

Invitation to Tender

Contract title:	Audience Development Consultant
Location:	Home based, with some travel to Sherborne, Dorset
Period of contract:	9 months (number of days to be agreed)
Maximum budget:	£8,000 including VAT and expenses
Contact:	Victoria Northwood, Chair of Trustees
Deadline for tender return:	5pm 30 July 2021

Introduction

Sherborne Museum wishes to commission an audience development report to provide a better understanding of our current and potential audiences, alongside the barriers and motivations for visiting the Museum. The report will help to inform the re-development of Sherborne Museum, planned for 2023-24, and an associated application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Context

Sherborne Museum is an Accredited Museum which opened in 1968. It evolved from the town's Historical Society, and the collections reflect the history, industry, geology and culture of Sherborne and its surrounding villages. The Museum is largely volunteer run, with the role of Curator supported by an Honorarium. The Curator has been commissioned to project manage the redevelopment project.

Sherborne Museum occupies a small but well positioned site comprising the former Gatehouse and Almonry of Sherborne Abbey, and under normal circumstances attracts around 7,500 visitors per year. The Museum operates seasonal opening from Easter to early December, and remained closed during 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is hoped that the Museum will be able to open for at least part of the 2021 season.

The Museum is represented on the Sherborne Tourism Forum and has good working relationships with Sherborne Town Council and the Museum Development Officer for Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole.

Further information about Sherborne Museum, including our Mission Statement, Access Policy and Collections Development Policy can be found on our web-site: <https://www.sherbornemuseum.co.uk/index.php>

The Brief

The audience development report will:

1. Establish the meaning and value of Sherborne Museum and its collections, and the potential benefits of the redevelopment project, through consultation with key groups of current and potential users including (but not limited to):
 - the Museum's Trustees, Volunteers and Membership;
 - the Sherborne Area Schools' Trust and other local schools;
 - the Town Council and local community groups;
 - Sherborne Historical Society and other special interest groups.
2. Draw on historic visitor data collected through Visitor Verdict surveys and other means to establish the current audience profile for Sherborne Museum, and benchmark this profile against the demographic data and social profiling of our principal catchment area.
3. Establish the factors which motivate or deter visits to Sherborne Museum, and identify the key barriers to visiting, through a survey to cover both visitors to the town and local residents.
4. Recommend actions which will contribute to increased membership, volunteer participation and visitor growth over the next five years, identifying target groups that will enable Sherborne Museum to broaden its audience base and support its ongoing sustainability.
5. Provide a robust, evidence-based assessment of the potential for visitor growth following completion of the redevelopment project, identifying target visitor numbers.

Output

The final report should include a position statement, summary of research findings and an action plan. It should be supplied as a PDF document to be sent to the Chair of Trustees and Curator.

Contract Duration

The contractor should be available for a start-up meeting towards the beginning of September 2021. Covid-19 restrictions permitting, we anticipate re-opening the museum during the summer holidays, participating in Heritage Open Days 10-19 September 2021 and running our annual programme of Winter Talks.

An initial draft of the report should be shared with the Trustees by mid-April 2022, in order to allow time for feedback prior to submission of the final report. We are flexible about the deadline for this but would anticipate receiving it by the end of June 2022.

Budget

The maximum budget is £8,000. Fee proposals should indicate whether the consultant is registered for VAT, and provide separate details of the day rate and any expenses.

Suggested payment will be 25% upon appointment, 50% for the first draft and 25% on receipt of the final report.

Tender Process

Proposals are invited from individuals or consultancies with:

- Experience in conducting audience development research;
- The skills to undertake consultation with a range of stakeholders;
- Experience working with (or for) independent museums;
- An understanding of the challenges facing small regional museums;
- An understanding of the NLHF application process;
- A willingness to travel to Sherborne for in-person meetings and consultations.

Proposals should include:

- A methodology of how you propose to meet the requirements of the brief;
- A programme indicating how you would deliver the project, and any key dates;
- A breakdown of costs;
- A current CV for each person who will be working on the project;
- Examples of similar projects undertaken;
- Details of two referees for whom you have done similar work.

Proposals will be assessed based on:

- Understanding of the client and project;
- Appropriate methodology;
- Relevant experience and expertise;
- Value for money;
- Availability of consultant.

Proposals should be sent by e-mail to Victoria Northwood, Acting Chair of Trustees:
chair@sherbornemuseum.co.uk

Deadline for tender returns: 5pm 30 July 2021

Interviews: w/c 23 August 2021

Notification of decision: 31 August 2021