

# ST JOHN'S CHATHAM RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT



## JOB BRIEF | RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT **\*\*\*extended deadline\*\*\***

**Role:** The Research Development Consultant will scope and manage research projects as part of the Community Activity Programme of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project at St John's Chatham

**Location:** Home or company based; ability to travel regularly to Chatham for meetings and workshops

**Reporting to:** St John's Chatham Mission Leader

**Contract:** May/June 2025 – May/June 2026 (12 months)

### 1. Executive Summary

The Diocese of Rochester has secured a Delivery Phase grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in support of St John's Chatham.

As part of the Delivery Phase, which will run from January 2024 to January 2028, the the Diocese of Rochester is seeking to appoint a Heritage Consultant to scope and manage research projects to increase the knowledge of the history of St John's Chatham, a Waterloo church in the heart of the Medway towns. The church was closed for over 20 years between 1997 and 2021 and there is a considerable lack of social knowledge of the building and its rich history. There is however significant archive material available.

The appointed consultant will be required to scope and manage research projects that will be delivered by community groups, an academic, students and community volunteers that help build and bring together the existing knowledge of the history of St John's Chatham. The resulting research will be used in a variety of ways to interpret the history of the church, including the development of teaching resources and creative responses by local schools and community groups that may be performances or art works.

### 2. About St John the Divine (St John's Chatham)

St John's Chatham sits as a gateway building into the town centre, and is one of the most prominent buildings in Chatham. After a 20 year closure, the building is in the midst of a major renovation and refurbishment which will deliver modern facilities (suitable for Christian worship, conferences and concerts for up to 300 people) within the Grade II\* listed building. It was built as a Commissioners Church and opened in 1821, in thanksgiving for peace with France which came with the Battle of Waterloo. The church houses important war memorials, beautiful stained-glass windows, and has a special place in the heart of many residents of the area.

### **3. The Project**

Our partnership's vision is to renovate and reorder the building to continue as a place of worship and become a focal point for businesses and the community and once again be a landmark building for Chatham Town Centre. Between 2018 and 2021, repairs and emergency works enabled the building to be reopened once again on a 3 year temporary basis prior to the commencement of the capital works funded by NLHF, Future High Streets Fund via Medway Council, Benefact Trust and Friends of Kent Churches. This work is now underway to restore and safeguard this historic Grade II\* Listed building for future generations.

During the development of the project, we have been working with stakeholders, partners and the local community to seek their thoughts and hopes for the future of the building in addition to continuing as a place of worship. We now have a scheme that will provide the following;

- A range of meeting and activity spaces for businesses, education and the community.
- Flexibility to offer conference and performing space
- A café space offering scope for light meals and refreshments

The building's multi-functional spaces will also provide the base for our Community Activity Programme funded by NLHF.

### **4. Scope of the work for the Research Development Consultant**

The consultant will help to scope and manage the following research projects to deliver outputs with and through partners that allow the church community, other local community groups and visitors to better understand the history of St John's Chatham, Waterloo Churches and the communities of Chatham:

- Work with Medway African and Caribbean Association (MACA) to research and interpret the story of Omoba Aina (Sarah Forbes Bonetta), the goddaughter and 'African Protégée' of Queen Victoria, who is known to have been a witness at two weddings at St John's Chatham.
- Post-doctoral research offered in collaboration with University of Kent to understand the history of St John's Chatham that will feed into the Volunteer Training Plan and the interpretation on site.
- Research into aspects of the history of St John's Chatham undertaken by history students from the University of Greenwich. Two projects developed that respond to identified areas of research, resulting in illustrated essays that can be used for interpretation and as part of the Volunteer Training Plan.
- Identify and manage the development of at least three research packages and outputs for volunteers, such as an investigation into the births, marriages and deaths registered with the church, the heritage around some of the war memorials, the history of the organ.
- Work with the history students at University of Kent to create teaching resources for Key Stage 3 about St John's Chatham and the Waterloo Churches to be included on the Age of Revolution [website](#).
- In response to the research above, work with the Community Partnership Officer so they can commission artists to work with a primary school, a secondary school and a community group to develop artistic responses and re-tellings of the heritage to be displayed in St John's Chatham.
- Identify speakers to deliver talks about the history of St John's Chatham, Waterloo churches and the communities of Chatham.

## **5. Outputs**

The Research Development Consultant will:

- develop a detailed project plan for the delivery of the research including the specific activities and tasks listed above in section 4.
- identify the areas of research to be undertaken and the outputs for each area of research (essay/dissertation/film/digital slideshow etc).
- work with the different partners to create a programme that meets both partners' needs.
- ensure that the research is delivered on time and on budget.
- ensure the research is delivered in a way that means it can be used by primary and secondary schools, community groups and St John's Chatham volunteers in an engaging way to interpret local histories.

## **6. Management of the commission**

The commission will be managed by the St John's Chatham Mission Leader. Regular communication is expected throughout the project.

## **7. Experience, knowledge and skills required**

### **Experience**

- Extensive experience of researching heritage
- Experience of working with academics and/ or volunteers to undertake research
- Experience of managing academics and/ or volunteers to deliver to a deadline
- Experience of delivering publicly funded projects on time and on budget.

### **Knowledge**

- An understanding and appreciation of the importance of the role of the church both historically and in the present day
- Knowledge of methodologies for undertaking research
- Knowledge of different types of outputs for historical research
- An understanding of the challenges and opportunities of undertaking historical research suitable for the public domain.

### **Skills**

- Ability to communicate and engage with a variety of stakeholders such as members of the local church community, other community groups, partners and stakeholders
- Ability to communicate historical research of the highest quality
- Excellent communication skills
- Proven track record in project management, delivery and evaluation

## 8. Requirements of the submission

Your proposal should include:

- approach to the project
- methodology
- CVs of proposed team members
- track record
- two client references
- a fixed fee showing your daily rates between individuals, number of days spent on each task and including all fees and expenses
- projected timescale.
- two references

## 9. Date of submission and timetable

The closing date for submissions is 12noon on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025

Submission should be emailed to [office@stjohnschatham.co.uk](mailto:office@stjohnschatham.co.uk)

**Interviews** by mutual agreement (preferably Wednesday 14th May)

The start date for the project is May/June 2025

The completion date for this element of the project is May/June 2026

## 10. Fee

The fixed fee for the Research Development Consultant post is £15,000.00 excluding VAT, but including all personal expenses.

## 11. Terms and conditions

We will require evidence of Professional Indemnity insurance cover.

## 12. Further information

For further information and/or to organise a site visit, please contact Helen Masters (St John's Chatham Administrator) at [office@stjohnschatham.co.uk](mailto:office@stjohnschatham.co.uk) or 07595 075958.