

## ARTIST COMMISSION BRIEF

### Sensory Loan Box for Mrs Smith's Cottage

#### Summary

Mrs Smith's Cottage is a small cottage museum in the village of Navenby, just south of Lincoln in Lincolnshire. Owned and run by North Kesteven District Council the cottage is undertaking a National Lottery Heritage Fund project to restore, reinterpret and produce a learning programme for the site.

The museum's Learning Officer is looking to recruit an experienced visual artist to produce a sensory loan box designed to engage people who struggle with memory problems, by families, and residents of care homes.

In use we hope this box will:

- Help to develop the communication skills of the users,
- Create conversations and memory sharing opportunities,
- Be a starting point for creative responses through activities designed by the Learning Officer at Mrs Smith's Cottage.

You will be supported by the Learning Officer, who will provide access to archive material and objects from the cottage. Activity Coordinators from local care homes will be consulted throughout the process, allowing them to give feedback and have an input into a product they will be using.



## Mrs Smith's Cottage

The museum tells the extraordinary ordinary life of Mrs Smith, who was born in 1892 and passed away in 1995. Through interpretation and the learning programmes the cottage tells stories from Mrs Smith's everyday life, providing practical lessons which people can use in their everyday lives.

Loan boxes are forming an increasingly important part of the cottage learning programme, because the cottage, even without covid-19 restrictions, has several access issues. Ladders are used to get upstairs, and our rural location means there is limited visitor parking and public transport options. As a response to these challenges, we are producing a comprehensive and versatile outreach programme, which will also include talks and workshops.

### Existing loan boxes at the cottage are:

- Suitcase of Sounds, a loan box which contain cubs that play sounds of the home when handled.
- Nature Explorers, an early years story basket focused on exploring the wildlife of Mrs Smith's garden. This box contains an activity pack for families or teaching staff with activities to help the group further explore the subject.
- Homes From the Past, an object handling collection looking at how objects of the home have changed over the last 150 years. Alongside these objects is an activity pack, giving teachers pre planned lessons and activities so they can get the most from the box without a member of the Mrs Smith's Cottage team being present.



## **The Brief**

The artist is to produce a set of at least 3 bespoke 3D objects, which are designed to engage the senses and tell stories of Mrs Smith life which a wide range of people can form a connection to. We want these objects to be able to tell stories from Mrs Smith's life in a way which historic objects cannot, bringing to life her personality, ethos, and the feel of the cottage. Objects created by the artist will be placed alongside photographs and activity cards produced by Learning Officer, contained within a suitable container to be decided by both parties.

The objects are to be designed to support memory sharing sessions in care homes, with SEN groups, or with families in home settings. This means that objects need to be robust enough to be handled frequently, and easy to maintain with simple cleaning, care, and repair instructions. During the covid19 pandemic we have been able to deliver loan boxes, ensuring they had a week quarantine at each location and that the contents of the box could be safely explored without a member of the Mrs Smith's Cottage team being present.

The objects are to be produced by the artist from their base, and visits to the cottage can be arranged in line with covid-19 guidance.

Sally Bird, the Learning Officer at Mrs Smith's Cottage, will be the main contact providing you with archive materials, contextual information, and contact details of partners.

## **Budget**

£3,000 is available for this project.

This is split in two parts.

- £1,000 is available for professional fees, covering the research and design of artworks.
- £2,000 is available for materials and production of artworks, and transport of completed work to staff at Mrs Smith's Cottage.

## **Timescale**

The deadline for applications is: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.

From then it will take 2 weeks for Mrs Smith's Cottage staff to review applications, and if needed contact artists for further information.

We are looking to have an artist appointed by the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2021.

We expect this work to be completed and handed over by the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, ready for the roll out of our education programme.

## What we are looking for:

- Proven experience of undertaking similar commissions
- High quality of design and art practice
- Quality of conceptual realisation
- Understanding of technical requirements in the creation of the works
- Ability to work with different partners
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Excitement about the Mrs Smith's Cottage story
- Experience creating handling objects

## Artists are required to submit:

Your application and expression of interest by email ([sally\\_bird@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:sally_bird@n-kesteven.gov.uk))

The application should include:

- A proposed approach to the commission and idea of the materials which might be used, based on the artist experience from similar projects.
- You should also confirm that you are able to meet the budget, schedule and deadlines detailed above.
- Visual examples of your work (6-12 good quality images) relevant to the commission including, importantly, examples of previously commissioned works of a similar scale
- CV and Artist Statement.

**Deadline: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**Applications and further information enquiries to:**

Sally Bird, Learning Officer at Mrs Smith's Cottage.

[sally\\_bird@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:sally_bird@n-kesteven.gov.uk)

