



Buxton Civic Association
buxtoncivicasociation.org.uk

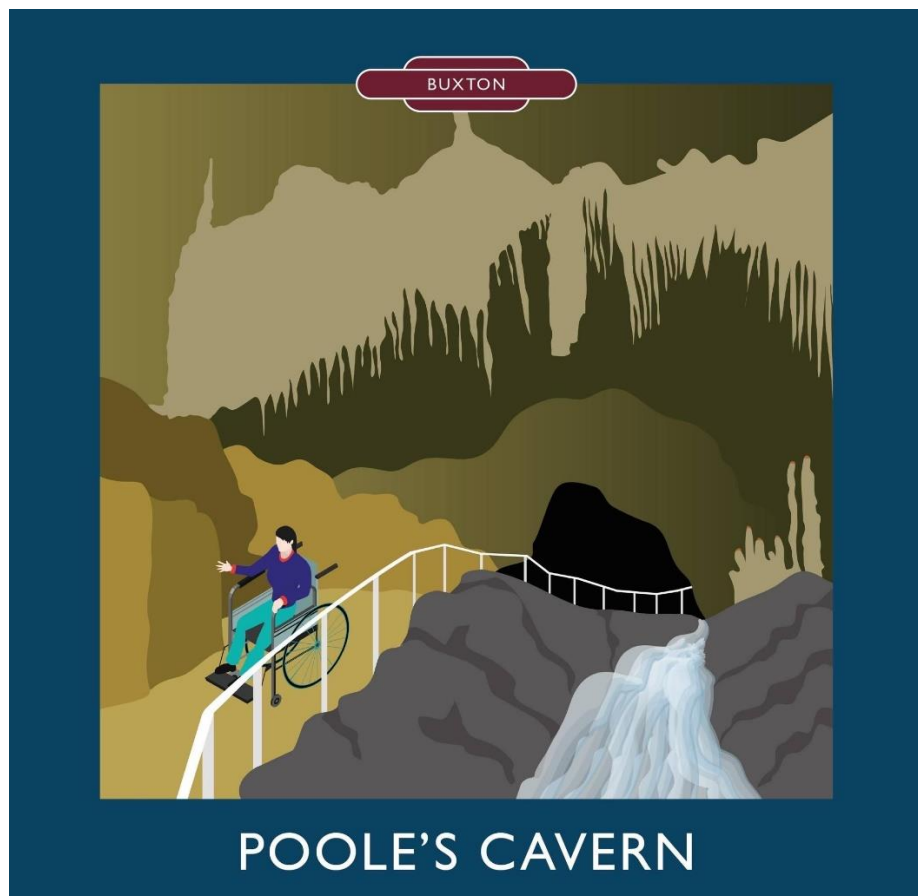
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Buxton Civic Association Ltd,
Poole's Cavern Visitor Centre,
Green Lane,
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SK17 9DH



Consultant Brief – Evaluation Consultant

**Buxton Civic Association - Future growth of Buxton Civic Association -
Engaging our community in heritage conservation for a further 60 years:
*A project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund
(Resilience & Recovery)***





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Type of contract: Consultancy / Self Employed

Remuneration: Up to £8, 000 (inc VAT) inclusive of travel and other incidental expenses, paid periodically by arrangement.

Background

BCA was formed in 1967 as an environmental charity (Registered Charity 258163), caring about the natural and built environment of Buxton and the local area. The organisation is very much part of Buxton's community; volunteer led, with many successes as part of its proud heritage.

BCA operates Poole's Cavern, Buxton's most popular paying visitor attraction; a SSSI listed cave containing many unique and fascinating features, which has been open to the public since Victorian times. The cave was purchased for the purpose of providing revenue to support the management of the nine historic woodlands which encircle the town, and were gifted to BCA by the Duke of Devonshire for the purpose of enjoyment by the town's residents. Our largest wood, Grinlow Wood, is managed as Buxton Country Park and contains important glades which are SSSI listed. In addition to being a leading visitor attraction, Poole's Cavern is the British Cave Research Centre, conducting research that is followed by scientific institutions around the globe.

BCA has c750 members, but recognises that maintaining this number faces significant challenges as the supporter base ages. Membership not only provides an engagement opportunity, but also an income stream, although this is relatively minor in comparison to cave admission fees, café income earned via our visitor centre, and retail income. BCA has a Trading Company that is limited by guarantee (94439).

BCA has grown considerably in recent years to the position where we are now a significant landowner and management company with a turnover in excess of £1 million a staff of c45.

In March 2023, BCA appointed its first Chief Executive, recognising that the leadership of the organisation and the institution's responsibilities was becoming too complex for volunteer trustees to manage alone. Trustees recognise that the post-Covid economic and social environment presents many challenges, a scenario made more concerning because the organisation spent significant amounts of reserves during the pandemic due to receiving no financial support during the enforced closures, unlike many heritage organisations.



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Changes in volunteering demographics are a concern, as is the cost of living crisis which impacts the leisure pound, however, more positively, Buxton is a growing town which values BCA's role and the opportunities it presents its residents for employment and environmental and wellbeing-focused activities.

This is a crucial time of change for BCA as we transition from a relatively small, volunteer led charity to a larger organisation led by a professional team responsible for operational management, working alongside the Board of Trustees. We are looking to expand our membership and greatly increase levels of volunteer engagement, as well as increasing the number of public visits to our sites

We are also conscious that some of our governance structures and working methods are in need of review and modernisation. We currently have a structure of 6 BCA Groups (previously called Committees) covering the key interests and activities of BCA. These all report to and are ultimately responsible to the Board of Trustees. [The groups are Corporate Affairs, Membership & Marketing, Planning, Spaces & Places, Biodiversity and Woodlands,]. Some of these Groups are now too large to be effective decision making bodies, whilst others have dwindled in membership and activity following the problems caused by Covid.

In January 2024, the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded BCA c£250k via the 'Resilience and Recovery Fund' for the purpose of addressing our challenges, and building a brighter future. It was pleasing that the National Lottery Heritage Fund recognised that BCA plays a valuable part in our community, and has the potential to achieve much more in the future, growing its relevance to locals and visitors alike.





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Our requirements

We are looking for a skilled and experienced heritage evaluation consultant to evaluate the project in line with National Lottery Heritage Fund guidance and best practice. The consultant must demonstrate experience of evaluating similar projects, from initial benchmarking through to the production of a final evaluation report that will be submitted to the funder, following an agreement of a draft by the Chief Executive.

The ability to speak with empathy and understanding to longstanding staff, members and volunteers will be a key influence in our appointment, as we recognise the need to support them through the changes this project is likely to deliver. You will also need to demonstrate the ability to mentor and upskill our team (both staff and volunteers) where appropriate, working alongside them, gathering data and interpreting it. We expect there to be elements of hands-on support for this, beyond simply providing a framework.

Excellent facilitation skills, combined with sensitivity and strict confidentiality will also be important character traits for the appointed consultant. Our aim is to not only produce evaluation which supports our funding drawdown, but also to produce a document that helps inform future decision making and planning.

The contracted 'Approved Purposes' of this project are:

- Evaluate the project in line with National Lottery Heritage Fund requirements.
- Take steps to Grow BCA Members and Volunteers, including: developing new volunteer roles and provide training; developing new membership packages, including member only events; implementing new membership and volunteer management systems.
- Take steps to Raise the profile of BCA assets: Poole's Cavern and Buxton Country Park, including: a new Marketing Plan and website improvements; exploring partnerships with other Buxton visitor attractions; commissioning a review of BCA's retail offer.
- High visibility acknowledgement of the National Lottery Heritage Fund on site, online and in all activities, as well as using your project to acknowledge and thank National Lottery Players.



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- Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the delivery of this project.
- Recruit two new posts: Volunteering Development Manager, FT, 2 Years, and a Membership and Marketing Officer, FT, 2 Years.
- Undertake a Governance Review to develop the new strategic vision and ensure all processes and policies meet best practice standards.



Location and Timings

In order to support close working relationships and an understanding of the project, BCA, our visitors, staff and volunteers, we anticipate some of this work will take place on site in Buxton. However, some contact can be remote via Zoom/telephone as appropriate, and we appreciate considerable work will be done away from site.

Due to the nature of working with volunteers, please note that it may be necessary from time to time to engage in the evening and weekends when availability is most likely.



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Contacts

The Review Consultant will work most closely with the Chief Executive (Dave Green), who will be supported by the Chair (Peter Phillipson).

In addition, there will be contact with a variety of staff, trustees and volunteers.

Key staff will include the NLHF funded Volunteering Development Manager and Business Development as well as the Caves and Visitor Centre Manager, Woodlands Manager, Community Engagement Manager, Commercial Manager and Finance Manager.



Remuneration for the Contract

The total fee will be up to £8,000 inc VAT. Payment will be paid in instalments to be agreed upon appointment.

(Our suggestion would be 25% upon appointment, 50% on delivery on first draft of the final report, and 25% on completion).

The Review Consultant will be registered self-employed/employed by their consultancy company and responsible for their own National Insurance and Tax payments as required by HMRC.

Insurance: The Review Consultant will be required to have their own professional indemnity and public liability insurance of £5 Million. We will require proof of these policies and their cover before appointment.



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Appointment Process and Timescale

We intend to appoint in March/April 2024 and anticipate that the work will take place throughout the life of the project which is currently due to end 31 May 2026. The exact timescale and approach to be agreed as part of the appointment process

Application will be based upon expressions of interest and interview. The expression of interest should include:

- A statement of the strengths and evidence of relevant experience that you will bring to the project
 - Examples of similar projects completed since 2012 and their relevance to this contract. We would also like to see examples of similar reports produced by the consultants at interview.
 - Your proposed methodology including a list of deliverables and how these will be achieved
 - Your proposed timetable for carrying out the work
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- A breakdown of your budget/costings which must include all costs and travel and subsistence and VAT if charged.
 - Details of who will carry out the work, their background and experience
 - Time allocation and day rates
 - If working as part of a team, the details of the lead consultant, who will remain available as the main point of contact throughout the project.

Expressions of interest should be submitted via email to dave.green@buxtoncivicasociation.org.uk in a format of the consultant's choice. Emails should contain the title Evaluation Consultant.

Submissions must be received by 5pm on 17 March 2024.

Invitations to interview will be circulated week beginning 25 March 2024.

Interviews will take place in Buxton week beginning 1 or 8 April 2024. Please specify your availability in your application.

BCA are grateful for the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Lottery players in funding this work.