**Conservation Research Officer**

**York Consortium for Conservation & Craftsmanship**

**Overview**

York Consortium for Conservation & Craftsmanship (YCCC) is a volunteer-led charitable and membership organisation, based in York, dedicated to promoting and developing heritage skills.

The organisation is now seeks to make it’s first appointment. We seek applications for a Conservation Research Officer on a fixed term appointment. We envisage 3 days a week for 18 months but are prepared to be flexible.

The role will be very varied and encompass a number of distinct, but complementary, projects and work streams all geared to priming the YCCC (and its charitable foundation the York Foundation for Conservation & Craftsmanship (YFCC) for the next phase of its development.

The role calls for someone with a broad interest in heritage who is self-motivated, energetic, flexible, business-like and with good people and networking skills. We believe the role could suit someone at the fairly early stage of a heritage/conservation career or someone towards the latter part of their working life and bringing with them a suite of analytical and business skills. Above all, the appointment will focus on the successful applicant’s personal qualities.

The role will be based in York and will call for some travel around the region and beyond.

**Background**

The UK's heritage buildings, places and objects are threatened by a diminution of the skills necessary to care for them. YCCC exists to encourage the development of heritage skills regionally and nationally. YCCC has achieved a good deal over the last 20 years as a volunteer organisation focused on supporting heritage skills development through the award of over 250 bursaries to craftspeople and conservators. For us to take a meaningful next step and build resilience in the organisation we need to:

• Create new partnership and network opportunities

• Expand our footprint (and YCCC membership)

• Promote heritage skills careers and training opportunities

• Establish a sustainable funding and resource model

We aim, over an 18-month period, to build capacity, capability and resilience within the existing organisation. At the end of this period we also aim to have scoped the feasibility of various strategic initiatives and the shape of the organisation and its work programme going forward.

**The Organisation**

YCCC was established in 1998 as a member organisation that exists to promote its members’ skills and interests. It’s membership is drawn primarily from the heritage craft and conservator practitioner community and associated professional specialists. YCCC has about 170 members and is well-networked with many other heritage bodies including as corporate members of the Heritage Alliance and Heritage & Craft Funders Network.

YCCC is led by a committee drawn from across the regional heritage spectrum. YFCC, the charitable arm, was established out of a concern at the rapid loss of rare skills upon which the region’s and nation’s heritage depends. YFCC’s charitable objectives are to raise money in order to fund the further development of heritage skills and the taking on of apprentices and we do so, for the most part, by awarding bursaries. Since our formation we have made over 250 bursary awards to promising individuals.

Follow-up research indicates that, overwhelmingly, our bursary winners have remained in their specialist fields and flourished within them. We aim to make the organisation more resilient so that we can continue building our capacity to award more money to more people. Our work, our networks and the experiences of our trustees and members convinces us, however, that there is so much more we could do by building linkages between complementary organisations within what is currently a very fragmented heritage ecology. However, this needs more capacity than can be sustained through voluntary effort alone.

**YFCC Trustees**

YFCC is a registered charity. Its Trustees are:

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| --- | --- |
| **Martin Stancliffe** | Chairman. Retired Conservation Architect, former Surveyor to St. Paul’s Cathedral and Trustee of the Landmark Trust |
| **James Grierson** | Hon Secretary. A Chartered Surveyor and Chairman of York Museums Trust |
| **Jim Spriggs** | Retired archaeological conservator and authority on “wet wood” |
| **Elaine Phillips** | Treasurer. Chartered Accountant |
| **Dr. Gill Chitty** | Head of Department of Conservation at York University (at King’s Manor) |
| **Sarah Brown** | Director of York Glaziers Trust and Senior Lecturer at York University |

**YCCC Committee Members**

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| --- | --- |
| **Martin Stancliffe** | (Chairman) Retired Conservation Architect, former Surveyor to St. Paul’s Cathedral and Trustee of the Landmark Trust |
| **Elaine Phillips** | Chartered Accountant |
| **Mags Felter** | Senior Conservator with York Archaeological Trust |
| **Alaina Schmisseur** | Objects Conservator |
| **Jim Spriggs** | Retired archaeological conservator and authority on “wet wood” |
| **James Grierson** | A Chartered Surveyor and Chairman of York Museums Trust |
| **Susie Clark** | A Paper and Photographic Conservator |
| **Helen de Sarum** | Head of Conservation at the National Railway Museum |
| **Sue Silk** | Proprietor of Houghtons, a specialist heritage joinery contractor |
| **Tim Stead** | (Secretary) Manager at York Minster Stoneyard |
| **Dr. Birte Walbers** | (Membership) Conservation academic. |
| **Tracy Wilcockson** | Conservator (British Library) and Associate Lecturer (University of York). |
| **Kibby Garn** | Proprietor of Matthias Garn & Partner – stone masons, stone and wood carvers |
| **Alex McCallion** | Chartered Surveyor and Director of Works & Precinct at York Minster |
| **Rebecca Thompson** | Conservation Project Manager and former President of Chartered Institute Of Building |
| **Glenn Young** | Originally a carpenter and now proprietor at Heritage Craft Alliance, a heritage skills training provider |

**Project 2020 Overview**

Project 2020 will make YCCC more resilient and better able to deliver greater benefit to more people over the longer term.

Project 2020 aims to explore, test and evaluate the feasibility of a number of different mechanisms all aimed at creating a deeper, richer pool of heritage skills and talent in the region. The more active and successful we are at realising the ambitions of Project 2020, the more compelling will be YCCC’s donor, member and volunteer proposition and, in turn, will result in more people being better trained, the fuller preservation of important skills and a sharper perception of the region as a centre of excellence

We expect Project 2020 to engage new people into our work, to increase the leverage we achieve on volunteer input, access new partner organisations, enable us to increase our membership and to build additional fund-raising capacity.

People impact. Project 2020 will provide us with a clear model for how to engage with young people to make them aware of the career options associated with heritage skills.

We expect the project to play an important role in sign-posting for career entrants, in promoting apprenticeship opportunities and in encouraging tacit skills transfer through mentoring. The project will work strongly on the demand side too.

We want to test the conviction that opportunities for more heritage skills training can be delivered by clients pooling their commissioning.

We note that many heritage practitioners have wonderful practical skills but underdeveloped business and presentational abilities. Project 2020 will promote concepts which are better understood and recognised to add value in other sectors; these include networking, presentational, proposition development, partnership, mentoring, training and lobbying skills.

We expect the programme to lead to increased numbers of people entering into heritage training, new apprenticeships being created and enhanced collaborations between organisations commissioning heritage skills. We believe we can build meaningfully on the perception of the region, and York in particular, as being a focus for high quality heritage skills. This will further amplify York’s heritage appeal.

An important element of Project 2020 is to distil a keen understanding of the complementary activities, groups, individuals and programmes across the region, to enable us to work more smartly and to greater effect in partnership with other organisations. We already have many thoughtful and experienced people involved in our work and we believe the Project 2020 will act as a further stimulus, and extend their reach to the sector more broadly.

**Project 2020 – Major Work streams**

Partner organisations

Heritage is an area with a small number of significant national bodies alongside a large number of independent, small, collective organisations addressing the needs of self-employed practitioners and micro businesses.

Part of our feasibility investigations will therefore be to research the heritage ecology relevant to our region. This landscape is populated by local, regional and national entities. They include individuals, firms, academic and training entities, craft/trade bodies and guilds, regional and national trusts and the relevant employers and commissioners of heritage skills (religious bodies, museums, historic house owners, local authorities, conservation professionals etc.). Our objective will be to map this network and explore the potential for collaboration with the ultimate objective of promoting the development of high quality heritage skills.

We have held preliminary discussions with a number of organisations including York Civic Trust, York Conservation Trust, York Minster, Landmark Trust, National Trust, National Churches Trust and Cathedrals Crafts Fellowship. An output from this work-stream will be a symposium of the key players, ideally leading to a joint plan.

Hosted training

We wish to stimulate the establishment of a larger number of high quality accredited training opportunities within the region.

We will explore the potential to pool demand to achieve varied training opportunities on live sites with organisations who, by themselves, have insufficient scale. This could include clusters of churches, country houses and bodies like the National Trust and Landmark Trust.

In simple terms, what would it take to create a meaningful stone masonry and carpentry training, apprenticeship and employment model serving the needs of half a dozen historic houses?

We will consider also how accredited, supervised training and skills programmes can be delivered on live sites with bodies such as York Conservation Trust, York Civic Trust and other amenity society initiatives.

Heritage careers outreach

We know that the number of heritage practitioners retiring far exceeds the number of new entrants, especially in terms of traditional building crafts. Some, highly specialised heritage craft skills are being lost for good. We know that employers are increasingly concerned about the lack of properly trained people. We are also aware, anecdotally, and via our bursary programme, that entrants are, increasingly, more mature

Entrants comprise distinct groups:

• School leavers embarking on apprenticeships

• People who have undergone construction-based training schemes and want to work in heritage

• Graduates wishing to pursue careers as conservators or more widely within the sector

• Older people looking to change direction

We believe that heritage practitioners can be helped and guided to make their experiences available, attractively, to school leavers and others contemplating heritage careers.

We will explore linking our heritage networks with initiatives of education providers and charities such as the National Careers Council and Education & Employers Taskforce.

Alumni organisation

We have over 250 former bursary winners, some of whom have gone on to run or establish organisations employing heritage practitioners. This list grows by about 25 people a year. We see this as a latent network that needs some structure and organisation that can turn it into a practical network within which career and training opportunities are shaped and collaboration happens.

Membership development

Our Consortium has about 170 members, largely recruited at the organisation’s original launch. We believe this could increase to about 500 by targeting suitable practitioners and professionals in the wider Yorkshire and Humberside region and recruiting student members.

A larger membership provides more influence, better access, a more valuable and productive network and enhanced opportunities for training, mentoring and career inspiration. A potential output would be to mount a series of highly targeted career development workshops.

Business Planning

A key Project 2020 deliverable is a 3-6-year business plan which will need to be developed in close consultation with the trustees. This will incorporate many of the elements whose feasibility has been scoped as distinct work streams within Project 2020.

Crucially, it will:

• Model the shape of the organisation (i.e. both YFCC and YCCC)

• Incorporate a resource plan with SMART objectives

• Identify funding mechanisms

• Refine the Goal, Mission & Strategic Objectives

• Make recommendations about organisational arrangements

• Suggest priorities

• Propose outcomes, quantified where possible

Fundraising strategy

YFCC is a volunteer –led organisation with no dedicated staffing. Our fund-raising has been done within our trustee group to date. We have built a fund of c.£420,000 whose income, coupled with money raised in year, goes towards our bursary programme. We distribute much of what we raise.

We know that our activities resonate with generous donors. However, we now need to develop an approach to fund-raising that delivers organisational resilience by exploiting legacy, major donor, public sector and corporate funding streams. Our fundraising strategy will both inform and be informed by our Business Plan

**Mini Work streams within Project 2020**

We envisage completion of a number of smaller mini-projects within the time scale of the Project:

Digital

Desktop research and scoping study to explore how an enhanced online and social media presence could be used to further our objectives.

Apprenticeship and Training Guidance

In terms of public sector performance in this area, the policy, approach and funding mechanisms for skills training, apprenticeships and, as a subset, heritage skills training, are shifting and complex. This is a world that seems fairly impenetrable to the predominantly small-scale organisations that provide specialist heritage expertise.

We wish to produce a summary, guidance and advice to small-scale heritage specialists to enable them to get more out of, and contribute more to, the various sources of funding, expertise, training, standards and guidance that are already available.

This work stream will involve desktop research to capture the assistance that is available and the most effective means by which this can be expressed as up-to-date advice to practitioners.

Skills shortages

Survey members and Yorkshire-based heritage practitioners about the supply of appropriately skilled entrants. This will deliver a profile output.

Commissioning Habits

Research to ascertain how to raise awareness of commissioning. Draw upon experience of other organisations such as the Crafts Council. Outputs will be insight and profile.

YCCC Directory Conference

Plan a launch conference, jointly with the York Company of Merchant Taylors and using their wonderful Hall to coincide with the publication of the next edition.

This would promote YCCC membership, the Directory, York, our role in supporting or carrying out relevant research, lobbying, the power of our networks. Perhaps including live demonstrations involving wood, stone, glass and metal.

Open Workshops

Feasibility study for the establishment of an Open Workshops programme modeled on the very successful York Open Studios.

Mentoring Scheme

Explore the feasibility of establishing a mentoring scheme between existing practitioner members and young apprentices and entrants.

Portfolios

Assess the scope for distinct portfolios within our trustee and committee memberships - for social media, events, finance, publicity, fund-raising, bursaries, training partnerships etc. This piece of work will include an assessment of volunteering options

Archive

Agree MOU for a York Conservation & Craftsmanship archive with the Borthwick Institute

**Practical Arrangements/Job Description**

We envisage a three day a week appointment (25 hours a week) of a Conservation Research Officer (CRO) for a period of c.18 months. This will be a fixed term contract.

The role will involve significant working from home and travel across the region. The formal place of work will be within the University of York’s Conservation Dept. in Kings Manor. The CRO will be provided with a workspace, computer workstation, IT support, phone, printer and access to the University Library and intranet resources etc.

Management /supervision. The CRO’s work streams would report to a small steering group of three trustees and relevant consortium committee members. After the first month we envisage a monthly formal reporting rhythm. In addition, one trustee will act as the “supervisor” of the Conservation Research Officer.

There will be a probationary period of 3 months.

The CRO role is recognition of the limited capacity available from a volunteer group of busy individuals. This volunteer group does, however, offer some capacity along with contacts and experience and will be an important resource for the CRO.

There will be a budget for such things as travel costs, postage, subscriptions, venue hire, mobile phone use etc.

A salary will be paid pro rata to the proportion of the week worked at an annual full time equivalent of £30,000 (i.e. £18,750 p.a.). In addition, YCCC shall pay employers NIC and an auto-enrolled pension equivalent to 2%. Holiday entitlement is 16 working days (pro rata 26 days full time)

You will need to be a car owner/driver. A mileage allowance of 45p/mile will be paid for journeys in your own vehicle in connection with the CRO work. YCCC will not pay for travel and parking costs between home and work.

**Web Link**: [www.conservationyork.org.uk](http://www.conservationyork.org.uk)

**Application & Interview**

Please address any queries to both Martin Stancliffe ( [mstancliffe@outlook.com](mailto:mstancliffe@outlook.com)) and James Grierson ([jrj.grierson@gmail.com](mailto:jrj.grierson@gmail.com) ). It will be possible to arrange for a telephone discussion in advance of the submission of an application.

Applications should take the form of a CV, names and contact details of two referees and an application letter of no more than three sides explaining why you are interested in, and would be suitable for, the role.

Applications need to have been received by 3rd November and sent to both Martin Stancliffe and James Grierson as above. We have scheduled 29th November 2019 for interview. Interviews will take place in York at a venue to be confirmed.