

Ecological Land Cooperative

For a living, working countryside



Planning Manager (Applications and Campaigns)

Two Year Temporary Contract

Job Description and Person Specification

The Ecological Land Cooperative (ELC) is a social enterprise based in Brighton, East Sussex. We exist to create affordable access to land for new entrants to ecological agriculture and mixed farming. Following the successful delivery of our first site, a cluster of three ecological smallholdings at Greenham Reach in Mid Devon, we have also purchased three further sites across the South of England and Wales. We have an ambitious plan to deliver around 20 smallholdings over the next 3 years.

We currently employ 1 full-time and 4 part-time staff, and strategic direction is led by ELC's Board of Directors, which currently has 4 members who are elected at the Cooperative's AGM. There are 300 members of the Cooperative.

We believe that ecological land-based livelihoods can help solve some of the most pressing environmental and social problems of our time, and we seek to marry ecological principles with sound business practice to help more people live and work on the land. This type of small-scale ecological production delivers a number of benefits including protecting the environment, building vibrant rural communities, providing employment and training, and supporting healthy diets through affordable, local produce.

Beyond this, our vision is one where land is valued and used as a means to enhance our collective good. At present, land in the UK is the target of financial speculation; in contrast, our model champions a collective, ecological and cooperative vision of land ownership and land use.

The Planning Manager

The Planning Manager is responsible for researching, writing and submitting planning applications for the ELC low impact smallholding clusters and campaigning for changes in planning policy to support low impact, sustainable rural development, and is supported by the Operations Manager.

Hours

2.5 days (18.75 hours) per week. The post is expected to be home based with the opportunity to work flexible hours and regular visits to Brighton to meet with

colleagues. The post is initially offered as a two year temporary contract from the postholder's start date.

Remuneration

£ 27,027 per annum* pro rata, actual salary for 2.5 days (18.75 hours) per week, £13,513 for two years. * the ELC has a flat payment structure, with all workers paid at the same rate. As soon as our organisational productivity exceeds our business plan targets, we'd like to increase the level of pay across the organisation.

Job Description

The Planning Manager is responsible for:

- Carrying out all the tasks necessary to research, write, submit and steward the planning applications for ELC residential smallholding sites through the planning application process until permission is granted. Duties include:
 - Undertaking preliminary planning appraisals of prospective sites for the development of linked smallholdings;
 - Preparation of requests for pre-application advice;
 - Undertaking community engagement;
 - Commissioning technical consultants;
 - Preparation, submission and determination of planning applications;
 - Progressing appeals (where necessary);
 - Coordination of the discharge of conditions and assisting with monitoring ELC's compliance with conditions.
- Documenting the steps necessary to complete the planning application process in the ELC Planning Handbook so that it may be replicated for future sites.
- Ensuring that the planning resources on the ELC website are kept up to date.
- Engaging with the professional planning community to ensure there is an understanding of the work of the ELC and the opportunity to influence planning policy at national, regional and local levels to encourage low impact and sustainable development.
- Developing a series of guides to assessing low impact developments and ecological small-scale farming for planning professionals.
- Working with ELC tenants to ensure that their building plans meet the requirements of ELC's building policy and the local planning authority building regulations.
- Delivering a programme of engagement with planning professionals to promote the work of the ELC and low impact development more generally.
- Any other aspect of work to submit planning applications and influence planning policy considered reasonable.

- Contributing to the work of the ELC as part of the staff team, including team meetings, strategic planning and away-days, and team-building or social events.
- Representing the ELC at meetings, conferences and events where appropriate.
- Preparing regular progress updates for the Operations Manager and ELC Board.
- Supporting the work of planning volunteers as necessary.
- Any other aspect of planning work considered reasonable.

Person Specification

Essential Skills and Experience

- An understanding of the planning system/s in England and/or Wales.
- A working knowledge of the National Planning Policy Framework and/or Planning Policy Wales, particularly as they relate to agricultural workers' dwellings.
- An eye for detail and excellent administrative skills.
- Campaigning experience or a willingness to campaign for policy change at a national or regional level.
- An understanding of low impact building principles or a willingness to learn.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain professional networks.
- Excellent written English and the ability to adapt written materials to different audiences.
- Excellent ICT skills.
- A commitment to working cooperatively.

Desirable Skills and Experience

- A professional planning qualification.
- Experience of submitting planning applications in England and/or Wales.
- Experience of working within the environmental movement, the coop movement or the third sector.
- Experience of the low-impact movement or agro-ecological farming.
- Experience of developing and delivering training workshops.
- Experience of running a campaign to change policy or practice.
- An understanding of building regulations, particularly as they affect low impact self -building.
- Familiarity with web-based management tools such as Google G-Suite, Slack.
- Experience of using and maintaining a website content management system.
- Experience of cooperative management and inclusive decision making.
- Experience of remote working or an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of working remotely as part of a small and diverse team.

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