PLACED / DISPLACED

Background and context for Project Manager applicants

Wainsgate Chapel

Wainsgate Chapel is an artist-led cultural space in the hills above Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. A Grade II* listed former Baptist chapel, it has become a place for artistic practice, performance, making, learning and gathering, bringing together people from the local area and much further afield.

Over recent years, Wainsgate has developed a distinctive and increasingly ambitious programme of dance, music, visual art, spoken word, workshops, residencies, exhibitions, heritage activity and community events. Alongside internationally recognised artists, we work with people who live nearby, people at different stages of their artistic lives, children and young people, and people who might have little previous experience of engaging with contemporary art.

Our regular activities include daily movement and drawing practices, artist residencies, performances, concerts, walks, workshops, shared meals and seasonal celebrations. Some activities are highly experimental; others are familiar, social and rooted in everyday life. Often these different worlds meet.

In March 2026, following several years of developing and caring for the building and its programme, Wainsgate Chapel became an independent charity and took ownership of the building. This represents a significant moment in our development, bringing new responsibilities and new possibilities for how Wainsgate might contribute to the cultural and social life of the region.

We are interested in what it means to be an artist-led organisation with a strong relationship to the place in which we work, and how artistic practice can contribute to the life of that place over time.

Why Placed / Displaced?

Wainsgate exists within a landscape shaped by many different histories of settlement, movement, work, community and change.

Some people living in the area have family histories stretching back generations. Others have arrived relatively recently, from elsewhere in the UK or from much further afield. Some have chosen to make their lives here; others have been displaced by circumstances beyond their control.

These different experiences of place, belonging and displacement are part of the living heritage of the region.

Through our existing programme, Wainsgate has already begun to develop relationships with people from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. These include people seeking sanctuary, children and young people, artists and local residents whose families have lived and worked in the surrounding communities for generations.

Placed / Displaced offers an opportunity to develop some of these relationships more deeply, while building new ones.

We are particularly interested in bringing into conversation people with longstanding, intergenerational relationships to this area and people who have experienced displacement and are now making their lives here.

These are starting points for exploration, rather than fixed or homogeneous communities. People's relationships to place are complex, sometimes contradictory and rarely captured by simple categories.

Young people will be central to this exploration, bringing their own experiences, questions and perspectives on what it means to belong somewhere, to inherit a place, or to make a life within it.

We want to learn more about the people who live here, their histories, knowledge, experiences and ways of understanding the world. We want to explore what we might discover through spending time together, and what new relationships, practices and possibilities might emerge.

At its heart, this is a project about learning: learning about one another, about this place, and about how we might live and work together within it.

Artistic practice as a way of knowing

Our creative vision places practice, making and attention at the centre of what we do.

We understand artistic practice as a way of exploring experience, asking questions, developing knowledge and discovering things that we might not otherwise know.

This extends beyond conventional definitions of art. Making food, growing things, singing, walking, dancing, drawing, telling stories, building, listening and sharing skills can all involve rich forms of practice, knowledge and attention.

We are interested in how these activities might become ways for people to encounter one another and explore their relationships to place.

What can we learn through doing things together? What kinds of conversations become possible when we make something, cook together, walk together or give sustained attention to a particular place or experience? How might the knowledge held in people's bodies, memories, skills and everyday practices contribute to our understanding of the region and its heritage?

We want artistic thinking and making to be integral to this enquiry from the outset.

The project will involve artists working alongside participants, with opportunities for film, photography, sound, writing, food, conversation and other forms of creative activity. The particular forms the work takes will develop through discussion, collaboration and the relationships established during the project.

We are ambitious about the artistic quality and depth of the work, while remaining open to unexpected outcomes and to the knowledge and imagination that participants bring.

Developing our work with young people

An essential ambition of *Placed / Displaced* is to begin building a more sustained, informed and purposeful programme of work with young people at Wainsgate.

We have already worked with children and young people through schools, workshops, performances and participatory activities, but we recognise that there is much more to learn about how Wainsgate might become a place where younger people feel a sense of connection, ownership and possibility.

We want to understand better who the young people in our surrounding communities are, what matters to them, what opportunities they have and what kinds of experiences and relationships might make Wainsgate meaningful in their lives.

Young people will have an important part to play in exploring the central questions of *Placed / Displaced*. Their perspectives on place, identity, heritage, belonging and the future may be very different from those of older generations. We are interested in what can happen when these different perspectives meet, and in creating opportunities for younger people to contribute their own ideas, questions, experiences and creative practices.

We are also interested in how young people might become active contributors to the development and making of the project itself, working alongside artists, learning skills, contributing to decisions and helping to shape what is created and shared.

This is an opportunity for Wainsgate to learn how to do this well.

We don't expect to establish a comprehensive youth programme within the life of a single project. We want to begin thoughtfully, developing relationships with young people, schools, youth organisations and others already working in this area, and finding approaches that make sense for the people involved and for Wainsgate.

We want the work to be appropriate in scale, carefully conceived and genuinely useful. Its value will lie in the quality of the experiences, relationships and opportunities we create, and in what they teach us about the possibilities for a longer-term programme.

Our hope is that *Placed / Displaced* will lay the foundations for young people to become an increasingly active and integral part of Wainsgate's future.

Hosting, welcome and encounter

Hosting is an important part of Wainsgate's practice.

We think carefully about how people are invited into a space, how they are welcomed, what conditions allow them to feel comfortable, curious or able to participate, and what it means to spend time together.

This involves practical things: warmth, food, accessibility, generosity, a well-prepared room and attention to people's different needs. It also involves more complex questions about power, trust, difference, hospitality and the conditions that make meaningful encounters possible.

Gatherings around food will be an important part of *Placed / Displaced*, offering opportunities for people to meet, share experiences and develop relationships. Food carries histories of migration, family, place, celebration and everyday life. Preparing and eating together can open up conversations and exchanges that might not happen in more formal settings.

We value both **rigour and welcome**. We want Wainsgate to be a place where challenging and ambitious artistic work can happen alongside the warmth and straightforwardness of everyday hospitality.

The radical and the down to earth belong together.

This is central to our understanding of how the project might work. We want to create the conditions for genuine exchange, where people can bring their experiences and knowledge, encounter difference, and contribute to shaping what happens.

A project that helps shape our future

Placed / Displaced is an important part of a longer-term ambition for Wainsgate.

We want to deepen our relationships with the communities around us, develop more sustained work with people seeking sanctuary, build meaningful opportunities for young people, and explore how Wainsgate might become an increasingly useful, accessible and imaginative resource for the region.

We also want to continue developing the quality and ambition of our artistic programme, bringing people into contact with exceptional artists and practices while creating opportunities for new work, new collaborations and new forms of participation.

Placed / Displaced provides an opportunity to research and test ways of working that could become part of Wainsgate's ongoing life.

We are interested in what meaningful participation and collaboration might look like over several years, rather than a single project cycle. We want to understand what we can learn from this process about how we work as an organisation, who we work with, and what kinds of structures, relationships and resources we will need in the future.

This is also a heritage project. We are interested in heritage as something living and continually being made: held in people's memories and experiences, in buildings and landscapes, in skills and practices, and in the ways people inhabit and understand a place today.

The project will create material that can be shared, documented and become part of Wainsgate's growing understanding of its place within the region. But we are equally interested in the relationships, knowledge and possibilities that remain after the funded project has ended.

We are conscious of our scale and resources, and of the responsibility that comes with inviting people into a project of this kind. We want to approach the work with care and consideration, developing activities that have artistic, human and practical integrity.

We believe that modestly scaled activity, undertaken with imagination, commitment and sustained attention, can have considerable value. We want to make things that matter, develop relationships that can endure and learn from what we do.

The Project Manager's role

We are looking for someone who will help us turn these ideas into an imaginative, carefully developed and well-managed programme of activity.

The Project Manager will work closely with Wainsgate's Creative Director to shape and deliver the project, and will report to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

We have already begun conversations with potential artists, community organisations, partners and individuals, and have a number of ideas about how the project might develop. The Project Manager will help take these conversations forward, bringing people together and supporting the development of activities and collaborations.

An important part of the role will be developing relationships with young people and with the schools, youth organisations and other partners who can help us understand how to involve them meaningfully. We want this work to be shaped through conversation and experience, with the longer-term potential of Wainsgate in mind.

The role will involve building and sustaining relationships, organising gatherings and creative activity, coordinating artists and partners, supporting participants, and managing the practical, administrative and reporting requirements of a National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported project.

It will also require curiosity, initiative, good judgement and a willingness to engage with the ideas underpinning the work.

We are looking for someone who understands that meaningful relationships take time, that people bring different forms of knowledge and experience, and that good collaboration requires listening, flexibility and care.

There will be important practical outcomes to deliver, but this is not a project with every activity or outcome already determined. We want the process to remain responsive to the people involved and to what we discover along the way.

The Project Manager will play a significant part in helping us create the conditions for that discovery, balancing imagination and ambition with the practical realities of delivering work thoughtfully and well.

We hope *Placed / Displaced* will generate work of genuine artistic, social and cultural value, deepen our understanding of this place and its people, and establish relationships and ways of working that continue to develop well beyond the life of the project.