



Candidate Brief

CURATOR

October 2021



Mae fersiwn Gymraeg o'r ddogfen hon ar gael



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1. NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES

The National Botanic Garden of Wales ('the Garden') is one of the youngest national botanic gardens in the world and a notable addition to the international community of botanic gardens. The Garden was established with funding from the Millennium Commission and Welsh Government amongst others, and opened to the public in 2000. It is within a Cadw Registered historic landscape, and an extensive restoration of the designed features of lakes, bridges and cascades has been recently completed. The 220 hectare site lies on the edge of the beautiful Towy Valley in Carmarthenshire, South West Wales.

As a modern Botanic Garden, the principles of biodiversity conservation and sustainability as included in the Nagoya Protocol, Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), the Millennium Development Goals and enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), were key founding principles for the organisation. Our international plant collections have been built in partnership with the source country, to ensure a fair and equitable sharing of any benefits arising from them.

In its short history the Botanic Garden has become internationally renowned for its research activities, has created one of the finest ex-situ collections of Mediterranean climate plants in the world, conserved and protected some of the rarest and most threatened endemic Welsh plants, and is an Ambassador for Wales around the globe.

Our education programmes and visitor activities are inspiring tens of thousands of children and adults every year to take greater care of our environment and understand the importance of biodiversity for the future well-being of the planet.

The Botanic Garden is recognised as a National Asset in the Science Strategy for Wales, as well as being an economic anchor organisation for West Wales, supporting a wide range of jobs in tourism, horticulture, science and education.

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is an independent charity, and operates as an iconic visitor destination, set in an historic designed landscape, to generate the funds necessary to deliver our charitable aims. A clear focus on delivering this commercial activity to underpin, support and complement the charitable aims is critical to the success of the organisation. The majority of turnover is generated from earned income, with important financial support also provided by the Welsh Government.

Notable features include the Great Glasshouse, the largest single span glasshouse in the world, with one of the finest collections of Mediterranean climate plants, the tropical house, the double-walled garden, Welsh native plants area, bog garden, woodlands, National Nature Reserve and organic farm, and the historic designed landscape with four lakes and associated cascades, waterfalls and dams.

Our science team are leading experts in pollinator research, are building the National Seed Bank of Wales, contributing to landscape-scale restoration of Welsh meadows and contribute to the development of Welsh Government environmental policy development. We are actively working towards more closely linking our scientific research, botanical conservation and educational activities, to increase the research and academic outcomes from the Botanic Garden.

For our visitors we have a range of hospitality outlets, retail spaces, an Apothecary Hall, Theatr Botanica, classroom space and meeting facilities, and welcome over 160,000 visitors per year.

The Botanic Garden encourages the use of Welsh in the workplace and engages with our visitors bilingually.

The Garden works in partnership with numerous other organisations throughout Wales and the wider international community and has historically successfully secured multi-million pound grant funding to further the aims of the organisation.

2. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Garden has recently developed a new 10 Year Strategic Plan, available on request. This is summarised below:

Vision

A world that values biodiversity, protects plants and the planet.

Mission

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is dedicated to the research and conservation of biodiversity, to sustainability, lifelong learning and the enjoyment of the visitor.

Values

We will:

1. Contribute to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales for future generations.
2. Advocate for and champion environmental conservation and sustainable practices.
3. Promote and develop biodiversity conservation in Wales and internationally, through partnerships and in consultation with national and international organisations.
4. Strive to communicate and engage with a wide diversity of audiences.
5. Through internationally recognised accreditation [e.g. BGCI] demonstrate implementation of the highest standards of research and conservation practice.

Strategic Objectives

1. Be an internationally renowned centre for biodiversity conservation and research.
2. Develop and maintain the horticultural and other collections to the highest curatorial and presentational standards.
3. Deliver inspirational informal and accredited education and training in horticulture, plant sciences, conservation, ecology, sustainability, and related STEM subjects, to all ages and abilities, to promote a greater understanding of the importance of the environment in our sustainable future.
4. Be a successful visitor destination of international standing that contributes to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.
5. As an iconic Welsh institution, contribute to promoting the status and recognition of Wales at an international level.
6. Continue to build and secure a financially sustainable organisation to maximise delivery of the core mission activity of the Botanic Garden.

Enabling Objectives

Effective and efficient management of resources to develop our people, infrastructure, scientific research, horticulture collections and commercial activity on a sustainable basis.

The Garden currently employs around 85 full-time equivalent staff [seasonally higher] across a wide span of skills including finance, operations, horticulture, science, education, marketing, development, visitor services [including catering, retail, and corporate events], and agriculture. The organisation also benefits from the efforts of many dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, including citizen scientists, who participate in activities to support the charitable endeavour. This has typically provided over 22,000 hours of voluntary input per year.

The role of the Curator is central to the delivery of the Garden's mission, and as an ambassador for the Garden within the botanical, horticultural, heritage and educational arenas.

3. HORTICULTURE AND ESTATE

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is accredited by Botanic Gardens Conservation International and delivers world-class research, conservation, education and horticulture on behalf of Wales. The 568-acre estate features diverse plant collections grown in a range of environments, including the largest single-span glasshouse in the world, the Great Glasshouse, which contains an outstanding collection of Mediterranean climate plants. A series of themed areas exhibit the diversity of plants to visitors, including the native Welsh plants, Wallace, Boulder, and Apothecary gardens. The historic double-walled garden contains a systematics garden, as well as a demonstration vegetable garden. The formal garden is encompassed by Waun Las National Nature Reserve. The Reserve is a diverse landscape including certified organic farmland, woodlands and historic designed parkland.

The ex-situ and in-situ collections are curated using the IrisBG system and are a cornerstone of the conservation, research and education programmes of the organisation.

The horticulture team consists of the Curator and 20 full and part-time staff overall, including horticulturists, apprentices, plant records officer and estate staff. A number of the current team have graduated from the ongoing, fully funded, apprenticeship scheme.

Farm and NNR

The Waun Las farm is predominantly a sheep (Balwen) and beef (Welsh Black) enterprise. It includes farmhouse accommodation, stock and machinery buildings and stores. The farm operation is to Soil Association organic standards, under a Glastir environmental stewardship and management grant scheme.

The farm manager, with one part-time assistant, reports to the Curator.

The woodland areas include sections of long-term arboretum planting (the Woods of the World) and amenity access (Spring Woods), as well as parts that fall within the NNR and are managed by the Estates team who also report to the Curator. An NNR management group coordinates activities within the NNR.

The wider estate and NNR is accessible to visitors, and visitor numbers in these areas have expanded considerably since the completion of the landscape restoration project in 2021.

4. THE ROLE

The Curator reports to the Director and is responsible for the botanical/horticultural and estate vision, strategy, and standards of the Garden, as well as being the chief spokesperson and advocate for the horticultural and land-based aspects of the Garden and the staff involved in these. The Curator will be a member of the Senior Management Team.

The Botanic Garden is actively developing greater links between the plant collections, the scientific research and educational activities conducted at the Garden, as well as improving access to the collections and plant materials by external researchers and other botanic gardens.

Key Responsibilities of the Curator include (but are not limited to):

- Contributing proactively to the strategic planning and mission of the whole Garden estate, being particularly responsible for delivering the horticultural and land-based elements within the 2021-31 Strategic Plan.
- Developing and managing the departmental budget [approx. £400k per year], in conjunction with the Director and Head of Finance.
- Developing, reviewing, and implementing relevant policies and protocols to develop and manage the collections to maximise their integrity and value as research resources.
- Lead, inspire, and manage a dedicated and talented staff team in the long-term development of the Botanic Garden and delivery of horticultural excellence.
- Ensuring that resources are effectively and efficiently used to generate interest in plant conservation and create visual impact to maximise visitor numbers and their engagement with the mission of the Botanic Garden.
- Overseeing maintenance and management of the historic designed landscape.
- Championing and supporting horticultural skills training internally, and as part of the education programme.
- Work closely with other senior managers to support the holistic development of the Botanic Garden.
- Brief the Director, Trustees, and colleagues on horticultural and estate conservation matters and related policy at national and international policy levels.
- Act as an Ambassador for the Botanic Garden to promote a wider understanding of the Garden as a centre of excellence, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Contributing to existing and new projects, developments and initiatives at the Garden. This includes initiating, writing, and progressing funding proposals and delivering their implementation, in collaboration with other staff and departments.
- Effectively harnessing the services of volunteers, members, stakeholders and collaborators to the mutual benefit of all parties and the Garden.
- Actively contribute towards the Garden's broad goals relating to environmental sustainability.

5. PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates will demonstrate the majority of the following qualities:

- A credible leader in the horticulture field, with specialist knowledge and experience in the delivery of 'best practice' horticultural performance; a minimum of a degree or equivalent in a relevant area such as horticulture or botanical science.
- Demonstrated ability to prepare, lead and implement significant projects in a botanic garden or comparable environment, including experience in the development and improvement of curated living plant collections.
- The ability and resilience to lead, manage and develop a diverse team of horticulturists and related specialists, including experience of successful change management.
- Experience as a communicator, comfortable in a wide range of situations, including broadcasting, speeches, panels and staff meetings.
- A track record in building relationships and partnerships internally, nationally and internationally.
- An understanding of, and experience in, environmental sustainability.
- A knowledge, appreciation and commitment to the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace.

Key skills

- A qualified botanical/horticultural specialist qualified to degree or Master level, or equivalent professional expertise, demonstrated at senior-level in a similar capacity. Preferably with arboriculture, agriculture and/or land management knowledge.
- Demonstrated people management experience, and an ability to communicate with people at all levels and diverse backgrounds.
- A thorough understanding of the importance of plant conservation and the role of botanic gardens in this.
- An understanding of the principles of tree risk assessment and management.
- A demonstrated ability to develop and grow teams, and a team-working culture across the organisation.
- Ability to represent the organisation when required, including at external forums and provision of specialist advice to shape policy in Wales.
- Substantial knowledge and understanding of applying current best practice to developing horticultural collections and conservation techniques, whilst managing an historic designed landscape in a National Nature Reserve.
- Successful track record of contributing at a senior level, managing resources including staff, finance, and facilities, and with evidence of the ability to plan and deliver budgets, monitor expenditure and provide verbal and written reports on progress.
- Evidence of involvement in initiating, preparing, progressing and delivering funding bids and grants – or the clear capacity to develop skills in this area.
- Commitment to the aims, objectives, and ethos of the Garden and to the people, language and culture of Wales. The ability to speak Welsh or willingness to learn basic conversational skills is highly desirable.
- Ability and willingness to work flexibly in relation to working times/days, including weekend working and provide duty manager cover on a rota.
- Ability to travel independently in a rural area is essential, a valid driving licence is desirable.

6. OUTLINE AND DETAILS OF APPOINTMENT

The position is permanent and is available from the soonest date that can be arranged.

Salary - A salary of up to £40,000 will be available, the level of which will be dependent on capabilities and track record of proven skills.

Work hours and pattern - the hours and pattern of work are generally expected to be 37.5 hours per week. The actual distribution of those hours and the specific days and times of work requires flexibility and are arranged on any five days out of seven as required to meet the needs of the role and organisation. A reasonable number of additional hours, as well as some weekend, evening, and bank holiday working, is a necessary part of the role and receives compensatory time off in lieu. Flexibility, willingness, and the capacity to travel within Wales, as well as within and occasionally beyond the UK as appropriate, on behalf of the Garden are expected.

The Garden supports the personal development of its staff and would aim to facilitate the successful candidate's professional development using formal and informal routes.

Benefits -

- Free Garden family membership or membership of choice
- Death in service benefit of 3 times salary
- 50% discount in catering outlets and 10% discount in other outlets
- Free work/life employee benefits assistance programme
- Pension of 5% - contributory
- Free parking

7. HOW TO APPLY

For further information or informal enquiries please contact:

Huw Francis, Director (email/e-bost: Huw.Francis@gardenofwales.org.uk; 01558 667106 or 07876 232848).

To apply please prepare a cover letter, along with a CV, which clearly identifies how you meet the criteria outlined above, and what you would bring to the Garden. Applications should be submitted, preferably by email, to Anne-Maria Nicholas, HR Manager: Anne-Maria.Nicholas@gardenofwales.org.uk; 01558 667153.

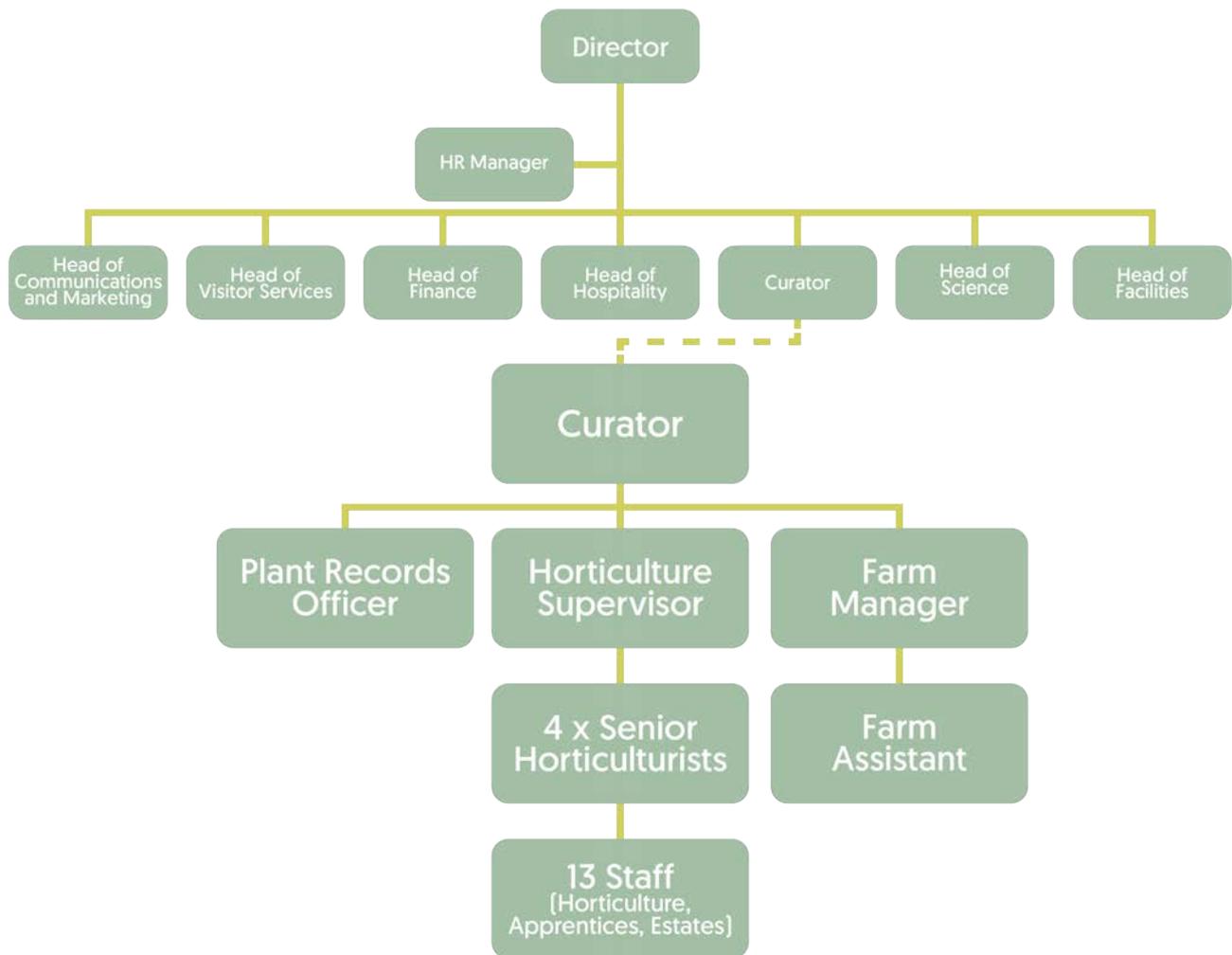
Please also provide full contact details for two referees (including telephone and email), one whom must be your current or most recent employer.

8. CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

The closing date for applications is 9am Monday November 22nd, 2021. We reserve the right to close this advert early should sufficient applications be received.

We welcome applications through the medium of Welsh and applications in Welsh will not be treated any less favourably.

9. APPENDIX 1: STAFF STRUCTURE



10. APPENDIX 2: 2021-31 TEN YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Available on request