



Canalside Community Food, Southam Road, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa, CV31 1TY
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Registered as a Community Benefit Society: 7743 VAT Registration: 932 2715 38

Canalside is a CSA scheme for people in Radford Semele, Leamington, Warwick, and the surrounding area. Through regenerative farming and permaculture principles, we provide shares of certified organic produce in a range of sizes suitable for different households, including a range of vegetables throughout the year, and fruit when in season. Each week, the overall harvest is divided and shared between more than 150 subscribing members' who form part of our community.

As well as being a CSA hub for the region, Canalside is also a **Community Benefit Society (CBS)** with community activities aimed at providing community benefit not only for its members but also the wider community. For example, Canalside hosts vulnerable adults through **The Willows CIC** (a care farm), educational programmes for local children, and group activities involving local companies. Share and social members benefit from the therapy of working and socialising with others while being immersed in the natural environment.

Canalside has flourished for nearly two decades, starting with only a small number of initial donations from its original members. This has been made possible by the commitment of its members and volunteers many of whom volunteer to work in the fields, the orchard and our polytunnels on our regular volunteer days. In addition to this a small and very committed group of people has met monthly as the steering group (since the summer of 2005) and this group is responsible for the overall strategy and vision of the enterprise as well as ensuring the legal duties of the Society are fulfilled. Due to the strength of our community, we now own the 12 acres of land on which we grow our own food- the capital being raised by our members in a community share offer in 2019.

However, times change, and we must adapt. Within a rapidly changing climate, changing buying and consumption habits (driven by online innovations) and changing economic conditions we must evolve to become even more resilient if we are to flourish and steward our land into the future. Although we are proud of our diverse membership, ranging from long-serving elderly members to young busy families we are also conscious we need to attract a new generation of participants who share our common belief in locally grown nutritious, seasonal food and empowered communities which forms the heart of Canalside's vision and mission.

Canalside's Vision:

To produce seasonal, organic, locally grown vegetables and fruit, and to involve local people in the process of producing the food that they eat.

Canalside's Mission:

- Produce fresh, seasonal, and organic food for its share members all year round.
- Evolve and sustain a resilient Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme through investment in staff, community mobilisation, and infrastructure.
- Promote the relationship between the **growers** who produce the food, the **members** who consume it, the **land** on which it is grown including the **soil, flora and fauna** on which it depends.

- Organise social events, educational visits, and farm open days, which will further our objectives, engage and benefit more people and relevant organisations.
- Promote the principles of regenerative and organic farming within the ethos of the CSA approach to farming (ensuring ecological, economic and social sustainability through regenerative farm practice, incorporation of biodiversity and community welfare).

Future Development:

Currently we are in the process of developing a new vision for the Canalside farmland, which will incorporate more elements of regenerative farming and more diversity of farm activities and enterprises. Below is an illustration showing how our land use in open field growing areas might evolve. Currently, roughly half the field marked in green ('Millfield') is a market garden area where salad crops, beans, strawberries, etc. can be closely looked after. The proposal is for this to be extended and to adopt a 'no dig' approach. The blue area ('Big Gorse') would develop from a field cropping area to perennials such as Jerusalem artichokes, asparagus, soft fruit and top fruit. The yellow and orange areas ('Canalside') could include mixed use, such as broiler chickens, mushrooms and bee hives, as well as field cropping.



In this way, we are looking for renewed energy and imagination to implement **regenerative agriculture practice** on site to improve further the health and vitality of topsoil, increase biodiversity and improve the water cycle.

This aims to increase our resilience to climate change and be able to demonstrate this potential to the wider food production community.

The ideal candidate will therefore be enthusiastic about regenerative farming practices, but also be grounded in the challenges of working practically on-farm in small scale organic horticulture. They will also be realistic about the challenges of directly working with a diverse community of people with different perspectives and be able to compromise between viewpoints at the same time as moving forwards with the vision and mission.

We therefore see this role as helping to complete a transition to new ways of working in the community and on-farm to reach our full potential. This is part of a broader change in the community governance arrangements already begun, which include streamlining the Steering Group, and the creation of subgroups for Community Engagement, Infrastructure Development and Funding.

Currently, there are three part-time Growers (including a Seasonal Grower), a part-time Finance Manager, Administration Manager, and voluntary HR support, some of whom work only a few days a month. Other regular volunteers partake in work mornings and attend governance meetings.

We are looking for an experienced grower to take a leadership role in moving the CSA forward towards a sustainable future. We foresee that the new role of Lead Grower and Manager will be overarching, taking responsibility for managing the business and projects while ensuring a close collegiate relationship with current staff including three part-time experienced Growers, and an Administrator. The role will be accountable to the Steering Group.

Practically, we expect this exciting and challenging role will work across what we consider three core elements of the future sustainability of Canalside:

1) Regenerative farming, soil health and biodiversity

Implement the best agroecological and regenerative practice in our food production from our 7 polytunnels and 12 acres of community owned land. We expect the grower to further develop cultivation and irrigation systems rooted in regenerative agriculture, which promote and enhance not only our fruit and vegetable production for our members, but also promote biodiversity and soil health. We would like this to include agricultural practices including perennial production, which are more resilient in the face of climate change.

2) Staff wellbeing and welfare

We aim to pay a fair living wage, with access to a workplace pension and training for personal and professional development. We would like to ensure that all staff receive support from the community with dedicated pastoral and professional support. The postholder will act as line manager and team leader and report into the Steering Group made up of Directors.

3) Community cohesion and wider networking and education

We are a community benefit society and a CSA. This means that we aspire to involve our farm community in the running of the farm and provide volunteering opportunities in all aspects of the farm work; i.e. from growing to marketing and funding. For the community to run successfully, we need the support of volunteers with clearly defined roles, and with policies in place for volunteer development and safeguarding. We also aspire to educate the wider community about broader farming issues around the environment, biodiversity, and climate change, and take opportunities to promote CSA principles regionally and nationally. This may involve a programme of school visits, engaging with local groups who share our aspirations, and attending regional and national CSA events.

We are therefore looking for a grower manager with the imagination and drive to lead the existing experienced staff team, but also engage the wider farm community of members to establish a firm vision for the future of our community owned land. More details of our current working practice and future plans can be obtained by contacting Gareth at finance@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk.

CANALSIDE LEAD GROWER AND MANAGER - JOB DETAILS

LOCATION: Canalside Community Food, Leasowe Farm, Radford Semele CV31 1TY

CONTRACT TYPE: Permanent contract after probation period (initially 6 months)

SALARY: £24,544 but depending on experience and agreed responsibility (see hours/days).

HOURS/DAYS: 7.5 hours per day, 226 days (= 0.87 FTE). Basic is for 5 days in summer, 3 days in winter at £14.48 per hour.

FLEXIBLE WORKING: The grower can work up to 5 days per week in summer (Apr-Oct) and 3 days per week in winter (Nov-Mar). This can be subject to discussion upon offer, as we value the importance of an acceptable work-life balance while running an efficient farm.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: We are looking to recruit as soon as we find the right candidate. Therefore, there is no application deadline set; interviews will be arranged on a rolling basis. Applicants meeting the criteria will first be invited for a video call online. If successful, will be invited for an in-person interview at the farm.

JOB OBJECTIVE:

To bring imagination and cohesion to a well-established CSA farm with prime organic land under ownership, so that members and the wider community are energised to evolve our mission to produce seasonal, organic, locally grown food with people, and feel part of the process.

As Lead Grower and Manager, this will involve implementing our growing operations in a way that embraces the principles of regenerative farming, permaculture and what it is to be a CSA, while promoting staff well-being, community benefit and leading us towards a more sustainable future in the face of climate change and changing consumer habits.

The role will also require that the grower manager will take on aspects of managing the overall enterprise including basic bookkeeping tasks (including ensuring bank reconciliations and VAT returns), liaising with our accountants for payroll and annual reporting requirements, coordinating staff activities and liaising with our community groups and the steering group and agreeing actions. In addition the post will require overseeing communication with our members and our outreach activities including attending relevant regional and national gatherings.

The role will also involve an element of fundraising (and, if successful, this could serve to increase the role to a full-time post). This would suit a person who has experience of fundraising small to medium grants and understands the administration involved in getting and delivering grants as well as some familiarity with potential grant sources for small businesses. Some experience of farming grants and farming schemes may also be advantageous in increasing basic farm revenue at the same time as delivering on our core ethos (e.g. environmental schemes and SFI payments).

POST HOLDER REPORTS TO Canalside Steering Group

JOBS REPORTING TO THIS POST 3 x part-time Growers; 1 x Admin Manager

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Every Canalside staff member should embrace our mission and values and demonstrate their implementation in the way our community is run and how our food production is delivered.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Together with the growing team, create and deliver a resilient farm sowing and cropping plan designed to produce sufficient food throughout the calendar year based on previous plan and learning from previous experiences. Prepare effectively for our future challenges relating to climate changes, soil health and biodiversity loss.
- The postholder is expected to be hands on involved with the growing work on the farm, but will also need to delegate responsibilities, as well as tasks, to the experienced growing team.
- Ensure that a responsible investment plan is created and implemented so that existing and new physical infrastructure on the farm is resilient and sustainable for our evolving needs and climatic conditions, such as water availability, drainage and irrigation; solar and generator power; farm transport; storage and shelter buildings; etc.
- Ensure the provision and development of practical and comfortable staff working conditions and spaces.
- Develop and implement staff rosters, recruitment and monthly payroll administration to ensure sufficient capacity for delegated tasks and responsibilities without requiring team members to work excessive hours.
- Organise and delegate regular volunteer work mornings and events to contribute to the seasonal food production programme, and ensure the community are given every opportunity to become involved.
- Commission paid daily labour as budget and operations require.
- Oversee the administration of the business to ensure it stands on a financially sustainable footing relating to: subscription numbers, food production capacity, financial reserves and budgeted costs.
- Create plans for approval by the steering group and ensure timely bookkeeping, ordering and invoicing, as necessary to keep within agreed monthly and annual budget levels.
- Develop funding proposals/bids for grants together with others.
- Produce with others concise, effective communication to staff, volunteers, membership and wider public both orally, through newsletters, reports and online.
- Work within Soil Association standards for organic certification, and attend/follow up on annual inspections.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- Organise and attend regular grower and staff meetings to drive forward the broader sustainability agenda as well as manage day-to-day operations and problem solving.
- Attend monthly steering group meetings at which concise written reports will inform on progress, setbacks and progress moving towards longer-term financial, administrative and operational plans, as well as to seek approval for next stage plans or changes to working practices.
- Attend meeting of community groups composed of members.

COMPETENCIES AND ABILITIES

- Excellent communicator with good listening, diplomacy and negotiation skills across a range of personnel
- Energetic, emotionally intelligent, and self-aware team/community leader
- Imaginative and reflective thinker, able to problem solve and plan for the future
- Adaptable; able to respond to a dynamic, changing environment, and quickly recover from setbacks
- Able to work in a small dynamic team with limited access to resources, and proactively on own initiative
- Friendly, positive, and approachable manner
- Good punctuality, timekeeping and ability to prioritise competing responsibilities and tasks
- Highly committed team player; able to nurture professional relationships with colleagues, partners and external contacts at all levels and bring others along

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE:

| Essential | Desirable |
|--|---|
| <i>demonstrated by application, interview, and references</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 full years of full-time experience working in organic food production; i.e. field scale and protected cropping • Experience as a Lead Grower who manages a team of Growers • Fully competent in the operation of tractors and machinery used in field-based food production • Good numeracy skills and a good working knowledge of bookkeeping and financial administration experience using software, such as spreadsheets and online document management systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of full-time experience working in organic veg growing • Detailed knowledge of organic practices and standards • Budget creation and management • Experience in researching and developing grant funding applications • Experience of fruit production • Experience of managing social media communication channels • Experience managing / leading a groups of unpaid workers/volunteers |

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We value diversity and seek to reflect this in our staff team. We welcome applications from people from all sections of the community, irrespective of race, colour, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

POLICIES AND PRACTICE

The successful candidate will be employed by the Community Benefit Society (Canalside) and must have a commitment to Canalside's values and mission; comply with our policies and practice, including our code of conduct and safeguarding policies.

ELIGIBILITY

Only people eligible to work in the UK can apply for this position. For further details please check:

<https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk> or <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>

SAFER RECRUITMENT: All offers of employment are subject to satisfactory references and appropriate screening checks (which can include safeguarding and criminal records checks).

DBS CHECK REQUIRED? No

PENSION: We offer a workplace pension with NEST. We pay current statutory employers contributions on top of the employee contribution. We may be able to contribute to other schemes as long as they comply with current employment law on automatic pension enrolment.

HOLIDAYS AND LEAVE: The holiday year runs from 1 April to 31 March. The entitlement is statutory holiday days (which include Bank Holidays) on a pro rata basis with additional days added with length of service (1 extra day pro rata per 2 years service). Sick pay and parental leave and pay will be given in line with statutory requirements.

PROBATION AND NOTICE PERIODS:

The appointment will be based on a 6 month probationary period when the notice will be one month. Once confirmed in post the notice period will be three months.

TO APPLY:

To apply email your comprehensive CV and Cover Letter to mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk or post to Canalside Community Food, Leasowe Farm, Southam Road, Radford Semele, CV31 1TY.