



HOSPITALFIELD

Post: Head/Skilled/Skilled Gardener*

Contract: Permanent

Hours: Full-time (hours negotiable)

Salary: £23,000 - £25,000 per annum (depending on experience)

Reporting to: Director

Application: Please apply using the application form available at this [link](#)

Deadline for application: Sunday 30 August

If Shortlisted: We will let you know if you have been shortlisted by Friday 4 September. We will then arrange for a site visit if this is possible followed by interviews which will most likely be by video call.

Hospitalfield is one of Scotland's most fascinating Victorian Arts & Crafts houses, we aim to inspire people in the history that connects Arbroath's dynamic medieval story with a 19th century artist's vision.

Situated just to the south of the coastal town of Arbroath, Hospitalfield House is an artists' house: We run an international programme of residencies for artists across art forms...we commission new work: summer schools; events; talks; festivals; conferences. We care for the historic collections and run a heritage programme. We open the doors and run tours and events that relate to our heritage.

We have a trading arm that runs a programme of hires and events that earns income for the Trust.

The Hospitalfield Trust wishes to recruit a hands on Head/Skilled Gardener who will oversee the management the five acre estate and lead, with great commitment and energy, on the responsibility for implementing and guiding the development of our newly designed and planted walled garden, designed by the horticulturalist Nigel Dunnett.

We require someone with demonstrable experience and who is an excellent communicator with volunteers, colleagues, and visitors. This is a practical role as well as having a requirement for an individual who is interested in training and supporting others to learn from the gardens at Hospitalfield.

Context

This is an exciting time to be joining the small and dedicated staff team at Hospitalfield as we work towards realising the five-year Future Plan for the organisation. This involves major capital refurbishment of the historic architecture and the creation of new buildings where this is required for the future use. (See the Future Plan booklet at this [link](#)). The aim is to make a campus that will support our programme and provide facilities that will help us build our business for future economic sustainability.

The Estate

Hospitalfield House is run by a charitable trust and sits within a sixty-acre site most of which is farmed through a long-term tenancy agreement. The Trust cares for roughly five acres close to the house which includes a wooded area, beautiful grass paddock and a very special walled garden. The role of the Head/Skilled Gardener is to care for and manage all five acres most of which is low maintenance – the role will have a very special focus on the new walled garden which will, when open in April 2021, will become an important destination in Angus and the Tay Region.

The development of this very special walled garden (about three quarters of an acre) sets the scene for Hospitalfield's audience facing future. The investment that the Future Plan will make to the site in the coming years is based on the Trust's commitment to contributing to the wider economic growth of Angus and the Tay Region through a shared focus on arts and culture tourism. The flagship lead project in Tayside is the V&A Dundee with Hospitalfield in Angus, other initiatives in Dundee and Perthshire working together to make the region an important heritage and cultural destination.

The Garden and Garden Building

The first phase of the capital programme at Hospitalfield, The Garden and Garden Buildings, is already on site. At the heart of the project is the re-design of the walled garden by the renowned horticulturalist Nigel Dunnett. Our architects, Caruso St John have overseen the restoration of the 19th century fernery and designed the new glazed roof structure and glass house café that will be located on the south wall of the garden where once there were hot walls heating the glass houses. We are working with the

Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh to source and plant the new fern collection. This collection will describe the 19th century passion for ferns.

The New Design for the Walled Garden

The brief for the design of the garden is to tell 800 years of garden history through its planting. Whilst the house itself is 19th century the site was populated from the 13th century with a hospital and chapel built on the site by the monks who ran Arbroath Abbey. It is quite possible that the existing walled garden was set out by the monks in that medieval period.

This phase of the project will be complete by January 2021 (later than expected due to Covid 19). The planting will take place in Autumn/Winter 2020 and the garden will then open to the public in April 2021. This will be the first appropriately designed aspects of Hospitalfield that will be open to the public.

The Role

Management of the majority of the site is seasonal grass cutting and tree maintenance and we have an established plan for this.

The jewel in the crown is to develop the newly planted scheme in the walled garden. The Head/Skilled Gardener will be joining is in the key early years of establishment of a scheme that unusually combines a very high commitment to sustainability and environmental horticulture with cutting-edge naturalistic planting, all set within a formal setting and framework.

This is a hands-on role, where the Head/Skilled gardener will be involved in practical gardening and maintenance, as well as managing the work programme.

The Head/Skilled Gardener will be required to cultivate and build upon the scheme, whilst adhering to and nurturing the original design principles e.g. annual displays, new areas of seasonal planting, productive planting etc also taking on the creative responsibility for the evolution of the garden.

Training: The Trust has ambitious plans to make the gardens at Hospitalfield a leading setting for training, therefore this is an opportunity to engage others in learning and training in the methods and practice of sustainable and environmental horticulture. There is considerable potential in this aspect of developing the audience for and participation in the garden.

- **Locally and regionally:** Good working relationships already exist with Dundee and Angus College and local community development organisations. There are opportunities for Hospitalfield to offer structured and certificated training opportunities and apprenticeships. we are interested to make the gardens an elevator for a new workforce.
- **Nationally and Internationally:** The significance of the design of the walled garden set against the context of the House and its historical importance

offers many opportunities for the training and learning programme to reach out and appeal to people across the UK and beyond. We are excited about this opportunity to bring people to the site to enjoy the experience of visiting the gardens, spending time in the café and visit the fernery, yet we are very keen too that there is a structure of opportunities to participate in and learn about the innovative new principles employed in the planting schemes.

Nigel Dunnett's commitment is to telling and showing people; students, professionals and enthusiasts, what he does and why. Hospitalfield is equally committed to continuing this approach and to use this visionary garden as a place to learn from at all levels.

Volunteers: The garden that has been swept away by our new plans was designed in the 1970's, by 2012 it was more or less derelict. By 2014 we had managed to get it to a condition where we could invite people to visit the gardens at Hospitalfield. This work has been achieved with staff and volunteers and the work of several gardeners employed by Hospitalfield over the period. These were short term gardeners who brought the right energy that was required at the time.

Key members of the volunteer cohort are long standing and have been associated with the garden since this time. They continue to be enthusiastic and are keen to continue to support the maintenance of the new garden.

There is a great interest in the garden and much potential to grow the cohort of volunteers who will be very important for many aspects of maintaining and managing the garden and communicating with visitors.

We employ two staff within the team who have a responsibility that relates to the gardens and grounds:

The Programme Manager for Engagement and Volunteers (Line Manager - Director) will work closely with the Head/Skilled Gardener particularly on recruiting and managing volunteers. She will lead on the delivery of the arts and events programmes as they develop around the garden. She will make and sustain the right partnerships that will result in a very active training programme. Kirsten Wilson has a good horticultural knowledge.

The Grounds Keeper (Line Manager – Head/Skilled Gardener) who also does work inside the house, cuts the grass, hedges and keeps the paths clear and in general keep the estate looking very good and brings great energy and commitment to his role in working to ensure the maintenance of the grounds. Garry Pearson does not have a horticultural knowledge but is excellent when directed.

Post Purpose and Outline:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To bring experience and vision to the management of a new garden set within historic grounds in such a way that contributes much to the

wider offer that Hospitalfield provides for all its visitors and stakeholders.

- To set out a plan for the maintenance of the five acre site based on and informed by the work that we are already doing.
- To bring a very strong commitment to the maintenance and development of the walled garden.
- Working with the team to ensure that the gardens are open to the public when advertised and looking impressive.
- To work with the volunteers guiding them and ensuring that they feel part of the experience of working at Hospitalfield.
- Working with the team to develop training opportunities for a wide range of individuals.
- Working with trainees and apprentices when schemes are available for their support.
- To work with the Director on the interpretation and communication of the garden to visitors.
- Through planning and developing the garden, ensure a commitment to Nigel Dunnett's principles of design.
- Work with the Director on any changes or development of the design of the garden.
- Devise a workable strategy regarding sustainability as part of the management of the garden; working ecologically to reduce environmental impact.
- Maintenance of all equipment, H&S planning, ensuring safe storage of all machinery and chemicals etc.

Person Specification

Hospitalfield Trust is looking for an enthusiastic, knowledgeable Head/Skilled Gardener who is a good communicator and enjoys working with people and plants.

We are looking for someone with vision who will work with the rest of the Hospitalfield team to realise the very great potential there is to manage the land, develop the garden and engage our audiences in the horticultural story of Hospitalfield.

Skills and Experience

Essential

Qualifications

- Excellent experience of horticulture either to RHS Level 3 level or through practical experience over a number of years working in horticulture.
- Certificates and training in use of garden machinery maintenance.

- Trained in environmental safety and use of herbicides/pesticides (organic/chemical free).

Garden Management

- An demonstrable understanding of the potential and opportunities there are to work within the context of a historic garden and in the grounds of an important Arts & Crafts country house with a fascinating cultural history.
- Ability to establish short, medium and long term strategies and plans for the development of the gardens and grounds.
- Experience of estate management including tree, hedgerow, grass and lawn management.
- Experience of working efficiently with outside contractors where this is required.
- Experience of managing people walking through or using sites that are less and more public/private.

Learning

- Experience of devising and delivering training programmes.
- Experience of and commitment to using the garden as a place for learning and training.
- Experience of working with a volunteer workforce.
- Interest to work with apprentices and enthusiasm to pass on knowledge and experience – consideration of the future workforce.

Approach to work

- Conscientious and organised approach to work.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Good grasp of computer working; e mails, word processing.
- Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines with limited supervision.
- Experience of working as part of a team and independently.
- Willingness to be flexible in this post-Covid time as we incorporate new ways of working in to our staff team particularly in relation to health and safety.

Desirable

- Experience of working in a garden or nursery that is open to the public and therefore has an awareness of the responsibilities of working with the public.
- Understanding of community learning and development.
- Experience of events management.
- Understanding of the ways in which horticulture can be used in the context of well-being.
- Interest in growing food and the link to the catering/food destination that Hospitalfield will become.

**This title has been amended 19/08 following expert advice*