

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH



Director of Finance, Corporate Services & People Candidate Pack

May 2026

“All known life depends on plants, yet approximately 45% of the world’s plant species are threatened with extinction. In this context, the skills, ambition, and ingenuity of botanic gardens are more crucial than ever. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a global leader in plant research, education, and horticulture, dedicated to shaping a better future. We are the custodians of the National Botanical Collection, provide high-quality scientific evidence to drive impactful conservation action, and enrich individuals and communities through transformative learning and engagement.”

Julia Knights

Regius Keeper, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh





OUR ORGANISATION

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a world-leading centre for plant science, horticulture, conservation, education, and public engagement. Founded in 1670 as a physic garden for the study of medicinal plants, it attracts around one million visitors each year and holds one of the world's most diverse botanical collections.

Through a wide network of national and international partnerships, we pursue our mission to Explore, Conserve and Explain the World of Plants, addressing global biodiversity loss and climate change.

RBGE is funded by Scottish Government Grant-in-Aid and self-generated income, reflecting our dual role as a public institution and an enterprising organisation. The continued growth of commercial activity, philanthropic support, and consultancy work is a key strategic priority for ensuring long-term sustainability and impact.





OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our work focuses on:

- **Understanding plant and fungal diversity for the benefit of society:** our scientific research seeks to understand the threats facing species and biomes, and how they respond to environmental change. We develop strategies and actions to conserve biodiversity both in Scotland and around the world.
- **Conserving and developing botanical collections:** we curate and enhance the National Botanical Collection as a living scientific and cultural heritage resource, and we support the development of botanical collections globally – particularly in partnerships with countries across the Global South.
- **Engaging and educating people:** we build global capacity to respond to the biodiversity and climate crises by sharing scientific, horticultural and conservation expertise through education and public engagement, inspiring people of all ages to value and protect the natural world.



Vision

A positive future
for plants, people
and planet.

Mission

To explore, conserve
and explain the world
of plants.



THE ROLE

Reports to: Chief Executive (Regius Keeper)

Direct reports: 3 direct reports as department heads (Heads of Finance, People and Culture, Digital).

Working pattern: Full time, 5 days a week.

Leadership and Representation

- A member of our Executive and Senior Leadership teams, supporting effective, collaborative leadership and delivery of RBGE's strategy and operations.
- Lead and develop skilled, motivated Finance, Digital, People and Culture teams and promote efficient, equitable working practices.
- Produce clear, timely reports (e.g. Board papers, Annual Report, performance reports, Risk Register, Health & Safety).
- Act as an ambassador and spokesperson for the Finance, Digital, People and Culture teams, representing RBGE externally.
- Serve as a Non-executive Director for RBGE legal entities such as the Botanic Trading Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of RBGE acting as our commercial trading arm
- Attend Board of Trustees meetings.

Strategy, Finance, and Corporate Planning

- Lead strategic and operational planning, including business and financial planning and performance reporting.
- Oversee financial operations to support sustainable growth.
- Support income diversification and work with the Executive Team to identify new revenue opportunities to support our charitable aims.
- Contribute to planning and delivery of major capital programmes aligned to budget and priorities.
- Ensure procurement is cost-effective, compliant, and fit for purpose.

Governance, Risk, and Policy

- Act as Company Secretary, supporting Board and Committee governance and meeting preparation.
- Serve as Senior Information Risk Owner, ensuring compliance with information governance requirements.
- Oversee governance, legal and risk matters, including new ventures.
- Advise the Regius Keeper and Executive Team on best practice resources, governance, innovation, and policy compliance.
- Support corporate policy development and maintain awareness of the wider policy context.



- Act as a key contact with our Scottish Government Sponsor Division ENFOR and work to strengthen external links.
- Serve as Honorary Secretary to the Botanics Foundation, an independent charity that seeks to advance the mission of RBGE through charitable giving

People and Culture

- Lead an effective people function, continuing to position RBGE as an employer of choice.
- Drive workforce planning, skills development, and continuous improvement.
- Oversee talent management, performance, pay, training, and volunteering to build an inclusive, high-performing workforce.
- Strengthen organisational resilience and adaptability.
- Chair the staff EDI Advocacy Group and champion inclusion.
- Act as Director responsible for Health and Safety, chairing the H&S Committee and ensuring compliance.

Digital & Technology Services

- Provide strategic leadership for technology, data systems, and cybersecurity.
- Oversee digital strategy, CRM, ticketing, e-commerce, and data governance to enhance the visitor experience.

Other Duties

- Undertake additional responsibilities as agreed with the Regius Keeper.





PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential skills

- Strong financial acumen and ideally a qualified accountant
- Strong proven senior leadership in multi-disciplinary corporate services, particularly Finance, Digital, and People & Culture
- Relevant previous experience e.g. of ensuring effective delivery and outcomes in a large charity such as a heritage body or a visitor attraction, or a university, public body or similar
- Strong people skills - excellent leader, including high level people management, and excellent stakeholder communications
- Experience as part of a multi-disciplinary Executive team, with Board-level engagement skills.
- Experienced in the development and monitoring of budgets and business plans
- A strong background in strategic and operational planning and performance, and knowledge of management information systems
- Proficient in external statutory reporting and audit
- Familiarity with current Human Resource practices
- Familiarity with current procurement practices
- Knowledge and experience of leading/advising effective and transparent governance

Desirable skills

- Experience of successful change management
- Experience of health and safety management
- Good working knowledge of equalities and diversity in the workplace
- Good working knowledge of charity legislation





TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

This role is based at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's HQ in the capital with some travel to our gardens at Benmore, Dawyck and Logan, and occasional travel to elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

We offer a generous employment package:

- Annually alongside your starting salary of £93,341, the organisation contributes 28.97% of this towards you being a member of the defined benefit Civil Service Pension scheme. Your pension pot in this scheme will grow by 2.32% per year.
- 25 days holiday entitlement on appointment, increasing to 30 days after 2 years of service, with the option to buy additional holidays.
- 11.5 days of public and privilege holidays annually.
- A range of staff support mechanisms, including an employee assistance programme, cycle to work and staff discount schemes.
- A number of family-friendly options to support work-life balance, including flexible working arrangements, enhanced contractual maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave, and career breaks.
- Discounts in our shop, restaurants, and cafes.





HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please email recruitment@rbge.org.uk with:

- Your CV, maximum 2 pages
- A covering letter of a maximum 1 page outlining the skills, knowledge and experience you would bring to the role
- Please also complete a digital equal opportunities questionnaire*: [EOQ form](#)

The closing date for applications is 17:00 (BST) on Thursday, 11 June 2026. Interviews will be held in later in June.

If you have any questions about the role, please contact Jennifer Martin at jmartin@rbge.org.uk

*The online equal opportunities monitoring form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete this as part of the application process.

