

Outdoor Visitor
Experience: a develop
and deliver project



Castle Bromwich
Historic Gardens

Freelance opportunity

Our popular 'Unplug and Play'* family activities programme took a hit in 2020, for obvious reasons.

Over last summer, instead of our usual drop-in programme of exploration and creativity, we worked with artists to provide a mix of pre-booked, outdoor workshops, socially distanced events and self-guided trails.

Our flexible response to the crisis seemed to work: young people and families were **still able to 'get out' and enjoy the space. We feel we were able to make at least some contribution to people's physical and mental well-being.**

We now want to make sure that 2021 (especially the early months) can continue to provide a good experience on our 10 acre site.

We do not know what or how restrictions may develop, but we want to make sure that the garden space, and landscapes we steward, will continue to intrigue, amuse and entertain.

We are looking for someone, or maybe a small team, to devise, develop, deliver and manage our family based outdoor visitor experiences.

What? How? When?

- We decommissioned our mud kitchen at the beginning of the pandemic- it had been one of the most popular areas.
- This summer we **borrowed artist Sophie Handy's** giant ladybird: a percussion instrument made of scrap materials - it is very popular.
- Our beautiful lego animal sculptures, hidden across the site are nearly at the end of their life **and looking sad, but there are also some new 'fairy houses'** hidden in trees and hedges.
- Our 3 small ponds, woodland surrounds, holly maze and orchards are all favourite areas for guided activities, but what about self-led activities?
- During the summer in 2020 we worked with artist/makers and musicians to run outstanding events for under-fives and their families – we will do that again as soon as weather permits.

What could you add, simply, to the landscape which would encourage people to engage with the space - safely?

What could be done to encourage people to come back to see more or do it again?

Seasonal trails and out of school Unplug and Play sessions

We have always produced, relatively simple, self-guided trails or 'hunts'. In these times it makes sense to rationalise and plan these differently for 2021.

How could seasonal changes and celebrations be marked and enhanced?

Some of our visitors are home educators. The concept of 'in school' or 'out of school' has changed radically **this year...** Should we continue to run prebooked activity sessions during half terms and school holidays?

Or could we run prebooked sessions at any time?

Should we move to increase 'forest school type' activities?

What can we deliver in the current world to continue our drive to support, encourage and nurture creativity in the Gardens?

There is no right answer to any of these questions but we want to work with you – your creativity, ability and knowledge - to ensure we can offer the best we can, as soon as we can.

You..

will have

- a practical understanding of working with families and young people,
- creativity, and supporting creativity, at the core to your being,
- possibly been a wildlife interpreter/communicator,
- possibly worked in visitor engagement roles in heritage sites,
- possibly been involved with outdoor learning,
- possibly forest school experience or qualifications,
- an open and welcoming work practice and be willing to work with other staff and volunteers to make things happen.

And you will be

- by nature a practical person,
- flexible and enjoy responding to changing situations,
- able to plan and deliver in this quarter,
- able to draw on other practitioners and commission their contribution where necessary,
- probably be locally based – we are mindful of tier restrictions on travel,
- able to travel to and work in the Gardens when necessary, but also work from home,

Timeframe and fees

Fee is £4,500 based on appx 24 days of work (prep and delivery). A small production budget will also be available.

This contract work is mainly funded through the Cultural Recovery Fund and is focussed on delivery during late winter and early spring. So an immediate start is required.

The contract *maybe* able to be expanded and extended, depending on a changing the situation.

Given the nature of the programme and 'the current times', the tendering process will be relatively informal and will remain open until the right contract is agreed.

We expect the contractor to know the Gardens or be prepared to visit and work onsite, where and when regulations permit.

Send a cv and proposal cover letter to cbhallgardens@gmail.com (Visitor Engagement in the subject line)

For a preliminary telephone chat please email the above to arrange a good time.

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*Unplug and Play: background

Unplug and Play is the generic name we give to all our family friendly activities using our 10 acre site.

The philosophy behind it is to provide reasonably priced access to 'the wild', 'the outdoors' and to creative activities for children (usually between 3 and 10 years) and their adults.

Our values are

- To promote love and knowledge of nature and outdoors
- To help and encourage adults and children to explore together
- To support creativity in all senses
- To use, where possible, recycled and sustainable materials – leading by example
- *Low cost – 'you can do this at home too'*
- *Inspire people to garden and grow food*

The programme has developed organically over the last 3 years, led by a staff member and a small team of volunteers - who have different levels of skills and availability.

A short promo video made in 2019

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TLbkAgYNy_TEUOZzZYAIMHFwLz-m_9q/view?usp=sharing

Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust

Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens are a nationally significant, highly protected, rescued early-18th century Grade II* listed walled garden on the borders of East Birmingham and North Solihull. **The whole 40 acres of formal gardens and untouched 'Parkland' are a** surprising green space entirely surrounded by motorways, highly industrial landscapes and one of the most densely populated, and multiply disadvantaged, areas of housing in the Region.

Rescued by volunteers 35 years ago, the formal gardens are owned by an independent charitable Trust and the Parkland by Birmingham City Council (with a management arrangement with our charity).

From early days as a remarkable restoration project, the Trust has recently blossomed and bloomed into a year-round heritage visitor attraction with a growing reputation.

Unplug and Play is part of the Trust's wider social and economic strategies to increase footfall and usage of the site and to make use of the Gardens multiple historical, natural and horticultural assets in order to become sustainable for another ..300 years

Contact

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