Penicuik Estate
Financial Controller
£55,000-£65,000 DOE, reviewed annually
Pension, private healthcare, 30 days' holiday including public holidays
Permanent, full-time, office based
Penicuik Farms Office, EH26 9LA

Role Purpose & Additional Information

Penicuik Estate is a 7,000-acre estate in Midlothian, cared for by the same family since 1654, where farming, forestry, renewable energy, conservation and a growing luxury hospitality business sit side by side.

The finance function has been supported by a Finance Director, who is moving to a part-time Strategic Financial Adviser role, and by the estate's external accountants. The business is now building an in-house finance team led by this role.

The Financial Controller is the senior finance role in the business, reporting to the Owner / Managing Director. A Strategic Financial Adviser (SFA) supports the Owner / Managing Director on financial strategy and the capital programme; this role owns the production and control of all the estate's financial information: management accounts, VAT, forecasting, analysis, the finance systems, and the move to a fully in-house function.

The Financial Controller also makes a major contribution to the estate's financial strategy, working closely with the SFA and the Owner / Managing Director on planning and investment decisions.

Hospitality is the largest and most financially complex part of the business. The right person will understand hospitality accounting, guest ledgers, booking-driven revenue, event cost structures and PMS reconciliation, and how the operational and financial sides connect.

Reports to: Owner / Managing Director

Works alongside: The Strategic Financial Adviser, the Sales & Marketing Director, the Hospitality Operations Manager, the Head of Facilities & Maintenance and the farm team. The role also leads a Finance & HR Assistant.

Key Responsibilities Include

1. Management Accounts and Month-End Close

- Own the month-end close from start to finish: accruals, prepayments, revenue recognition across all six business units, and full balance sheet reconciliations, accurate, on time, every month.
- Review and correct P&L coding so the accounts are right first time and the numbers tell the right story.
- Produce clear departmental reporting across the estate's income streams, hospitality, farm, forestry, renewable energy and property, so each part of the business can see how it is performing.
- Keep the fixed asset register and lease/HP schedules current and correctly posted.
- Prepare a clear, well-presented management accounts pack for the Owner / Managing Director, with material variances identified and explained.

2. VAT and Tax Compliance

- Prepare and submit quarterly VAT returns across a genuinely diverse income base, hospitality, farm, forestry, minerals and biomass, handling mixed-supply and partial-exemption calculations where not all activities carry full VAT recovery.
- Support the estate's external accountants on statutory accounts and corporation tax, providing the context and workings that make their job straightforward.
- Account accurately for grant income and renewable energy revenues, keeping the treatment clean and the reporting clear.
- Keep an eye on tax legislation changes that affect the estate and flag anything that needs action.

3. FP&A and Decision Support

- Own the Fathom forecasting model: keep it current, roll it forward monthly, and make sure it reflects the commercial reality of the business.
- Prepare monthly performance packs and ad-hoc analysis for the Owner / Managing Director, translating numbers into insight that helps decisions get made.
- Support pricing decisions across hospitality and the cottage portfolio, modelling scenarios and giving the Owner / Managing Director the financial grounding to act with confidence.
- Monitor cottage KPIs, occupancy, ADR and RevPAR, and keep the reporting sharp.
- Lead annual budgeting with the Owner / Managing Director and heads of department, and support them through the year on their financial performance, budgets and cost control, building plans that are realistic and owned by the people delivering them.
- Provide financial reporting and cost tracking for the estate's capital projects, from appraisal through to delivery, so investment decisions are well-grounded and spend stays on track.
- Watch the cash position and working capital closely, flagging anything coming down the track before it becomes a problem.

4. Accounts Payable & Receivable Oversight

- Oversee AP and AR as these functions come in-house from the external accountants, building the processes cleanly from the ground up, with day-to-day processing handled by the Finance & HR Assistant.
- Review and approve bills in ApprovalMax, making sure coding is right and spend is properly authorised.
- Embed a culture of financial rigour across the estate: run a clear purchase-order process, make sure spend is authorised and on budget, and give heads of department the numbers and support they need to manage their costs well.
- Keep the estate's financial controls, spend limits, card controls and approval workflows up to date and fit for purpose as the business grows.
- Run payment runs when needed and maintain the estate's banking relationships.

5. Finance Technology & Systems

- Own the finance tech stack, Xero, Fathom, ApprovalMax, Dext, Pleo, PriceLabs, the estate's banking platform and MEWS BI, and keep it working well.
- Keep bank feeds and reconciliations accurate and Xero clean and up to date.
- Lead new technology rollouts when they come, embedding them properly so they actually get used.
- Keep the MEWS BI dashboard current and useful, working with the Hospitality Operations Manager on what it surfaces.
- Keep energy recharges accurate and posted each month.

6. Building the Function

- This is a founding role for the in-house finance team. The right person will enjoy building it: documenting processes, establishing ways of working, and creating a function that is organised, resilient and genuinely useful to the business.
- Lead the transition of work coming in-house from the external accountants, managing the knowledge transfer thoroughly so nothing is lost in the handover.
- Be the first port of call for finance questions across the estate, handling escalations calmly and keeping things moving.

7. How Success is Measured

- The month-end close lands accurately and on time, every month, without drama.
- VAT returns submitted correctly and on time, with the Owner / Managing Director confident the estate's compliance is in good hands.
- The Owner / Managing Director has a Fathom model and monthly pack that give a clear and accurate picture of the business.
- Pricing and commercial decisions are better informed because of the analysis this role provides.
- The transition from the accountants is managed smoothly, with no gaps in reporting or compliance.
- The finance function is well-documented and well-organised, something the business can rely on and build on.
- The finance technology stack works well and is used properly across the team.

Person Specification

Penicuik Estate is warm, welcoming and down to earth, and the right person brings that same quality to the finance function. They understand hospitality in practice: that a guest ledger needs to reconcile before checkout, that event-week cash flow looks different from a quiet January, and that the people running the house need financial information that helps them, not just something that satisfies an audit.

They are curious about the business, enjoy being close to the work, and communicate clearly with colleagues who are not finance professionals. They take genuine pride in a clean set of accounts and a model that reflects reality, and they will take real satisfaction in building something here.

Essential

- A qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA or ICAS), or qualified by experience with a strong track record at this level, covering management accounts, VAT and financial reporting.
- Experience in a hospitality, hotel, venue or events business; this is genuinely important. The right person understands hospitality accounting: booking-driven revenue, guest ledger reconciliation, event-based cost structures, and the financial rhythm of a business where occupancy, ADR and RevPAR are the metrics that matter.
- An understanding of how a hospitality Property Management System feeds the financial picture, and comfort working with finance systems generally.
- Proven experience preparing monthly management accounts and balance sheet reconciliations to a high standard, with the confidence to own the month-end close independently.
- Strong working knowledge of VAT, including mixed-supply and partial-exemption rules, and the ability to prepare and submit returns accurately.

- Strong cash flow forecasting and management, building and maintaining rolling cash and P&L forecasts and giving the business clear sight of its cash position, essential given the estate's investment programme.
- Commercially minded and focused on business growth: comfortable with FP&A, budgeting and scenario modelling, and turning financial analysis into recommendations that help the business grow profitably.
- Confident user of Xero or an equivalent accounting platform, with the aptitude to own and develop the estate's wider finance technology stack.
- A natural communicator who translates financial information into plain language for a non-finance audience and builds effective working relationships across a small, close team.
- Organised and self-sufficient, comfortable being the most senior day-to-day finance person.
- Happy to work on-site at Penicuik Estate, Midlothian.

Desirable

- Experience with a hospitality Property Management System, or in the hospitality industry more broadly, with MEWS experience a particular bonus. We recognise this is an unusual role and do not expect every system or sector to be a perfect match.
- Familiarity with common finance systems such as Xero, ApprovalMax or Fathom, and strong financial modelling skills.
- An interest in using technology and AI to streamline finance processes and reduce cost across the business.
- Experience in a rural estate or mixed-use property business, with farm, forestry or energy income lines.
- Familiarity with capital allowances and the financial treatment of a significant capital investment programme.
- Experience overseeing payroll, including a casual or variable-hours workforce.
- Experience supporting a transition from outsourced to in-house finance, including knowledge transfer and process documentation.

How to Apply

Penicuik Estate is recruiting for this role through Eden Scott. To apply, please send a CV and a short covering note explaining why this role and this business appeal to you, to david.currie@edenscott.com

Closing date for applications: 31st August 2026. We will review applications as they arrive and may close early if we find the right person, so early applications are encouraged.

The process is a first conversation with Eden Scott, followed by an interview at Penicuik Estate with the Owner / Managing Director and the Strategic Financial Adviser, including a short practical discussion of month-end and forecasting. Ideal start date: 1st October 2026.

Penicuik Estate is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from all backgrounds and will make reasonable adjustments at any stage of the process; please just let us know what you need.