the necessary supporting
information, should be emailed to recruitment@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk, to arrive no later than 5pm
on 9 July 2021.

Interviews will be held week commencing 19 July.

May 2021