The Japanese Garden at Cowden Castle

Scottish Charity No SC045060

**EDUCATION AND OUTREACH OFFICER**

**Job Description**

The Japanese Garden at Cowden Castle wishes to appoint a Part time Education and Outreach Officer. The post is project funded until 2023 supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and a range of Trusts and Foundations.

**Background**:

The Japanese Garden at Cowden was commissioned by the explorer Ella Christie in 1908 after an inspiring visit to Kyoto. Created by Taki Handa, the only woman credited with designing such a garden, it has been described as “the most important Japanese Garden in the Western world”, has been visited by celebrities and dignitaries and is now a listed Inventory landscape. Destroyed by vandals in 1963, it was almost lost forever until a careful restoration project began in 2013.

Opened to visitors in 2018 as a restoration in progress, a funded project lasting three years includes the reinstatement of the original Tea House, as well as pathworks, lighting, craftsmanship training projects, staffing, interpretation and education, audience development and outreach events.

The Tea House will display an Ella Christie collection and explain her vision for the garden, its decline and restoration. Sensitive interpretation will guide visitors through the site explaining how Japanese gardens are a source of meditation and peace. There will be special events, walks, learning, training and employability opportunities and regular ‘protected’ opening hours that will offer therapeutic access for vulnerable groups.

Our engagement with individuals, groups and volunteers has far exceeded expectations and to meet ambitious plans for future engagement we require an Education and Outreach Officer that will have access to supporting budgets to engage volunteers, manage work experience placements, involve schools, students and community/special interest groups.

This project is vital to the ongoing restoration, visitor offer, viability and sustainability of a unique visitor attraction of international significance. Further information about the garden can be found online at:

<https://www.cowdengarden.com/>

**Key tasks**:

The full programme of activities is described in the Garden’s Activity Plan and application to the NLHF. The Education and Outreach Officer will develop and deliver the programmes envisaged.

On appointment a full familiarisation process on the history, value, context of the Japanese Garden with the Trustees will be provided. Key tasks will include but are not limited to:

* To consider and review the range of activities identified so far
* To build on existing relationships and to make new connections with community groups that have an interest in and can contribute to the project, including occasional out of hours talks and outreach sessions
* Manage contact with local primary and secondary schools in the area making arrangements for, and supporting school visits, and engaging, if requested, in site visits
* Devising teaching materials in consultation with education and community partners to support learning visits to the garden
* Specifically reviewing, finalising and supporting the delivery of planned activities including Bamboo-work workshop, Rhododendron walks & talks, Stone Workshops and a Fungi walk & talk. In addition the Walks for Wellbeing project, Green Gym, Haiku Alive and More Than Making Tea employability project (these are likely to be run and delivered together with specialist partners)
* Administering the protected hours for vulnerable individuals/groups and extended hours for special interest groups
* Support a biannual Japan Festival, Japanese cultural exchange drop-in and bookable events, and an end of season Lottery Players Event
* Fulfilling an outreach role into organisations and communities that have difficulty in accessing the garden
* Support the recruitment, training and mentoring of existing and new volunteers in collaboration with the Garden Team
* Promote and develop community and volunteer involvement in the Garden through the Garden Team and partnership working, in particular with a focus on the Garden Guide team
* To consult with activity participants and potential audiences to collect feedback and evaluation on activities
* To support updates to funders with progress reports
* To work within the standards of our Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults
* Working closely with the Visitor Experience and Marketing role to provide a comprehensive and shared service, in particular liaison over the corporate /private hire of the Tea House, ensuring this dovetails with free-to-access community use and Garden visitor access.

**Qualifications**:

* Demonstrable ability to engage with a range of different audiences including young people, families and general audiences (essential)
* Excellent interpersonal skills (essential)
* Excellent written and verbal communication skills (essential)
* Experience of developing skills and training projects that deliver formal and informal outputs (desirable)
* An interest in, knowledge of or openness to Japanese culture and practices (desirable)
* Experience of undertaking consultation with a variety of audiences, from the general public to strategic stakeholders (desirable)
* Experience of the development, management and implementation of formal and informal learning activities, working with schools, the curriculum for excellence and educational outreach (desirable)
* Experience of developing and delivering an events programme (desirable)
* Experience of supporting and contributing to the development interpretation projects (desirable)
* Experience of working with NLHF funded activity projects (desirable)
* Ability to work constructively with a range of stakeholders (essential)
* Strong organisational and time management skills with a proven ability to prioritise tasks and meet deadlines (essential)
* Demonstrable ability to use initiative and resolve problems effectively and promptly (essential)
* Ability to work effectively and efficiently as part of a team as well as unsupervised (essential)
* Ability and willingness to work flexibly and out of hours at weekends and evenings and through the season (essential)
* Driving licence and access to own vehicle (desirable)
* Have IT skills for:
  + word processing
  + email

# Conditions of appointment:

* The Education and Outreach Officer will be employed by and will be responsible to the Trustees of the Japanese Garden and Cowden Castle SCIO.
* The appointee will be expected to report to the Trustee on a regular basis, reporting progress and completing the evaluation requirements of the project.
* The Education and Outreach Officer will work 2.5 days per week, at times to be agreed with the line manager. There will be no set hours: there will be work on mornings and afternoons, and on occasion at weekends.
* The seasonal nature of the attraction may require that a greater number of days are worked April – October. Should this occur this will be balanced by a reduced workload during the closed season.
* The role will be paid up to £21,500 per annum pro rata payable monthly in arrears, taxable and subject to National Insurance Contributions. Remuneration will be reviewed annually.