

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Court House Director

Opens Thursday 12th May 2022

Deadline for applications 5pm Wednesday 1st June

Email applications to: alison@openhousefestival.com



Key details

Job title: Court House Director

Location: Based at the Court House, 16 Quay Street, Bangor BT20 5ED

Salary: £35,000+ PA, dependent on experience (Fixed term 3 years. This post may be extended or made permanent subject to funding)

Full time post: 40 hours per week, flexible and as needed. You may need to work some evenings and /or weekends

Additional terms: pension @ 5%

Annual leave: 25 days plus customary holidays

This is a new post, made possible by the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Background

Open House is a small independent charity, that aims to transform people and places through arts and cultural activity. Founded in 1999 in Belfast's emerging Cathedral Quarter it played a role in the cultural and economic transformation of post-Troubles Belfast.

In 2013 Open House moved 14 miles along the coast to Bangor, with the aim of revitalising this failing seaside town. Formerly known as the 'Brighton of Ireland', the town centre has come adrift socially, economically and culturally, with empty shops, dereliction, crime and deprivation all on stark display. Despite being the third largest town in Northern Ireland, it has virtually no arts provision and no civic theatre, arts centre or dedicated music venue.

In the nine years since Open House moved to Bangor, it has created a grass roots movement for social change and arts-lead regeneration. It is increasing the aspirations of local people, showcasing talent and increasing capacity, and spearheading the campaign to re-imagine Bangor as a centre of creative and cultural excellence, a progressive, modern seaside town.

We are now undertaking the next step in our evolution – restoration of the former Court House on Bangor seafront, via Northern Ireland's first ever Community Asset Transfer, and creation of an accessible town centre venue for arts and creative activities. The Court House is a Victorian listed building that has charted the town's changing fortunes for more than 150 years. Built in 1866 as a branch of the Belfast Banking Company, and converted to a Magistrates Court in 1954, it was decommissioned in 2013 and transferred to Open House in December 2020.

A £1.5m restoration has been paid for by a range of funders including the National Lottery Heritage Fund plus crowdfunding from local people. Construction work is well underway, due for completion in August 2022, with the doors opening to the public in October.

The transformation of the Court House will create a permanent home and self-sustaining business for Open House, and a springboard for future projects. It will provide a powerful physical example of how arts and culture is leading local regeneration, and how placemaking begins with local people doing extraordinary things.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Role

We are looking for an exceptional individual to run this exciting new independent music and arts venue in a restored heritage building on Bangor seafront. You will lead the Court House team with flair and vision, to deliver an exceptional year-round programme of music, arts and cultural events, developing an outstanding reputation for our new venue and contributing to the regeneration of Bangor town centre and seafront.

This will be a busy and fast paced role covering strategic planning, building management, audience development, fundraising, staff management, financial sustainability and day-to-day operations.

Your aim will be to balance the preservation of this heritage building with the aspiration to increase access; and the need for income generation and business sustainability against the delivery of a cutting-edge artistic programme. It will be your job to create a culture that balances an efficient and safe working environment with a friendly, welcoming, community atmosphere.

The venue will have one outdoor and three indoor performance spaces of varying sizes, and will operate a theatre licence for food and drink. Directly reporting to you will be the Bar Manager and bar staff, as well as event management staff, operational staff and volunteers.

You will work as part of the Open House Senior Management Team, liaising with the Digital Marketing Manager, the Finance Manager, the Events Manager and the Development Director, and reporting directly to the Open House Director on strategic and artistic programming decisions.

Areas of responsibility include:

- Overall management, maintenance and cleaning of the building
- Long term strategic development
- Audience development
- Income generation including fundraising
- Staff and volunteer management and recruitment
- Events space management including maintaining the events diary
- Public spokesperson for the venue.

Key tasks will include:

1. Finance, budgets and strategic planning

- Planning for future development in line with strategic business objectives including working with senior management team on short and long term corporate business plans
- Managing budgets and strategic planning in conjunction with the Finance Manager
- Helping secure funding from external sources
- Generating income from ticket sales and commercial activities, including catering and bar facilities, and hiring out the venue for events
- Writing reports, policies and procedures

2. Building management and maintenance

- Developing and delivering a building management, H&S and maintenance plan
- Managing the event spaces within the building, and the events diary in conjunction with programming and events staff

3. Staff and volunteer management

- Recruiting, supervising, training and motivating casual and freelance staff and volunteers (in conjunction with the Volunteer Co-ordinator)
- Evaluating employee and volunteer performance and providing direction, correction, or additional training

4. Heritage promotion

- Promote the building's heritage through an ongoing programme of heritage events, guided tours, talks and open days

5. Audience Development

- Leading the team, from programming to marketing staff, to develop and implement an audience development strategy that will generate market share and raise visitor numbers
- Developing community and local business partnerships
- Evaluating feedback from audiences and stakeholders.

6. Partners and Providers

- Relating at a senior level to statutory bodies
- Liaising with external agencies such as funding bodies, professional associations, other heritage organisations, tourist bodies and regional development agencies, to explore and deliver co-funded and joint-venture projects.

Essential criteria

- A minimum three years' experience leading and managing an arts organisation, venue or project – or a division within a larger arts organisation – of a similar scale and complexity to the Court House, with demonstrable success in this role
- Strong leadership skills with experience of building, motivating and inspiring a performance-driven, cohesive team of employees, freelancers and volunteers
- Proven track record managing significant budgets and cashflow, and achieving targets
- Experience of generating income from both commercial activities and from fundraising, and the ability to manage and develop relationships with funders
- Ability to think strategically, and effectively communicate our vision (written and verbal)
- Commitment to delivering the organisation's policies on equality, diversity and best value in all aspects of its activities, both internally and externally.

Preferred skills and experience

- Experience or knowledge of successfully managing a music, arts or cultural venue
- Knowledge of heritage buildings
- Experience of working in the charity / voluntary sector
- Experience of working with a trading subsidiary within a charitable organisation
- Experience of developing and implementing an audience development strategy
- Good computer literacy including MS packages, spreadsheets and ticketing software
- Driving licence and access to a car

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please send your application to alison@openhousefestival.com. This should include:

1. A **concise** CV including any qualifications, training and relevant work experience.
2. Contact details for a minimum of two referees who know your work, including current or previous employers.
3. A covering letter (no more than two A4 pages) telling us why your skills and experience make you the best person for this job, based on the criteria above, and why you want to work for Open House.

Timeline

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Wednesday 1st June 2022

Successfully shortlisted candidates will be notified no later than Wednesday 8th June.

We expect interviews to take place during the week 13th – 17th June at our office in the Fountain Centre on Bangor seafront.

Equality of opportunity

Open House is an equal opportunities employer and does not discriminate on the basis of perceived religious or political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, colour, race or ethnic origins.