

# Artist call out:

## Families at Helmshore Mill

**Contract dates:** July 2022 to September 2022

**Closing date for expressions of interest:** 4 July 2022

### The Brief

As part of a partnership between the National Trust and Lancashire County Council, made possible through the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund the National Trust are seeking to appoint an Artist to work with Helmshore Mill Museum. The team at Helmshore want to collaborate with families from the surrounding community to explore sustainability and create interventions with families that enhance the experience at Helmshore Mill Museum with a lasting legacy for families.

This opportunity is the beginning of a journey for the team at the Museum working in partnership with organisations and artists to creatively collaborate with its communities. Helmshore Mill wants to be more relevant to its communities and the families in the surrounding area are a key part of this. The team at the Mill believe firmly that “Nothing about us, without us, is for us” and so want to **work with those communities to improve the experience at the Museum for families; making any visit to Helmshore Mill a more relevant and engaging experience.**

The selected artist or artists will be supported by the Helmshore Mill team as part of a partnership project between Lancashire County Council and the National Trust which is being funded by the National Heritage Lottery fund

This brief is deliberately very open, as we are interested in starting a conversation with an artist or collective to explore the possibilities for families at Helmshore Mill. We are particularly interested in hearing from artists who have a track record of meaningful collaboration with groups of participants to realise high quality outcomes.

We do not have a group of families to work with so part of this work will be initial drop-in sessions that will make new connections with local families some of which the chosen artists will go on to collaborate with.

We are keen to hear your ideas for starting points, areas of particular curiosity and inspiration. But we recognise that the process ultimately will define the outcomes of the work as it develops.

## **Background**

Nestling side by side in the quiet village of Helmshore in the stunning Rossendale Valley are two original Lancashire textile mills, Higher Mill and Whitaker's Mill, together known as Helmshore Mills Textile Museum.

Higher Mill was constructed in 1789 and Whitaker's Mill in the 1820s by the Turner family, textile manufacturers from the Blackburn area. While Higher Mill has always been a wool fulling mill, Whitaker's Mill for the first century of its existence alternated between working wool and cotton; this despite a considerable part of Whitaker's Mill being destroyed in a fire in 1857 as it was rebuilt shortly afterwards, then by the late 1920s it was reconfigured to solely working recycled cotton.

In 1967 Higher Mill closed and was taken over by the Higher Mills Trust who maintained it as a museum. Whitaker's Mill continued to be in operation until 1978 when it was acquired by the council, who by then had taken over running Higher Mill on behalf of the Higher Mill Trust, and the two mills were joined together as one museum.

When the mills were built the village was built around them and ever since the mills have been part of and at the heart of the local community. Industry became nestled into a rural setting influencing, changing and sustaining the surrounding landscape as well as the lives it touched; from the owners of the mills with their own spheres of influence, via the mill workers and their families, to the wider community and visitors to the museum – past, present and future.





## **Budget**

The budget for this project is **£3000** which must cover fees, expenses, and materials. Given the short timescale for participation and delivery, it is important that you are clear about what is possible in terms of delivery and consider how to create maximum impact within a tight budget and timescale.

## **Timescale**

The selected artist or artists will work from July to the end of September 2022. We envisage this will consist of initial drop-in sessions at the museum and or in the community which will develop into a smaller group of families collaborating with the artist in late July through to August. We are aware of the tight timeline for this and so would request you have a suite of options for the team with a view to realising one of these options (to be decided by the families and Helmshore Mill team) in September 2022.

As this is beginning of a wider piece of work it may that further opportunities may stem from this work at a later date.

## **How to apply**

Please send us:

- A short outline of why this project interests you, your area of focus and the process you would undertake towards the realisation of the final work.
- An outline of your previous work and examples of no more than 3 projects that you feel demonstrate why your practice is relevant for this opportunity (including images or links to video / sound-based work).
- A simple budget outlining how you would aim to use the £3k available budget, including your daily rate.

## **Deadline**

Deadline for application is **Monday 4th July 2022**.

The chosen artist or artists will be invited for an informal discussion with the team to be arranged

Please send applications to: Louise Jacobsson, Museum Manager

For further information and an informal discussion please contact:

Louise Jacobsson, Museum Manager on [Louise.Jacobsson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Louise.Jacobsson@lancashire.gov.uk) or call on 01706 226459

