

FRIENDS OF WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM

Buying and Retail Manager (Permanent contract, full-time)

Recruitment Pack

Buying and Retail Manager: Shape the future of retail at Westonbirt Arboretum!

Are you a savvy buyer with a passion for sourcing unique, high-quality products? Do you want your skills to make a real difference? Join Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum (The Friends) and help create a retail experience that delights visitors and supports conservation.

As our Buying and Retail Manager, you'll lead the retail team and take ownership of all buying decisions for the Westonbirt Shop. This is your chance to combine commercial acumen with creativity, sourcing products that reflect the spirit of Westonbirt.

Working in the Westonbirt Shop is at the front line of raising funds to help us support The National Arboretum to protect trees and enrich lives whilst delivering exceptional service for over 600,000 Westonbirt visitors a year. The Westonbirt Shop has been transformed into a bright and welcoming space, known for its array of stunning locally sourced, unique and eco-friendly product ranges.

As our Buying and Retail Manager, your passion for customer interaction and ambition to lead your team will serve you well in managing the day-to-day operation and inspire your team to exceed customer service expectations. You'll also be working with teams across the site to ensure the shop is an integral part of the visitor experience.

Our Retail Team are crucial to sharing the amazing work we support through membership, donations and shop profits, which are donated to The Friends to support visionary projects at the Arboretum. Your proactive approach will motivate your team to champion the work taking place at Westonbirt Arboretum and proudly talk about how customers can further support the arboretum's cause through The Friends.

Westonbirt Arboretum and The Friends

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 almost 39,000 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

Join our team of passionate and dedicated people who are committed to making a difference.

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 40,000 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.

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 learning how to work smarter, not harder. We take pride in our ability to be agile and creative, which enables us to be forward-thinking, innovative, and to make better decisions. 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 today and help us create a better future for Westonbirt Arboretum, the world of trees and our local community.

About the Role

Job Title	Buying and Retail Manager
Salary	Starting from £38,000 per annum
Location	Shop based at Westonbirt, The National Arboretum, 100%
Working Hours	Full-time 40 (hours p/w) over 5 days – hours worked between 8.30am and 5.30pm. You will work flexibly Monday to Sunday in line with the business needs and in agreement with your line manager.
Benefits	Generous benefits package including 10% employer's pension contribution; 25 days paid holiday plus the usual public holidays during each holiday year, and complimentary joint membership.
Reporting to	CEO

Key Responsibilities:

This is a multi-layered role and can be divided into several distinct areas:

Leadership of the Retail Operation

- Lead the day-to-day running of the shop, ensuring it is an integral part of the visitor experience.
- Inspire, support and motivate the Retail Team to deliver exceptional customer service and the role of The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum
- Work collaboratively with Friends of Westonbirt colleagues, Forestry England teams and others to strengthen the shop's role within the wider site.
- Identify and develop opportunities for member events and other revenue-generating initiatives working in collaboration with the Enterprise board and wider Friends team.

Buying

- Manage the full buying cycle, including stock selection, ordering, pricing and range maintenance.
- Develop and deliver an annual buying strategy, reviewing performance and adjusting ranges accordingly.
- Source quality products reflecting the values of the site and in line with buying policy and visitor expectations.
- Attend trade fairs, liaise with suppliers and identify new product lines that support income growth.
- Oversee the development of any branded merchandise and packaging.

Customer Experience and Merchandising

- Ensure window displays, signage and promotional displays in line with the organisation's culture and brand.
- Ensure product choices and visual themes reflect the arboretum's identity.
- Maintain excellent housekeeping and presentation standards across the shop.
- Work with the team to keep displays fresh, stock replenished and merchandising responsive to visitor demand.

People Management and Welfare

- Support and develop the retail staff team to build capability across all core retail functions.
- Manage staffing resources, including rota planning, annual leave, sickness cover and recruitment.
- Ensure clear and consistent communication across the Retail Team and wider site colleagues.
- Hold regular team meetings
- Conduct one-to-ones at least every six months and complete annual appraisals.
- Ensure adherence to Health and Safety policies, including COSHH, creating a safe environment for staff and visitors.
- Support integration of the Retail Team into the broader site culture.

Other Duties

- Provide hands-on support on the shop floor when required, including some weekends and evenings (particularly during Westonbirt's Christmas Lights).
- Oversee the management of the computerised stock system, including orders, deliveries and purchasing.
- Ensure secure opening, closing and general building security, including staff training and managing shoplifting incidents.

Person Specification

Essential Skills & Experience

- Demonstrated retail management experience—ideally within gift, lifestyle or visitor-attraction environments—with confidence in leading day-to-day shop operations and delivering strong customer service standards.
- Buying and merchandising experience, including shaping commercially successful product ranges and applying creative visual merchandising skills that enhance visitor experience and drive spend.
- Strong supplier-relationship skills, ensuring quality, value and reliable stock availability.
- Proven ability to meet financial and operational objectives, including margin management, stock control, KPI performance and accurate record keeping.
- Competence with EPOS and computerised stock systems, alongside good IT literacy (MS Office).
- Excellent organisational and time-management skills, with experience managing rotas, workloads and operational priorities.
- Experience in leading, training and developing a retail team, fostering a positive and customer-focused culture.
- Entrepreneurial mindset with the ability to identify and develop new income opportunities, both in-store and online.
- Commitment to The Friends' charitable aims and the shared vision with Forestry England to be a world leader in trees, inspiring people through education, participation and conservation.

Desirable Skills & Experience

- Experience buying for conservation-led, lifestyle or gift ranges.
- Basic bookkeeping.

Closing date: 30th December

If you wish to apply for this exciting new role, please email the following information to recruitment@fowa.org.uk

1. CV
2. Covering email / letter advising why you are the more suitable candidate for the role
3. Completed Equality & Diversity Monitoring Form