

Job description

Job title:	Communications Officer
Salary:	£29,000 - £32,000 per annum pro rata (based on a 35-hour week)
Location:	Main place of work Westonbirt Arboretum (min 60% of working week onsite)
Working hours:	Full Time – Part time 28-35 hours p/w. Flexible working considered.
Benefits:	Generous benefits package including 10% employer's pension contribution; and complimentary joint membership.
Reporting to:	Head of Income Generation & Engagement

Westonbirt Arboretum and the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum

Westonbirt, The National Arboretum is one of Britain's finest tree collections, with the vision to be a world leader in trees, inspiring people through conservation, education, and participation. With over 600 acres homing 15,000 specimens and 2,500 species of tree from all over the world, the arboretum plays a vital part in research and conservation, and is a significant visitor attraction, drawing over 500,000 visitors each year.

Westonbirt Arboretum's story began in the 1850s with the wealthy Victorian landowner, Robert Holford's passion for a natural world. Owner of the large estate centred around Westonbirt House, on a quest to discover rare and extraordinary plants, he used his family fortune to finance and plant collecting expeditions all over the world. These species were brought back to the arboretum and have resulted in the site not only being a breath-taking, diverse landscape but also a world-renowned botanical collection.

From the early 1880s Robert's son, Sir George Holford expanded the arboretum into Silk Wood creating vast drives with wide verges and bays of ornamental trees. With no heir, his nephew sold the estate; and the land was divided with the mansion becoming a girls' school. In 1956, the entire 600 acres was handed over to the Forestry Commission (now Forestry England) who has continued to improve and expand on the work of the family. The arboretum and Downs landscape is designated a Grade I Registered Park and Garden by English Heritage.

In 1985, a small group of enthusiasts who saw the need to work with the Forestry Commission to preserve, enhance and enlarge this unique landscape, met for the first time. This group became the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum, a registered charity. Today the charity employs a small number of staff who manage a supporter base of over 38,000 members, some of whom volunteer at the arboretum. In addition, in 2020 the charity formed an enterprise trading subsidiary, which is now responsible for managing and running the Westonbirt Shop.

Working for the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum

As an employee of The Friends, you will be part of a team that is passionate about trees and dedicated to inspiring people through education, participation, and conservation. We work closely with Forestry England to support and develop Westonbirt Arboretum as both organisations work towards accomplishing our joint 10-Year Vision for Westonbirt to be a world leader in trees.

Your role with The Friends will contribute to our efforts to nurture and grow our community of over 38,000 supporters and to further public enjoyment and knowledge of Westonbirt. We are a registered charity that supports Westonbirt, and our mission is to inspire people to connect with trees, improving quality of life and securing the arboretum's sustainable future.

Our culture is built on the values of **Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation** and **Clarity**. We are a team that respects and encourages diverse opinions and perspectives. We work collaboratively towards a shared purpose and actively seek to improve ourselves through self-reflection and continuous learning. We take pride in our ability to be agile and creative, which enables us to be forward-thinking and progressive. We are committed to ethical decision-making, holding ourselves accountable for our actions. We communicate skilfully, ensuring we inform and engage people effectively to showcase our impact.

Most importantly, we place the well-being of our colleagues, customers, volunteers, and partners at the heart of everything we do.

If you are passionate about trees and committed to making a difference, then The Friends is the place for you. We offer a challenging and rewarding career where you can make a real impact on the world around you.

Join us and help create a better future for Westonbirt Arboretum, the world of trees and our local community.

Role purpose

Role Purpose

The Fundraising Officer will play a vital role in helping Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum (The Friends) secure and grow income to support the conservation, research, and visitor engagement work of Westonbirt, The National Arboretum.

Reporting to the Head of Income Generation & Engagement, the postholder will be responsible for researching, preparing, and submitting compelling funding applications to charitable trusts, foundations, and statutory bodies, as well as supporting the development of broader supporter relationships across individual giving and major donors.

This role will also oversee the maintenance and development of the fundraising database, ensuring accurate record-keeping, reporting, and insight to support effective planning, stewardship and decision making. Working collaboratively across The Friends and with colleagues at Forestry England, the postholder will contribute to the organisation's wider income generation and engagement strategy — helping to build meaningful, long-term connections with those who care about the future of Westonbirt.

Key Responsibilities

Trusts & Grants Fundraising

- Research and identify charitable trusts, foundations, and grant opportunities that align with The Friends' priorities and Westonbirt's projects.
- Monitor the wider grant-giving landscape to identify new funding sources, emerging trends, and potential partnerships relevant to The Friends' work.

- Prepare high-quality, tailored funding proposals and applications, clearly articulating the impact of Westonbirt's work and The Friends' charitable objectives.
- Manage the full lifecycle of grant relationships – from initial research and application through to reporting and renewal – ensuring all funder requirements, deadlines, and communications are met.
- Work closely with colleagues across Westonbirt to gather accurate information, evidence, and stories that strengthen funding bids.
- Maintain an up-to-date pipeline of funding opportunities, tracking progress and forecasting income against targets.

Reporting & Stewardship

- Coordinate the timely and accurate submission of grant reports, providing clear evidence of outcomes, expenditure, and impact.
- Develop and maintain strong, professional relationships with funders through thoughtful stewardship, updates, and invitations to events.
- Support the development and delivery of a structured donor stewardship programme, ensuring funders and donors feel valued and informed.
- Contribute to the creation of case studies, impact stories, and project updates for funder and supporter communications.

Supporter Engagement, Major Donors & Individual Giving

- Support the Head of Income Generation & Engagement in developing and implementing a major donor strategy, helping to identify, research, and cultivate high-value supporters.
- Assist in the planning and delivery of activities, events, and communications that strengthen engagement with major donors and prospects.
- Contribute to the development and growth of individual giving, including regular giving, digital appeals, and donor journeys.
- Help create compelling materials and communications that inspire and thank supporters, ensuring consistent messaging across all touchpoints.
- Maintain accurate records of all donor relationships and engagement activities within the CRM system to inform future strategy and stewardship.

Database Management & Administration

- Maintain accurate and consistent records of all fundraising activities, prospects, funders, and communications using the charity's CRM database (Raisers Edge).

- Record and monitor all grant-giving activity, including applications submitted, outcomes, reporting deadlines, and income received, ensuring data is complete and up to date.
- Produce regular reports and dashboards to track the progress of trust and grant applications and inform forward planning.
- Monitor and record changes in the wider grant-giving landscape, keeping an overview of new opportunities, shifts in priorities, and funder behaviours relevant to The Friends' work.
- Ensure data integrity and compliance with GDPR and Fundraising code of conduct.
- Support the Head of Income Generation & Engagement with analysis of income trends and donor behaviour to inform strategy and planning.

Collaboration & Organisational Support

- Work collaboratively with colleagues to ensure consistent messaging and a joined-up supporter experience.
- Liaise with Forestry England teams to gather project information and ensure alignment with site priorities and governance processes.
- Contribute to the wider fundraising and engagement calendar, supporting events, appeals, and campaigns as needed.
- Champion The Friends' values and contribute to a culture of openness, professionalism, and continuous improvement.

Essential Skills & Experience

- Proven experience in trusts and grants fundraising, including researching, writing, and managing successful funding applications.
- Strong written communication skills, with the ability to produce persuasive, evidence-based proposals and reports tailored to different audiences.
- Experience in monitoring and recording grant-giving activity, managing data accurately, and producing reports to inform planning and strategy.
- Experience in donor stewardship and relationship management, with an understanding of how to build and maintain long-term funder and supporter relationships.
- Ability to interpret and communicate project outcomes and impact clearly and compellingly, using both data and narrative.
- Strong organisational and administrative skills, with the ability to manage multiple deadlines and priorities effectively.

- Confident in the use of fundraising databases or CRM systems (we use Raiser's Edge) and proficient in Microsoft Office applications.
- Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues across different teams and functions to gather information and develop coherent funding proposals.

Desirable Skills

- Experience supporting the development of a major donor or individual giving programme.
- Familiarity with charitable funding trends and grant-making bodies in the environmental, heritage, or cultural sectors.
- Experience working within a charity or membership organisation, ideally within fundraising or income generation.
- Understanding of the environmental, conservation, or education sectors relevant to The Friends' mission.
- Confidence in presenting or communicating project outcomes to internal and external stakeholders.

Personal Attributes

- Passion for the natural world and a commitment to conservation, education, and participation.
- Collaborative, curious and team-orientated, with a diplomatic approach to partnership working.
- Patient and perceptive, able to listen carefully, build trust, and navigate relationships with sensitivity and integrity.
- Warm and authentic communicator, able to convey appreciation and impact sincerely to supporters and partners.
- Proactive but unassuming, comfortable working independently while contributing positively to a small, close-knit team.
- Commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and responsible communication practices.

How to apply

Closing date: 9th November – early applications advised

1. Complete the Screening Questions

Fill out the screening questions form

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=M4wMKsYFrkOukYzXsPgABjhKMq1-jrxGuiUhUFGbcfZUQTYyWTRPSVIMzhPM0ZHNzc4WTU2R09CRC4u>

2. Wait for Our Response

After you submit your answers, our team will review them. We aim to get back to you within **5 working days**.

3. Next Steps

If you pass the initial screening, you'll be invited to complete a full application form and tell us more about why you're a great fit for the role.

Need Help?

If you need any support or adjustments to complete the form, please let us know – recruitment@fowa.org.uk

All applications and communication will be treated as confidential.

We reserve the right to close this vacancy early if we receive sufficient applications for the role.