



JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Part time Assistant Gardener
LOCATION:	Bishopscourt, 24 St Margaret's Street, Rochester, ME1 1TS
ACCOUNTABLE TO:	The Bishop and those he nominates
RESPONSIBLE FOR	Not Applicable
KEY RELATIONSHIPS:	Head Gardener, the Bishop and his staff
HOURS	six per week
SALARY	Full time equivalent £23,063 (plus allowances of £4,313) per annum
HOLIDAY	Full time equivalent 25 days, plus 8 bank holidays
PENSION	Non-clergy staff will be automatically enrolled into the Church Administrators Pension Fund
APPRAISAL	Yearly, by the Bishop or those he nominates

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Jonathan and Toni Gibbs moved to Bishopscourt in 2022, when Jonathan became the Bishop of Rochester. The post of Assistant Gardener is now vacant. The Assistant Gardener supports the Head Gardener and there is a small team of volunteers.

Also working at Bishopscourt are three members of the Bishop's office staff.

The Garden: The garden is walled and approximately one and a half acre. At the centre of the garden is a large lawn. Around this, the garden is divided into different areas, including a small meadow, a patio with raised beds, a rose garden and pergola with climbing roses, a gravel garden, a shady woodland area and a small vegetable garden and glasshouse. A large section of yew hedging separates the main garden from a 'secret' garden. There is also a 'bower' with seating, and a 'lookout' at the end of the garden with views over the Medway. The garden opens for two days per year (April & June) as part of the National Garden Scheme.

<https://ngs.org.uk/gardens/bishopscourt-me1/>

There are also opportunities for an Open Garden or plant sales for a chosen charity, for example Christian Aid. The Open Garden usually attract a large number of visitors.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Duties, which will include (but not confined to):

- Mowing and edging lawns to a high standard
- Carrying out routine garden maintenance tasks (e.g., weeding, mulching, deadheading, watering, pruning)
- Assisting the Head Gardener with larger jobs and seasonal projects
- Supporting and helping volunteers and the gardening team as needed
- Preparing the garden for NGS (National Garden Scheme) open days and assisting during these events
- Helping to maintain tools, machinery, and garden structures in good order
- Ensuring all work is completed safely and efficiently

The garden is under continuous development, with changes being made to the layout and the planting.

Other duties: Being available to assist on the two weekends when the garden is open to the public. Visitors appreciate being able to talk to the gardeners on these occasions. Time off in lieu will be given for these days.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

Skills/Aptitudes:

- A genuine passion for horticulture.
- The ability to cope with the physical demands of the role
- The ability to use own initiative when appropriate
- Ability to work well within a small team and as part of a close-knit and established household
- Ability to maintain confidences and be courteous, friendly and discrete at all times.
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Willingness to learn and take direction from the Head Gardener.
- Reliable, hardworking and able to work outdoors in all weathers.

Knowledge/Experience:

- Basic Knowledge of plants, lawns and garden care an advantage
- Previous gardening or grounds keeping experience preferred.
- Competent handling and maintenance of garden tools
- Competent and safe use of garden equipment
- Knowledge (or willingness to learn) of Health and Safety and COSHH regulations

Desirable

- Sympathy towards the Christian faith and an interest in the Church of England.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Standards of Behaviour and Conduct

Staff are expected to act at all times with due consideration for others and in a manner befitting their position as employees of the Church and as professionals, whatever their job.

Health and Safety Responsibilities

All staff are required to ensure that they understand and accept the legal duties placed on them by the Health and Safety at Work Act not to endanger themselves or others and by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to co-operate with colleagues and management in the control of health and safety at work. And therefore:

- keep up to date and ensure compliance with current health and safety legislation
- to read and understand and abide by the health and safety policy;
- to make themselves familiar with accident and emergency procedures on their site;
- to make themselves familiar with the findings of any risk assessments which might affect them;
- to inform their manager immediately of any health or safety deficiencies or dangerous situations or near misses;
- to set a good personal example in respect of health and safety.

Confidentiality

Staff must not pass on to unauthorised persons, any information obtained in the course of their duties without the permission of their manager.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Salary

Full time equivalent £23,063 (plus allowances of £4,313) per annum.

Pension scheme

Non-clergy staff will be admitted to the Church Administrators Pension Fund (CAPF, DC Section) unless they choose to opt out. Clergy already in the Church of England Funded Pensions Scheme (CEFPS) will have the option of either remaining in this scheme or joining the CAPF scheme.

There is no contracting – out certificate under the Pension Schemes Act 1993 in force for this employment in relation to the CAPF and CEFPS. Both CAPF and CEFPS members are contracted-in to the State Second Pension.

The Church Commissioners on behalf of the Bishop have an income protection insurance arrangement. To be eligible for cover under this policy an employee must be a member of the CAPF DC section. Please note that insurance cover is not necessarily automatic and that underwriting may be required by the schemes in some instances. Cover will be subject to any terms and conditions laid down by the insurance company.

Hours of work

Your hours of work will be six hrs per week on a Friday (plus one-hour unpaid lunch break).

Annual Leave

You are entitled to 25 days full time equivalent, plus 8-day bank holiday.

Notice

During the probationary period your employment may be terminated by two weeks written notice on either side or by pay in lieu of notice by your employer. Once your appointment is confirmed the notice period will be extended to one month on either side or that to which you are entitled in accordance with current employment legislation, whichever is greater or by pay in lieu of notice by your employer. Should you be summarily dismissed on the grounds of gross misconduct, your employment may be terminated without notice.

Probationary period

There will be a probationary period of six months.

Application forms to be sent to Bishops court, 24 St Margaret's Street. Rochester, ME1 1TS

Closing date for receipt of applications: 5pm Friday 14 November 2025

Please note, if you have not heard from us by the close of play on Friday 21 November 2025 you have not been shortlisted for interview.

Interviews: Friday 21 November 2025 at Bishops court.