

# Sound and Art at St Swithun's

External Evaluation Brief  
April 2021



## **1. Introduction**

Sound and Art at St Swithun's (SASS) is a £2.4m conservation and regeneration project at St Swithun's church in Worcester, delivered by the Churches Conservation Trust and generously supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, The Rowlands Trust, The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation as well as numerous other Trusts and Foundation and private donors. This innovative project will create an inspirational sensory space that uses sound and art to engage, enthuse and interpret, operating as a new venue for the arts and music in the heart of Worcester.

The CCT are seeking to appoint a qualified and experienced evaluator to evaluate the delivery (development and construction periods plus operational phase until the project end Autumn 2024) of the SASS project and to work with the SASS Centre Manager and Regeneration Team to establish an evaluation framework for the SASS following the end of our NLHF funded period of operation.

## **2. Project Background**

St Swithun's is a remarkable Grade I listed example of Georgian architecture of exceptional historical significance. The building is an elegant landmark in the city with its clocks at both east and west ends and 15<sup>th</sup> Century tower rising between the streets. It was built in 1734 on the site of a medieval church and continued to serve its community until the twentieth century. By the late 1960s the stonework was decaying and there was concern about movement of the north wall. The church was vested with the Redundant Churches Fund (now the Churches Conservation Trust) in 1977.

Internally, the space retains complete box pews, gallery with a rare, early example of an English organ and a remarkable carved triple-decker pulpit topped by a gilded pelican feeding her young. These fittings, along with the font and various memorials, are exceptionally rare. The building is a classic example of the Georgian auditory church; many similar spaces were altered during the nineteenth century, but at St Swithun's evidence of eighteenth century Anglican liturgical practices survives near intact. The SASS project will conserve and protect the historic fabric with sensitive new interventions allowing for twenty-first century reuse in new, exciting and accessible ways.

The innovative vision is to create SASS, conserving and regenerating the Church and creating an inspirational new space that uses sound and art to engage, enthuse and inspire a better connection to heritage and history. The building will be conserved and repaired with works to external masonry, nave, tower and vestry roofs, windows, below ground drainage and plaster work and floors internally. New services including heating, lighting, water and toilets will be installed, access improved and a small office will be created in the side chapel.

SASS is about engaging with communities. However, without the work carried out to make the building fit for purpose, the goal of long term

sustainability will not be achieved. Operational Plans illustrate the central theme of bringing this building back to life and back to the heart of City and:

- Breathe new life into the building and establish it as a major player in the city's cultural mix;
- Interpret the church, the people who used it and the heritage of the surrounding area in a new, exciting and accessible way using a variety of media – sound, light, digital and immersive experiences both onsite and remotely;
- Work with innovators and practitioners in sound and art education to pilot a programme of learning and engagement;
- Support sound and art students in developing their practise;
- Provide facilities and space to present creative installations and immersive experiences, creating a distinctive cultural venue and resource;
- Collaborate with emerging talent, giving artists working in new media a creative space to trial new interventions and develop their practice;
- Provide an environment for people to recharge and relax; to experience and interact with the space in a meditative way;
- Provide a learning programme in a range of cultural, heritage and engagement disciplines;
- Create new job opportunities, including a Centre Manager and Participation and Engagement Officer, to deliver the extensive events and engagement programme.
- Undertake urgent repairs, conservation and adaptation works to support future use and to realise this vision.

Work began on site in autumn 2019 and, following significant delay due to coronavirus, is due to complete in autumn 2021. SASS will open its doors to the public as a unique arts venue for the city and we require the project to be evaluated by an external consultant up until the end of the funded operational phase (autumn 2024).

### **3. The Regeneration Team**

The SASS project is being delivered by the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) Regeneration Team which delivers major projects for the CCT, aiming to conserve and transform underused community assets by simultaneously repairing a building's structure, and finding new uses that put it back into the heart of the community.

More information on the CCT Regeneration Team is available at <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration-and-communities>

The evaluation consultant will report directly to the Head of Regeneration and Consultancy Isabel Assaly and work alongside CCT's SASS Centre Manager Hywel Pontin and SASS Participation & Engagement Officer Brian Hoggard in delivery of this work.

### **4. The Regeneration Team Approach – Measuring Our Impact**

The Regeneration Team evaluates projects using a Theory of Change and Logic Model which sets out how a project has an impact on beneficiaries with a focus on core social outcomes that we want to achieve through our regeneration programme. The Theory of Change allows us to compare and contrast projects, their development, impact, strengths and weaknesses and is used to underpin our evaluation frameworks.

Measuring outcomes and impact not only supports the evaluation of our projects as required by funders, but also enables the team to build our own knowledge and learning in order to create strong future projects that in turn benefit wider and more varied groups of people and have a positive impact on the historic built environment.

Our social impact outcomes are organised under three broad headings that mirror the NLHF outcomes for heritage, people and communities:

- Im1: Outcomes with an impact on the building itself, primarily that the site is effectively managed and financially sound.
- Im2: Outcomes with an impact on individuals that they learn more, develop new skills, and are happier and more fulfilled.
- Im3: Outcomes with an impact on communities; that the project process leads to happier, more successful localities.

## **5. Evaluation of Sound and Art at St Swithun's**

There are three strands to the evaluation of the SASS project

- The evaluation of the project delivery phase (development and construction periods);
- Evaluation of the operational phase (delivery of business plan and activities post-launch until the end of the NLHF funded programme);
- Following the end of the NLHF funded programme, SASS aims to continue to operate as a sustainable enterprise and as such, ongoing evaluation will be a core activity.

Progress in the following areas will be reported directly to the NLHF and our other funders:

- The recruitment of a Centre Manager, Engagement Officer and Caretaker;
- Delivery of a capital programme of works including urgent repair and new build work to support the new arts based enterprise;
- Delivery of an extensive activities programme and interpretation scheme;
- Engagement of 50 volunteers during the NLHF funded phase of the project;
- Delivery of a programme of learning that features training opportunities including apprenticeships, work placements and technical days;
- The outcomes and impacts resulting from delivery of the above will be evaluated within the SASS evaluation framework and mapped against the CCT Regeneration Team Social Impact Outcomes as described in Section 3.

## **6. Evaluation process and collection of data**

The evaluator will join the project team as we near completion of the construction phase.

Evaluation during the operational phase will be carried out throughout the first three years of operation. Evaluation during this phase should allow for an iterative approach enabling the project team to respond to lessons learnt through the process.

Evaluation activity must be organised around an annual cycle and planned around the activity and business plans, designed to avoid where possible other peaks of activity and spread the load.

It is important that planned evaluation and data collection during the operational phase is not too onerous and therefore will be incorporated into existing activities wherever possible. Feedback and other data will be primarily collected by volunteers and by the Centre Manager and Engagement Officer.

Findings from the evaluation process will be shared with internal and external colleagues, the NLHF and other funders, partners and stakeholders locally and in the wider heritage sector.

## **7. The Brief**

We are looking to work with a skilled and experienced external evaluator to:

- Work with the Centre Manager to review and finalise the evaluation framework and logic model for the SASS project. This will be based on our existing draft framework and model for the operational phase of the SASS project. This framework will form the basis of our evaluation of the operational phase of the project;
  - Collate and analyse data within this framework, including data collected by staff and volunteers through a variety of means and data contained in project documentation to date;
  - Develop evaluation materials and suggest tools and resources for gathering audience insight and evaluation of project impact in consultation with the project team which incorporates the CCT social impact and NLHF outcomes using the evaluation framework they have created for the project;
  - Produce an interim report at the end of the delivery phase (after construction completes) to highlight how the project has met its objectives, as well as how effective, efficient and sustainable the project is at this point;
  - Produce a summative report at the end of the funded period of the operational phase to highlight how the project has met its objectives, how it has achieved outcomes for people, heritage and communities and had an impact on heritage, communities, individuals and organisations, and on the sustainability of the project. This report should include project methodology, achievements and learning points.

These reports will be shared externally, primarily with funders, and should present impact, outcomes, and progress against set KPIs and approved purposes. Recommendations for improvements to future work and projects should be included. In addition, we want to share our learning, impact, social return on investment, and economic benefits with the wider heritage sector, our internal and external colleagues and the local community. We are looking for an evaluation process which does not solely consist of a report which 'sits on the shelf'. Creative ways of achieving this are welcomed.

Work with the project staff team to develop a robust approach and system for evaluation which can be used following the end of our project funding. This approach and system will help those involved to continue to monitor sustainability, outcomes and impact, and improve and refresh the operation of SASS as it grows and develops.

## **8. The role**

The external evaluator role will enable us to evidence and understand what has been achieved and improve this and future projects by:

- Monitoring – letting us know if our project is heading in the right direction;
- Evidencing – telling us whether our project is achieving its objectives;
- Validating – informing us whether we are making the right funding decisions;
- Improving – showing us if we can improve if we change something;
- Researching – adding to our body of knowledge;
- Data collected by the project team including site staff and volunteers will measure how successfully the project has met the NLHF outcomes and CCT social impact outcomes in terms of quantitative outputs (numbers of resources, events, visitors, audiences, etc.) and qualitative indicators;
- Analysis of this combination of data will establish the degree to which the original project aims have been met;
- Reports produced must be flexible so we can use them for reporting to existing and potential funders including our main funder the NLHF.

The external evaluator will:

- Work with project staff and volunteers to ensure that data is accurately collected and that expectations are clear, providing training as required. For example on how to carry out impact interviews with key stakeholders and facilitate reflections from key individuals;
- Assess impact on volunteers, audiences, and other beneficiaries through a variety of means and techniques such as observing activities and workshops, interviews, surveys, focus groups, attendance/audience data;
- Draw out models of good practice and ensure that strengths, weaknesses and unexpected opportunities are identified and built on to the best advantage of the project;
- Ensure that the approaches and systems used can be integrated into CCT's reporting system;
- Provide insight and distil learning from the project as a whole to prove impact and improve future practice.

The external evaluator will be directly responsible to the Head of Regeneration and Consultancy (Project Manager), working alongside the Centre Manager and Engagement Officer. The external evaluator will recommend and develop evaluation tools for the project team to use and train the team in use.

## 9. Programme

Activity	Who	Timescale
Tender Deadline	Potential evaluators	30 April 21
Shortlisting	Isabel Assaly and Hywel Pontin	5 May 21
Invitation to successful interviewees	Isabel Assaly	5 May 21
Interviews (to be held online)	Isabel Assaly and Hywel Pontin	10 May 21
Appointment	Isabel Assaly	12 May 21
Introduction to project team	Successful evaluator and project team	TBC
Evaluation Framework finalised	Evaluator and project team	August 21
Capital phase report completion date	Evaluator	August 21
End of year 1 report	Evaluator	31 Sept 22
End of year 2 report	Evaluator	31 Sept 23
Final Report	Evaluator	31 Sept 24

Timetable may be subject to change.

## 10. Budget

We have a budget of £10,000 + VAT for this commission (inclusive of travel and expenses and any recording equipment required).

## 11. Payment Schedule

Payment will be made in 3 instalments

- 25% following completion of a new evaluation framework and construction report;
- 25% on production of year 1 evaluation report;
- 25% on production of year 2 evaluation report;
- 25% on completion of final evaluation report.

Please note payments will only be made on production of an invoice to the Churches Conservation Trust

## **12. Tender Requirements, Qualifications and Experience**

CCT requires those who wish to quote to submit a proposal that includes the following:

- A methodology and programme outlining their approach to the brief and referencing the role as described in this document. This should be short, succinct and practical in nature and should also include:
  - Outline of previous relevant experience including CV of key personnel;
  - Detailed breakdown of fees including expenses and showing VAT where applicable;
  - Details of two referees

The methodology should also set out how the contract will be delivered under Covid secure conditions.

- Proposals should be submitted by email to [iassaly@thecct.org.uk](mailto:iassaly@thecct.org.uk) by 5pm on Friday 30 April 2021.

Submissions should demonstrate;

- Proven track record of arts and heritage project evaluation;
- High level of written and verbal communication skills;
- Demonstrable report writing and presentation skills;
- Experience of successfully carrying out audience research;
- Knowledge of national agendas and policies in relation to the arts, heritage and community engagement.

## **13. Contact**

For any further information about this commission please contact Isabel Assaly: [iassaly@thecct.org.uk](mailto:iassaly@thecct.org.uk), 07831 875 161.