



Audience Development  
Services

People's Palace

Morecambe Winter  
Gardens

WINTER GARDENS

Supported using public funding by



**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## 1 Introduction

The Morecambe Winter Gardens Preservation Trust is currently delivering a £3.2m programme of works to restore Morecambe's iconic music venue through providing new facilities and critical equipment and infrastructure, and jointly funded by the Arts Council England (ACE) and UK Shared Prosperity Fund through CDF3 Funding. Background. Alongside this capital project (September 2023 to March 2026, the Trust wish to appoint a suitably experienced Audience Development consultant to support them in the next phase of their ambitious "People's Palace" project. This new work is part of the Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities programme, run by Theatres Trust, with funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and Swire Charitable Trust.

### About The Trust

The Winter Gardens is currently operated by the Morecambe Winter Gardens Preservation Trust Limited (WGPT), a registered charity (Charity Number 1113010). Established in 2006, the primary purpose of the Trust is to care for and work towards the restoration of the building, bringing it back to its former glory as a music and performance venue of national significance for the north west. The Trust has had considerable initial fundraising success so far, including through securing a range of grants for emergency and urgent repairs to the building's fabric and structure. This work has allowed it to host some events, many of which have been extremely successful, and to open for 6 months per year for tours and visits. The building is currently operated by a dedicated group of volunteers and trustees, who maintain the building, open it to the public on weekends, run heritage tours and a small café, and facilitate and market events on site. Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction of the Trust, finance and fundraising, legal advice, and for guiding the professional team supporting the project.

### The Winter Gardens

The Grade II\*-listed Winter Gardens is a cultural asset of national heritage significance. It is important for its architectural beauty and interior decoration, musical and theatrical history, and its place in the collective memory of Lancastrians. Originally a 2500 capacity venue, it currently operates on a temporary basis limited to 1,000 attendees for music or around 700 for theatre. It remains one of the largest theatres in the country, and a return to its original capacity would make it the largest music venue in North Lancashire. The building includes the main Auditorium, with Grand Circle above. Access is via the main entrance foyer, grand staircases, and adjacent corridors and connect to back-of-house and dressing spaces, including the original architect's offices. However, around a third of the building is never utilised as part of the primary cultural and performance uses held on-site. Among other spaces, an Indoor Promenade and Smoking Gallery remain empty.

This project forms part of a larger programme of works that will bring the Winter Gardens back to its former glory, reinstating up to its 2,500-capacity and developing a nationally significant contemporary music programme. It will form an important part of

the regeneration of Morecambe's seafront and town centre, creating transformational change to the way the town is perceived, broadening access to culture for millions of people in the north-west, and generating significant economic opportunity and impact for residents of Morecambe and Lancaster. Further details of which can be found in Appendix 1

## 2 Audience Development Brief

The Trust is considering future funding opportunities for the next phase of the project's delivery, including potential applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) among other options. Ahead of this, the Trust requires support from a consultant with experience in audience and activity planning to help draft a brief for a full Audience Development Plan. The current work being tender for is funded by the Theatres Trust through their Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities

The key requirements at this stage are:

- Pull together existing audience data and information, working closely with the Trust to identify what is available.
- Review existing documentation, including the Trust's Business Plan, capital development plan, and conservation plan.
- Clarify the procurement requirements of major funders regarding Audience Development activity, in particular the NLHF.
- Draft a brief for this strand of work, in line with the Trust's current state, procurement requirements, and the project's delivery timetable.
- Work with the Winter Gardens Engagement team to align data and new information into the final Action plan through the online and in person consultations

It is expected that the successful consultant will have the following expertise:

- Experience with the NLHF funding process, an advantage if this is in the North West;
- Has experience of working with Trusts and Volunteer Groups;
- Is experienced at working with community groups;
- Strong experience of audience development, activity planning, and community engagement;
- Has a track record of similar work which has been delivered in adherence to the principles above;
- Has experience of working with multi-disciplinary teams
- Is able to provide references of previous or current clients.

The fee budget for this piece of work is £10,000 exclusive of VAT, but inclusive of any required expenses.

### 3 Tender and Submission Requirements

Tenders are to be returned by Friday 13th October at 5pm – if further time is required this can be extended to Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October by request only. Proposals/bids to Professor Vanessa Toulmin email [chair@morecambewintergardens.co.uk](mailto:chair@morecambewintergardens.co.uk) Further information on organisation, venue and activities can via our website: <https://morecambewintergardens.com/about-us/>

Suitably qualified applicants must submit a document (in electronic format) as per the requirements outlined below Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 5pm or later as outlined above by prior discussion.

- Copy of your CV's for your proposed team
- A summary and budget breakdown of proposed work
- Proposal demonstrating: how you will manage and deliver the work; how your skills, knowledge and experience meet the selection criteria; and why you would like to work on the project (max 1,000 words)
- Examples of previous work, including examples of previous NHLF funded projects
- A total lump sum fee proposal for the work, in line with the budget specified above.

#### Selection Criteria

The contract will be awarded based on the price and the quality criteria indicated below. Initial assessment will be based on the written submissions, followed up if necessary with clarification interviews. The following skills and experience are essential for appointment

#### Experience

- Minimum of 5 years' experience within Audience Development and Activity Planning, especially within the context of NLHF applications.

#### Skills

- Excellent project and time management skills, able to prioritise and multi-task in order to meet deadlines

#### Personal Qualities

- Effective communicator to develop strong working relationships with staff, trustees and external parties
- Assertive and proactive approach to work
- Highly organised with ability to work under own initiative to achieve results.

Fees for the work should be broken down to provide a day rate, expenses and other anticipated costs and charges.

## 4. Estimated Timescale for Delivery

Our Chair, Professor Vanessa Toulmin will manage the project on behalf of the Trust with the support of our wider project management team currently out for tender and the Engagement Post under recruitment. Enclosed a provisional timetable for this piece of work and have divided the tasks accordingly

- September -continuous desktop research, analysis of existing data and creating template for audience capture ongoing during the September period undertaken by the Trust online and in the theatre.
- October appointment of consultant
- October/November– developing the focus groups, working with the Engagement post who will be creating the workshops and organising online and in person events within the theatre from the end of October to February. The online conversations will be delivered through the Winter Gardens Community Conversation platform and three in person workshops.
- December/January – draft outline of activity plan strategy plus costings for delivering a full engagement plan as part of an HLF submission to be ready for feedback and consultation from WGPT and Theatres Trust and other funders
- February work with Project Management Team to align this work into existing data and strategies so they appear as a seamless set of documents ready for future bid developments and to be implemented through the Trustees.

The project will be managed through the Trustees (Finance for example our Treasurer, Workshops and Focus Groups (Engagement Post), overall liaising and working with consultant and data management (Chair and Project Team). All data collected will be compliant with our GDPR policy.

## 5. Outputs

Prepare a draft costed Action Plan, in line with NLHF guidelines, together with any supporting documents and summaries of research undertaken in preparing the Plan

This will include:

- Plans for audience engagement and development, formal and informal learning, participation to sit alongside the developing volunteer framework
- An outline costed two Action Plan for delivering the Activity Plan in the format stipulated by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- A set of research data, to be stored in a readily accessible electronic format such as Excel
- Job descriptions or input depending on timescale for proposed project-funded posts.
- An Evaluation Framework for the outcomes of the project. Sustainability plans for project activities including how they can be continued and developed after the project

## Appendix 1 - People's Palace Project

The Morecambe Winter Gardens Preservation Trust was recently successful in two significant grant applications to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund, securing most of the required funding for Phase 1 of the restoration, totalling c £3.2m of capital and revenue costs. This phase of works will see the venue's capacity increased to around 1,500 people, through the installation of critical equipment and infrastructure, including a new build extension incorporating fit-for-purpose bathroom facilities for visitors. In particular, the works will include:

- The installation of modern fire doors and fire detection systems
- Works to the stairways and corridors, including the repair of the original mosaic floors in the building's entrance
- Environmental upgrades to the stage doors and fly tower windows
- A large new build extension incorporating sufficient toilet capacity for the building's final capacity, as well as access improvements via a lift.
- The refurbishment of the bar on the ground floor.
- Audio and lighting equipment suitable for a music venue of national significance
- Works to the circle seating to prepare for the second phase of works

Alongside this, the project also includes the creation of three critical paid jobs – a Volunteer Co-ordinator, events and engagement post, and a co-ordinator of the Young Creatives programme delivered in partnership with Lancaster and Morecambe College (LMC). These roles will be recruited within the lifetime of the current project, and will last for at least two years.

The Young Creatives programme will support young people with industry recognised experiences and training. This will also involve placements at a range of cultural and heritage organisations across Morecambe and Lancaster. It will develop tangible pathways to work by embedding young people with organisations well placed to take up available roles. It will include several elements, including formal training opportunities towards a range of technical qualifications in Art & Design, Creative Digital Media, Travel and Tourism, and Business among other subjects. In partnership with the Winter Gardens Morecambe, the Young Creatives Pathway will provide learners with unique opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, through a range of innovative work experiences. Each work experience will be for a minimum of 2 weeks and the opportunities created for a cohort of 75 learners over the duration of the project.

In addition, the programme will offer a course supported by the Association of British Theatre Technicians, with participants given the opportunity to undertake the ABTT Bronze Award Course. The Bronze Award is a SCQF Level 7 qualification which is recognised through the industry. The course will cover Health & Safety, Electrical Fundamentals, Ropes, Knots and Splicing, Safe Use of Temporary Access Equipment, and the Fundamentals of Flying. The courses will be delivered by the Skills and Volunteer Co-ordinator based at Morecambe Winter Gardens. The Co-

ordinator will work alongside the college to arrange the additional training, placement opportunities and monitoring.

## Current Progress

Alongside the urgent restoration and repair works described above, the Trust has made important progress on several key areas of work, on which the project can now progress:

- The completion of an HM Treasury *Green Book*-compliant Outline Business Case for the project, demonstrating strong value for money and a sustainable business model.
- Design development of major project components up to RIBA 2, including indicative costings for capital works, equipment, and revenue expenditure.
- A range of condition surveys and investigative works completed, including Conservation Management Plan, fire report, and asbestos survey among others.
- Extensive public and stakeholder engagement, leading up to a formal partnership with Lancaster and Morecambe College, and informal collaborations with a range of other local cultural, educational, and commercial businesses.