

Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration

Job Pack – Community Gardener

Contract: Available as either a permanent salaried position or a freelance contract.

Hours: 15 hours per week (0.4 FTE). We are open to discussing flexible working and job shares.

Salary: £32,000 per annum pro-rated to £12,800 for 0.4 FTE

Apply by: Friday 9th January at 9:00am GMT

Start date: We aim for the successful candidate to start in February 2026. However, we are open to discussing individual notice periods.



The vision for the new Centre © Nora Walter

We are looking for an enthusiastic and motivated person to join our team as Community Gardener, prior to the opening of the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration in May 2026.

As part of the restoration of New River Head, a former waterworks in the heart of Clerkenwell, we are creating new, biodiverse, public gardens. These will be free to visit, bringing much needed green space to Islington. The garden design is currently being developed by experienced landscape designer [Sue Amos](#), who is working on the project until at least March. The planting scheme for the garden will be handed over to the Community Gardener who will be responsible for establishing and maintaining the garden and grounds.

Working closely with Sue, the Centre's staff team and community volunteers, the Community Gardener will play a leading role in establishing the gardens. They will ensure a welcoming and inclusive experience for visitors, including those with access requirements, and nurture long-term relationships with volunteers.



Left to right: Plant pressing workshop © Valentina Zunino, Visitors at Open House Festival at New River Head © Valentina Zunino

The Quentin Blake Centre champions art that is dynamic, diverse and inclusive; we want our team to reflect that. This Job Pack gives more details about us, the role, what we are looking for and how to apply. If you have any queries, please email us at jobs@qbcentre.org.uk.

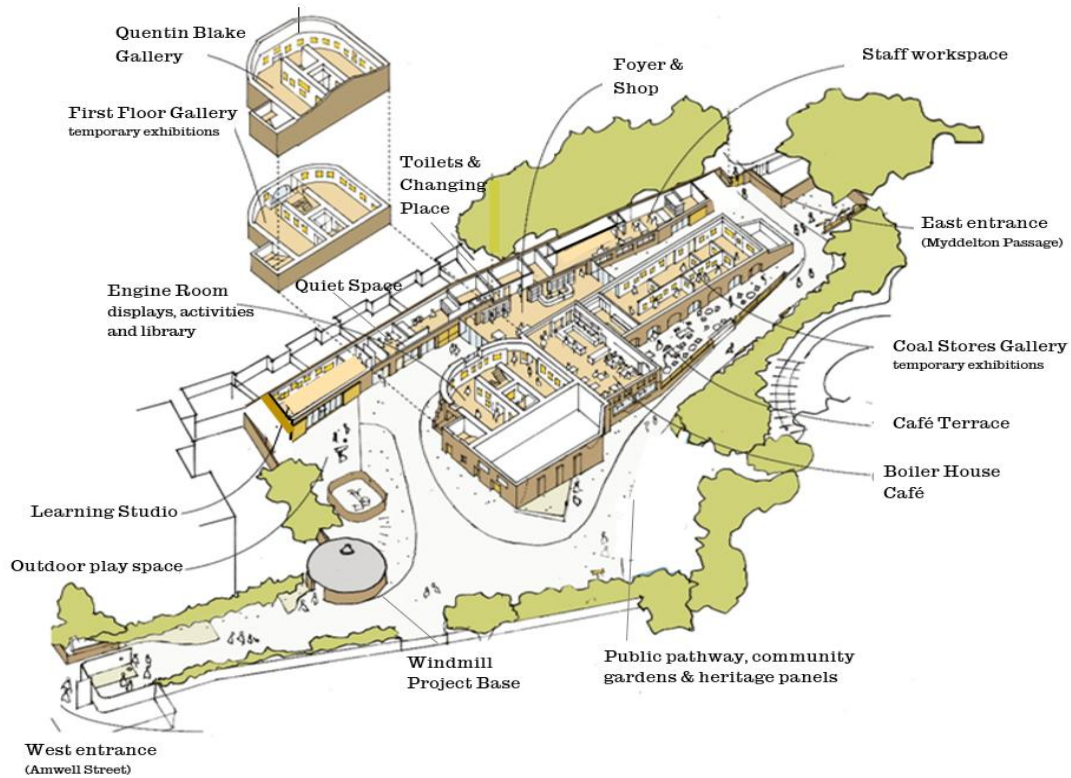
Thank you for your interest in this role. We wish you all the best in applying.

About us

Opening in May 2026, the new Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration will be located within a beautifully restored 18th and 19th century waterworks in Clerkenwell, London.

Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, trusts and foundations and philanthropy, and designed by Tim Ronalds Architects, the project will create:

- two temporary exhibition galleries, sharing illustration from around the world
- a permanent gallery for Quentin Blake's archive
- a free-entry gallery including a small library, activities and displays
- a dedicated learning studio to support our work with schools, families, community groups and illustrators
- a project base to support illustrator residencies and community handovers
- a café and terrace
- a shop offering prints, books, art materials and gifts
- new public gardens with planting, play and heritage interpretation



The Quentin Blake Centre will be a vibrant place where everyone feels welcome: where the displays are unexpected yet relatable, where everything is accessible and everyone's stories and ideas matter.

We aim to build visitor numbers to 100,000+ each year, multiplying that reach many times over through our online presence, nationwide touring exhibitions and participatory programmes. The range of our programming offers opportunities to engage with confident independent arts audiences, families, special interest groups and more local communities who have been under-served by museums and galleries.

About the new garden

The New River Head heritage buildings are set within 0.8 acres of outdoor space – currently a mix of cobbled yards and hard-standing, under which lie water mains and cables. The redevelopment of the site will create:

- Shallow beds, planted with hardy trees and hedges
- Espaliered fruit trees
- A large rockery, formed from unused cobbles
- An outdoor play space
- Play benches
- Pots and moveable planters
- A large-sculpture and a series of heritage interpretation panels
- Bat and bird boxes
- Compost heap and tool shed

The gardens will be planted on organic principles and are intended to support local wildlife. The spaces are designed to promote drawing, making, play, exploration and relaxation. There will be plants and materials that can be drawn or used to make dyes and drawing materials.



Above: impressions of the new gardens © Tim Ronalds Architects

Over time we hope to further develop the outdoor spaces, with additional landscaping and a pond.

About the role

This role sits within the Welcome and Participation team, reporting to the Welcome and Participation Lead and working closely with the Operations and Facilities Manager, Schools and Families Producer and Community Partnerships Producers. They will be supported by the new Welcome, Buildings and Gardens Assistant.

The Community Gardener will be responsible for:

- **Ensuring that the garden is well-maintained, through:**
 - Developing and implementing a seasonal detailed garden maintenance plan that includes soil care, weeding, pruning, planting, pest management, fertilising and watering to ensure the gardens are well managed and healthy.
 - Maintaining gardening tools and equipment
 - Creating and maintaining biodiverse habitats
 - Following sustainable practice eg, gardening organically, composting green/brown waste, managing water use, reviewing planting in line with climate change

- **Planning and overseeing planting schemes, including:**
 - Managing the planting, propagation and cultivation of all plants in the garden, ensuring that they are healthy and thriving
 - Ordering seeds, compost, plants and equipment as required



Above: Resources from garden and landscaping public consultation day © Cassie Ash, Plant pressing workshop © Cassie Ash

- **Supervising and engaging our garden volunteers, through:**
 - Providing them with tasks
 - Developing and delivering seasonal training
 - Ensuring compliance with Health and Safety and Safeguarding practices
 - Supporting with recruitment of volunteers
 - Encouraging volunteers to share knowledge with visitors
 - Inspiring and motivating volunteers to remain involved throughout the year

- Keeping the Community Partnerships Producers aware of any issues that may arise
- **Engaging with community and school groups:**
 - Welcoming visitors to the site, having informal conversations about the garden
 - Supporting seasonal activities with a diverse range of people including those with English as a second language, children and young people, and those with additional needs
 - Creating a multi-sensory experience for garden visitors, enabling them to touch, see, feel and smell different plants
 - Supporting the Schools and Families Producer projects such as after-school clubs eg teaching basic gardening skills, creating minibeast habitats

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Ensuring equity of opportunity, access and inclusion for all visitors, participants and volunteers
- In collaboration with the Evaluation Consultant and the Head of Learning and Participation, supporting

evaluation of the programmes, and adapting activities in response to feedback

Communication:

- Supporting the Communications and Marketing Lead and Development and Partnerships Lead to ensure that the impact of the work outlined above is known about and valued by participants, audiences, funders and stakeholders

Operations and Finance:

- Recording and monitoring the expenditure of the gardening programme in line with the annual budget to meet budget goals
- Complying with the Safeguarding policy and all other relevant organisational policies

General:

- Playing an active role in team meetings, contributing to wider organisational strategy
- Supporting and attend events delivered by other members of the team when required, e.g. large public events

- Carrying out any other duties as reasonably required
- Upholding our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion

As we are committed to meeting our communities where they are, there may be some weekend and evening work required, for which time off in lieu can be claimed.

Recruitment information

Dates

<i>Closing date for applications</i>	Friday 9 January 2026 at 9:00am GMT
<i>First round interviews</i>	Week commencing 19 January in Clerkenwell, London
<i>Second round interviews</i>	To be confirmed, if required

How to apply

Please complete the online application form on our website: <https://careers.qbcentre.org.uk/>. It is very

important that you explain how your skills and experience (including transferable skills) match the essential criteria set out on page 17 of this Job Pack, giving examples wherever possible.

For this role, you may submit the Personal Statement section of your application as a video or audio recording if you prefer. If you would like to do this please email your video or audio file to jobs@qbcentre.org.uk by the application deadline, and note that you have done this in the Personal Statement section of the online application form.

Please ensure that any audio or video submission is no longer than five minutes. To support our anonymous recruitment process, do not include your name or any other personally identifying information in your recording.

Applicants must have the right to work in the UK. We will inform all applicants of the outcome of their application by 23 January 2026.

Unfortunately, we are unable to give feedback on your application if you are not shortlisted for interview. If you

are shortlisted for interview and you cannot make the advertised interview date, we will endeavour to find an alternative date.

This role requires an enhanced DBS check. Please email us at jobs@qbcentre.org.uk if you have any questions about this.

Guaranteed interviews

To address underrepresentation in our staff team, we will be offering a **guaranteed interview** to applicants whose applications meet all the essential criteria for the role and who are disabled.

In cases where we receive an exceptionally high volume of applications and are unable to offer interviews to all candidates who meet the criteria for a guaranteed interview, we reserve the right to limit the number of guaranteed interview spaces available, selecting applicants who scored highest against the essential criteria for the role.

The number of additional interviews offered under the guaranteed interview scheme will depend on how many

we can reasonably accommodate, and we will prioritise those whose applications are strongest against the essential criteria.

The guaranteed interview scheme will not disadvantage candidates who are not eligible. All applications are assessed equally against the essential criteria, and the highest-scoring applicants are shortlisted through the standard process. Where capacity allows, we will offer additional guaranteed interview spaces under the scheme in addition to the original shortlist.

**Definition under the Equality Act 2010: you are disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.*

Job description

Role	Community Gardener
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Salary	£32,000 per annum, depending on experience. Salary will be pro-rated to £12,800 for 0.4 FTE
Employee benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual holiday entitlement of 25 days per annum plus public holidays (pro-rated to reflect that the post is part-time) • An additional 2 days (pro-rata) personal development leave and a further day to celebrate your birthday • Enhanced maternity, paternity, shared parental leave, sick leave and compassionate leave policies • Access to award-winning employee assistance programme • Cycle to work scheme
Hours	<p>15 hours/week.</p> <p>We are open to discussing flexible working with candidates at interview.</p>
Place of work	<p>Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration, 1 Myddelton Passage, London, EC1R 1AG.</p>

	This is primarily an on-site role, however there may be occasions when home working (e.g. for admin) is possible.
Contract type	Available as either a permanent salaried position with a six-month probationary period, or freelance contract (to be discussed at interview stage).
To note	This is a physically demanding role that requires working outside in all weathers.

Essential skills and experience

Please provide examples of how you meet the following criteria:

- Excellent practical understanding/experience of amenity horticulture/gardening with a horticultural qualification eg [RHS level 2](#), or equivalent practical experience (at least three years on-site)

- Demonstrable and recent experience managing or supporting the management of a garden that is open to the public
- Experience of supporting the public to engage with gardens for the community and/or public outdoor spaces or of working with a diverse cohort of volunteers
- Good organisational skills, including the ability to multitask (responding to visitor questions while working in the gardens, for example)
- Appreciation of heritage and/or outdoor spaces and their potential to contribute to wellbeing, creativity and learning among families and communities
- Proven commitment to and understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion
- Flexible, collaborative and self-motivated

Desirable skills and experience

We'd also be interested to know if you have experience in any of the following areas (but please note these are not essential):

- Experience of co-designing community engagement activities

- Experience of recruiting volunteers
- A good understanding of communities and the challenges they face in Islington, Camden, Hackney, Enfield and Haringey
- An understanding of the role of stakeholders (internal and external) in successful community engagement
- Experience evaluating garden/community activities
- Experience working with schools, families or community groups
- Experience supporting the planning and delivery of activities for families and community groups

We are registered as a
Disability Confident employer.
Please let us know if you have



any access requirements that need to be met to support you to make an application or participate in the interview process by emailing jobs@qbcentre.org.uk

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to hearing from you.