

GARDEN DESIGNER ST JOHN'S CHATHAM



JOB BRIEF | GARDEN DESIGNER

Role: The Garden Designer will produce a design and planting plans for the outdoor spaces at St John's Chatham through engagement with the Project Team and with Chatham's diverse communities. The garden design will be appropriate to the heritage and urban setting of St John's Chatham. The role requires close working with the Project Team and local community groups to ensure that their ideas, aspirations and practical needs are incorporated within a sustainable design concept.

When implemented, the outdoor spaces will host horticultural activities and learning programmes to attract young people aged 14 – 24 years old, low-income families, older adults over 55 years old, homeless and vulnerably housed people and local schools as set out in the Heritage Fund Activity Plan as part of the major project to redevelop St John's Chatham. The aim is to enable more people to become engaged in the heritage of the church and through participation in maintenance of the outdoor spaces to improve their health and well-being.

Location: Home or company based; ability to travel regularly to Chatham for meetings and workshops

Reporting to: Senior Church Leadership

Contract: April 2026 – August 2026

I. Executive Summary

The Diocese of Rochester has secured a Delivery Phase grant from the Heritage Fund in support of St John's Chatham. As part of the Delivery Phase, which will run from January 2024 to January 2028, the Diocese of Rochester is seeking to appoint an Evaluation Consultant to direct and support the evaluation of the capital and activity programme at St John's Chatham.

2. About St John the Divine (St John's Chatham)

St John's Chatham is a Grade II* listed building that sits as a prominent gateway building into the town centre. It was built in 1821 as a Commissioners Church, in thanksgiving for peace with France after the Battle of Waterloo. Unfortunately, in the late 1990s, it closed due to a dwindling congregation but continued to retain a special place in the heart of many residents of the area.

In 2021, the building reopened as a palace of worship and has since undergone a major renovation and refurbishment. Now with its heritage saved including important war memorials and beautiful stained-glass windows, it also has modern facilities providing meeting rooms for small businesses and community groups as well as spaces for conferences, concerts, a cafe/kitchen and new sanitary/WC facilities.

3. The Project

A key element of the vision has been realised to renovate and reorder the building to continue as a place of worship and become a focal point for businesses and the community and once again, be a landmark building for Chatham Town Centre. The capital works were funded by the Heritage Fund, Future High Streets Fund via Medway Council, Benefact Trust, The Rochester Bridge Trust, National Churches Trust and Friends of Kent Churches. During the development of the project, St John's Chatham worked with stakeholders, partners and the local community to seek their thoughts and hopes for the future of the building in addition to continuing as a place of worship.

The building now provides:

- A range of meeting and activity spaces for businesses, education and the community.
- Flexibility to offer conference and performing space
- A café space offering scope for light meals and refreshments
- An outdoor space to be transformed into a beautiful space for the local community

These multi-functional spaces will now also provide the base for our Community Activity Programme funded by the Heritage Fund, the Diocese of Rochester and the Dorothy Kerin Trust. The Community Activity Programme represents another key element of our vision to engage and involve the communities of Chatham in the heritage of St John's and create a legacy of an ongoing volunteering programme.

4. Scope of the work for the Garden Designer

The role of the Garden Designer will be to develop a design for the outdoor space that is appropriate to the church building and wider urban environment of Chatham Town Centre.

- Through the project team (including the Community Partnerships Officer, agree a list of success criteria and an engagement plan with key stakeholders and community groups.
- Preparing a summary of the requirements within the fixed budget available.

- Using your technical design knowledge and skills to provide a high-level framework design for consultation and agreement.
- Once the framework is agreed, taking exact measurements, test the soil for acidity, nutrients and drainage.
- Provide advice during the planting and installation of any planters to help address any issues and assist full implementation of the Garden Design and planting plans.

5. Outputs

The Garden Designer will produce:

- Plans showing the main features of the outdoor space and sketches showing detailed proposals for different areas.
- Specifications for implementation of the designs and provide advice on supply of plants, shrubs, trees and planters as appropriate.
- A maintenance plan reflecting the uses and needs of the different groups that will be using and working in the outdoor spaces.

6. Management of the commission

The commission will be managed by the Senior Church Leadership. We expect regular communication throughout the project.

7. Experience, knowledge and skills

Experience

- Experience of designing small gardens and outdoor spaces in urban settings.
- Experience of working for, or participating in, a community- based organization.
- Experience of community consultation techniques.

Knowledge

- Good technical knowledge of plants, tools, horticultural processes and strong plant identification skills.
- Recognised qualification in horticulture and garden design to at least HNC level.
- Good technical knowledge of designing gardens in urban spaces applying principles of sustainability.

Skills

- Ability to communicate with people with a wide range of backgrounds and skills.
- An enthusiastic, confident and effective communicator both verbally and in writing.
- Good presentation skills

8. Requirements of the submission

Your proposal should include:

- approach to the project
- methodology
- CVs of proposed team members
- track record
- two client references
- a fixed fee showing your daily rates between individuals, number of days spent on each task and including all fees and expenses
- projected timescale.
- two references

9. Date of submission and timetable

The closing date for submissions is **12noon on Friday 20th March 2026**

Submissions should be emailed to lou.kizwini@rochester.anglican.org

Interviews by mutual agreement Thursday 25th March)

The start date for the project is April 2026

The completion date for this element of the project is August 2026

10. Fee

The fixed fee for the Garden Designer post is £6,500.00 excluding VAT, but including all personal expenses.

11. Terms and conditions

We will require evidence of Professional Indemnity insurance cover.

12. Further information

For further information please contact lou.kizwini@rochester.anglican.org To organise a site visit, please contact Helen Masters (St John's Chatham Administrator) at office@stjohnschatham.co.uk or on 07595 075958.



Diocese of *Rochester*
called together



**Dorothy
Kerin Trust**