



Invitation to Tender for Business Consultancy for Ashburton Arts Ltd

About us...

Ashburton Arts is a community organisation (not-for-profit company limited by guarantee). It was set up in 2017 with the primary aim of buying and transforming a redundant Methodist Church into a vibrant arts centre for the community of Ashburton and surrounding areas. We successfully raised £185k in pledges of donations and loans which allowed us to buy the old church at auction in July 2017.

Over the last three years we have made an excellent start at bringing this important local Grade 2 listed building back into a destination venue for performing and visual arts. We've attracted an extremely high quality of visiting artists from the UK and beyond, as well as promoting and supporting local professional and amateur artists, schools and community organisations. We've attracted audiences from the local catchment area (Dartmoor, Torbay and the A38 corridor) as well as from much further afield. In 2019 we were one of 12 venues included in a Guardian article about "the best small music venues in the UK".

We are programming top touring musicians, theatre, dance, magic and regular cinema screenings. The space is also being very well used by the community for workshops, classes and meetings.

Current activities are greatly curtailed by Covid restrictions. More information about our programme can be found on our website: www.ashburtonarts.org.uk and at facebook.com/ashburtonarts/events (which includes all past events).

About the work...

Ashburton Arts has been successful in obtaining a project viability grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund to bring in dedicated support to identify a sustainable business plan for the future. This work is to be led by a freelance Business Consultant, contracted and managed by the Board of Ashburton Arts Ltd.

We anticipate the Business Consultancy period should be around three months, starting **July 2021**.

The available fee is £5,750 to include expenses and VAT, contracted and managed by the Board of Ashburton Arts.

Overall Objective

The AHF Viability Support programme has been set up to support growing Heritage organisations to develop viable businesses and to fund necessary business strategy and building plans that will move them into a readiness to apply for large development grants.

The overall objective of this consultancy project is to **articulate a strong and sustainable business model for Ashburton Arts**, working collaboratively and supportively with the Board to develop and prepare structures for implementing the detailed business plan. This may include current operations as well as proposals to develop new activities.

Our approach so far has been creative and innovative – perhaps unique! People regularly express amazement at both the quantity and quality of what happens at Ashburton Arts Centre. We hope that this consultancy will be approached in the same way: learning from established best-practice, but not afraid to go beyond it and suggest new ways of doing things that will allow us to continue to develop and improve, using the resources we already have and identifying ways that we can build and add to them.

Consultant Brief

The Consultant will:

1. Support the Board around a review of the organisation's vision, mission, values and guiding principle
2. Undertake a full analysis of the organisation's finances, including business plan, income sources, expenditure, potential funders.
3. Undertake a comparator review to identify existing organisations running similar venues with successful and sustainable models from which we can learn.
4. To review all existing procedures, including financial management, accounting, and reporting. If necessary, propose new tools and procedures to improve these areas
5. To present the Board with a series of options for the organisations' future operational model that will enable a sustainable future, including the likely scale of capital investment that would be required to facilitated each option.
6. After agreement of the preferred option, to prepare an outline 3-yr Business Plan, identifying capital and revenue expenditure, potential income sources and allocation of staff resources.

These documents will be presented to potential funders and supporters to help explain our plans.

Consultant experience and competence:

Essential requirements are:

- Business and funding experience of social enterprise, arts / heritage organisations / venue start ups
- Knowledge of the broadest possible spectrum of potential sources of funding for Community & Arts organisations, including but not limited to: ACE, HLF, Educational and health/well-being related bodies, National Park-related funding, economic regeneration possibilities, commercial operations (e.g. ticket sales)
- Knowledge of the relationship between AHF funding and Big Lottery grant applications (this business model will form part of our AHF-supported

preparation for potential future applications for National Lottery capital funding)

- Financial Management
- Developing sustainable business models
- Working with Boards in the wider social economy

Tender Process

To respond to this tender, please write to the Chair of Ashburton Arts (as below) outlining your relevant skills and experience, including a detailed C.V. Please also detail how you propose to undertake and deliver the work.

Please submit a proposal by 11th June 2021 to:

Sarah Cobley
Chair, Ashburton Arts Ltd
sarah@sarahcobley.co.uk

Interviews will be held w/c 21st June 2021