

Wakehurst

Royal
Botanic
Gardens **Kew**

Appointment of Director

November 2023 | Ref: JASPE

Saxton Bampfylde

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Welcome from Richard Barley, Director of Gardens, RBG Kew

Thank you for your interest in becoming our new Director of Wakehurst.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world-leading botanic institution with a rich history of conserving, researching, and celebrating plant diversity. Kew's mission is to **understand and protect plants and fungi, for the wellbeing of people and the future of all life on Earth**. Our Wakehurst site is an integral part of the Kew organisation, serving as a wild botanic garden with a unique focus on conservation, horticulture, and scientific research.

In recent years, our team has undertaken a transformative journey aimed at establishing the Wakehurst site as both a nationally recognised visitor destination and a pioneering scientific centre. The core focus lies in UK biodiversity and global conservation, seed research, and ecosystem science; being committed to bridging the gap between scientific research and the wider public, and ensuring that Wakehurst's impact resonates locally, nationally, and globally.

The Director of Wakehurst will be central to achieving our aspirations. You will lead Wakehurst's Senior Leadership Team, while also playing a key role in the overall direction and management of the site. You will also be an active member of Kew's Executive Board, contributing to high-level strategic discussions on a wide range of issues; utilising your experience to provide informed guidance in areas of specific relevance to the Wakehurst site. Our Trustees will also rely on your informed guidance and insights on matters relating to the Wakehurst site.

We have an ambitious Development Masterplan, and have already embarked on design and delivery of key projects that will support the priorities for the future of Wakehurst. There are exciting plans in the pipeline, and a world of possibilities for you to make your mark with this dynamic team.

If you are a confident, energetic leader, with the ability to explore new directions, while managing diverse agendas and priorities with peers and partners; and to combine strategic thinking, planning and organisation-wide collaboration to drive long-term organisational goals, then we would love to hear from you. As Director of Gardens for Kew, I will personally make every effort to support you and your Wakehurst team to ensure that Wakehurst's extraordinary potential is fully realised.



Richard Barley, MBE, CHort, MCIH, FLS
Director of Gardens, RBG Kew





About Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world-famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding collections as well as its scientific expertise in plant and fungal diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world. It has two main sites: Kew Gardens in south-west London, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Wakehurst, Kew's wild botanic garden in West Sussex. Combined, Kew Gardens' 132 hectares of landscaped gardens, and Wakehurst's 535-acre site, attracts over 2.5 million visitors every year. The Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre is Kew's only overseas office and third research centre. Kew receives approximately one third of its funding

from Government through the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and research councils. Further funding needed to support RBG Kew's vital work comes from donors, membership and commercial activity including ticket sales, events, and licencing.

Kew Science's purpose is to help stop biodiversity loss and develop nature-based solutions to some of humanity's biggest global challenges. Kew scientists work with collaborators in over 400 institutions from more than 100 countries to help find solutions to urgent global challenges. You can read about examples of work and find out more about projects across the globe [here](#).

Kew's Manifesto for Change 2021-2030

Kew's ultimate goal is to step up to help end the extinction crisis and contribute to creating a world where nature is protected, valued by all and managed sustainably. In the wake of a global pandemic, and with the future of the planet in peril, the strategy represents a public commitment by Kew to do everything in its power to reverse the environmental devastation of biodiversity loss and climate change. To deliver this mission, [Kew's Manifesto for Change 2021-2030](#) centres around five key priorities for the coming decade. These commitments are based on how Kew believes it can best deploy its expertise and other assets, including Wakehurst, to make a distinctive and substantial contribution to solving these global challenges. Kew also has a sixth internal priority to ensure that it has the people, financial health and infrastructure to deliver its Manifesto priorities.

1. Deliver science-based knowledge and solutions to protect biodiversity and use natural resources sustainably.
2. Inspire people to protect the natural world.
3. Train the next generation of experts.
4. Extend our reach.
5. Influence national and international opinion and policy.

About Wakehurst

Wakehurst, formerly known as Wakehurst Place, is a house and botanic gardens situated near Ardingly, West Sussex in the High Weald, and is Kew's wild botanic garden. Wakehurst is home to the Millennium Seed Bank, the largest wild plant seed bank in the world, and over 500 acres of diverse landscapes and plants from across the globe. It was chosen to complement Kew Gardens as it has a different climate and soil type and so is suitable for growing a different range of plants.

The Wakehurst gardens were largely created by Gerald Loder (later Lord Wakehurst) who purchased the estate in 1903 and spent 33 years developing the gardens. He was succeeded by Sir Henry Price, under whose care the Loder plantings matured. Sir Henry left Wakehurst to the nation in 1963 and the Royal Botanic Gardens took up a lease from the National Trust in 1965.

The garden today covers over 500 acres and is full of diverse plants from around the globe, including walled and water gardens, woodland and wetland conservation areas and an American prairie.

Wakehurst attracts around 450,000 visitors a year, with ambitions to grow this number significantly, and hosts a diverse programme, including specially

curated exhibitions, family-friendly tours and trails, a range of seasonal activities, most notably the popular Christmas Glow Wild lantern festival, and workshops and short courses, such as forest bathing, willow deer making and Christmas wreath making.

The Wakehurst team is in the midst of a transformative journey aimed at establishing itself as a nationally recognised visitor destination and a pioneering scientific centre, as part of delivering [Kew's Living Collections Strategy](#). The core focus lies in UK biodiversity and global conservation, seed research, and ecosystem science; being committed to bridging the gap between scientific research and the wider public, and ensuring that Wakehurst's impact resonates locally, nationally, and globally. Wakehurst is also in the midst of a Masterplan project, part of which is the refurbishment and repair of the Wakehurst Place mansion.

[You can read more about Wakehurst here.](#)



The role

This is an exciting time to join Wakehurst as it continues to play a crucial role in delivering Kew's wider strategy and in the development of global conservation and sustainability. Alongside this, Wakehurst is in the midst of a transformative journey of increasing its recognition as a national visitor destination and a pioneering scientific centre.

The Director of Wakehurst will guide and oversee innovation, coherence and creative quality in Wakehurst's designed and natural landscapes, whilst strengthening collaboration with key peers across Kew, supporting delivery of [Kew's Living Collections Strategy](#) for the Wakehurst site. They will take the lead in progressing Wakehurst's Masterplan, guided and supported by the Director of Gardens and the Board of Trustees' Wakehurst Advisory Committee.

As the senior responsible officer for the whole Wakehurst visitor experience, including publicly accessible areas of the Millennium Seed Bank and all areas of the site used by the public or other visitors, they will lead the continuing development of outstanding onsite events and visitor programmes. They will liaise with and advise Kew Estates and other key internal stakeholders to ensure that works on site buildings and infrastructure are delivered according to local priorities, as allowed by budgets.

The Director of Wakehurst sits on Kew's Executive Board and reports to the Director of Gardens. They are responsible for 4 direct reports – Heads of Horticulture & Landscape, Public Programmes, Marketing & Strategic Communications, and Visitor Experience & Commercial – and an overall staff team of c.150 plus c.100 seasonal volunteers, students and apprentices.

Key responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Management

- Provide inspirational leadership to Wakehurst's Senior Leadership Team and all staff, responsible for the overall direction and management of the site with overall responsibility for day-to-day decisions (excluding the operations of Kew Science), promoting cross organisational collaborative working and an engaged workforce;
- Promote and empower an energetic, flexible team culture of engagement, collaboration, innovation, productivity, and personal development;
- Lead the continuing transformation of Wakehurst to a nationally recognised visitor destination and pioneering scientific centre dedicated to UK biodiversity and global conservation, seed research and ecosystem science;
- Develop and execute a visionary plan to align Wakehurst with this new scope, ensuring its significance and impact with a clear long-term vision combined with a focus on excellence and smart delivery;

- Provide clear vision and leadership for progressing the overall Wakehurst Masterplan, including curation of the historic estate alongside close collaboration with Kew Estates & Capital Development Department, and lead capital development projects as required;
- Manage and guide the formulation of Wakehurst budgets.
- Oversee the administration of funds to support strong financial performance and the application of organisation policies and priorities;
- Represent Wakehurst on Kew's Executive Board, providing insights and strategic advice, and contribute to the discussion and resolution of organisation-wide issues and priorities;
- Support and contribute to the activities and decisions of the Wakehurst Advisory Committee.

Science, Horticulture & Landscape

- Continue the development of exceptional standards of conservation, horticulture, landscape design and management with an ecological focus;
- Ensure the delivery of Kew's Living Collections Strategy to ensure high priority conservation outcomes, transform Wakehurst's horticultural status, drive visitation, and membership growth;
- Promote Wakehurst's profile as a national exemplar for conservation and habitat management;
- Provide leadership towards achieving the aims of the Kew Sustainability Strategy;
- Lead the development and delivery of botanic research programs across Wakehurst inspired by natural capital and landscape ecology frameworks;
- Ensure high-impact science outcomes, including public engagement and communication.

Partnership Development

- Advocate on behalf of Wakehurst and nurture relationships with external stakeholders, funders, partners, the National Trust, and statutory bodies;
- Collaborate closely with Kew Science and Millennium Seed Bank teams;
- Foster cooperation, knowledge exchange, and joint initiatives both internally and externally.

Audience Development

- Work with the Senior Management Team on the delivery of events, exhibitions, learning, interpretation, communication, and commercial activities to further Kew's vision and mission;
- Inspire and engage diverse audiences, experts, and stakeholders in the importance of Natural Capital Science and Ecological Horticulture;
- Engage stakeholders at all levels including among external peers, professional networks and the media in the work happening across Wakehurst.

Commercial Opportunities and Income Generation

- Lead and support the Head of Visitor Experience and Commercial to develop and deliver the business plan ensuring commercial growth of the Wakehurst;
- Collaborate with Kew Enterprises to oversee the development of commercial opportunities at Wakehurst;
- Contribute to self-generated income through support of Kew Consultancy services, Kew Enterprises, charity-based income generation, and activities related to Kew Development.





Person specification

The ideal candidate will bring all or most of the following attributes:

Knowledge and experience

- A strong track record of senior leadership in a relevant and similar organisation;
- A track record of overseeing the delivery of strategy and large-scale projects in a relevant context;
- Experience and well-developed understanding of the management of public activities within a cultural attraction or similar place, including educational programmes, visitor events, cultural programmes, and commercial operations;
- Experience of being a member of an executive board, or equivalent senior executive group with organisation-wide responsibilities;
- Significant experience of operational risk management in a public environment;
- Proven professional experience in building, developing, and motivating a large, diverse, complex team;
- Experience in effectively building and managing external partnerships;
- Experience of public-sector political context, ethos, policies, networks and regulations impacting on the running of a public/charitable body and its communication activities.

Approach and style

- Strong strategic leadership capability with a breadth of perspective across project management, financial planning, and budget management expertise;
- A collegiate and inclusive leadership style and an entrepreneurial and collaborative approach;
- High level of organisational, problem-solving and change skills: able to strategize, plan, prioritise and budget flexibly; create new systems and frameworks; change plans at short notice to adapt to changing priorities; deal with ambiguity, foresee challenging situations and take difficult decisions;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills with an engaging and persuasive style and the ability to represent Kew and Wakehurst with stakeholders at all levels, general and specialist visitors and the media;
- The ability to build strong collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including networking, negotiating and identifying business opportunities.
- A knowledge and understanding of plant-based science and/or horticulture, including key Wakehurst plant genera and habitats (e.g. grassland and meadows, deciduous woodland, wetlands).
- A knowledge of garden and landscape history.

Terms of appointment

This role is based at Wakehurst, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH17 6TN.

Base salary

The starting salary for this role is £90,000 pa.

Annual leave

30 days, excluding bank holidays, on entry rising to a maximum of 33 days after 5 years' service.

Pension

RBG Kew offer a Group Personal Pension Scheme through Royal London, with an employer contribution of 8% of salary. This is a non-contributory unless you decide to make a voluntary contribution as a % of salary. If you do decide to make a contribution, RBG Kew will match your contribution up to a further 2%, making the total possible employer contribution 10%.

Benefits

Family Friendly

RBG Kew supports its employees in achieving a work-life balance and we have a range of schemes and policies in place to support well-being and wider needs:

- Generous and comprehensive family friendly policies: maternity, paternity and adoption leave, career break.
- Employee Assistance Programme: The Employee Assistance Programme offers advice and counselling via a confidential phone line and an extensive website with help sheets. Advice subjects include everything from addictions to work-life balance.
- Family pass: RBG Kew employees are entitled to free admission to the Gardens at Kew and Wakehurst for two accompanying adults and two children on presentation of their staff pass.
- Civil Service Sports Club (CSSC): Employment at Kew provides the opportunity to join CSSC, a not for profit organisation aimed at public sector workers positively promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace. CSSC aims to help you to have fun, get active, try out new hobbies or activities and experience the great diversity of the Civil Service.
- Vodafone Employee scheme: RBG Kew members of staff and up to 5 of their family and friends are entitled to a discount on any Vodafone tariff.

Training & Development

We provide comprehensive and continual training throughout your career, across all levels of the organisation.

Access to Flexible Benefits Portal

All employees have access to a flexible benefits portal, mylifestyle, which allows you to select a number of flexible benefits to suit your lifestyle. Through the website you can also access discounts at hundreds of different retailers.

Season Ticket Loans

An interest free Season Ticket Loan is available for all employees on permanent and fixed term appointments. The loan is paid back via monthly payments deducted from your salary.

Cycle-to-work Scheme

The salary sacrifice cycle-to-work scheme is part of Kew's flexible benefits package and gives you the opportunity to purchase a bike for cycling to work at little over half the normal cost. The scheme is open to all permanent employees and those on fixed term contracts for at least 1 year.

Payroll Giving – Tax Efficient Charitable Donations

Payroll giving is part of Kew's flexible benefits package and you could make tax efficient charitable donations direct from your pay.

Eye Care Scheme

If you use a computer or other display screen equipment for a significant portion of your job, you are eligible to participate in the eye care scheme. This scheme provides self-service vouchers that can be used as payment for eye tests, and where eligible a free pair of frames or discount from the optician's range.

Free access to museums, galleries and gardens

National museums, galleries and gardens that offer free admission to Kew staff members on presentation of a staff pass.

Discount on items purchased in the Kew Shops and Restaurants and Cafes

A 50% lunch discount across all its restaurants and 20% discount on retail products.



How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **JASPE**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 1st December 2023**.

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

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

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Wakehurst

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