Walled Garden Project Development Officer
Job Description

Location: Norton Priory Museum and Gardens
Contract: Fixed-term, 12 months
Hours: 22.5 hrs per week
Salary: £21,000 per annum (£35,000 FTE)
Reports to: Chief Executive

About Norton Priory
Norton Priory Museum and Gardens is operated by an independent, charitable trust, Norton Priory Museum Trust Limited. The Trust is dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich heritage of Europe's most excavated monastic site and the 900-year story of the estate. This approach reflects the Trust's Mission Statement: *To conserve, champion and celebrate the heritage, landscapes and collections of Norton Priory for present and future generations*.

As a small, passionate team supported by a wider community of volunteers, the Trust strives to provide a warm, welcoming and valuable experience for all our visitors.

About the Role
The postholder will play an active role in shaping a major heritage project centred on Norton Priory's Walled Garden, its historic built environment and the site's existing and developing orchards.

Working with the Norton Priory team, visitors, stakeholders and specialist consultants, the postholder will coordinate consultation, research, feasibility work and project planning to establish a clear, evidence-based vision for the future use, conservation and improvement of the Walled Garden's buildings and spaces.

The role will explore how these spaces can support Norton Priory's ambition to establish a Northern Centre of Fruit Tree Excellence, providing opportunities for horticultural learning, training, visitor engagement and the celebration of orchards, while strengthening the museum's wider visitor offer and its 900-year story.

The postholder will develop the proposals, evidence and professional advice needed to inform a future major funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, ensuring that the emerging project is feasible, accessible, financially sustainable and aligned with Norton Priory's long-term ambitions.

Key Responsibilities

Project development and feasibility
- Work with the Chief Executive and Norton Priory team to establish the vision and scope of the Walled Garden project.
- Assess how existing buildings and spaces can be refurbished and used to support the planned future development.

- Explore potential uses for the spaces, such as visitor welcome, horticultural training, learning activities, events and the demonstration of orchard and fruit tree care and management.
- Consider how the proposed facilities and activities will complement and strengthen Norton Priory's existing visitor experience.
- Identify the practical requirements, opportunities and challenges associated with the proposals.
- Maintain a clear overview of development activities, milestones, risks and deliverables.

Consulting with stakeholders

- Plan and coordinate consultation with visitors, staff, volunteers, community groups, Halton Borough Council and other relevant stakeholders.
- Gather and analyse feedback, identifying needs, themes and opportunities.
- Ensure that consultation findings inform the vision as it develops.
- Build meaningful relationships with stakeholders and share proposals and findings clearly and in good time.

Commissioning specialists / consultants

- Identify the surveys and feasibility studies required to develop the project.
- Prepare briefs and scopes of work for specialist consultants, working with the Chief Executive and relevant colleagues.
- Coordinate the commissioning process (as required) in accordance with Trust procedures and agreed budgets.
- Manage relationships with consultants and monitoring progress accordingly.

Understanding the visitor experience

- Investigate how the Walled Garden can be made welcoming and accessible to a broad range of visitors, especially in relation to access, design and the needs of different audiences.
- Explore how visitors will access the spaces, including connections with the wider Norton Priory estate, transport links and parking.
- Consider how the Walled Garden can be integrated into the existing museum visitor experience, through interpretation, learning activities and events.

Sustainability

- Assess the operational implications of the proposals, including staffing, maintenance and ongoing running costs.
- Explore potential income-generating activities, partnerships and other opportunities to support the long-term financial sustainability of the project.
- Consider how the spaces can support horticultural expertise, training, knowledge-sharing and the future development of Norton Priory's fruit tree collections over the longer-term.
- Identify the resources, partnerships and operating model needed to sustain the proposed facilities and activities beyond the initial investment.

Project recommendations

- Bring together consultation findings, feasibility work, specialist reports and other relevant evidence to inform the project.
- Identify gaps in knowledge and coordinate further research where required.
- Develop clear recommendations for the future use and improvement of the Walled Garden and associated structures (for example, the Ice House and Coach House).
- Prepare reports, options appraisals, cost information and supporting documentation for consideration by the Chief Executive and Board.
- Provide the evidence and developed proposals needed to inform a future National Lottery Heritage Fund application.

Expected outcome
By the end of the 12-month contract, Norton Priory will have a clearly defined and evidence-based Walled Garden project, supported by consultation findings, appropriate specialist advice, feasibility work and developed proposals for the use, accessibility, improvement and long-term sustainability of the spaces.

This work will provide the core of a major National Lottery Heritage Fund application.

Person Specification

Essential
- Experience of developing and / or coordinating to projects.
- Ability to research ideas, explore opportunities, turning them into practical and deliverable proposals.
- Experience of working with different people and organisations to gather views and information.
- Good organisational skills and the ability to manage tasks and competing priorities.
- Ability to assess options and identify challenges with practical solutions.
- Good written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to prepare reports and present your findings.
- Confidence working with external consultants, specialists and partners.
- Ability to work independently.
- An understanding of the importance of accessibility, inclusion and sustainability.
- A practical and considered approach to planning for the long-term use and maintenance of buildings and spaces.

Desirable
- Experience of working in or with heritage, museums, visitor attractions or the cultural sector.
- Experience of developing funding applications or working on projects supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).
- An understanding of historic buildings and the considerations involved in their conservation and use.

- Experience of commissioning or coordinating surveys and specialist professional advice.
- An interest in horticulture, orchards, fruit trees or the historic landscape.
- Experience of developing new activities, partnerships or income-generating opportunities.
- Understanding of visitor experience and how to make places welcoming and accessible.
- Relevant project management, heritage or other professional qualification.

Personal qualities

- You will be curious and enthusiastic, with the ability to explore possibilities and then turn them into practical proposals.
- You will enjoy working with people, listening to different perspectives and bringing ideas together to shape something worthwhile.
- You will be organised, resourceful and self-motivated, with the confidence to take ownership of your work.
- You will be comfortable working independently but understand the importance of keeping colleagues involved and working together.
- You will be positive and solution-focused.
- Above all, you will share our enthusiasm for Norton Priory and the potential of the Georgian Walled Garden and orchards to create something special for future generations.

Team Responsibilities

- Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of yourself, colleagues and visitors at all times.
- Act as a positive ambassador for the museum and charitable trust at all times.
- Undertake Safeguarding and First Aid training.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and volunteers to provide a welcoming and inclusive visitor experience.
- Treat colleagues and volunteers with respect to foster a supportive and trusted working environment.
- Represent the Trust in a professional and positive manner at all times.
- Support the Trust's commitment to sustainability by following environmental best practice (for example, recycling) and encouraging eco-friendly practices across the estate.
- Carry out other duties that may reasonably be required in line with the level and nature of the role.

Staff Benefits

- Access to professional development and role-specific training opportunities.
- Access to confidential staff wellbeing support on request.
- Opportunities to work in a unique and historically significant museum and grounds.
- Generous employer-contributed pension scheme.
- Staff discounts in the museum shop and the Brooke Café.
- Free on-site parking.

- Invitations to staff social events.