



## Appointment Brief for the Governance Review Consultant

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### **Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society**

BWAS was founded in 1870 and its first inaugural lecture was held on November 10th of that year. It later became the Birmingham Archaeological Society but with the publication of its centenary volume No. 84 (1967-70), it became known as the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society (BWAS) demonstrating the extent of its geographical reach through its title.

BWAS exists to help foster an interest, understanding and enthusiasm for archaeology in local people and academics alike. With just over 100 members, including organisations as well as individuals, BWAS:

- delivers a programme of monthly talks and lectures on all aspects of archaeology
- offers a membership scheme to those interested in archaeology research, learning and practice
- hosts visits to sites of interest and events
- publishes the annual Transactions reports of regional archaeological which is a resource for both academics as well as lay enthusiasts.

The Society celebrates the diverse history and heritage of the area covering archaeological sites and digs such as early earthworks in Warwickshire and early roads in Warwickshire and Worcestershire to customs and traditions now long gone including the speeches of watermen in the early 1800's to industries long since disappeared such as the prehistoric flint factory at Great Packington, Warwickshire and the salt roads of Bromsgrove.

Whilst located in the past, archaeology is also about the present, and since being founded, BWAS has been equally concerned with the cultural and political significance of the past as it is understood by people today. Many of our ideas about who we are and where we belong are formed with reference to the past, which means archaeology is also about the future.

Whether it is the story of our relationship with the natural world, arguments about the origins of people, or debates about how and why societies change, archaeology is a subject that makes us think about where we are now and where we want to go. Archaeology is all around us; archaeology matters.

### ***The Celebrating its Past; Finding its Future Project***

As it approaches its 150th anniversary, BWAS - an august organisation which once formed a central plank of the city's civic and academic discourse - finds itself in a spiral of decline.

Membership is declining, plummeting to just over 100 organisational and individual members from a peak of several hundred 30 years ago. Like many organisations, its members are largely elderly, white and many have an academic background or interest in the subject. This is in contrast to the huge growth of interest in citizen archaeology sparked by finds such as the Staffordshire Hoard and the huge numbers of visitors attending since it was discovered and went on display. The enduring success of TV shows such as Time Team stand testament to the popularity of archaeology by the general public.

Its programme of monthly talks and lectures on all aspects of archaeology are dogged by poor attendance which means talks - although often delivered by acknowledged speakers of interest - attract few attendees and often fails to bring archaeology to a wider audience or to associated communities of interest. The once-popular season of visits to sites of interest largely ceased in 2017 without a dedicated member to arrange the programme. Events that could attract new members such as a developing a young archaeologists club do



not feature in the current programme and although there is some interest in developing this, the society lacks sufficient volunteer capacity to arrange a new activity like this.

Publishing and distribution information on current digs and archaeological research is another route to spreading awareness of the Society and potentially recruiting new members. Since its foundation, BWAS has produced the annual Transactions reports which details regional archaeological works and this has traditionally been distributed widely to academic libraries, public lending libraries and similar societies. Unsure of the Transactions' impact, relevance and the reactions of its audiences, the Society now wishes to review whether, and how, to continue with this information resource.

There are several issues that need to be addressed: the issue of succession planning for the editorial role needs to be investigated - should the post be a voluntary one as previously or should it be paid; how the Society presents the information to its audiences which includes Society members, students, professional staff and those with an interest in archaeology; could the Society move to producing the Transaction as an electronic copy but as the Society lacks the capacity to deliver this at present, it needs to understand what it would need to do to be able to present and distribute information in this way. Also, the question of access needs to be reviewed as the public and academic lending resources have experienced budget cuts and so ensuring that the information is accessible and available needs to be considered.

Whilst everyone on the Committee recognises the need for urgent organisational development work, many have spent several terms in office as other members are reluctant to assume leadership roles. Although the Board recognise that they need to be more representative of the area and communities they cover, the Society needs help to develop a plan of action. Key to this is identifying the skills gaps that exist amongst the current Board and then developing a plan to address this. The current Board members are fatigued - the demands of running this volunteer organisation alongside their busy lives or heavy workloads leaves little time for activity planning above and beyond the usual programme.

So, as it approaches this landmark celebration, BWAS finds itself at a crossroads: Does it continue in its current state potentially moving towards inevitable decline? This course of action would do little to resurrect the organisation and breathe new life into the Society; more likely the current Committee would find it increasingly difficult to continue keeping the Society going and may even consider closing.

Alternatively, does BWAS seek a new direction through which it can reconnect with communities of interest and create new partnerships, activities and events and continue to deliver its charitable objectives in the changed circumstances of the 21st century?

Unlike many organisations, the need to consider the future and the way forward is not determined by financial instability; rather BWAS has built up sufficient reserves to enable the charity to continue to function, in whatever capacity for a number of years, even continuing in its current state of decline. Rather it is the desire from the Trustee Board to find a new direction that is driving this project as Trustees recognise that the funds could be better spent on delivering a mixed programme that engages and captures the enthusiasm and interest of a diverse range of audiences that will help BWAS celebrate both its history, and create a new future.

So, BWAS is seeking to explore its future by carrying out a strategic review helping to create a new vision for the Society focused on delivering a diverse range of activities, events, and community engagement opportunities that not only recruits members but also engages new, more diverse audiences and provides a springboard for new partnerships and projects which will ultimately help find ways of breathing life into the charity, enabling it to survive for another century and use its 150th anniversary as a platform to bring the charity to wider public view.



## Governance Review Consultancy

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**Brief:** To be employed on a freelance/consultancy basis

**Contract value:** £3,600 inc. VAT maximum value to include all expenses, travel, etc.

**Location:** BWAS, BMT, Birmingham

**Reporting to:** The commission will be managed by the Project Manager and will ultimately report to the Board of Trustees.

**Responsible for:**

The focus of this commission is to identify the most effective governance arrangement for BWAS and to recommend inputs to strengthen its capacity and capability to develop and deliver sustainable plans for the Society's future.

Therefore, BWAS wishes to commission a Consultant to:

- conduct a Trustee Skills Audit and work with the Board to complete the Resilience Healthchecker to identify any potential number of expertise gaps in key areas such as fundraising and marketing; etc.;
- devise a Trustee recruitment plan and to draw up a programme to implement this, making recommendations about how this is carried out;
- review the current Society's Constitution and make recommendations as to any changes necessary;
- devise with the Trustees a new committee, management and operational structures if required;
- write a Succession Plan to ensure the highest quality of governance in the future;
- consider comparator organisations to demonstrate best practice;
- facilitate a workshop mid-way to present interim key findings;
- present the final report to directors.

**Overview of project outputs:**

This post holder will assist BWAS to deliver the following outcomes:

- A comprehensive skills audit highlighting areas for development, training and identifying key skill gaps amongst current Board members
- A roadmap detailing how the future recruitment plan can be implemented
- A refreshed constitution reflecting current charity law
- Input into a revised Business Plan for the period 2020-2023

**Timetable:**

The commission is for 12 months in length (April 2020 – March 2021)

**Tender information:**

Please send a proposal covering:

- Proposed methodology, programme and timescales
- How the Consultant(s) intends to work given the current Covid-19 lockdown
- Details of relevant experience of working in comparable areas
- CV of the Consultant(s)



- Fee proposal for undertaking this work, fully broken down into work stages and tasks including a cost breakdown giving the daily rate of the Consultant(s), expenses and VAT if applicable.

Please email completed proposal by Friday 17 April to [carolinebrumbones@gmail.com](mailto:carolinebrumbones@gmail.com)

#### **Tender budget and evaluation**

The chosen Consultant will be selected based on:

- Understanding of the brief
- Proven experience
- The method proposed and assessment of the key issues to be addressed in the commission
- Fee proposal