

ST MARY THE VIRGIN STEBBING ECOLOGIST IN RESIDENCE BRIEF

[1] INTRODUCTION

This document provides tender information and a brief for the appointment of a consultant or consultant team (hereafter “the consultant”) to undertake the role of Ecologist in Residence for St Mary’s as part of the delivery phase of a major repair and upgrade project that was given a delivery phase grant by the National Lottery Fund (hereafter the “Heritage Fund”) in December 2023.

[2] BACKGROUND

The Project: St Mary Stebbing: The Way Forward

The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Stebbing, has recently been awarded a delivery phase grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for our ‘Way Forward’ project. This is a £1.8 million project that will see major repairs and upgrades to the historic church building to remove it from the Heritage At Risk register, alongside an exciting three year heritage activity programme.

Our capital programme will see urgent repairs to the building, levelling of the flooring to improve accessibility, removal of the pews to allow for greater use and flexibility, installation of a new heating system to enable the church to be better used in the winter months and more comfortable for people, and to address the damp issues affecting the structure of the building which will enable the church to be removed from the Heritage At Risk register.

We are planning for most of the capital work to take place in time for the building to be reopened in 2025 for a full celebration programme. Our activity programme centres around the celebration of the restoration as well other aspects of our heritage.

[3] SCOPE OF WORK

The Way Forward Project is offering a paid two-year residency for an ecologist to explore the natural environment of St Mary’s Stebbing and to engage our volunteers and community with the biodiversity and ecosystems in and around the site.

The Ecologist in Residence will provide ecological expertise, advice and support to the project team and the community. Priority areas for the project are:

- Identification, surveying, recording, analysis and monitoring of species within the churchyard, field and potentially within the wider village.

- Development of programmes, provision of training and resources for volunteers to create and care for wildlife habitats and ensure effective onwards monitoring.
- Creation of conservation management plans for the churchyard and field.
- Provision of advice and support to increase biodiversity, habitat creation and species abundance in the area of the church.
- Provision of advice and support to promote and maintain biodiversity in the future and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Identification of actions to progress towards Silver Status Award from the Eco-church initiative.

The following outcomes will be required:

- Production of a written report in a format agreed with the Way Forward Project Steering Committee
- Participation in the project's activities:
 - Supporting the development and delivery of community events and other learning/sharing opportunities, to include the creation of seasonal nature walk resources as well as workshops, activities, and working with existing community groups such as the Stebbing Garden Club.
 - Supporting the piloting, creation and delivery of formal and informal learning activities such as KS1-3 STEM school sessions focused on animal and plant habitat in and around the church.
 - Supporting and guiding the work of environment volunteers, including sharing knowledge of different ecological skills such as how to survey, map and monitor species, and how to record and analyse data.
 - Supporting the collection of information that will inform project evaluation.
- Partnership working with the Heritage Engagement Officer, Volunteer and Training Officer and others as required.
- Partnership working with the Ecological Consultant where appropriate.
- Supply of images and material for The Way Forward project's social media and education programmes.

The Way Forward steering committee are particularly interested in activities that promote conservation, community engagement and/or have a positive impact on the local area. The successful ecologist will provide opportunities for the community to both input into and access the final report; submissions for desktop-only studies will not be successful.

The final decision for the activities, timeframe, and schedule of payment will be negotiated between the project Steering Committee and the successful applicant.

The Ecologist in Residence will retain copyright of the material generated during the residency and will acknowledge Stebbing PCC as the original commissioner of the material. The Church of England and St Mary's Stebbing will retain the right to publish material generated from the program in any format without further permission or remuneration.

[4] PROJECT PROGRAMME AND MANAGEMENT

Timescale

The Delivery Phase grant was awarded in December 2023. The first stage of the project is to get the capital programme underway and completed by the end of Qtr4 2025. The activity programme will run over a period of three years.

Delivery Phase key dates:

Second round pass awarded	December 2023
Permission to start completed	June 2024
Recruitment and appointment of staff/consultants	August to Nov 2024
Activity Programme begins	April 2025
Activity Programme ends	December 2027

Project management

Stebbing PCC will be the client. The consultant will report to the Project Team and will be managed by the Project Team Lead, Rhoda Herbert. The Project Team reports to the PCC.

The consultant will be expected to provide regular update reports for the Project Team. The frequency of which will be agreed on appointment and in line with project progress. We expect that the consultant will also attend Project Team meetings and PCC meetings as appropriate.

Location

There is an expectation that the successful applicant will be available to work on-site and to support on-site activity at specific events to be agreed with the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is keen that this opportunity is available to as wide a range of people as possible but acknowledges that public transport links to the site are poor; if you do not have access to your own vehicle and are concerned about access, please contact smvwayforward@gmail.com for an informal discussion about how the Steering Committee may be able to support you in your application.

Timeline

Deadline for tender submissions	Monday 23 rd September 2024
Shortlisting submissions	30 th September 2024
Interview dates	w/c 7 th October 2024
Successful consultant notified	Monday 4 th November 2024
Contract begins	Monday 9 th December 2024
Contract ends	31 st December 2026

[5] APPLICATION PROCESS

Ecologists are required to submit a proposal in response to this brief of no more than 2 pages (not inclusive of attachments) which should include the following:

- Current resume/CV (no more than 2 pages)
- Methodology/approach to delivery of the brief.
- Experience of previous community-facing environmental work, with examples of how you will build in opportunities for community involvement/sharing.
- How you will present the research:

- To the Steering Committee
- To the community

The shortlisted candidates will be asked to attend an interview at Church of St Mary the Virgin Stebbing, Watchhouse Road, Stebbing, Essex CM6 3SW. Online interviews may be arranged if requested.

If candidates cannot make any of the interview dates they should state so in their submission.

Contact and Closing Date

For more information or for an informal discussion about this brief please contact Rhoda Herbert. All submissions should be received by 5pm on the deadline day via email to the Project Lead Rhoda Herbert smvwayforward@gmail.com

[6] BUDGET

Total fixed contract value - £6,500. Your proposal should be presented in a clear manner, in sufficient detail and in a style that enables a clear understanding of the fee, services, programme and deliverables.

[7] JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience

Essential

- Experience working in the ecological/environmental sector.
- Experience of delivering workshops and presentations engaging a wide range of audiences.
- Experience of working in community settings including schools.
- Experience of creating activities and learning resources in a range of formats.
- Experience of working with and managing volunteers and community groups.

Desirable

- Experience of creating and maintaining wildlife habitats.
- Experience of creating engaging content for social media.

Competence, Knowledge and Skills

Essential

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of nature conservation principles and practices.
- Excellent knowledge and understanding of UK wildlife, habitats and biodiversity.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including building positive stakeholder relationships.

Desirable

- Confidence to develop new ideas and approaches.

Personal Qualities

- Confident, positive and outward focused.

- Organised and able to manage own time effectively.
- Self-motivated and able to work independently and/or collaboratively as required.
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

[8] ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Interested parties should note that we will also be recruiting for an Ecological Consultant role, focused on programming, mitigation works and similar around the capital development aspect of the project. St Mary's welcomes joint applications where these add value to the roles required.

For more information about St Mary's <https://stebbingchurch.org/>

We can provide the following information on request:

- NLHF Second Round Bid
- NLHF Activity Plan and Action Plan