



Head Gardener - Newnham College



Newnham College is looking to recruit a Head Gardener to carry on the sterling work that the current incumbent has completed over the past seven years. It is an exciting time to join the College as we celebrate our 150th Anniversary.

Newnham College is an educational charity founded in 1871 to promote academic excellence for women. It has been a College of the University of Cambridge since 1948. The College's main purpose, enshrined in its Royal Charter, is to advance education and learning among women, to provide accommodation in which they can reside and study, and to support and promote research.

The Head Gardener plays a critical role in overseeing the College gardens. The scale and historic nature of the garden makes this a challenging and rewarding opportunity. The Head Gardener will lead the Garden Team that consists of one Senior Gardener (full time) and 5 Gardeners (4 full-time, 1 part-time). One of the full-time gardener posts is currently vacant and will be filled once a new Head Gardener has been appointed.

The gardens are at the heart of the College and are an integral part of the daily life of our students, Fellowship and staff, and are a much-admired asset by local residents and others who visit the gardens, which the College nurtures and celebrates. The College has ambitious plans for biodiversity, ecology and sustainability for its operational estate and the Head Gardener will play a key role in achieving this.

Newnham has 18 acres of landscaped grounds, which combine areas of formal gardens with areas of wildflower meadow and woodland. The gardens are predominantly laid out following the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement and retain the serenity and harmony of that era.



In 2018, the completion of the Dorothy Garrod Building prompted the first major redesign of the gardens since 1914. Four new gardens were developed, including rooftop terraces and courtyard gardens. The development has been suitable and in keeping with the buildings.



As well as looking after the main gardens, the College Gardeners are responsible for maintaining a number of smaller domestic scale gardens on the perimeter of the main site. Several Edwardian houses have been converted to accommodate postgraduate students. Around most of these, gardens have been laid out to complement the houses and to provide pleasant surroundings for studying. In the immediate vicinity there is also a block of residential, commercially let flats with three private gardens that have to be maintained.

The gardens are maintained using sustainable horticultural practices and to maximise biodiversity. Minimal use of chemicals and watering, and maximum conservation of wildlife and soil health are central to the ideals of the College. The College has allotments for use by all College members and a permaculture garden, designed and led by the student garden club. The garden team also runs regular events to promote gardening for well-being amongst the students and other members of the College.



There is an on-site plant nursery consisting of a large secure compound area, with ample storage, composting bays, potting shed, greenhouses (which are being replaced in July 2022) and large purpose-built mower and equipment sheds. There is a self-contained Annex which houses the Head Gardener's Office, staff tearoom, shower and changing room facilities (built in 2014).

The garden team also manages the onsite sports field providing facilities for football, hockey, lacrosse as well as tennis and netball courts.

You may wish to arrange an informal visit where you could meet the current Head Gardener, or you may visit the garden independently as the gardens are open all year around. If you wish to arrange an informal visit please email: gardens@newn.cam.ac.uk

For more information visit: <https://newn.cam.ac.uk/about/gardens>



Job Description

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| Job Title: | Head Gardener |
| Reporting to: | Domestic Bursar |
| Responsible for: | The Gardens Department comprising: 1 Senior Gardener F/T, 4 Gardeners F/T and 1 Gardener P/T (24 hours). |
| Significant working relationships: | The Chair of the Garden Committee and the Buildings Manager. |
| Place of work: | Newnham College. |
| Tenure: | Permanent contract. |
| Hours: | Full time (37.5 hours per week). |
| Salary: | Spine point 42 on the University's single salary spine, currently £34,304 per annum. |
| Holidays: | 33 days including 8 public holidays. |
| Pension: | The College offers membership of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) with a current employer contribution rate of 21.6%. |
| General terms and conditions: | This post is subject to proof of the right to work in the UK and governed by the provisions in College staff handbook, policies and procedures which may change from time to time. Confirmation in post is subject to satisfactory references and the successful completion of a 6-month probationary period. Thereafter, the notice period is three months. |
| Main Purpose of Role/Overview: | |
| <p>The Head Gardener will lead the Garden Department in carrying out the full range of practical tasks and duties necessary to tend, preserve and develop the College gardens for the future. The outdoor spaces both on the main site and at other adjacent properties owned by the College are also managed, developed and maintained by the Gardeners. The Head Gardener, as a Head of Department, is responsible to the Domestic Bursar for day-to-day management of all these areas.</p> <p>The Head Gardener will work closely with the Garden Committee, comprising members of the College Fellowship, students and staff. The Committee meets once a term to translate development plans and projects into operational plans for delivery. The Garden Committee keeps the planting and character of the College gardens under review. It takes proposals for major development projects in the gardens or grounds to the Governing Body that is responsible for the strategic vision within which the College operates.</p> | |

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Managing, training and developing the garden team and working alongside team members to carry out gardening work;
- Prioritising work schedules (providing detailed work action plans on an annual, seasonal and weekly basis) and setting deadlines for completion of work by the garden team and/or external contractors;
- Managing propagation and production of garden plants;
- Maintaining herbaceous, annual and shrub borders;
- Organising the regular inspection of all trees and maintenance of the Tree Register; planning and organising all necessary tree work, including obtaining City Council permissions and booking tree surgeons;
- Organising the pruning of shrubs and hedges;
- Undertaking minor hard landscaping repairs;
- Designing and then implementing, in conjunction with the Garden Committee, garden design projects;
- Purchasing garden equipment and consumables, as necessary;
- Oversight of the maintenance and improvement of all the lawns, including the sportsfield;
- Oversight of the maintenance of the tennis courts and sportsfield – marking out for different sports;
- Oversight of the maintenance of the College car parks and College frontage;
- Managing the compost rotation;
- Managing the hire of equipment as needed;
- Working with the other College Heads of Departments to support their department functions as necessary;
- Liaising with other Head Gardeners across the collegiate University.

Staff

- Responsible for all staffing issues within the Gardens Department;
- Responsible for regular staff reviews and for team members achieving agreed objectives;
- Responsible for coaching and training for staff in the department to enable them to achieve their full potential;
- Maintaining accurate training records for each member of staff, to ensure all legal certificates are in date and not expired;
- Maintaining and recording staffing levels in the department including hours worked, holidays and sickness.

Health, Safety and Security

- Purchasing and maintaining the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensuring compliance;
- Organising and maintaining the annual schedules and requirements to remain legally compliant;
- Preparing and reviewing all Risk Assessments, Standard Operating Procedures and COSHH records;
- Maintaining the Hand Arm Vibration and Noise Monitoring records and ensuring that individual log books are kept up to date;
- Regular inspection of all ladders and maintaining the Ladder Register;
- Ensuring security of all garden machinery and equipment and of the garden buildings and their contents.

Seasonal

- Preparing the grounds for major events throughout the year and being present at such events as required;
- Organising the erection and dismantling of the College marquees and gazebos for events;
- Organising garden tours to both members of the College, alumnae and visitors as necessary (some of these tours will be on the weekend or evenings – advance notice is given);
- Organising the regular checks of car parks and bicycle sheds and identifying unauthorised vehicles and bicycles, with a view to organising an annual bike cull in conjunction with the Head Porter;
- Overseeing the on-site management of the Garden Parties during May Week (mid-June) and for a May Ball/June Events which may involve an overnight shift;
- Overseeing the gritting of the main paths and entrances during icy and snowy weather conditions.

Finances/Budgetary control

- Taking budgetary responsibility for all aspects of the Gardens Department against targets and taking corrective action where necessary;
- Overseeing the purchasing of all supplies and equipment for the department;
- Identifying and achieving value for money from all contractors and suppliers;
- Coding against budget headings and authorising payment all invoices for repairs and maintenance;
- Providing the Bursary promptly with financial statements, invoices and bills for payment.

Other

- Maintaining good relationships with all members of the College, visitors and neighbours;
- Working with local schools for various garden-related and educational projects;
- Updating the Domestic Bursar and Garden Committee on progress of tasks;
- Keeping garden buildings clean, tidy and safe.

Committees

The Head Gardener is required to attend the following College Committees:

- Garden Committee (Member);
- Environmental and Sustainability Committee (Staff Member);
- Safety Committee (Member);
- Buildings Estate Committee (Member);
- Heads of Department meetings (Member);
- Domestic Bursary team meetings (Member).

General

- To take part in the College's appraisal scheme and to undertake training as required;
- To be responsible for your own health and safety in the workplace;
- To comply fully with all the College's policies including health and safety, equal opportunities and data protection;
- To undertake any other reasonable request or duties, commensurate with this post.

The above is not an exhaustive list of duties. The post-holder may be asked to take on different tasks as required, and all are expected to work collaboratively to support the overall work of the College.

Person Specification

| | Essential | Desirable |
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| Qualifications, experience and background | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial and demonstrable practical experience in the horticultural or landscape industry at managerial level; • A recognised horticultural qualification at Level 3 or equivalent; • In-depth knowledge of plants, tree management, turf culture, horticulture and grounds maintenance techniques; • PA1 and PA6 certificates; • Industry approved certificates for mowers (ride-on, pedestrian, rotary and cylinder); • Industry approved certificate for use and maintenance of hedge-cutters; • Industry approved certificate for use and maintenance of strimmers and brush-cutters; • Industry approved certificate in Tractor Driving; • Certificate in chainsaw operation and maintenance; • Working at height, safe use of MEWP and safe use of a harness certificates; • Qualification in Health and Safety Management e.g. IOSH. <p><i>If you do not have a current certificate for any of the items listed above you would be required to complete these.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interest in biodiversity and sustainable horticultural practices; • Experience working with young people or in an education/campus environment; • First Aid qualification; • Qualification or experience in bee-keeping. |
| Specific knowledge/skills (technical) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing and able to undertake the physical work required, and to work outside in all weathers and at height where necessary. • Willing to work outside normal hours when required. • A good knowledge of Microsoft Office Word. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of relevant current Construction (Design Management) (CDM) regulations; • A good working knowledge of Outlook and Excel; • A working knowledge of databases. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent interpersonal, communication and influencing skills; • Excellent organisational and prioritisation skills with the ability to effectively plan and execute work to meet firm and often tight deadlines; • A team player with the ability to communicate effectively with a range of constituencies. | |
| Personal attributes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful and friendly approach; • Conscientious and reliable; • Willing to work flexibly. | |

Newnham College is an equal opportunities employer

May 2022

