

FURTHER PARTICULARS

Job title	Assistant Head Gardener
Location	Christ Church
Department	Treasury
Salary	University Scale Grade 5 (currently £32,108 - £37,388, with a discretionary range up to £40,514)
Hours	40 hours per week
Contract type	Permanent
Responsible to	Head Gardener
Application deadline	Noon 29 June 2026
Vacancy reference	2026_HG
Additional information	This is a full-time position that cannot be held concurrently with any other substantive post without the explicit permission of the Human Resources Director. This post is subject to a four-month probationary period.

Christ Church

Known as 'The House', Christ Church was originally founded in 1525 as Cardinal College and, subsequently, by Henry VIII in 1546. The college has made an indelible mark on the UK. It played an important role in the creation of the Church of England, housed King Charles I during the English Civil War, and has educated 13 Prime Ministers and many notable alumni such as Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll. Today, Christ Church continues its tradition as a unique joint foundation: one of Oxford's largest colleges—with accommodation for over 600 undergraduates and graduates—and the Cathedral for the Diocese of Oxford. It is also a popular tourist destination, encompassing not only quadrangles, gardens grounds, and the Meadows, but also a Picture Gallery and Tudor dining hall. More information is available at www.chch.ox.ac.uk.

Christ Church is now seeking to appoint an Assistant Head Gardener who is enthusiastic, self-motivated, experienced, reliable and adaptable and who is keen to use their knowledge and experience to ensure the gardens and grounds are maintained and developed to a high standard.

The gardens and grounds

Within the Christ Church grounds there are 10 separate gardens. Some are open to the public to view through tours and others are private or used for functions. They are all maintained by the gardening team. There are two quadrangles with formal lawns and two gardens outside the College curtilage, one of which is being maintained by a contractor, but consideration is being given to bring this in-house.

In all these gardens the emphasis is on the trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and bulbs surrounding the spacious lawns, which are maintained to a high standard. Summer and winter bedding schemes feature in a small part of the Rose Garden. Plant production is undertaken in a small plant nursery containing glasshouses and cold frames.



Christ Church Meadow is an enclosed area of just under 50 acres, adjacent to the college, with tree lined walks and a meadow area with free daily public access as well as two fields managed by a local tenant farmer where the college's Longhorn cattle graze and an annual hay cut is performed.

The gardens and Meadow are within the Oxford (Central and University) Conservation Area and are Grade I listed and included in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England. "The Christ Church designed landscape is of the highest significance ... as an early example of ornamental walks, quadrangles and garden spaces, and as the designed setting for an extensive group of Grade I buildings."

Recently extensive work has been carried out to improve biodiversity in the Meadow areas including flood plain meadow restoration, native bulb planting and wildflower sowing as well as changing maintenance regimes to encourage a more natural look to the walks and fields. Use of chemicals is kept to a minimum, but some herbicides are routinely used.

The role

The Assistant Head Gardener is a hands-on supervisory position and responsible for the following:

- Deputising for the Head Gardener when they are away.
- Working as part of a small team of gardeners to ensure a designated area of the gardens are being maintained to a high standard

Maintenance duties include:

- maintenance and planting of trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, bulbs and annuals
- General lawn care
- Care of wildflower areas within the Meadow
- Hedge cutting and strimming
- Plant propagation and production
- Weed and pest/disease control
- Leaf, litter and debris clearing
- Using appropriate machinery

- Assist the Head Gardener with the line management of a team consisting of between 7-9 gardeners and potentially a WRAGS Trainee.

- Involved in the planning and implementing an annual programme of preparation and maintenance of the gardens at Christ Church. This programme includes responsibility for the propagation and rearing of plants and for planting, weeding, pruning and daily care. It is essential that the Assistant Head Gardener should be a keen and experienced plants-person as well as having previous experience of managing a formal garden including running a small nursery or green house.

- Monitor and supervise team members ensuring all members are being compliant with health and safety legislation to ensure tasks are being carried out safely. Assists the Head Gardener in compiling and reviewing risk assessments, keeping records as required and ensuring contractors are complying with Christ Church's health and safety policies.

- Assist the Head Gardener with supervising contractors as necessary.
- Assist in the management of the maintenance of the public areas within Christ Church Meadow including Boat House Island, including tree care, planting, grass cutting, wildflower areas.
- Manage the plant nursery and green houses.
- Assist in the ordering of plants and garden machinery from third party suppliers.
- Working closely with the Head Gardener in planning for improvements and the design and maintenance of new and revamped planting areas, as well as small areas of seasonal bedding, and for a rolling programme of tree planting.
- Work in cooperation with other departments and with contractors to facilitate maintenance work and events such as the triennial commemoration ball, college plays and weddings etc.
- Carry out other gardening duties, commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the role

Person specification

Essential

- Possess a minimum qualification of NVQ Level 3 or equivalent, NCH, HND, OND, City & Guilds, Kew or Edinburgh Diploma in Horticulture, RHS Level 3, MHort RHS.
- A proven track record of high-quality horticultural work.
- Supervisory or management experience.
- Thorough understanding of relevant Health and Safety legislation, formal training in manual handling and risk assessment.
- Motivated team player who can take initiative, be proactive, and deliver to deadlines.
- Good communication skills to effectively engage different audiences within Christ Church.
- Good plant knowledge and interest in improving planting within the grounds.
- PA1/6 spraying certificates.
- NPTC Level 2 chainsaw certificates.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications
- An interest in sustainable garden practices
- An understanding of high-quality lawn care
- Knowledge of wild meadows and growing native plants
- Full clean driving licence

Desirable

- Either Garden Design or garden nursery management experience.

Terms and Conditions

This position is offered on a full-time basis. The working hours for the Assistant Head Gardener will be 40 hours per week – 7.00am to 4.00pm with one-hour lunch break (unpaid), Monday to Friday.

Salary - University Scale Grade 5 (currently £32,108 - £37,388, with a discretionary range up to £40,514).

Pension – Membership of the Oxford Staff Pension Scheme (OSPS).

Annual leave – 25 days annual leave plus statutory Bank Holidays, rising to 30 days after two years' service. The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Meals – Employees are entitled to take lunch free of charge in College each day they work when the kitchen is open

Employee Assistance Programme – Free confidential telephone support service is available to all staff.

Sports Facilities – Access to the University Sports club

University Card – For discounts in shops, cafes and restaurants and University Leisure facilities

Smoking – Smoking is not permitted in the workplace.

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks: If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide proof of your right to work in the UK; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated.

How to Apply

To apply for this position please complete provide the documentation listed below, no later than the deadline of **Noon 29 June 2026**. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Application documents should include:

- A letter of application addressed to the Head Gardener stating your interest in the role, and explaining how you meet the criteria in the Person Specification, set out above, using examples of your skills and experience; and
- A CV, including the names and contact details of two referees. References will be taken up only for the successful candidate.
- The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.

Applications should be emailed to recruitment@chch.ox.ac.uk

Applications will be judged only against the criteria which are set out in the job description, and applicants should ensure that their applications explain how they meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of their skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants).

Christ Church is committed to fairness, consistency and transparency in selection decisions. Members of the selection panel will be aware of the principles of equality of



opportunity, fair selection and the risks of bias. Applications are particularly welcome from black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in College staff.

Interviews for the position are expected to take place during **early to mid-July 2026**.

If you need help

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact recruitment@chch.ox.ac.uk. All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence and will not form part of the selection decision.

Important Information for Candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to Christ Church as part of the job application process will be used only for the purposes of determining suitability for the post and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the Christ Church Privacy Notice available at: <https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/privacy-policy>.

Due to the large volume of recruitment that Christ Church administers we are unable to provide feedback to non-shortlisted applicants.

Christ Church's policy on retirement

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in non-academic posts have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Christ Church is committed to equality of opportunity. It is our policy and practice that entry into employment and progression within employment will be determined only by criteria which are related to the duties of a particular post and the relevant salary scale. No applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of their age, disability, ethnicity, marital or civil partnership status, parental status, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.