



Holy Trinity Church: New Community Hub
The renovation of one of Colchester's oldest buildings to put it at the centre of a city community.

INTERPRETATION PLAN BRIEF

Holy Trinity Church: New Community Hub



Role: Development of an interpretation plan to support round 2 (delivery phase) of The National Lottery Heritage Fund project at Holy Trinity Church, Colchester.

Brief: The output required for the contract is the completion of a dynamic, detailed, costed, interpretation scheme which accomplishes the aims of the project and can be accommodated sensitively within the constraints of the building and provide a range of engagement opportunities.

Location: Hybrid

Reporting to: Colchester City Council Economic Regeneration Manager.

Contract Length: April to September 2024.

Budget: There is an indicative budget for this work of £15,000 inclusive of all expenses, but excluding VAT. A fixed fee proposal is required. Consultancies must make Colchester City Council aware of whether VAT is applicable from the outset.

Tender issued: Monday 4th March 2024

Deadline for submissions: Thursday 28th March 2024

Contract award: Mid-April 2024 for start on 1st May 2024

How to apply: Please complete the attached bidder response document and return by the closing date of 28th March 2024 to matthew.brown@colchester.gov.uk

Payment schedule will be mutually agreed upon appointment of the consultant.

Please note that Colchester City Council will consider the same consultancy for more than one commission, particularly in relation to the Interpretation, Evaluation and Activity planning.

Summary: This brief sets out the requirements for the commissioning of interpretation for the Development and Delivery phases of the proposed “Holy Trinity Church: New Community Hub” Project in Colchester. Colchester City Council is planning a sensitive restoration and repair of this recognised (Gr1 listed) heritage asset, located at the heart of Colchester’s city centre, and its conversion into a new community hub.

The project has been successful in securing viability-stage funding from the Architectural Heritage Fund and Town Deal funding programmes. This funding has enabled development of concept, stakeholder engagement, building of a partnership for scheme delivery, preparation of business case, design, and architecture to RIBA2. This work has been used to develop and prove the project viability and provide confidence in the ability of the Council and our partners to deliver this project. The interpretation plan is a key component of this project work and is a core requirement of the next stage (Round 2) application.

The Interpretation Plan must be in the appropriate format for a second-round (Delivery Phase) funding application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund and completed by September for submission in November 2024, giving due regard to guidance, and developed to meet the equivalent of RIBA Stage 3.

Objective of the Interpretation plan:

- For audiences to understand the story, history, and significance of the church based on the physical and documentary evidence.
- Uncover the untold history to encourage community to feel connected to the church.
- A place for history and community to coexist.



In undertaking the preparation of the Interpretation Plan the successful consultant will:

- Establish a working timeline to produce the Interpretation Plan, providing dates for completion of key activities and methodologies of work in accordance with wider project milestones.
- Understand and research Holy Trinity Church's specific heritage.
- Hold content workshops with staff, stakeholders, and target groups to develop themes and storylines.
- Hold creative design workshops to translate the Interpretation Plan into physical and virtual plans.
- Develop ideas for digital interpretation to support the physical displays.
- Work with the Activity Planner to evaluate storylines and themes with the public.
- Feed ideas into and respond to the Activity Plan.
- Feed into the Management and Maintenance Plan.
- Attend Project Steering Group meetings and other subgroups / working groups virtually, when necessary.
- Abide by Colchester City Council's safeguarding policies and national data protection guidelines.
- Attend The National Lottery Heritage Fund liaison meetings as required, including Committee visits or reviews.

Audiences: Our aim is to invite as many groups and individuals as possible to take part; and make sure that people can see the point in being involved. We must foster clear understanding of Holy Trinity Church's existing and prospective audiences, together with target groups, to ensure that inclusivity remains at the heart of the project.

- Young People
 - Local schools, further education & Universities – notably St John's Green primary school "One Square Mile: Heritage on our doorstep" project – see: [Facebook](#).
 - Local scouts and guides groups.
 - Young people engaged through local churches.
- Older people including those with dementia, those with disabilities, etc. To reach out and gather 'stories' from the church's past from residents with significant life events at the church (married, baptised, attended funerals etc.)
- Minority groups.
- Special interest groups, i.e. those with an interest in local history and/or interest in ecclesiastical buildings.
- Tourism – Visit Colchester.

Learning Outcomes

- Feeling a connection with the building and its part in Colchester's rich history.
- A sense of excitement about bringing history and community together.

Skills and Experience

Colchester City Council is looking to appoint a consultant and/or small consultancy which can demonstrate the following:

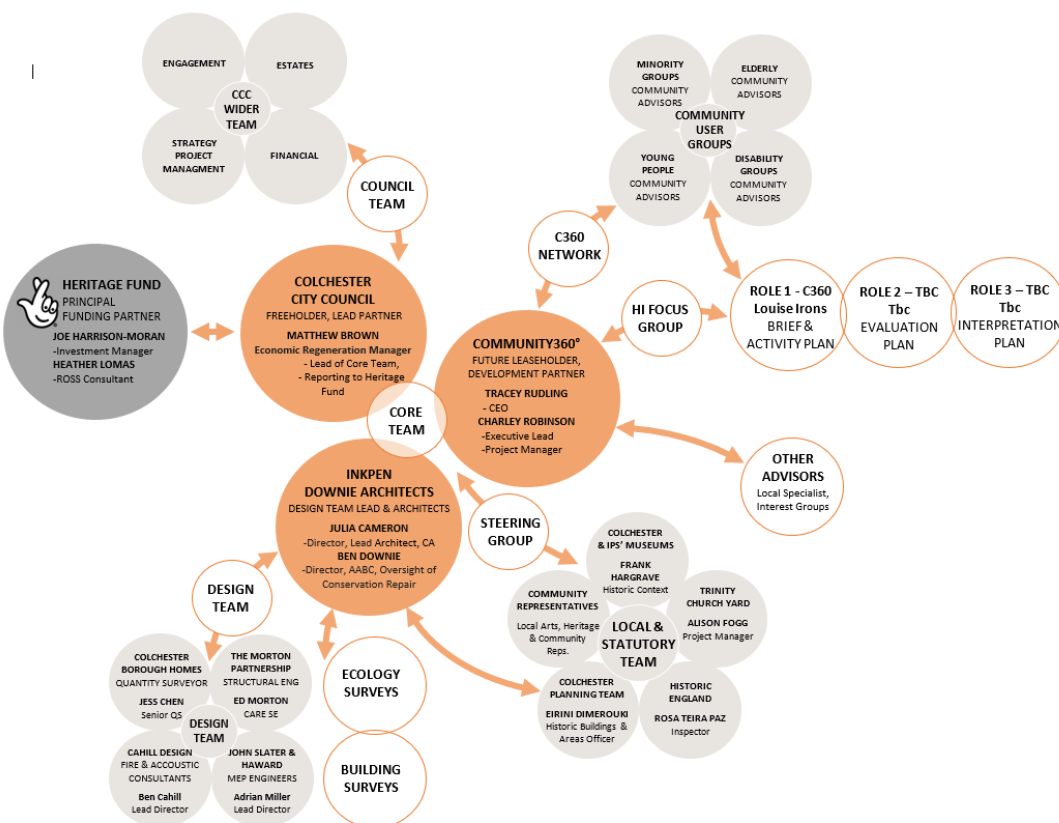
- At least 3 years' experience of working on The National Lottery Heritage Fund capital projects (value of at least £2m) through to completion.



- Experience delivering successful, attractive, integrated interpretation outputs in the historic environment.
- Understanding of the interlinked nature of activity planning, interpretation planning and exhibition design abilities
- Strong report writing and presentation delivery skills.
- Ability to be flexible and work collaboratively with Colchester City Council, Community360 and the rest of project team.
- A genuine affinity with the Project vision.
- Evidence of working in community settings and with community members, trusts and local authorities on National Lottery Funded projects.

Who will be involved: The attached organogram details all the project stakeholders, key stakeholders being Colchester City Council, Inkpen Downie, One Colchester Delivery Board & Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service (larger version will be provided):

The main contact will be the Economic Regeneration Manager at Colchester City Council (the project lead).



Outputs

Colchester City Council will require the final outputs to include:

- An Interpretation Plan to RIBA Stage 3, with a full rationale for proposals



- b) An electronic copy of the final documents in PDF and Word formats, with appendices detailing the full scope of research and work.
- c) Electronic copies of source material, including images/visuals, maps and other data.
- d) Electronic copies of any presentations relating to the Plan. Final reports should be succinct with a clear emphasis on what could be done and why specific actions are recommended.

The consultancy will assign the copyright of all outputs to Colchester City Council for use in connection with its operations. The consultancy must clear the copyright and photography consents for any images, illustrations or other material used.



Additional Information

The project team would be happy to share any further information including our full application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund and all supporting documents, below you will find some further information to support this brief.

Background:

Key challenges this project addresses:

Dating from around 1050, and owned by the City Council; our notable, locally loved, and celebrated Holy Trinity Church has not seen regular use since 2017. Key challenges together create the market failure which this project will address:

- The grade 1 listing requires Historic Buildings consent from Historic England and any changes made must be sensitive to the historic fabric.
- Also, the original conveyance from the Church of England to the council in 1956, includes a restrictive covenant limiting future uses to community and cultural only. This prevents any commercial future uses.
- The physical condition of the building is deteriorating. This led to it being added to Historic England's 'heritage at risk' register in 2021.
- Coupled with the poor condition, the building lacks insulation and has an antiquated heating system which with recent energy cost escalation makes it prohibitively expensive to operate, especially for a community sector organisation.
- The council has funded and completed emergency repair works in the summer of 2023, but lacks the resources needed to undertake more extensive works without attracting further external funding.

The opportunities this project responds to:

Recognising the need to develop a future use which addresses these challenges; since 2019 the council and Community360 have been working together in partnership to develop a scheme which will deliver a viable and secure long-term future for the building:

- The project has already secured c. £500k Town Deal funding which can leverage heritage funding. A business case and initial feasibility work including architecture to RIBA stage 2 has already been completed, and a design team are now mobilised to work on this exciting project.
- An approach has been made to The National Lottery Heritage Fund who approved an expression of interest for this scheme in February 2023, and a Round 1 bid was submitted in August 2023 and approved in early 2024.
- If approved, the Round 2 (delivery stage) funding will enable the full repair of the core fabric of the building, the upgrades to key features such as heating & insulation, addressing accessibility and similar issues, and finally the conversion of the building into a hub for the future use of Community360, replacing its current operational base at Long Wyre Street, Colchester.
- Alongside this, historic interpretation will be enhanced, and the church can play a role in heritage tours and open days, recognising its status as the oldest standing building in the city centre, and the best surviving Saxon entrance arch. Through Community360, a programme of volunteering will engage people in the rich heritage and history.
- Following this one-off full repair and conversion, Community360 will take the building on a long-term basis (subject to negotiation and agreement prior to The National Lottery Heritage Fund R2 bid submission), with rent forming the basis of a sinking fund catering for long-term maintenance.

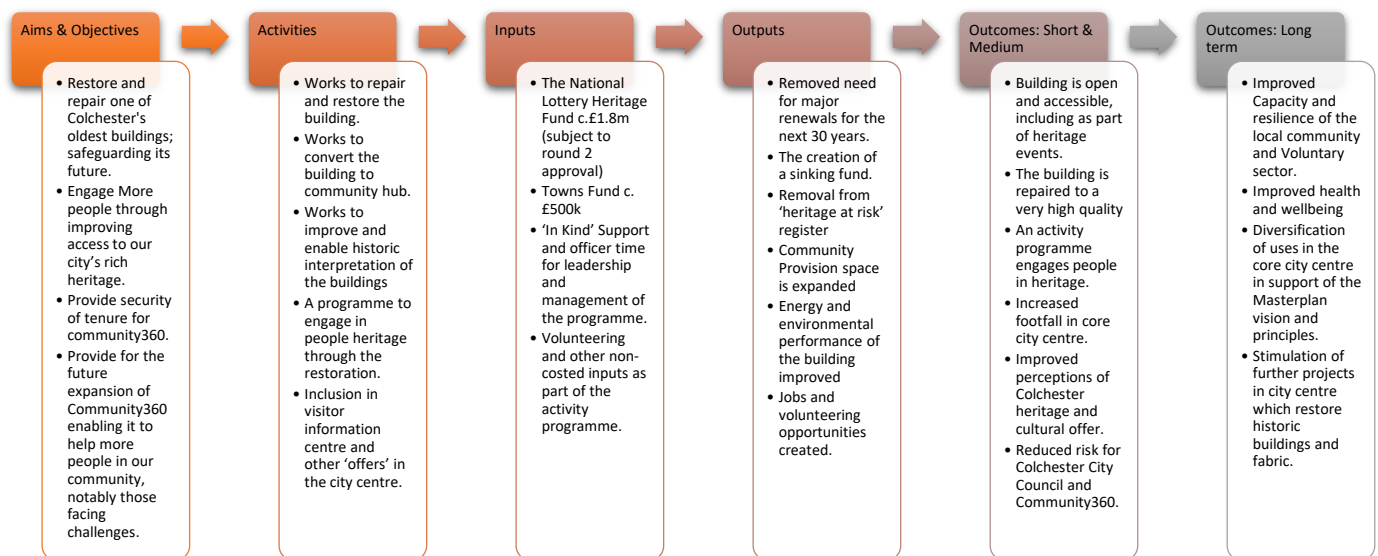


- The scheme complements the adjacent, though independent scheme also within the Town Deal programme to convert the churchyard into an accessible public space which recently secure planning approval (details available on request).

In summary the scheme safeguards and provides a sustainable long-term future for our city's oldest building, provides security of tenure for C360 in bespoke, high-quality facilities catering for future growth, and enables more people to be engaged in our city's rich heritage.

The project has received significant support and backing from statutory organisations, along with the wider community and special interest groups. Aside from the Council and Community360 (the project delivery partners), those in strong support of the scheme include Historic England, Colchester & Ipswich Museums Service, North Essex Heritage (leading the 'Jumbo' restoration project), The Church of England Commissioners, Colchester Tourist Guides Association, Colchester Civic Society, Friends of Essex Churches, Essex Heritage Trust, the Business Improvement District, Will Quince the outgoing MP for Colchester, the NHS, the 'We are Colchester' (Town Deal) board, and the Bishop of Colchester. The director of Colchester's Mercury Theatre is also providing practical support and check-and-challenge to the project lead.

Project objectives, outputs, and outcomes



The project journey to date:

Since the initial work to secure a new tenant for the building following the vacation by its previous long-term tenant in April 2017, the Council and Community360 have worked tirelessly to bring this important scheme forward. This journey is described in broad terms in the Round 1 application; however, it is felt valuable to bring the timeline of the scheme together in one cohesive summary:



When	What	Who	Why / How / Narrative
April 2017	The previous tenants of the church surrender their lease, ending regular use of the building.	The Go4 Community Café and Craft Centre.	The need to cover high energy costs and make repairs to the building were beyond the means of a small local charity; this is identified as the key market failure to which this project responds.
2017-2018	Seeking a new tenant to take on the building.	Colchester City Council Communities Team.	The Council undertook a formal process to promote the building and seek expressions of interest to take it on along similar terms to Go4's previous lease arrangement. This exercise was unsuccessful.
Late 2019	Agreement to enter a new partnership to develop future uses for the building.	Colchester City Council & Community360.	CCC and Community360 informally agree to work together. A successful application was made to the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) 'project viability' grants programme.
Early 2020	Project viability work undertaken.	Community360.	Following award, Community360 commissioned the project architect Inkpen Downie, and a project viability and options appraisal exercise was undertaken. This work included in-depth and costed condition surveys which considered the entire building.
Mid 2021	Project viability report completed and submitted to AHF.	Community360.	Upon completion this work was submitted to AHF and a further successful application to AHF's 'project development' grants programme was then made; though the awarded monies were not drawn down as they were intended to be held back to be used later.
Mid 2021	The building was added to Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' register.	Historic England.	Refer to main application and part of Supporting Document SD16: condition survey . This includes the Historic England assessment report in full.
Mid 2021	The project was included within Colchester's Town Investment Plan and Town Deal programme.	Colchester City Council.	The scheme was added to the Town Deal programme, and £517k of funding was sought, providing for all the future partner funding contributions required to bring the scheme forward.
Early 2022	Town Deal Business Case was prepared and included within Colchester's submission to Government. This was approved in Spring 2022.	Community360.	Town Deal Business Case was prepared.
Mid 2022	Community360's board of trustees requested a pause to the scheme due to the high level of risk and uncertainty.	Community360.	Discussion between Community360 and the Council resulted in Community360 withdrawing as project lead, but retaining appetite to support the project and take on the building once the repair and conversion programme is completed.
2022/23	The Council agreed to undertake priority 1 works to the building. The Council commenced preparation of the application to National Lottery Heritage Fund.	Colchester City Council.	Colchester Borough Homes were commissioned in April 2023 to undertake all the priority 1 repairs to the building. These works were completed July 2023. Colchester City Council submitted an expression of interest to The National Lottery heritage Fund for this scheme, which was approved.
Mid 2023	Prepare The National Lottery heritage Fund Round 1 application.	Colchester City Council.	More in-depth engagement commenced between the Council and the National Lottery heritage Fund programme, and work was undertaken to refresh/update the project including wider engagement, working up the scheme to ensure good fit with TNLHF's heritage grants programme.



When	What	Who	Why / How / Narrative
			<p>Reviewing all costs to establish the level of The National Lottery heritage Fund investment needed, gathering quotations from relevant suppliers to demonstrate that the development phase can be achieved within budget and can proceed (subject to seeking further quotations to meet procurement requirements) swiftly in event of permission to start, entering new / refreshed partnership arrangements, and seeking wider support to and engagement in the scheme.</p> <p>Engaged with Historic England who as well as providing support to the application in writing, advised that they are minded supporting further non-essential works to the tower, and invited a 'repairs grant' application for further funding.</p>
August 2023	Submit The National Lottery heritage Fund Round 1 application.	Colchester City Council.	The Round 1 application was submitted to The National Lottery heritage Fund.
September 2023	Approval of Expression of Interest to HE 'Heritage at Risk Grants' programme	Colchester City Council.	A full application for £250k to HE for discretionary / non-dependent works to the tower will be prepared in tandem with the development phase.
September 2023	Approval of Expression of Interest to DLUHC 'Community Ownership Fund' programme	Colchester City Council with C360.	A full application for £250k to CoF for enhancements to the building specification and further features (ICT, energy efficiency, storage) will be prepared in tandem with the development phase.
October 2023	Initial informal feedback and request for supplementary information from TNLHF.	The National Lottery heritage Fund assessor.	Further evidence and narrative requested and supplied by CCC lead.
December 2023	Informal advice from TNLHF.	The National Lottery heritage Fund.	Embargoed confirmation of a development stage award to the project.
January 2024	Project inception meeting.	All.	Discuss and agree further requirements prior to permission to start.
February 2024	Permission to start from TNLHF.	The National Lottery heritage Fund	Formal confirmation of project commencement

Future Key Project Milestones (proposed):

When	What	Who	Why / How / Narrative
September 2024	Mid-stage review with The National Lottery heritage Fund	All.	Mid-stage review of the development phase. If successful, permission to submit is granted.
November 2024	Round 2 Submission	Project team.	Submission of Planning Application, Historic Buildings Consent, R2 application to The National Lottery heritage Fund accompanied by Activity Plan, Historic Interpretation Plan, Business Plan, Evaluation Plan and other key appendices.
March 2025	Decision and permission to start (delivery phase)	The National Lottery heritage Fund.	Subject to successful outcome of Round 2 application, planning consent & historic buildings consent.
November 2025	Repairs and conversion start	All.	The physical on-site phase of the project commences.
August 2026	Repairs and conversion end	All.	The physical on-site phase of the project ends.
October 2026	Handover to operation	All.	The building re-opens as the new community hub.



About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, The National Lottery Heritage Fund's vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in the strategic plan, [Heritage 2033](#).

Over the next ten years, the Heritage Fund aims to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment. The Heritage Fund helps protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

The Heritage Fund is passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

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