



Brief for Partnership Research Consultant

Clay College Stoke

December 2018

Background

Adopt a Potter was established as a charity in 2009 to secure the future of studio pottery in the UK for the next generation. As it takes many years to train a studio potter, Lisa Hammond MBE, founded the charity to ensure that the long and established tradition of pottery apprenticeships for emerging potters, could continue.

The charity started at a time when many art colleges were moving away from teaching the practical skill aspects of ceramics such as throwing pots, glaze and kiln techniques, mixing clays and glazes. This was also at the point of significant decline in further education courses for ceramics – in 2003, there were 33 institutions offering BA (Hons) courses in disciplines relating to ceramics, today there are just seven.

To date Adopt a Potter has funded 14 full-time apprentices, offering individuals a stipend for one year enabling the apprentice to benefit from direct teaching and from the observation of good practice from the professional host potter, developing the necessary skills required to establish their own careers and businesses. The scheme has been extremely well supported by the wider ceramic community enabling the charity to build an extensive network of contacts giving us close links to international and UK based potters, pottery associations, galleries and collectors.

In September 2017, after a successful fundraising campaign, Adopt a Potter launched Clay College Stoke an independent college offering a skills-based, full-time ceramics course taught by potters who make a living through ceramics, something unique in the UK. The two-year full-time course is made up of three 15-week terms and offers the thirteen students enrolled an unparalleled immersive experience. Clay College is situated at the Middleport Pottery and offers teaching and working space, electric and gas kilns and a gallery which was opened in November 2017.

The emphasis of teaching is on core skills and the use of materials. Students are taught all aspects of design, throwing, glazing, kiln building and firing, alongside traditional hand building and decoration techniques. This is augmented by modules focusing on business and marketing which will offer students the opportunity to become self-sufficient, developing their own business model to suit their work and sufficiently skilled to join a work force in a production pottery. Guest tutors expand the teaching with visits from master potters including Clive Bowen, Lee Kang Hyo, Akiko Hirai and Walter Keeler.

As an independent, UK registered charity, we do not receive any public funding, relying on tuition and course fees and support from individuals, trusts, foundations and companies to continue our work.

Project Overview

Having successfully launched Clay College Stoke, the Trustees of Adopt a Potter Ltd recently announced their plans for the future growth and development for the College. In March 2018 it was agreed that the charity should focus on the following priorities over the next few years.

- Maintaining and Developing the Bursary Fund – This will ensure that, wherever possible, we limit the financial barriers for talented students wishing to study at Clay College Stoke.
- Seeking Course Accreditation – So that the core skills learned are recognised universally and students have access to the benefits of official student status, particularly funding.
- Piloting Work Within the Local Community – Seeking creative and effective partners to develop links within the wider Stoke community to engage a new generation in the importance of pottery.

Having announced these plans, the college secured funding from the Charlotte Fraser Foundation who are supporting the work required to set up a pilot project working with the local community in Stoke on Trent. In addition to supporting the pilot event/s, the foundation is providing funding towards researching the 'offer' currently available in the local area, local organisations with whom Clay College might partner and the types of activities/outcome which would be of most benefit.

It is hoped that following the research and evaluation phase that the pilot project can take place in winter 2018/19.

Brief

Adopt a Potter are seeking an experienced consultant to deliver the following elements of the project:

- Review existing ceramics provision available in the Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire available for 16-18 year olds in education, training, employment and NEET
- Identify and make initial enquiries with local groups and other service providers who might be suitable partners for a pilot scheme
- Prepare a final evaluation report on the findings of the two aforementioned areas with suggestions of what might make an appropriate pilot.

Clay College Stoke seeks to complement the work of other organisations who already operate in the Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire areas and run engagement/learning programmes in the local community which use ceramics as a starting point. We believe that there is a meaningful way in which we can engage with particularly young people in the local community but do not wish to replicate what is already offered.

The consultant will be expected to familiarise themselves with the work of Adopt a Potter and Clay College Stoke, with an understanding of what we might be able to bring to a partnership e.g our studio resources (limited by the teaching of our full-time course and evening classes/workshops), our expert teaching in both core skills and business and our size.

Resources

The consultant will be expected to work offsite whilst researching the piece of work, but we are happy to offer time with our Trustees to discuss the project in more depth and a mutually convenient time to discuss the project with the Clay College Stoke staff as he or she is working on the project.

A total of £1,250 is available for this work, which will take place over the early Spring term.

Timetable

It is proposed that the research can start during the early part of Clay College's spring term in late January 2019 with progress updates prior to the delivery of the draft report by the end of February and the final report in March 2019. The report can then be presented to the Trustees at their board meeting and a pilot scheme organised for late spring 2019.

Application process

The consultant/s should apply in writing to the Chair of Adopt a Potter providing a CV, details of relevant experience and a breakdown of the days required to complete the work and how they feel they would fit the brief within the budget provided. Interviews are expected to take place before the end of January 2019.

The consultant will be expected to demonstrate:

- Understanding of the brief and the context
- Proven experience of developing research/evaluation reports for similar organisations
- Ability to write clear and accurate copy
- Excellent presentation skills
- A track record working in collaboration and consultation with local Stoke on Trent and/or North Staffordshire groups
- An interest in ceramics is desirable

Applications should be received by 10th January 2019.