

Job title:	Head Gardener
Contract:	Permanent
Salary:	From £25 – 28k
Reporting to:	Head of Collections, Research and Exhibitions
Line reports:	Part time gardeners and contractors Horticultural apprentices and interns Volunteers
Hours:	35 hours per week

The Charleston Trust

Charleston is a seventeenth century Sussex farmhouse that was the house of two of the most important and influential British artists of the twentieth century - Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. Their uniquely decorated home became the country retreat of a group of individuals known as the Bloomsbury group which included Vanessa Bell's sister, the writer Virginia Woolf, the economist John Maynard Keynes and critics Roger Fry and Clive Bell. Writers Lytton Strachey, TS Eliot and EM Forster were regular visitors.

Today, Charleston is a thriving house museum with a programme of regular exhibitions, events and festivals, a café/restaurant and retail operations. The garden is an integral part of the historic site and critical to the exceptional visitor experience which Charleston strives to achieve. The Charleston Trust receives no public funding to support its running costs and each year is entirely dependent on self-generated income and fundraising.

Main purpose of role:

The Head Gardener will be an able and outward-looking gardener, strong communicator and team member who will ensure that the historic garden reflects the appearance of the 'painters' garden' developed for and by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant as interpreted by planting schedules developed by Sir Peter Sheppard in the 1980s. This role involves working with the Head of Collections, Research and Exhibitions to ensure the gardens are maintained in an appropriate historic style, to assist with the development of Charleston's garden archives and research programmes and to ensure the wider site is maintained and developed in a manner appropriate to Charleston's setting in the South Downs National Park.

The Head Gardener will work to develop an appropriate interpretation and engagement programme to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the gardens at Charleston working closely with the events, curatorial and visitor experience teams. The Head Gardener will explore and embrace new initiatives to support the fundraising, communications and enterprise teams in their promotion and development of Charleston, its histories and its programmes. The Head Gardener will act as a coach, mentor and line manager to volunteers, apprentices, interns and staff and as an ambassador on issues relating to the garden.

Key Competencies:

The successful candidate will be an outstanding horticulturalist who actively demonstrates the following key competencies:

- An intuitive and imaginative gardener;
- An active interest in the arts and historic planting schemes;
- A collaborative and inclusive team player;
- A successful line-manager, coach and mentor;
- An innovator and able change-management advocate;
- A confident communicator;
- Strong time-management and planning skills;
- Confident with the use of office technology.

Key Responsibilities:

- Maintenance and management of the historic planting schemes and outdoor public areas including Barnyard, Courtyard, car parks, roadways, verges and hedgerows to an agreed budget and ensuring horticultural standards are maintained.
- Responsibility for the recruitment, training and supervision of staff, contractors, interns, apprentices and volunteers, ensuring their wellbeing whilst on site.
- Supporting the Programme and Events team on planning the Festival of the Garden and other relevant programmes.
- Providing historically informed floral arrangements for the historic house.
- Sourcing and providing floral arrangements across the site as required, including the Threshing Barn café and for dressing and bouquets for events.
- Working with the Events team to provide source and maintain plants for dressing events.
- Supporting the Visitor Experience team in identifying and developing opportunities for the promotion of the garden and the development of a year-round visitor offer.
- Ensuring that the garden and grounds are safe and accessible to all.
- Acting as an ambassador and interpreter for Charleston's garden, communicating about it via a range of media and events.
- Supporting the Development team in identifying and securing funding opportunities.

- Selecting plants for retail and supporting retail plans, harvesting produce for the café and aiding the development and maintenance of an historically informed kitchen garden.
- Developing garden policies and programmes that support an organic garden and Charleston's environmental and sustainability aims.
- Proposing and managing budgets, and ensuring effective management of staff, equipment, machinery and health and safety procedures.

Person Specification

Essential skills and experience

- At least three years of senior garden management experience in the maintenance and development of an historic garden, including direct line management of garden staff, volunteers or apprentices.
- National Diploma in Horticulture Level 3, other appropriate higher education qualification in horticulture or comparable experience.
- Understanding of contract and budget management and an ability to use Outlook, Word and Excel to a good standard.
- Understanding of the historic gardens sector and the management of gardens and landscapes open to the public.
- Understanding and experience of health and safety aspects of gardens as visitor attractions including COSHH and risk assessment procedures.
- An ability to identify and appropriately treat the full range of horticultural pests and diseases.
- Effective management of own and others' priorities, workloads and deadlines.
- A supportive manner in dealing with all levels of stakeholder - whether visitors, colleagues, organisation partners, supporters, neighbours, suppliers or community groups.
- Willingness to support and deliver the overall objectives of The Charleston Trust.
- Capable of undertaking all aspects of horticultural work and the physical challenges of the post.

Core competencies

- A passion for the heritage sector.
- Flexible and adaptable to changing demands and new challenges.
- Ability to work collaboratively in a small team.
- Ability to mentor and supervise individuals.

To apply please email a CV and covering letter to: d.clarke@charleston.org.uk

Deadline for applications: midnight, Sunday 5 April 2020

Interviews will be held: w/c 6 April 2020

Additional information

- Because of the rural location of Charleston, the post holder must be aware that getting to work without use of a car involves some additional planning and commitment.
- The Trust has a commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for all employees and employees are required to adhere to this in their work.
- All positions at Charleston are offered subject to the following conditions:
 - Receipt of satisfactory references
 - Proof that you are legally entitled to work in the UK

Charleston, Firle, Nr. Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 6LL

www.charleston.org.uk