

Ranger – job description

Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons are wonderful green spaces of more than 250 acres reaching into the centre of the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, with its varied habitats bursting with wildlife. Such a special place deserves someone very special to look after it. Our longstanding Warden is retiring in June 2022 and the Commons Conservators are looking for a new Warden (now to be entitled ‘Ranger’) to continue the work of managing, conserving, and shaping the Commons for future residents and visitors to enjoy.

JOB TITLE:	Ranger
REPORTS TO:	Clerk
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Volunteers, contractors and, if appointed, an assistant or apprentice.
JOB SUMMARY:	To manage, develop and implement action plans and programmes arising from the current and future management plans for the Commons.

Responsibilities

- Advice and guidance on the Commons and their management, based on relevant expertise and experience.
- Core contribution to strategy and planning and monitoring their effect on nature conservation.
- Visible presence on the Commons.
- Communications and public relations – the Ranger is the public face of the Conservators on the Commons.
- Monitoring and enforcement of legislation, bylaws, and policies.
- Supervision of contractors, other paid workers, and volunteers.
- Managing available resources in an efficient and cost-effective way.
- Reporting and administration associated with the above responsibilities.

Duties

1. Conservators’ and Committee meetings:

Attend quarterly meetings of the Commons Conservators and submit to such meetings works programmes, proposals and reports as requested. Attend one Committee meeting per month (via Zoom) to update on progress and advise on issues arising.

2. Strategy, planning and risk management:

- a. Play an integral part in strategic planning for the Commons. The Ranger is expected to make a key contribution to the long-term Management Plan for the Commons.
- b. Arrange for the monitoring and recording of key habitats and wildlife of the Commons, liaise with nature conservation and wildlife organisations to identify and

then establish best practice and incorporate that in strategies and plans for the Commons.

- c. Lead on managing and monitoring the health and safety system on the Commons.
- d. Take the lead, working with the Clerk, in preparing and maintaining a rolling list of priority projects for funding by the Conservators or third parties, consistent with the long-term Management Plan.
- e. Work with the Clerk and the Treasurer in preparing and presenting annual plans and budgets, consistent with the Management Plan. (The Ranger has responsibility for the nature conservation and land management aspects of plans and budgets.)
- f. Develop a quarterly work programme that implements strategic projects, routine maintenance, and remedial works in line with the annual plan and budget (including projects funded by third parties).
- g. Contribute to effective risk management. Maintain the physical and operational risk register, regularly updating tree reports and completing incident reports where necessary. Work with the Clerk and Treasurer to monitor key risks, prepare risk assessments, highlight issues, propose mitigation measures, and ensure these are built into plans and work programmes.
- h. Assist the Clerk and Treasurer in seeking out and progressing opportunities for external funding.

3. Work programmes and contractor and volunteer management:

- a. Implement work programmes. This will involve some physical maintenance and repair work as well as supervision of contractors and volunteers. Review progress and evaluate impact.
- b. Closely monitor spending on work on the Commons through the year, in conjunction with the Treasurer, adjusting work programmes as required.
- c. Write specifications for projects, multi-year contracts and individual tenders. Work with the Clerk and Treasurer to evaluate and shortlist suppliers and prepare draft contracts for the Conservators' approval.
- d. Recommend suppliers for inclusion in an approved supplier short list and work with the Clerk to create and maintain such a list.
- e. Allocate work to approved suppliers in cases where competitive tenders are not required.
- f. Supervise the work of contractors and others engaged to work on the Commons, ensuring that the work is always carried out in a safe and proper manner and in accordance with relevant legislation, bylaws, contracts, and instructions, including full compliance with health and safety policy. Monitor progress, and review and issue completion certificates.
- g. Organise and manage volunteer work on the Commons and either supervise such work, or closely monitor it, to ensure it is conducted in a safe and proper manner and adheres to Conservators' policies, in particular health & safety.
- h. Take responsibility for the safe storage and maintenance of all tools and equipment owned by, or on hire or loan to, the Commons Conservators or the Friends of the Commons, making recommendations for any replacement items deemed necessary.

4. Administration:

- a. Work alongside the Clerk to respond to correspondence and enquiries on behalf of the Conservators.

- b. Assist the Clerk in maintaining complete administrative records including work orders and work completion certificates, health & safety, and other compliance documentation.

5. Monitoring and enforcement:

- a. Patrol the Commons on each working day to maintain a visible and friendly presence; identify and assess risks, hazards or breaches of the bylaws and determine the response to such issues; and supervise work that is underway.
- b. Take action to respond to anti-social behaviour, encroachments, and other infringements of the bylaws, following Conservators' policies and working in conjunction with the appropriate authorities. (Actions might include informal advice and guidance, formal warnings, and notices, as well as informing the appropriate authorities.)
- c. Act as the main out of hours emergency contact. Initiate and supervise emergency works as required and liaise with emergency services and statutory agencies as necessary.

6. Stakeholder relations:

- a. Engage with users of the Commons during regular patrols.
- b. Work closely with the Clerk in maintaining good internal and external relations with all persons and organisations who have an interest in the Commons, as well as the public at large.
- c. Give illustrated talks to local groups and organisations, lead guided walks of the Commons for groups and the public, write articles for local magazines, publications and social media.
- d. Post regular updates/blogs of news and planned works on the website or other social media (such as Facebook), as agreed with the Clerk.
- e. Act as a primary contact for media enquiries on behalf of the Conservators. Give interviews and issue statements where required, in consultation with the Clerk, and obtain the Conservators' approval as far as possible.
- f. Liaise with the Clerk to advise applicants and make recommendations to the Conservators regarding requests for events or activities on the Commons.
- g. Process requests for installation of memorial seats and ensure such seats are kept in a good state of repair.

The Ranger will be expected to carry out any other duties that may reasonably be required in line with their main duties.

Skills and Attributes

- Qualified to degree level or equivalent in land management, ecology, conservation, or a related discipline. In exceptional cases this may be varied.
- Significant experience working in conservation or land management. Tree management and heathland management experience would be an advantage.
- Understand the ecology and urban context of the Commons and how to manage them to optimise their value for people and wildlife.
- Strong inter-personal skills, good communication skills, both verbal and written. Community outreach and familiarity with social media would be an advantage.
- Ability and willingness to develop expert knowledge of the geography, history, natural history, wildlife, usage patterns, and legal and management context of the Commons.

- Project management experience including planning and execution, supervising contractors and volunteers, managing budgets.
- A clean UK driving licence.
- Current first aid certificate (or willingness to undertake training).

Terms & Conditions

- This is a full-time, permanent role.
- Starting salary £28,000 per annum depending on skills and experience.
- Contributory pension scheme.
- 37 hours per week on average, with normal working days being 4 weekdays and Saturday. At least half this time will be outdoor working.
- The role requires flexible working including some evenings and weekends outside normal hours, balanced by time off in lieu. The Ranger is the main emergency point of contact for the Commons.
- Holiday entitlement 22 days plus Bank Holidays.
- Notice period 3 months after 6-month probationary period.
- The Commons is the main working location with supplementary working from home and occasional attendance at office-based meetings.
- Subject to a DBS check.

Closing date for applications

- 24th January 2022

Interview dates

- 1st Interviews – in week commencing 31st January (via Zoom)
 - Walk on Commons – in week commencing 7th February
 - 2nd interviews – in week commencing 21st February
- Problems with any dates please let us know.

Expected start date

- 1 June 2022