

Invitation for Expressions of Interest

Feasibility of Outdoor Summer Events Programme adjacent to Lauderdale House in Waterlow Park, N6

Lauderdale House is seeking an experienced professional:

- To carry out a feasibility study to explore whether it is practical and financially viable to create a temporary outdoor event space, predominantly for social functions, but enabling some community use, in Waterlow Park near Lauderdale House over the Summer.
- If viable, to set up suppliers and a plan to enable implementation at short notice depending on progress against the Covid Roadmap.

To be considered, please:

- Email the Director, Katherine Ives – kives@lauderdale.org.uk
- Put in the subject 'garden parties'
- Send your costs
- Include an explanation of why you would be suitable to carry out this study

Please note that we wish to get this piece of work started as soon as possible or we may miss potential opportunities, and we will look to arrange Zoom meetings on a rolling basis as we receive submissions from suitable applications.

Please email Katherine Ives on kives@lauderdale.org.uk if you wish to arrange a site visit in advance.

Background

Built in 1582, Lauderdale House is a registered charity and vibrant arts and education centre based in a Grade II* listed heritage house in Waterlow Park, Highgate. Each year we host a packed programme comprising a wide range of creative events (classical concerts, jazz, children's theatre and seasonal activities, cabaret, exhibitions, creative classes for all ages) and private functions with a footfall averaging 75,000. In addition, we run an extensive outreach programme working with young people in schools and community centres.

The vast majority of our income is self-generated, predominantly through hire for social functions (wedding ceremonies and receptions, parties, funerals and memorials). Other income is derived from smaller hires, ticket sales for creative activities and some trust grants which pay for our outreach and education programme. See Appendix for breakdown of core hire income and number of events.

Since March 2020 we have had negligible income as a result of Covid-19, although we have tried to take every opportunity we could to work safely within the restrictions to generate hire income and to run activities to ensure we stay relevant to our community.

Generating income as soon as possible is vitally important, but we need to be sure that any new initiative carries minimal financial risk. Even with the Roadmap we are very conscious that the dates are 'not before' dates and depend on a number of variables outside our control. On the 'plus' side, we think many people will not be keen to gather inside in any significant numbers, even if permitted, so outdoor events could be extremely popular. We have already had a number of enquiries.

Scope of Feasibility

See next section for relevant considerations.

Summary:

- to explore whether it is practical and financially viable to create a temporary outdoor event space, predominantly for social functions, but enabling some community use, in Waterlow Park near Lauderdale House over the summer of 2021.
- If viable, to set up suppliers and a plan to enable implementation at short notice depending on progress against the Covid Roadmap.

The work should include:

- Recommendations for creating rain protection, lighting, amplification (plus control of sound levels) and heating including power requirements
- Whether we need to hire in furniture, or if we can use Lauderdale House stock
- Working with Pink Food the caterers to advise on the management of catering, and development of suitable menus which can be delivered within the resources available
- Identification of any additional equipment which the caterers would require
- Storage of equipment and security. We have minimal space in the house storage so this might have to include temporary external storage
- Staffing required - how many and what experience per event; for set and take down; for anything else; how we source suitable staff if not using the in-House team
- Advice on how to minimise impact on / damage to the park
- Reinstatement costs in the event of damage to the park

- What can be done to minimisation of disruption to other park users and our neighbours
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- Advice on ensuring public liability / employer liability cover, taking into account existing policies held by Lauderdale House and Camden Council
- Feasibility of insuring risks
- Ensuring compliance with planning laws
- Advice on security, health and safety costs and implications

- A list of excellent reliable supplier contacts who would be able to supply at short notice and/or could be set up to 'go' if the programme were permitted but with no liability if Covid prevented it

- All costs
- Assessment of what can be covered 'in-House'

- Scope and suitability of types of activity possible – wedding receptions, parties, memorials,
- Restrictions on types and scope of activity, eg. number of guests, level and timings of music
- Any thoughts on any other uses in the light of your own experience?
- Review of our internal hire contracts and advice on areas which should be specifically included in contracts for hiring the external space.
- Developing ideas with Camden Council Events team with Lauderdale House

The work does not include:

- researching marketing or potential markets as both Camden Council and Lauderdale House have arrange of experience in this area.

Considerations

Location

Lauderdale House has a lease over the building and a license over the tea lawn at the back, the front garden and the side pathways. The rest of the Park is managed by Camden Council. We have identified with the Camden Council Events Team that we are are looking at 2 (possibly 3) potential locations which we believe:

- Are attractive and have potential as a party / reception space
- Are near the House, which means:
 - Near well maintained toilets in the House
 - Near to the in House caterers
 - Near to a main entrance to the Park. The park closes at dusk and we would be responsible for ensuring that guests did not stray out into the park, and that the general public did not enter the park after closing)

Catering

Our in-house caterers, Pink Food, run the community café at Lauderdale House and cater for all our functions in a 'normal' world. They produce high quality food and drink with an increasing emphasis on vegan and gluten free options.

They closed at the start of the first Lockdown in March 2020 but re-opened as a takeaway in May 2020 and have been operating at the House in whatever capacity has been legal since then. They have an experienced team but, like us, have not run this type of operation before. It would be important to talk through the various options with them as it is important that this provides them with an income opportunity as well, as in the 'normal world' their profit comes from the functions.

Relationship with Camden Council

We have a good relationship with Camden Council and depending on the feasibility would be considering a partnership arrangement with their Events Team. We have in principle an agreement from the Parks Department.

Relationship with Local People

We have a good relationship with local people and the Waterlow Park Trust Advisory Group which comprises representatives from a number of community groups who have given in principle support.

However, it should be noted that local people are very fond of their park, many are resistant to change and there is a large row of residential houses across the road. It is therefore important to minimise disruption and inconvenience, and demonstrate our respect for our neighbours and importance of community use.

Use

Whilst we see private functions as the main income generator, we would look to make the space available at an affordable rate for other community activities such outdoor classes (arts and sport), meetings and also offer some free events in recompense of any disruption.

Staff capacity

In normal times we run on a small staff. To date we have secured Emergency Funding to keep the full-team working until the end of March. We are awaiting at the end of March the results of another application which would also pay a further 3 months salaries. The intention would be to keep the full team on board as long as feasible but we may need to make use of the furlough system. See Appendix for summary of roles and experience.

Security

Waterlow Park is locked at dusk but not patrolled. Historically, there has been little vandalism or damage but we are aware of a number of regular homeless people who are in the park after it has been locked. As

referred to above, after the Park closes at dusk, we would be responsible for ensuring the guests stayed in the designated areas and for ensuring members of the public do not enter the Park. This is something we have done for years when people hire the House itself and have use of the tea lawn at the back of the House, but there will be additional considerations if we are in a different area.

Financial Risk

This has to be as risk free as possible, so minimal lead in times and flexible contracts with suppliers are essential to cover the uncertainty around Covid and the timetable suggested in the 'Roadmap'. For example, can we agree prices in advance and a tentative date with no liability if it becomes clear that due to Covid it is not possible to hire out for private functions.

Logistics

Minimising set up and take down is important to avoid disruption to neighbours and park users and to minimise staffing costs.

Appendix

Analysis of number of events and total hire value in 2019/20 – our last 'normal' full year of hire

No. of Events																
2019/20	total	total income	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	average	
Ceremony	11	13,146	0	1	1	1	5	0	1	1		1	0	0	1,195	
Reception	9	27,566	0	0	2	1	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	3,063	
Cere. & rec	6	22,956	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3,826	
Party	26	51,358	2	2	3	5	3	3	1	2	1	0	0	4	1,975	
Funeral	42	67,231	3	8	3	0	2	5	3	6	3	4	3	2	1,601	
Barmitzvah	1	2,340	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2,340	
Meeting	37	10,373	1	3	3	2	1	3	4	8	3	3	4	2	280	
Kids Party	34	12,103	1	3	5	4	0	2	3	7	0	2	3	4	356	
Misc	15	5,435	3	0	3	1	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	1	362	
One Off ClaSS	19	3,571	2	0	1	1	2	3	1	1	0	4	0	4	188	
Exhibition	23	9,295	3	2	2	0	2	2	3	2		2	2	3	404	
Concert	37	9,090	1	2	7	4	1	0	3	6	8	0	2	3	246	
	260	£234,464	16	22	30	22	20	18	25	33	17	19	15	23		

Staffing:

Events Manager – full-time (Monday to Friday); focuses on dealing with enquiries, doing showrounds and managing the clients i.e, predominantly desk based rather than managing actual events, which is done by the caterer's General manager working in conjunction with the Operations manager.

Marketing Manager – full-time (Monday to Friday). Responsible for ALL the marketing which includes not only promoting hires but also selling tickets for concerts and subscriptions to classes.

Events and Marketing Assistant – full-time (Monday to Friday) until mid-May when her 6 month contract ends. We will extend this contract if we receive further grant funding. Supports Events and Marketing managers, and also covers for Operations manager.

Operations Manager – full time but works Friday to Tuesday so can cover weekends (Wednesday and Thursday off). Manages events on the ground working with the caterer's General Manager; does some showrounds, responsible for maintenance and good condition of the building; but not a technician.

Director – full-time (Monday to Friday). Supervises the whole team; overall responsibility for strategy, finance, development plus the creative and educational programme along with fundraising, health and safety etc. Has personal experience of setting up and running small scale outdoor events at Lauderdale House, and in addition to Lauderdale House has produced indoor small scale theatre in London and at the Edinburgh Fringe.

We do not have an in-house technician so although most of the team can operate the PA, projector, etc there is no in-house technical knowledge if things go wrong or to develop new technical solutions.