Church Support Officer

Salary: £22,000 to £24,000 per annum pro rata
Duration: Up to 3 year contract
Hours of Work: 0.8 (i.e. 28 hours / week) with possibility of going full-time subject to funding / the applicant
Terms and Conditions: 25 days paid holiday pro rata

The Trust operates an auto enrolment pension scheme

Location: Home based, in Northern Ireland, with occasional travel to the NCT offices in Westminster, London

Reports to: Senior Church Support Officer

Introduction

The National Churches Trust supports and promotes church buildings of historic, architectural and community value. We are the independent, UK-wide charity supporting churches, chapels and meeting houses of all Christian denominations.

Places of worship are an integral part of the UK’s architectural heritage and play a vital part in building and sustaining local communities. Church buildings are valued for many reasons. Where one finds solace, another finds inspirational architecture. Some churches provide poignant family memories, while others are commended for their presence in the community and the work they do in bringing local people together.

Incredible work is done by volunteers up and down the country to preserve these buildings for future generations and ensure that they remain at the heart of their local community. The National Churches Trust is here to help them address the challenges and opportunities they face. The Trust, founded in 2007, is the successor to the Historic Churches Preservation Trust (HCPT), created in 1953.

The aims of the National Churches Trust are:

- to help maintain the UK’s heritage of church buildings and to enhance their ability to serve local communities
- to promote the benefit to communities of church buildings and to inspire everyone to value and enjoy them.

The Trust offers a range of grants to church buildings for maintenance, repair and development works. £1.2 - £1.5 million of grant funding is allocated across 4 programmes. The Trust’s website www.nationalchurchestrust.org provides more information about the organisation and its work.
Background

Treasure Ireland aims to support an improvement in the maintenance and sustainability of historic places of worship in Northern Ireland. At its core will be a grants programme for proactive repairs and maintenance, funded jointly by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and the National Churches Trust. The project will use training and mentoring support, plus video guides to address skills and capacity issues affecting places of worship in Northern Ireland. Training will be offered on managing a capital project, writing funding bids, maintenance skills and systems, interpretation and tourism. The project will also involve our ExploreChurches and MaintenanceBooker initiatives.

Job description

The Church Support Officer will help deliver our Treasure Ireland National Lottery Heritage Fund project and contribute to other areas of work as required. The project builds on existing partnerships and projects that the Church Support Team has begun in Northern Ireland. The Officer will manage the day to day work of the project and support churches to engage with it. Responsibilities will include overseeing a small grants programme, running training events and sector meetings, raising the profile of maintenance, supporting church tourism and expanding contractor availability.

The Church Support Officer will be responsible for providing effective administration, assessment and monitoring of the grants programme and will support the Head of Church Support, working in collaboration with local leaders and faith groups, to implement a network of support within Northern Ireland where they will be based, as well as supporting churches elsewhere in the United Kingdom. This is a key role which provides a tremendous opportunity to be part of our exciting and innovative church support work. The post holder will be the regular contact for churches, volunteers, stakeholders, partners and funders involved in the Treasure Ireland project. There will be the opportunity to work from the office in London from time to time, to build relationships with the team and report back on work. The work will be carried out in conjunction with the Head of Church Support and Senior Church Support Officer and direct line management will usually be via video call.

The Church Support Officer will be responsible for establishing a small grants programme designed upon existing NCT grant programmes and assessing the applications and making recommendations for funding. They will follow up the decisions of the grants committee and record decisions as per NCT existing processes, and also develop a small mentoring scheme from volunteers of successfully completed projects.

The Officer will help co-ordinate a Northern Ireland Grants Committee, a sub-committee of the National Churches Trust Grants Committee. They will be responsible for coordinating the meetings, drafting the papers in advance, circulating recommendations, writing the minutes and for the meeting follow up.

The post holder will work with partners to organise and advertise events, and will arrange training sessions for volunteers; liaising with churches and partners to ensure appropriate dates, securing venues and refreshments and carrying out evaluations of the day. They will produce materials (particularly support and advice, and film) for the project and partners, and support the Communications Team with content.
The post holder will also arrange forum meetings for sector stakeholders; liaising with churches and partners to ensure appropriate dates, securing venues and refreshments and carrying out evaluations of the day. They will produce materials, minute the meetings and follow up any actions.

The post-holder will sit within the Church Support team which offers support and advice to churches and works across our grants programmes, as well as the NCT’s wider initiatives such as ExploreChurches and MaintenanceBooker. They will work with colleagues to ensure that churches are listed on ExploreChurches and that visitor experiences in Northern Ireland are developed, and that MaintenanceBooker is expanded to list contractors in the region. This will require them to be comfortable with working via social media to raise awareness of the project and the National Churches Trust.

The officer will support the Head of Church support to ensure that this project and its grants are delivered according to best practice standards at all times, and that the impacts of the grants, as well as the wider project, are recorded and known.

Organogram

Key Internal relationships:
Church Support team, ExploreChurches Team, MaintenanceBooker team, Head of Church Support, Senior Church Support Officer, Northern Ireland Grants Committee, Fundraising Team, Communications Team, Head of Finance

Key External relationships:
National Lottery Heritage Fund, other heritage bodies and local organisations, local leaders and faith groups, church dioceses, funders

Key tasks

1. Be a point of contact via phone, email and post for churches and volunteers involved with the Treasure Ireland project.
2. Assist with the set-up of a new grants programme for churches in Northern Ireland.
3. Market and explain the Treasure Ireland project and the grants to churches and volunteers in person and via a range of communications channels, including social media.
4. Assist in the preparation of materials and documentation for the grants committee meetings. Provide effective grants administration including meeting minutes.
5. Provide wrap around care to churches, including development support ahead of an application, assessments, and post decision support as required.
6. Ensure that data and information about grant applications and decisions is logged onto Benefactor (and Raiser’s Edge if required) within agreed time frames.
7. Log feedback from grantee churches and unsuccessful applicants. This will inform the process of review and development of the grants programme.
9. Post-grant monitoring and grantee church visits on completion of works to maintain the relationship between the church and the Trust and to collect and collate information and data for outcome monitoring and impact measurement. Use visits to collect images and material for use on ExploreChurches and to support marketing campaigns.
10. Support and consult with local organisations and project partners as agreed.
11. Organise stakeholder meetings for churches, organisations and project partners.
12. Arrange forum meetings for sector representatives; planning and arranging venue / refreshments, liaising with trainers and speakers, taking bookings from volunteers, coordinate and analyse feedback from attendees.
13. Arrange training sessions for volunteers (including online events); planning and arranging venue / refreshments, liaising with trainers and speakers, taking bookings from volunteers, coordinate and analyse feedback, manage expense claims.
14. Ensure any materials produced are uploaded to the NCT website, and ensure that information and guidance relevant to Northern Ireland, and is kept up to date.
15. Work with churches to encourage best practice maintenance.
16. Work with colleagues to market and explain the ExploreChurches website, and coordinate entries.
17. Work with colleagues to expand MaintenanceBooker in Northern Ireland.
18. Work with colleagues to publicise all aspects of the project including grant awards, and identify case studies for press releases or photo opportunities to promote the work of the Trust and this project, as well as for fundraising purposes and reports to donors.
19. Contribute to the evaluation of the Treasure Ireland project
20. Any other responsibilities as may be deemed fit by the line managers or Chief Executive.

**Person specification**

**Qualifications**
Educated to degree level or equivalent qualification/experience
A qualification relevant to the heritage sector would be desirable

**Knowledge**
Knowledge of standards or experience of project management would be desirable

**Skills and Experience**

**Essential:**
- Excellent presentation and interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate confidently, effectively and persuasively, both orally and in writing
- Report writing experience
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills, good attention to detail, and accuracy with the ability to prioritise and work under pressure
- Excellent IT and online skills including experience working with databases
- A self-starter able to work both on their own initiative and also as part of a team
- Experience of relationship building and negotiation with a wide range of stakeholders
- Knowledge of Northern Ireland
- Willingness to travel

**Desirable:**
- Experience of grant and/or contract management
- Experience of contributing to the monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes and key performance indicators
- Experience working with professionals in the field of conservation and heritage
- An interest in heritage issues and knowledge of historic buildings
• An interest in places of worship and an understanding of different Christian denominations
• Digital skills including experience with arranging events online
• Experience of working with spreadsheets and databases
• Experience of working within the CMS of a website, uploading and managing content in a clear and consistent way
• An understanding of the principles and responsibilities of data protection and data management

Enthusiasm for the work and strategy of the National Churches Trust is an important element of the job

Further Information

This role will be home based, in Northern Ireland and therefore will need adequate broadband and suitable conditions to be able to work effectively outside a formal office setting.

It should be borne in mind that the National Churches Trust comprises a small staff, and you should be prepared to work as part of that team to ensure the delivery of the organisation’s operations and objectives.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that their activities comply with the Trust’s Data Protection Policy and Procedures. Staff should not disclose personal data outside the organisation’s procedures, or use personal data held about stakeholders of the Trust for their own purposes.

Your eligibility to join the NCT pension scheme is subject to the rules of auto enrolment. Further information regarding your rights under auto enrolment can be found on the Pensions Regulator website; [www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk)

The National Churches Trust is an equal opportunities employer and does not unlawfully discriminate in employment. No information provided by the applicant will be used for the purpose of limiting or excluding any applicant from consideration for employment on a basis prohibited by law.

If you have any questions about the role please contact Nigel Mills, Senior Church Support Officer: [nigel.mills@nationalchurchestrust.org](mailto:nigel.mills@nationalchurchestrust.org)

To receive an information pack and application form, please email Rosalinde de Best-Allott [Rosalinde.debest@nationalchurchestrust.org](mailto:Rosalinde.debest@nationalchurchestrust.org)