

HBF is looking for a Festival Director (interim)

Job Description

Job title: Festival Director

Responsible to: Company Directors

Location: Attic Office, Queen's Hall Arts, Hexham, NE46 3LS

About the Festival

Hexham Book Festival is a non-profit making CIC. The main festival is delivered over 10 days in late April – early May and hosts at least 60 events over this period with its main venue being Queen's Hall Arts, Hexham with events also taking place in Hexham Abbey and other venues around Hexham. The Festival enjoys a good relationship with all the main publishing houses and attracts headline authors with its reputation for well attended events, excellent hosts and the welcoming environs of a well-connected, small Market town in Northumberland. The Festival also runs a dynamic year round programme of events for young people in schools and libraries across Northumberland, plus a dedicated festival for schools and a Family Day of events - StoryLand. For more information about the Festival please go to www.hexhambookfestival.co.uk

About The Role

HBF is going through some organisational change and is seeking to engage an Interim Festival Director. This exciting opportunity is offered as a freelance position for a period of one year: the successful person will be expected to lead on programming, advise on strategy and funding, contribute to the vision of the organisation and report to the Company Directors quarterly. The post is in person, based in the Book Festival Office, Queen's Hall, Hexham for two days per week. Hexham Book Festival has an excellent track record at attracting funding and strong relationships with a range of stakeholders and funders, it also has a healthy box office income, we are therefore confident we can secure a sustainable future, but we have chosen to advertise an interim post while this is achieved and as the current founding Director steps away from the organisation.

The position will be supported in the initial months by the Founder/Director.

Key responsibilities include:

1. To have responsibility for programming the Festival, working with the Festival Manager to identify and invite high profile authors and engage suitable chair people and speakers. To create a diverse, inclusive, and enjoyable programme which celebrates books, authors, and writing across a range of genres.
2. Work with the Festival Manager on fund raising applications to Trusts and Foundations and statutory bodies and liaise on increasing annual sponsorship and advertising revenue including Friends programme.
3. Establish overall budgets and targets and work with Festival Manager to maintain relevant financial records.
4. Maintain working relationships with Queen's Hall Arts, Northumberland Libraries and Northumberland County Council and attend external meetings, representing the Festival where appropriate, including with regional cultural organisations.

5. Manage one-off projects throughout the year as needed, contribute to research & development, planning, fund raising, recruitment of freelance staff and volunteers and delivery of projects.
6. Monitor programme performance against schedules and key milestones, monitor workloads and identifying anticipated additional resource requirements.
7. To co-ordinate with the HBF team (including Festival Manager, Festival Administrators and Festival Assistants) to effectively implement policies and procedures for staff development and leadership.
8. Prepare and present progress reports to Company Directors on a quarterly basis.

Person Specification

The successful applicant will be expected to be based in the Festival Office at Queen's Hall Arts, Hexham for 2 days per week and full time over the Festival period 2nd -11th May 2025, which will include some evenings and weekends.

We are looking for the following knowledge, experience and qualities:

Essential:

- Knowledge of the publishing industry, contemporary literature and literature festival scene, with experience of working in a live literature or similar organisation.
- Extensive administrative experience at a high level of responsibility, including systems-based strategic planning, with meticulous attention to detail and strong IT skills.
- Experience of communicating – in person and in writing – with a wide range of stakeholders including authors or other artists.
- A proactive and positive approach, combined with stamina and calmness in the face of pressure.
- A high level of literacy and articulation, with excellent communication skills both verbal and written.
- Full understanding of and commitment to the vision, mission, aims and objectives of the Book Festival.
- Experience of managing budgets and of making funding applications.
- Experience of recruiting and managing staff.
- Flexibility regarding working hours during festival period

Desirable

- Experience of and ability to chair events
- Car owner /Driving Licence

What we Offer:

Fee: £25,000

- **Contract:** 1-Year Contract Freelance. Based on 2 days per week with seasonal adjustment related to the Festival period.
- **Application deadline:** Friday 4th October
- **Interviews:** Week Commencing 14th October
- **Start Date:** Ideally week commencing 11th November (but flexible)

NB: Unfortunately, HBF Festival Office is only accessible by 2 flights of stairs and there is no lift access

How to apply

Please send a full CV including names and contacts of two referees and a letter of application outlining your interest in the role.

Applications should be sent to: Susie Troup susie@hexhambookfestival.co.uk with subject line Interim Festival Director HBF

Hexham Book Festival CIC 6630555