**Job Title**
Gardens Community Engagement Officer

**Responsible to**
Head Gardener

**Responsible for**
Volunteers

**Remuneration**
£28,000 per annum

**Hours**
35 hours per week

**Location**
Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens, Quex Park, Birchington, Kent. CT7 0BH

**Contract**
Fixed Term contract until 31st January 2025
Funded by Association of Independent Museums - Connected Communities Grant

**Closing Date**
Monday 27th November 2023

We are looking for an experienced, pro-active, highly skilled and enthusiastic community engagement officer to work in our historic gardens developing and delivering activities, and / or volunteering opportunities for vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled people. This is a unique opportunity to work with social horticultural therapists, artist practitioners and service providers to test and develop engagement activities that increase levels of social connections for participants.

You will be a creative thinker with good communication skills, energy and the ability to engage others. You will have strong planning and organisational skills, and the ability to manage your own workload and prioritise effectively to meet deadlines. You will be experienced in working to develop partnerships and relationships with community organisations and stakeholders.

The postholder will be supported in their role by the Gardens team, and colleagues from the museum. This is a fixed term post funded by AIM Connected Communities. AIM Connected Communities is funded by the DCMS Know Your Neighbourhood Fund through Arts Council England.

**The Sunshine Project**
The Sunshine Project focuses on making the historic gardens an inclusive space for all to engage within. The project builds upon our current practice in the delivery of volunteering opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, mental health issues, and SEND students. The Sunshine Project will widen the use of the garden for social and therapeutic horticulture offering engagement beyond our usual gardening activities. It will consolidate existing partnerships with service level providers as well as developing a model of partnership working to increase our capacity to meet the needs and expectations of additional volunteers who are socially isolated in our community providing them with meaningful and engaging volunteer opportunities.
Training: A Professional Development Plan will be agreed with the Head Gardener.

Start/end date: This post is a fixed term contract ending on 31st January 2025. A three-month probationary review period applies for all contract staff.

Closing Date for Application: Monday 27th November 2023
Interview Date: Friday 8th December 2023
Interview type: Interviews will be in person where possible. We offer reasonable adjustments as required.

The interview will include a traditional question style, a presentation by you, and a walk and talk where you will meet other colleagues, and volunteers.

Reasonable interview expenses will be paid.
If you are selected for interview the questions, and your presentation theme will be sent out in advance.

How to Apply: Download a job pack from https://powell-cottonmuseum.org/support-us/work-with-us/ CV’s will not be accepted.

Please return the completed application form to enquiries@powell-cottonmuseum.org or post to Director, Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex Park, Birchington-on-Sea, Kent, CT7 0BH

For an informal discussion concerning this post contact Sue Harris, Head Gardener. Email: sue.harris@powell-cottonmuseum.org or tel 07582718658
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**Job Purpose**

The postholder will work with the Gardens team, and colleagues from the museum to deliver the Sunshine Project.

The postholder will work with service providers and Thrive (horticultural therapists) to test and develop engagement activities that increase levels of social connections for participants, provide appropriate and high-quality volunteering opportunities that are tailored to and respond to specific disabilities, mental health and other wider wellbeing issues.

The postholder will engage and develop relationships and initiatives with existing and new local communities that are socially isolated to help them access, enjoy and learn about our historic Quex Gardens.

**Main Responsibilities**

**Partnerships**

1. Build and develop existing and new partnerships and relationships with community organisation and stakeholders, including creating partnership agreements.
2. Develop a framework for the Sunshine Project which will ensure the sustainability of this community and partnership work.
Community Engagement

3. Lead and assist with practical and meaningful volunteering activities, promoting, organising and delivering these to ensure that volunteers are motivated and gain new skills, with a particular focus on the garden environment and horticulture.

4. Liaise with other members of the team to plan gardening and other appropriate volunteer tasks based on the needs of the Gardens and the needs of participants, taking into account the activities of other groups on site including those using the museum buildings.

5. Lead the development and running of tailored activities, for vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled people working with social horticultural therapists, arts, sports and heritage practitioners where appropriate.

6. Responsible for the health and safety of yourself and others who you interact with and undertake appropriate health and safety reviews, risk assessment in relation to volunteer, and community engagement activities and events.

7. To ensure effective safeguarding and reporting for all visitors, volunteers, and staff whilst involved in the work of the Gardens.

Administration

8. Carry out the administrative activities required of the role.

9. Support the Head Gardener in the monitoring and management of the project budget.

10. Keep up to date and accurate records of activities and involvements of users.

11. Carry out evaluation activities required to support the grant bodies reporting requirements.

12. Work with the Head Gardener to identify and support further fundraising opportunities.

General Responsibilities

13. Take personal responsibility to demonstrate the Powell-Cotton Trust brand of inclusivity, curiosity, and equality. Every employee is an ambassador in the community for the organisation.

14. Ensure compliance with all Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens policies.

15. Undertake appropriate training and development as available and determined with your line manager.

16. Promote equal opportunities in service delivery as well as employment and procurement practices, ensuring the service reflects and provides for the community.

17. Willingness to work the occasional evening or weekend to support the Sunshine Project’s public programmes. This may include travel.

18. Any other duties or responsibilities that may need to be allocated from time to time to ensure the efficiency of the Charity.

A probationary 3-month review period applies for all fixed term contract staff.
Person Specification: Gardens Community Partnership and Engagement Officer

Short-listing and selection will be based on the criteria set out here. Do make sure that your application fully demonstrates how you satisfy the points listed, drawing on your personal and work experience, education and training. This is a broad role, and we encourage you to mention all your experience, knowledge and skills on your application.

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<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Essential (E)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
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<td>An understanding of social and therapeutic horticulture</td>
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<td>Must have a good understanding and commitment to Health and Safety standards and requirements</td>
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<td>Understanding of Safeguarding procedures for vulnerable adults, young people and children</td>
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<td><strong>Abilities and Skills</strong></td>
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<td>Ability to communicate effectively and enthusiastically to a wide range of community groups and individuals including children and young people, people with learning disabilities and those for whom English is a second language</td>
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<td>Ability to work on own initiative within stated guidelines, manage own workload and prioritise effectively to meet deadlines</td>
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<td>Strong planning and organisational skills, with the ability to juggle competing priorities in a fast-paced environment</td>
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<td>Excellent computer-based skills using programmes such as Word, MS Outlook, Teams etc., and ability to contribute to content for social media platforms e.g. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.</td>
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<td>Experience of procurement, and monitoring budgets</td>
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<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
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<td>Experience of commissioning external bodies to support the delivery of an engaging programme of activities, following standards of best practice.</td>
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<td>Experience of leading the development and running of tailored activities, for vulnerable, disadvantaged, or disabled people</td>
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<td>Experience of delivering practical and meaningful volunteering activities within the garden, heritage or care sector.</td>
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<td>Experience of working with and supporting community groups and volunteers</td>
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<td>Experience of develop partnerships and relationships with community organisation and stakeholders.</td>
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<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
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<td>A demonstratable commitment to Equal Opportunities</td>
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<td>A driving licence and access to a vehicle to facilitate attending meetings off site as we are in a rural area of Kent.</td>
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<td>A commitment to personal development and undertaking required training for the post</td>
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<td>Willingness to work the occasional evening or weekend to support the Sunshine Project activities.</td>
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Vision and Values

Vision: People Matter
The Powell-Cotton Museum is for everyone – current and future audiences, staff, volunteers, our local community, the source communities from where our collections originate.

We will make space for these voices in our museum: past, present and future. We will listen to the diversity of voices within our community today and use our collections to make space for people who have historically been silenced.

We are committed to telling a wider story, to enable others to share in that narrative and be a part of its making. At its heart, any story we tell is about people. For this reason, our vision can be encapsulated in the phrase: people matter.

Values:
- A commitment to inclusion means greater collaboration and co-production with diverse perspectives and voices, so that we are relevant to the communities we serve.
- A commitment to equity means everyone’s lived experiences are valued by the organisation and everyone should be empowered to fulfil their potential.
- A commitment to change means radically rethinking what we do and how we do it, being brave in our actions and innovative in our approach.

Key Aims and Strategic Objectives
Our strategy for the period 2023 to 2028 is designed to take us from a position of uncertainty due to the ongoing resolution of an inheritance to a position of growth and development that will ensure the viable future of the charity to protect and utilise the collection and other resources to fulfil its charitable objects.

Throughout the period of this plan, we will continue to be guided by our overall vision ‘people matter’ and the aims laid out in our ‘Reimagining the Museum’ statement (September 2020).

The uncertainty of the last few years has therefore shaped our thinking and ambitions for the next 5 years to ensure that we have a sustainable future, where we address the significant issues within the museum and ensure that the collection is protected and available to the widest possible audience.

AIM 1. Financial Sustainability
The charity has, over the past few years, sustained itself from reserves whilst waiting to receive its share in Michael Garrett’s legacy after his death in 2016. This process has been ongoing for several years, and it may continue for a further one or two years before a resolution is finally reached and a full financial settlement is achieved which will deliver regular income.
However, regardless of timing the charity must embark on creating a sustainable financial model to:

- Generate significantly more income utilising the resources of the museum, gardens, and house to go from a deficit position, to as a minimum, breakeven within 5 years
- Be prepared to benefit from and be able to effectively manage the inheritance when it arrives.

**AIM 2. Collection Sustainability**

Under investment in the museum and other buildings over several decades and lack of space combined with a delay in the receipt of the inheritance has put the long-term sustainability of the collection at risk. Significant investment in the last 2 years from additional specialist staff, secure storage, equipment, and consumables is addressing the most vulnerable parts of the collection. However, the collection remains at critical risk from damp and water ingress and so addressing the building condition, in particular the roof, is now beyond urgent.

Our long-term aim is to engage in a programme of activity that protects the collection and enhances and develops its use, its relevance to local and global audiences, whilst increasing access.

**AIM 3. Impact, Inclusivity and Diversity**

We will increase our impact and ensure that we are inclusive and relevant, not only to our local community but to all those users who engage with our collections, stories, and programming whether in person or digitally. This is critical to our success, longevity and providing real benefit to society.
Introduction to the Museum

History

The Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex Park was established in 1896 to house natural history specimens and cultural objects collected by Percy Powell-Cotton on his expeditions to Asia and Africa. Powell-Cotton was a pioneer in the use of the diorama to display mounted animals against backdrops of their usual habitats. Today these natural history dioramas are unique and outstanding examples of a form of display that is increasingly rare.

The Museum evolved from a single diorama within the original pavilion (which is shown in the image above), to the eight dioramas contained within three galleries today. The first diorama was started in 1896, and the final diorama was completed in 1955. The museum was developed over a long period from 1896 and it opened to the public from the early 1900s. Various phases of expansion and construction took place over the subsequent years including the creation of additional galleries and opening parts of Quex House in the early 1970s. The Museum and House are found within seven acres of gardens which formed part of the family home.

Today the museum, gardens and house are run by an Independent Charitable Trust, The Powell Cotton Trust (PCT) and is situated in Quex Park which is owned and managed independently of PCT and has been developed to include several other commercial and educational enterprises. The wider estate continues to operate arable farms and a commercial and residential property portfolio.
The Collections

The Collection can be broken down into 9 categories: Natural History, World Cultures, Archaeology, Ethnobotany, Weapons, Fine and Decorative Arts and Furniture, Social History, Archives, Photographs and Film.

The strength of the natural history collection is in mammal material – around 6,500 animals from Africa and India, collected between 1889 and 1940 by Percy Powell-Cotton, his family, and associates. The collection is supported by a wealth of data including accurate dates and localities, field notes, and correspondence.

The Museum also houses an internationally significant primate collection including lowland gorillas and chimpanzees representing all developmental stages, monkeys, galagos, and pottos. The collection also includes birds, reptiles and amphibians. The Museum displays some of the oldest and largest taxidermy habitat dioramas in Europe, with animals mounted by Rowland Ward Ltd and Edward Gerrard & Sons between 1896 and the 1950s.

The Museum’s collection also includes over 20,000 ethnographic objects, collected between 1891 and 1966, that focus on Africa and Asia. Prominent collections include those from South Sudan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Uganda. The bulk of the collection is attributed to Percy Powell-Cotton. However significant collections were contributed by Fred Merfield (Gorillas and Chimpanzees), and by extended Powell-Cotton family. Diana and Antoinette Powell-Cotton are responsible for one of the largest Angolan collections in Europe, numbering approximately 2,600 objects.

Closer to home, the Museum also holds items of local interest including approximately 8,000 archaeological finds from the Thanet coastline and an archive of supportive material including over 30,000 photographs and 40,000 documents.

The Gardens

The gardens at Quex were originally laid out in the fifteenth century when the first manor house was built, but were extensively remodelled throughout the nineteenth century, so that the present design contains strong Regency, Victorian and Edwardian influences. The gardens were designed to be viewed from the main withdrawing room on the first floor of the house, from where lawns radiate around a central vista ending in the far distance with the Gun Tower, one of three celebrated follies in the grounds.
The established parkland contains numerous ornamental specimen trees and a sunken fountain garden. On the upper terraces of the lawn, there are some fine specimen trees, including two venerable King James Mulberries and an ancient Sophora Japonica. Surrounding the upper terraces is an extensive shrub border and a vibrant Edwardian herbaceous border against a south wall. A more recent introduction is a rose border, established with the help of David Austin Roses, which contains a collection of the old roses and some new introductions.

Hidden behind the high, old brick walls of the herbaceous border is an exceptional example of a Walled Kitchen Garden, which had later commercial use as a market garden. Although in need of restoration, many original features of its historic use remain and there are collections of tender exotics, fruit trees, cacti, succulents and pelargoniums. Work is ongoing to preserve the glasshouse structures and to raise heritage fruit and vegetable varieties.

Surrounding the gardens is a woodland walk, contrasting with the more formal pleasure grounds of the mansion.
Governance

The Powell-Cotton Trust (Previously known as The Powell Cotton Museum) Registered Charity No.1167318 in England and Wales and Registered Company No. 09934968

The charity was originally established (through a deed of conveyance) as an unincorporated charity (governed by a Charity Commission Scheme) in 1926. As is common for unincorporated charities, it was decided it would be appropriate to re-organise the charity so that it acquired a corporate legal form. As a result, a new and separate charitable company, The Powell Cotton Trust, was established in January 2018 (a charitable company limited by guarantee, with charity number 1167318 and company number 09934968) and the assets and undertaking of the unincorporated charity transferred over to that new corporate charity.

A small number of assets remain in the unincorporated charity and, as a result it continues in existence; the corporate charity is now its sole corporate trustee, and it has been linked (by way of a Charity Commission linking direction) to the corporate charity for charity reporting and filing purposes. As a result, it no longer has a separate page on the Register of Charities/separate charity number but is listed as a linked charity of the corporate charity. This was completed in 2021.
Developing our Buildings, Collections and Green Spaces

[Extract from the Business Plan 2023-2028]

Greens Spaces

The walled garden has significance heritage value through its survival as a near intact late Victorian/Edwardian Garden with its associated buildings. Each year within the garden the Charity prioritised the refurbishment of historic glasshouses within the walled garden, repairing the buildings and their historic features. Much of this work was undertaken by the Gardens team drawing upon specialist advice, gifted labour, monetary donations or significantly reduced costs for materials and equipment. Where appropriate and necessary specialist carpenters, brick workers, heating engineers and electricians joined the team.

During the period transformation was achieved in the Stove House, Cucumber pit, Fern House and Winter Garden. The most ambitious project was the Winter Garden. An important feature of the garden, it was built at a time when the Powell-Cotton family wanted to create a space in which they could house frost-sensitive plants and access their orchid collection. This historic glasshouse required a complete exterior and interior refurbishment to deliver a multifunctional space for all to enjoy. A beautiful heritage building for learning, gathering and relaxing.

Plot to Plate

Transformation to the historic glasshouses has been matched within the walled kitchen garden. The Head Gardener has lead staff and volunteers in a programme of work to systematically remove the inappropriate floral planting schemes, and the grassed lawns of the last decades to return the area to a functioning kitchen garden. Today we balance traditional horticultural practices with a modern sensibility, and more sustainable techniques including modern sustainable principles. This long-term programme of work aims to ‘revitalise and restore these spaces and help reconnect people to locally grown food’. We now grow an extensive – and delicious – selection of seasonal herbs, fruit, and vegetables. Over the past few years, the produce from the Walled Garden has gained a niche reputation and has been sought out by local chefs. Installation of a woodstove and sink to our winter garden enables the garden to expand on the links it has with local chefs and added a unique element of sustainable cookery – fuel for the wood stove is readily...
available from our own woodland – the chefs carry out demonstrations using the seasonal produce.

Selling directly to the public is also successful and has been achieved through Quex Barn as well as the Museum shop counter. Vegetable boxes have been trialled (with staff to date) and generate a small income. Food from the garden also forms a central part to any celebratory activities that bring the entire charity team together.

From 2022 lessons and demonstrations are now taking place in the garden itself with selecting and harvesting produce being part of the experience. This leads to many learning opportunities as well as attracting external funding and commercial potential for hire as a venue.

Social Inclusion and a community hub

The ethos of a garden, and its historic buildings as a space for learning is echoed in its development as a centre of excellence within the charity for diversity and inclusion. The 'Sunshine' garden project is a commitment to working with local groups and organisations throughout Kent to ensure equity in access to the Garden. The Gardens team worked to build an inclusive, varied workplace welcoming individuals and groups of all backgrounds. Our Head Gardener has trained with Thrive and is embedding the ethos that gardening can
bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities or ill health, or who are isolated, disadvantaged, or vulnerable.

The team work to support young adults and adults with learning disabilities and / or mental health issues attending site to engage and participate in general garden duties, maintaining garden furniture/equipment and meaningful work experience for the furtherance of their wellbeing. Partners includes Terrance House, Forelands Field School and Kent County Council Adult Social Care for whom the Powell-Cotton Trust is a recognised ‘Community Partner’ providing ‘support services and meaningful occupation to people accessing Kent County Council Community Service’.

There is always an operational area to any historic garden, and it was here that repairs to the bothys created a series of watertight buildings, of which one is now a dedicated community space with kitchen facilities and meeting area for our partners.

Post COVID-19 the garden has achieved an independent status not only as a visitor destination but also as a busy vibrant place, a working garden with a diverse volunteer team. It is this vitality which takes the garden to a place where there is an active community which everyone can get involved in. The garden hosts open days, historic tours, demonstrations of craft garden skills as well as being a place to dwell and enjoy the natural world.
The Sunshine Project

[Extract from the Application to AIM Connected Communities Grant]

What is the Project?
The Sunshine Project will build upon current practice in the delivery of volunteering opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, and mental health issues by consolidating existing partnerships with service level providers as well as developing a model of partnership working to increase our capacity to meet the needs and expectations of additional volunteers who are socially isolated in our community providing them with meaningful and engaging volunteer opportunities.

Project background:
Quex gardens is a treasured local site that is inclusive and accessible. It is a safe, beautiful place for the education and recreation of all, a place of purpose, both historic and current, with strong links to the local community.

We welcome, on a weekly basis, volunteers from several adult social services groups, including Thanet Community Day Services (TCDS), Kent County Council Adult Services for adults with learning disabilities, Terrance House supported living for vulnerable adults with mental health issues, and Liberty Training for vulnerable young people aged 16 – 25 with additional needs. From 2022 onwards we have also welcomed young adult groups from Foreland Fields SEND school and East Kent College. We also welcome a variety of individual volunteers, many retired, who love gardening.

These vulnerable groups attend the gardens on set days during the week and engage in various volunteering opportunities ranging from woodland clearance, garden furniture up-cycling, painting, and tabletop activities to name a few. Volunteer groups, along with independent volunteers and the garden staff work together which increases everyone’s levels of social connections, communication, and wellbeing. Feedback from care group leaders has informed us that we are seen as a permanence by the groups and that communication, happiness, and wellbeing has increased in the people attending the garden sessions.

This practice grew organically from an initial contact by TCDS in the summer of 2020. They requested access to an outdoor environment to help vulnerable people, at risk of social isolation, learn and take part in gardening activities on a 1-2-1 basis. We were happy to help and from this small beginning our commitment has grown. The Connected Communities Grant is a timely opportunity to scale up our offer and improve our practice through its coaching and mentoring programme, the learning action set supporting our project team as well as creating capacity to collaborate more effectively with partners to embed this type of working throughout our organisation.

Project Activities:
We are seeking funding to,
  • build capacity within our team through the recruitment of a Community Partnership and Engagement Officer. The postholder will formalise existing relationships with
KCC Adult Services, TCDS, Terrance House, Liberty Training, East Kent College and Forelands Field School. They will engage and develop relationships and initiatives with additional local communities that are socially isolated to help them access, enjoy and learn about Quex Gardens. The post holder will work with service providers, the wider garden team, and Thrive (horticultural therapists) to test and develop engagement activities that increase levels of social connections for participants, provide appropriate and high quality volunteering opportunities that are tailored to and response to specific disabilities, mental health and other wider wellbeing issues. Where appropriate working with external learning providers to deliver accredited training units in horticulture and gardens.

- Deliver specialist disability equipment and furniture for increased high quality volunteering opportunities. We already provide high quality volunteering opportunities for adults with learning disabilities through our partnership with KCC adult social care. KCC would like to work with us to place adults with learning and physical disabilities (mild physical, and mobility impaired). KCC and we acknowledge that additional equipment is required. These are existing service users who are isolated by the physical disability from joining their contemporaries. The grant would provide specialist equipment and furniture to bridge this gap, and in addition increase the volume of PPE and tools available to match an increase in participants able to volunteer in the gardens.

- deliver a new programme of artist led workshops that will bring different volunteer communities together to create collaborative interventions and installations that can be displayed within the gardens and museum. We believe this will provide a sense of pride and belonging and help break down barriers and address social challenges amongst the participants. The artist led activities along with the produced work that will be displayed, fits in with the museum vision ‘people matter’ and will create a legacy of the project. We have already tested this type of creative therapeutic approach with KCC adult social care. The workshop led by a local clay artist, Julia Ellen Lancaster used materials and inspiration from the garden to create a series of splash back tiles for a small kitchen area in Winter Garden building - so it has a permanent place in our buildings. We are seeking to work with Julia Ellen Lancaster again over a 12-month period as an artist in residence. Julia works to create practical and functional ceramics with participants that deliver a sense of belonging in the space they are working. Additional budget is to be used by the Community Partnership and Engagement Officer to test other activities (music therapy, photography) that levels of social connections for participants.

- to carry out minor capital works to refurbish an existing garden building. This will create a dedicated room that provides a safe space for community groups to hold wellbeing workshops and activities designed to meet the various needs of the community participants. The room will also act as a quiet space where vulnerable volunteers can go and relax if they feel overstimulated within the museum or grounds.
engage Thrive as a consultant. Thrive have over 40 years’ experience of an approach called social and therapeutic horticulture (STH), where trained horticultural therapists work with plants and people to improve an individual’s physical and psychological health, communication, and social skills. Thrive will be commissioned on a short-term consultancy to assess and advise the best use of the gardens for social and therapeutic horticulture, as well as deliver on-site training for 2 days for the project staff, volunteers, and care group leaders from the user groups already attending the gardens. The Head Gardener has attended basic Thrive training and notes that this short consultancy will ensure that we do not waste the valuable resource that this grant will provide.

Our Community
The Gardens are located in Birchington, Thanet, an area high on the Indices of Deprivation. 2019 statistics show that Thanet has the highest proportion (23.4%) of its resident population living with a health condition or disability within the county of Kent. Those living with a disability, or a long-term health condition often report prolonged periods of loneliness. Thanet also has the highest level of unemployment as well as a high lack of social mobility. Birchington’s population has a high number of older people, with 46.5% being over 60.

Who the project will benefit?
The Sunshine Project will benefit adults with learning disabilities and / or mild physical disabilities, mental health issues, and retired individuals. It will contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of adults experiencing social isolation through mental ill health and/or learning disability living in Thanet. We currently have contact with, and user groups from KCC Adult Social Services, TCDS, Terrance House, Foreland Fields School for Profound, Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN). The service users from these groups are classed as socially isolated. They are engaged in volunteering opportunities on multiple days during the working week.
  • KCC Adult Social Services – 9 service users with learning disabilities and/or mental health
  • TCDS – 16 service users with learning disabilities
  • Terrance House – 7 service users with mental health
  • Foreland Fields School – 14 service users with learning disabilities

In addition, we have volunteers who are retired (50 persons) and a group of young people with a range of learning disabilities from East Kent College (5 persons) who attend on a regular basis.
Our project will ensure that all volunteers will be included and involved with activities to help them feel less isolated and feel more of a belonging to the community and will enable people to improve their quality of life, social interaction, physical and mental health in a supportive environment.
Individual garden volunteers will benefit from the project by being involved with Thrive training and user groups, helping to create an understanding of needs and tailoring of activities to meet those needs.
How we will get them involved?

The employment of a Community Partnership and Engagement Officer will allow for the specific consolidation of existing relationships we already have as well as developing other relationships, for example with East Kent Mencap. We lack the capacity to sit down and consult with the service providers on formalising these relationships and driving forward new users from their existing clients. For example, KCC Adult Services have already expressed an interest in bringing some of their users who are socially isolated living with mild physical disabilities. Terrance House have also expressed interest in bringing along a group living with Dementia.