

Wanted: Visionary Organisation to Grow Banff @ the Vinery

Call for Operators

This is an exciting opportunity to lead the development of a new enterprise in the north-east Aberdeenshire coastal town of Banff to provide transformational, all-inclusive community support from an iconic heritage site on the edge of town. With a focus on social and community regeneration through growing and cooking, the project will deliver outcomes that improve skills and aspirations, improve mental and physical health and wellbeing and build community pride.

To help us achieve this we are looking for a visionary organisation who will work with us and the community to fulfil the potential of this garden gateway site to make a real difference to people's lives. The project objectives are as follows:

- To target barriers to employment and poverty by providing training, work experience and building confidence for local people.
- To improve health and wellbeing by developing new opportunities linked to the local environment.
- To improve quality of place through the restoration and reuse of a B listed former Vinery building and its associated historic gardens.
- To improve social capital by bridging the generation gap and building a greater sense of community pride in a key site in Banff.
- To boost the economy by growing and developing products that can attract tourists and local shoppers alike.

Following the award of £242,832 from the Scottish Government Town Centre Fund to undertake Stage 1 of the re-development of the Vinery site, we are looking to appoint an operator to help shape this first stage process and work in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, architects and a community steering group to develop the project further in readiness for the submission of further funding applications for the main restoration and delivery of activity later in the year. During this planning stage, the operator will also be able to access support from our business development and marketing colleagues, to ensure the financial success of the concept.

Once an operator is selected in September, September to December will see contractors appointed and relevant permissions gained. Phase 1 work which includes repairs to the Bothy is scheduled to start in January with an estimated completion date of May 2020. During the planning process, the successful operator will be able to contribute ideas for the internal layout/design of the buildings to suit operational requirements. During this time we will be applying for Stage 2 funding for the project which will see the majority of the refurbishment undertaken. If successful this work would start later in 2020. Formal handover of the property to the operator is expected in April 2021 with the project starting to deliver activity from July 2021.

It is expected that the premises will be provided at a nominal rent, subject to final committee approval. They include a category B listed Glasshouse, an attached Bothy providing workshop/training and kitchen space, and a separate Turret for storage. Utilities will be your

responsibility, as will the acquisition of relevant equipment. However, we can provide assistance with funding applications, if required.

The buildings sit within a landscaped walled garden of 0.8 hectares which once formed part of the Duff House policies. Currently under-used this project offers huge scope to re-invigorate this garden space as a place for the community and an attraction for tourists.

We welcome applications from individual businesses, social enterprises, charities or from a consortium of partners. However, you must be outcome focused with a track-record for delivery, have an eye for innovation and entrepreneurship, a flair for creative community engagement and a passion for making a difference to people and places.

This is a long-term venture which we expect will become an integral part of the fabric of our community. As a result, this is a great opportunity to let your ideas, innovation and your particular brand of development, truly flourish.

In the first instance, please email june.burnett@aberdeenshire.gov.uk, or suzanne.rhind@aberdeenshire.gov.uk registering your interest by 5pm on 16th August. (Just tell us a little about your skills and experience to date and why you would like to be involved). We will then provide you with a date/time for an initial Skype discussion with the team when we can each explore the project in more detail. In keeping with the community involvement element of the project we will be asking longlisted operators to present their ideas to the steering group who will be involved with the final selection of shortlisted operators. Following this a mini-public exercise will be held to gather wider community input. A final decision is expected by mid September. Visits to view the site can be arranged.