

**Head Gardener**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job title**: Head Gardener

**Based**: The Regent’s Park and Primrose Hill (The Regent’s Park, South Block, The Storeyard, Inner Circle, Regent’s Park, London NW1 4NR), with travel to all parks

**Salary**: £32,666 to £36,921 per annum, depending on experience

**Terms**: Permanent contract on a full-time basis, 36 hours per week. Due to the nature of this role, there will be an 80% practical work, to 20% office split so opportunities for remote working are limited

26 days’ annual leave plus public holidays, increasing to 29 days after 3 years’ service.

A pension scheme and healthcare plan are available

**Reporting to:** Assistant Park Manager

**Responsible for:** N/A

**Internal relationships:** Park Manager, Assistant Park Manager, Head of Horticulture, Wildlife Officer, Head Gardeners, other Royal Parks managers, technical, executive, and support officers, Commitment to The Royal Parks’ values of being responsible, excellent, inclusive, open and respectful, and a commitment to supporting diverse and inclusive teams

**External relationships:** The managers and staff of the Landscape Maintenance (LM) contractor, other contractors, concessionaires, and suppliers, members of interest groups, Friends of the Park, volunteers, park users, officers of the Metropolitan Police Service, other organisations and external partners involved with the park or TRP corporately

**BACKGROUND**

The Royal Parks (TRP) is a charity that manages over 5,000 acres of diverse parkland, rare habitats and historic buildings and monuments in eight Royal Parks across London. These are: Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, The Green Park, St James’s Park, The Regent’s Park and Primrose Hill, Greenwich Park, Richmond Park, and Bushy Park. We also manage other important public spaces including Brompton Cemetery and Victoria Tower Gardens. Our eight Royal Parks and other public spaces are among the most visited attractions in the UK with 77 million visits every year.

The Regent’s Park and Primrose Hill are managed together and make up the second largest of the Royal Parks after Richmond Park. Regent’s Park is the most diverse of the Royal Parks, with numerous high-quality gardens, the largest open access sports facilities in central London, a wide range of habitats supporting a diversity of wildlife and has a reputation for excellence.

**JOB PURPOSE**

You will support the Assistant Park Manager (APM) with delivery of landscape maintenance operations, including horticultural projects arising from park management plans, including but not limited to implementing planting plans, pruning works, regeneration projects, and habitat creation.

Head Gardener posts are primarily operational roles, approx. 80:20 practical to office split. You will lead with a strong horticultural focus to plan and implement practical ornamental horticultural operations, and some conservation duties, delivered through a Horticultural Resource Team (HRT) of gardeners, apprentices, and volunteers.

A key responsibility will be to lead the HRT in the establishment and maintenance of a new 2 acre garden, currently under construction on the site of a former plant nursery, due to open to the public in April 2026. This garden will utilise a range of planting types including floriferous meadow, and low fertility planting. Experience of these and other planting types will be essential.

With a well-rounded approach to horticulture, you will assist with the management and maintenance of other horticultural features within the park, and deliver key objectives of the Royal Parks charity as our future landscape strategy develops.

**MAIN DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Plan and deliver all day-to-day aspects of practical ornamental horticultural maintenance, presentation, and cyclical works.
2. Maximise the visitor experience by ensuring excellent horticultural standards are maintained.
3. Keep digital and written plant and planting records up to date, and ensure plant collections are correctly identified, labelled, and interpreted, where necessary.
4. Support the APM to plan, procure, and deliver seasonal and permanent planting schemes and horticultural projects.
5. Propose ideas and assist with the practical horticultural implementation of TRP initiatives and programmes, e.g. Biodiversity and Sustainability, Green Flag/Green Heritage.
6. Report wildlife issues and concerns to the Wildlife Officer and APM upon discovery.
7. Take a practical lead on biosecurity relevant to areas of responsibility.
8. Provide updates and photographs related to the delivery of practical horticulture.
9. Undertake or oversee occasional pesticide application for the control of invasive plant species where necessary.
10. Monitor and engage with the HRT and other Landscape Maintenance staff to ensure work schedules are completed in a timely manner and to high standards, ensuring health and safety best practice is followed at all times.
11. Liaise as required with other contractors to facilitate the delivery of other project and maintenance operations within the park.
12. Provide leadership, guidance, and motivational support to the HRT to instil a positive working environment and ensure high quality output in a safe and efficient manner.
13. Assist in the recruitment, selection, training, and induction of horticultural volunteers in conjunction with the Volunteering Team, APM and other stakeholders/partnership groups as required.
14. Assist the APM in planning, developing, and evaluating work programmes, training, and plant identification for apprentices, trainees, and volunteers.
15. Act as the main day to day operational point of contact and support for a diverse range of volunteers (and carers) including issuing practical tasks to suit abilities with daily catchups, motivating and developing the team.
16. Participate in the planning and delivery of volunteer and apprentice recognition events such as recruitment days, awards ceremonies, masterclasses, horticultural tours etc., working with colleagues as required.
17. Assist in the delivery of high-quality community, corporate, and stakeholder volunteer days, supporting the APM and Volunteering Team on project plans, delivering risk assessments, and purchasing tools and equipment.
18. Attend LM contract meetings, team meetings, and other meetings as and when required. Report back on progress against HRT work schedules, report issues, and escalate where necessary, demonstrating clear communication and accountability.
19. Support the contract administration and monitoring of the HRT through the completion of Key Performance Indicators, undertaking quality checks of work undertaken, recording, and reporting attendance, and providing technical support to TRP colleagues.
20. Supply and maintain sufficient hand tools, PPE, and other equipment for the HRT. Suggest ideas for the development of sustainable resources and operations to the APM.
21. Produce monthly roundup emails for the horticultural volunteers and assist with contributing information for other marketing/ promotional material as needed, working closely with the Volunteer Team and Communications Team.
22. Be aware of responsibilities as described in the Health & Safety Manual and summarised in the Health & Safety Handbook; and in particular to implement policy in their area of responsibility, ensuring all staff, contractors, and volunteers comply with Health & Safety regulations and best practice when working in the park.
23. Be aware of safeguarding children and adults, following TRP Policy.
24. Respond directly to face-to-face enquiries from members of the public and stakeholders whilst performing duties in the park.
25. Report defects and incidents observed in the park, carry out incident investigations, and write reports, following up as required.
26. Be a team player and provide support to the park management team, as well as the wider TRP team as and when required. The Head Gardener may be required to cover other sites on an ad hoc basis during periods of absence.
27. Carry out other relevant duties that may be agreed with the Line Manager from time to time. Some out of hours working is required during evenings and weekends. Please note The Royal Parks applies a ‘time off in lieu’ policy.

27. Role model TRPs values and behaviours at all times.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| **Selection criteria** | **Essential / Desirable** |
| **Qualifications** | |
| * Formal horticultural qualification e.g. National Certificate in Horticulture, National Diploma, NVQ Level 3 (amenity horticulture) or RHS, or equivalent experience with a minimum of three years leading teams | **E** |
| **Experience** | |
| * Experience in using MS office package including Outlook, Excel and Word | **E** |
| * Demonstrable practical horticultural experience, ideally in a public park or publicly accessible garden | **E** |
| * Experience of working with volunteers, particularly in a horticultural environment | **D** |
| * Writing risk assessments and method statements | **D** |
| * Competence in visual tree Inspection | **D** |
| **Skills, knowledge and ability** | |
| * Good knowledge of Health & Safety in the workplace, including practical knowledge of COSHH regulations | **E** |
| * Good knowledge of horticultural plant and machinery operations | **E** |
| * Excellent plant knowledge, particularly around shrubs, herbaceous, floriferous meadow, and low fertility planting | **E** |
| * Excellent leadership, motivational and communication skills | **E** |
| * Excellent organisational and forward work planning skills | **E** |
| * Financial awareness towards staffing, overtime, tools & equipment and other TRP property | **D** |
| **Other** | |
| * Commitment to The Royal Parks’ values of being responsible, excellent, inclusive, open and respectful, and a commitment to supporting diverse and inclusive teams | **E** |
| * Full driving licence | **E** |
| * First Aid Certificate | **D** |

The Royal Parks is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace and is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from candidates from all backgrounds and successful candidates will be appointed on merit.