

OPEN EYE GALLERY

FREELANCE EVALUATION CONSULTANT TREE STORY: A HISTORY OF LIVERPOOL THROUGH ITS TREES

PROJECT BRIEF

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Open Eye Gallery are working in partnership with dot-art, Mersey Forest and nine schools and community groups across the Liverpool City Region.

We are commissioning an independent evaluator to assess the impact of our year-long project with partner schools and community groups. The project aims to explore special trees, their biodiversity, heritage, history and place in local life, documenting them photographically.

The project will result in displays of participants' work in school settings, on our dedicated project website and at LOOK Photo Biennial 2022.

The project website will enable the project to reach across the city region and open up participation to the general public. It will have three main features: an interactive map which enables people to upload images and stories about their favourite/locally significant trees; a timeline which creates a history of Liverpool through its trees, seeded with material from the community projects; and a resources section which supports teachers, families and group leaders to run their own tree inspired heritage projects.

The project is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We are looking for a consultant who can help us to evaluate how well we have met the outcomes we specified in our project application; extrapolate the lessons learned and make recommendations for the future. The consultant will have to work with NLHF's evaluation guidance in mind in developing appropriate research methodologies.

MORE ABOUT THE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

We will be working with four schools to deliver this project. All of them work with pupils experiencing high levels of economic and social deprivation, which limits access to their own green spaces such as gardens and allotments, and also to the countryside and natural environment. Family days out are limited, and focused on attractions which are local and accessible. Many of these children will never have spent time playing in woods or forests.

LIPA Primary is focused on learning through creative and performing arts. It is based in the Riverside ward in Liverpool, a highly deprived area of the city which benefits from a rich multicultural heritage. 25% of pupils qualify for Pupil Premium payments and 28% speak English as a second language.

Egremont Primary School is based in Seacombe, Wirral. This is a highly deprived ward within Wirral, which has pockets of severe deprivation alongside great affluence. 59% of pupils qualify for Pupil Premium payments. We know that some pupils at the school have never been across the river to Liverpool. Egremont Primary will deliver this as a whole-school arts project, with some classes integrating trees as a theme into history and geography teaching.

Wirral Hospitals' School is an alternative education provision which works with children at KS3 and 4 who have medical conditions or other psychological, social and emotional issues which make it impossible for them to attend mainstream school. Many pupils have Autism Spectrum Conditions and/or severe anxiety. 46% of pupils qualify for Pupil Premium payments. The project will support the school to develop pupils' confidence and independence as well as meeting educational outcomes.

Rainhill High School is based in St Helens, but takes pupils from as far afield as Widnes and Warrington. 18% of pupils qualify for Pupil Premium payments. A quarter of children in St Helens are living in the 10% most deprived areas in England for income deprivation affecting children.

In each school we will deliver the project with two separate classes of 30 pupils, apart from Wirral Hospitals' School, which has small class sizes.

Alongside this, we will be working with four community groups: the Spider Project, Faiths4Change, Growing Sudley and Rimrose Valley Friends.

- The Spider Project is based in Birkenhead and is a creative arts and wellbeing recovery project for adults with mental health issues. They work with to support people with previous issues around addiction and low levels of mental health.
- Faiths4Change is an environmental charity which shares learning and skills to enable people to take meaningful action on climate change. Their Roots in the City garden in the heart of Liverpool city centre grows produce for the local food bank, and offers horticulture courses and regular gardening groups.
- Growing Sudley is a therapeutic gardening project based within the Victorian walled garden on the Sudley estate. The project is creating a safe and accessible space for gardening and growing to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the community. They currently run targeted sessions for people with ASD and their families, and for people with long term health conditions such as dementia or the impacts of stroke. They also operate Forest School holiday clubs.
- Rimrose Valley Friends are a team of volunteers who develop projects and activities for the communities adjacent to Rimrose Valley, a country park situated in a highly built up area of South Sefton which is currently under threat as a result of the proposed Port of Liverpool access road scheme. Unlike a traditional urban park, it is a stretch of open wild and semi-wild land which is rich in wildlife.

Around 15 adults will take part in each community group.

MORE ABOUT THE COMMISSIONERS

Open Eye Gallery is one of the UK's leading photography spaces. We present an international programme of contemporary photography exhibitions at our Liverpool Waterfront gallery, elsewhere in the UK, and further afield. We also programme workshops, talks and evening events, and house a permanent archive of diverse photographs. We deliver an on-going socially engaged programme of residencies and collaborative projects between practitioners and our local community. This particular commission opportunity is part of Tree Story: A History of Liverpool Through Its Trees, which is a new project running from January 2022 to April 2023 and funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project will also create a website where people across the region can upload their own images and stories about the trees which are special to them, creating a crowdsourced map of significant tree heritage across the city, and an interactive timeline which uses the material created through the school and community projects to create a history of Liverpool which maps trees against other urban developments. Educational resources created through the project will be available through the website to support teachers, families and groups who want to create their own projects and content for the website.

dot-art are our partners on this project and will manage the delivery of the new brand. They will be your day-to-day contact as you deliver the work.

THE ROLE OF THE EVALUATION CONSULTANT

The evaluator will:

- Work with the partnership to articulate a theory of change for the project
- Design appropriate methodologies to assess the impact of the project, bearing in mind that participants will include children and vulnerable adults
- Carry out research – we are keen to hear about your suggested approach to the evaluation, but expect that it will include a mix of participant surveys, observation, interviews and/or focus groups; collection of feedback from website visitors; interviews and feedback sessions with the project delivery team.
- Provide formative feedback at an agreed midpoint, and full evaluation report at the end of the project.

Our priorities for this evaluation are to:

- Identify the extent to which the outputs and outcomes specified within this application have been delivered
- Evidence any changes in participants' sense of wellbeing
- Evidence any changes in participants' intent to take personal action to address the climate emergency, and
- Identify successful approaches which could be replicated by other schools and community groups, and advising on the content of online resources to support this activity beyond the project.

The project team will support the collection of data and take responsibility for ensuring that teachers and group leaders roll out the evaluation in their settings and provide material to the evaluator.

A copy of the project plan is available on request.

BUDGET

A budget of £3600 exclusive of VAT has been allocated to this evaluation.

TO APPLY FOR THIS CONTRACT

Please provide a CV plus an outline of your approach to this tender (no more than 2 pages) setting out:

- why you are interested in this piece of work
- previous experience of delivering similar projects
- your suggested approach to this piece of work
- details of 2 people we can contact for a reference

Tender documents should be emailed to: lucy.byrne@dot-art.com no later than 5pm on Friday 11th March.