The Witches of Essex Community Heritage Project

Project Leader Job description

Key details:

**Title:** Project Leader for The Witches of Essex Community Heritage Project

**Venue:** Hythe Community Centre, Colchester

**Start date:** 5th May 2025

**End date:** 31st October 2025

**Payment:** £150 per day

**Working hours:** 1 day per week (Wednesdays)

**Responsible to:** Project Leader

A brief outline to the project

The Witches of Essex Community Heritage Project is a new project run by our Black Dog Theatre Creation community group and supported by The Heritage Lottery Fund. The aim of this new community project is to create a new project exploring the witches of Essex and particularly, of St Osyth, an Essex village around which a series of ‘Witch’ accusations spread in the 1580s along the coast to Clacton, Hamford Water and Walton. Following on from our recent successful local Victorian community heritage project with Alfie James Productions; we have teamed up once again with the Essex Records Office to continue developing our historical enquiry and archives research skills whilst also developing a new skills in using and developing audio and digital archives. In this project, we are also delighted to be working with local Historian and Writer Professor Marion Gibson, and we hope that the project will support the new emerging Essex Witches Museum by providing them with a series of educational resources. The project will be open to approximately 15-20 local participants in Colchester (Essex) focusing upon (but not limited to) engaging with people with poor confidence and mental health issues. Participants will be invited to attend a weekly workshop where we will develop historical enquiry skills, use archives, artefacts, performance techniques and visits to research to develop an understanding of the stories of those who were accused of witchcraft. We will create a series for educational and learning materials as well as developing a series of audio stories / monologues bringing to life some of the real-life stories of those accused to share to the local community.

About the Black Dog Theatre Creation:

The Black Dog Theatre Creation is a small community theatre project which was set up ten years ago by the team behind Alfie James Productions which have successfully created six community heritage projects with the HLF. The Black Dog Theatre Creation’s core aim is to use creativity and the artforms to support adults suffering from poor confidence and mental health issues. Over the past ten years, we have developed countless projects, and we currently run regular groups in Colchester (Essex), Camden (London), East-Ham (London) and Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk) and regularly work with local support organisations including Rethink, Colchester Community 360, Camden Community Network, West Euston Project and local libraries who all signpost clients to us regularly.

The role of the Project Leader

As our Project Leader, you will plan and lead our workshops held at the Hythe Community Centre and visits e.g. to the Essex Records Office, Essex Witches Museum helping to create a safe and friendly environment, supporting our members to access the activities, and giving positive encouragement. You will plan accessible, differentiated activities with clear shared aims and objectives, modelling and encouraging people’s confidence to grow and building knowledge and understanding of research and historical enquiry skills. You will work with Project partners, organising trips and external workshops, training of staff, volunteers and participants. You will oversee the management of the project, ensuring that the timetable and aims and objectives are achieved, working with the Treasurer to oversee the budget and evaluation process. We will be working towards creating a series of small, devised audio pieces including short stories/plays retelling the true stories of the witches of Essex and what we have learnt. You will direct the audio pieces ensuring that everyone feels valued and included. You will lead the creation of developing a learning resources pack which may include helping to create audios, information sheets, our website, short films, blogs as well helping us to evaluate our project throughout.

Specific duties to the role:

As our Project Leader, you will work in a team with the Trustees and staff, Volunteers and Participants supporting each other with the general running of the project and guiding the team towards its collective vision and shared goals. Duties include (but not limited to):

1.Planning and leading of workshops – running differentiated and accessible activities, helping to demonstrate and model key skills and encouraging participants to develop key historical enquiry, research and performance skills.

2. Ensure that necessary health and safety/risk assessments are carried out and shared.

3. Organise resources including artefacts, sharing archives, topic loans, visits.

4. Support the participants during the workshops – Having lots of positive energy, a ‘get up and go vibe’, encouraging them to take part in activities, supporting them to access the work that we do, giving positive feedback and helping to create a positive safe environment for everyone to thrive.

5. Attend and oversee visits e.g. Essex Records Office, Essex Witches Museum to support our learning of historical enquiry skills and research. Thanking guest workshop leaders.

6. Support the project’s public engagement strategy by helping to promote the project on social media.

7.Taking photographs and filming of workshop activities, visits, research activities, rehearsals and performances as part of our evaluation process.

8. Promote and model the projects overall vision and its aims and objectives, serving as a guide for everyone as they journey through the project.

9. Oversee the management of the project, including its timetable, budget, evaluations.

10.Lead staff, offering support, training and advice throughout.

11.Write, Direct, produce audio’s.

12. Work as a team to create learning resources sharing what we have learnt. This may include helping to create audio’s, learning information sheets, creating props, short films, webpage.

13. Ensure that participants are supported in their learning and that activities are accessible.

14. Ensure that the project is evaluated at regular intervals throughout the project and feeding back to the project partners.

General duties:

15. Everyone should act in a professional manner at all times.

16. Everyone should work as a team, supporting each other where possible

17. Support in the marketing of activities, performances.

18. Support the organisations core aims and ethos.

19. Employees should act in a manner which does not bring disrepute to the organisation, and which abides by our code of conduct particularly considering their role working alongside vulnerable adults.

20. Everyone should respect and act accordingly towards any behaviour and public safety policies of the workshop, visiting and performance venues e.g. Fire and Health and Safety Policy and Procedures, rules regarding smoking at the theatre.

Statutory checks:

Due to the nature of some of our work employees may be asked to undertake a DBS check. All offers of employment whether paid or voluntary will be subject to the outcome of this check. The cost of the DBS check will be covered by the Black Dog Theatre Creation.

Fee:

The Black Dog Theatre Creation agrees to pay the Project Leader a fee of £150 per day for 1 day per week (paid monthly) upon receipt of the employees invoice. The employee is responsible for paying their own tax and national insurance.

Trial period:

The contract is subject to the employee completing a two-week fully paid trial period. This trial period is full both parties to be given the opportunity to make sure that the role is for them. A review meeting will take place at the end of the trial period.

**Closing date: Monday 28th April 2025 12 noon.**

**Interviews held on: Thursday 1st May 2025**

**Kindly supported by:**

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