

The Salisbury Museum – Café Contract Tender

About The Salisbury Museum

At The Salisbury Museum we are committed to welcoming, inspiring and entertaining our diverse audiences by telling the story of Salisbury and the surrounding area – a unique landscape which has been the cradle of unparalleled human achievement for over half a million years.

We continually seek new ways to engage and collaborate with the broadest of audiences and partners. We use our expertise, creativity and passion, and the extraordinary breadth of our collections, to present contemporary experiences, displays, exhibitions and events which give context to the archaeological, historic and artistic riches of Salisbury and south Wiltshire.

The Salisbury Museum acts as a catalyst to understanding and learning about English history on many different levels, and to appreciating what is so special and significant about this landscape, and the lives of the people who have shaped it – and who continue to shape it today.

The Salisbury Museum is a registered charity and the café operator's commission contributes vital income to the museum.

Past Forward: Salisbury Museum for Future Generations

This is an exciting time for the museum. We are delighted to have been awarded £3.2million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in September 2021 for the **Past Forward** project.

This £5 million project is the culmination of our plans to redevelop the museum, delivering new permanent galleries, a flexible learning and events venue, along with new activities and the staff to run them. The project completes what we set out to do with the opening of the Wessex Gallery in 2014 – to create a high-quality offer across the museum that will attract more visitors, introduce new income streams and provide increased opportunities for getting involved, thus building a stable platform for the future.

The redevelopment of the museum is critical for people's enjoyment and understanding of the city's great stories and for the long-term protection of the King's House and the museum.

The Opportunity

The museum café is superbly located in a Grade 1 listed building within the Close, at the front of the museum opposite Salisbury Cathedral – the café garden may well have the best view from any café seat in Salisbury!

The current café opening hours are broadly aligned with the museum's (the museum is open every day from 10am to 5pm; the café 10am to 4pm) and it offers lunches, snacks and refreshments to museum visitors, to visitors to the Close and Cathedral and, increasingly, to destination customers and to an established regular clientele. The profile of the café and its

customer base changed noticeably through COVID with the premium outside space – perhaps unsurprisingly – being a draw and supporting substantial sales growth.

The museum is seeking a creative, visionary and contemporary approach to the management and development of this important asset – one which maximises on the commercial opportunity presented by the location and the museum's major development project, but which will also enhance the visitor and customer experience and the reputation and perception of the museum itself.

We would like the café to appeal to a broad range of audiences, ranging from families with young children to the more mature customer, from museum members to first-time visitors to Salisbury.

Current situation summary:

- Current operator contract runs to March 2023
- The café will close mid March 2023 as the *Past Forward* building works commence – these will include works to the kitchen, preparation room, front reception area and public toilets
- The new museum galleries are due to open to the public in Spring 2024 – this may be timed to coincide with the start of the new café operation, although a pop-up offer may be possible during Spring/Summer 2023 (see Brief & Tender section)
- Business has grown steadily over the past 4 years and continued to grow through COVID
- The café garden is recognised as a premium space with further potential to develop and market to new audiences
- The café sits within a listed building. The front of house and indoor dining areas need new furniture and a refresh – this is outside the scope of the redevelopment and so we hope the franchise holder would help the museum fund this work
- Outdoor furniture was purchased in 2020/1 and is owned by the Museum
- Operating hours have always been tied to the museum opening hours (when duty managers are on site). There may be the possibility of extending this in the future if there is a strong business case to do so to mutual advantage
- The current licence arrangements are based on the Café Operators being the Premises Supervisor for the Museum Premises Licence. The museum wishes to see the continuation of this arrangement which will require the Café Operator to be a personal licence holder
- The museum liaises with the café team with updates on events and larger booked groups
- The café operator has the opportunity to quote non-exclusively for ad hoc events requiring catering in other parts of the museum building (e.g. refreshments and lunches for corporate hires, drinks and canapes for private evening functions)
- The museum retains the right to contract specialist catering suppliers for events that require such support (e.g. barbeque or ice cream van for such events as the Festival of Archaeology) – the café operator will have the right to quote for such specialist catering
- The commission agreement will be based on a % of gross T/O with a minimum annual contribution of £10,000

Brief

The café operator will be a key component in the commercial success of the museum but, more importantly, will impact and influence the visitor experience and the museum reputation and brand perception. To the majority of visitors, the museum and the café are perceived as being one and the same and it is important that the café customer experience is consistent with – and complements – the museum visitor experience. The café operator will have a responsibility to reflect the values of the museum – including a commitment to excellence in customer service, experience and product – and the core museum team will want to work closely with the café team to ensure the offer is complementary.

The operator will be a key partner in helping broaden the reach and appeal of the museum to target visitor groups – families, locals, destination visitors, and non-visitors. The menu must cater to a wide range of needs and price points.

There is an opportunity to build new relationships and, through café destination visits, to build awareness of the museum itself.

We would encourage the franchise holder to work with the museum to maximise on the commercial opportunity, to market the offer and to meet the museum's ethical, EDI and sustainability targets.

The Tender

As noted above, the café kitchen, preparation room, reception area and the public toilets are all included in the scope of works of the *Past Forward* building project. It is unlikely that a full café service will be in operation until early in 2024 so, at this time, the museum is inviting early **expressions of interest in the café franchise contract**.

There may be the opportunity for those who have expressed interest in the café operation to have **input to the detailed design of the new café kitchen and counter area**.

Expressions of interest in the café contract could (but do not have to) include proposals for an **interim pop-up operation** in the café garden from Spring to Summer during the building works/closure in 2023.

The museum will also consider proposals **solely for a pop-up operation in 2023** (without reference to the management of the café from 2024).

In Autumn 2023 we will **follow up expressions of interest with a full tender process**.

At that point, tenders should include:

- submissions for a three-year contract term
- a vision for the café's future and brand positioning
- an outline of how the café could be developed
- the service, product and marketing strategies
- the staffing and management structure
- a three-year draft business plan
- sample menus
- example suppliers which should focus on local sourcing for food and drinks
- social media campaign concepts that support the business plan

All terms and conditions will be subject to negotiation.

We welcome the opportunity to hold informal meetings with potential pop-up operators and/or franchise holders in advance of application submissions.

Timings

The museum Past Forward project building work will be undertaken throughout 2023 and early 2024– there may be a short full-closure of the museum but this will be minimal.

- Preliminary discussions/site visits March/April 2023
- **Pop-up Submission deadline Friday 7th April 2023**
- Selection and contract for pop-up operation April/May 2023
- Commencement of pop-up operation approx. May/ June 2023
- Full tender process for café franchise Autumn 2023 with a view to selection and contract by year end

Submission Information

Pop-up Proposals

Please send your pop-up proposal for interim operation in the café garden from Spring to Summer 2023 during the building works and partial closure **by 5pm on Friday 7th April 2023** via email or post to:

lucybridal@salisburymuseum.org.uk

or

Lucy Bridal

Chief Operating officer

The Salisbury Museum

The King's House

65 The Close

Salisbury

SP1 2EN

Proposals should include:

- Information on Pop-up structure facilities i.e. a coffee van/trailer
- Service requirements i.e. electricity and water
- A sample menu
- Staffing and management structure
- A brief business plan showing predicted running costs and turnover
- Expression of interest in the Autumn tender process if applicable

Expressions of interest only

If you wish to express interest in the café franchise contract only, and not the interim pop-up, then please submit your expression of interest in writing to Lucy Bridal at the above contact details by **5pm on Monday 31st July 2023**.

For more information or an informal discussion please contact Lucy Bridal via email

lucybridal@salisburymuseum.org.uk or by calling 01722 332 151

