Invitation to tender

Client: **Ripon Civic Society**

Title: **Re-Viewed Photographic Project – Website tender brief**

Fee: **£10,000 inclusive of VAT**

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 5:00pm Wednesday 1st November

1   Summary

Ripon Civic Society wishes to commission an experienced company with a track record of working within the cultural heritage sector to design and build an engaging, fully searchable website that will create access to over 7,000 photographic images which have recently been digitised as part of the Ripon Re-Viewed project.

The appointed supplier will be able to demonstrate substantial previous experience of delivering high-quality, open-source, accessible web projects with robust back end functionality and a content management system that is straightforward, sustainable, and cost effective.

The funding for this work is part of an award from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the requirements are that the website will be designed, tested and fully operational for launch by March 2018 at the latest.

2   About Ripon Civic Society and the Ripon Re-Viewed Project

Ripon Civic Society is a registered charity dedicated to protecting and enhancing the historic buildings and environment of the Cathedral City of Ripon and the surrounding area. Its aims include:

- promoting heritage protection and conservation projects in the city and area
- promoting the highest levels of architecture, planning and design
- stimulating public awareness of the best qualities of Ripon and the surrounding area
- acting as a leading voice in the development and prosperity of the city and the surrounding area

In 2015 Ripon Civic Society stepped forward to lead and submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to address the needs of a significant number of photographic negatives, housed at the time by Ripon Library.

The key aims of the Ripon Re-Viewed project are to preserve, digitise and make accessible over 7,000 photographic images dating from the late 1890s to the 1980s that capture a century of life in the City of Ripon – the people, shops, schools, traditions, celebrations, events and everyday life in the community.

The collections were the result of a government funded community scheme in the late 1980s, the Ripon Community History Project, which invited people to offer their photographs of Ripon people, places, and events to be copied in order to create a comprehensive photographic record of the City. In total, some 6,000 medium format copy negatives were made, and a card index containing information on each of the images was created. This card index is now an important resource for the Ripon Re-Viewed project. A small quantity of original negatives were also donated to the project.

The Ripon Community History Project closed in 1988 and the collections, card index, and additional information were all transferred to Ripon Library, where they remained until 2016. However, the storage conditions were inadequate, the images held as negatives only, on an analogue format, rendering them inaccessible, and at risk of further deterioration.

The growing concern regarding the collections resulted in a small interest group being established by Ripon Civic Society (RCS). The group included representation from Ripon Library, North Yorkshire County Record office, and two 'Ripon' members, both of whom were involved in the 1980s original community history project. The group is chaired by Mandy Whitehead, who sits on the RCS executive committee.

It was this Ripon Re-Viewed group that prepared the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund on behalf of Ripon Civic Society, and in late 2015 the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a grant of £59,000 (85% of the total project costs of £69,200). The group above now form the Management Committee for Ripon Re-Viewed, and a freelance, part time Project Manager has been contracted to deliver on all the approved purposes defined within the HLF award. One of the key purposes is the design, build and launch of a new Ripon Re-Viewed website, creating permanent online access to the photographic collections.

In addition to support from HLF, North Yorkshire County Council (in particular the Record Office, NYCRO), offered support and facilities for digitising the collections. Importantly they have also taken on the housing and ongoing care of the collections, ensuring their long term preservation, and creating the digital masters which are the foundation for all future access to the images. Digitisation of the collections has now been successfully completed, with originals safely stored in appropriate temperature controlled conditions by NYCRO.

The master digital TIFF files are held by NYCRO, and good quality JPEG working copies have been linked to a Microsoft Access database that has been created in order to catalogue the collections. Cataloguing work is being undertaken by a core group of volunteers with local knowledge of Ripon and the surrounding area.

The database is Microsoft Access 2013 (desktop version) and the expectation is that this will feed the information to the front-end website with relevant images being linked via digital reference number.

3.   The Brief

This tender brief is to create the online access to the photographic collections, and must ensure that the three specific elements are brought together seamlessly to form an engaging and accessible online resource:

- the backend database containing all the relevant metadata and cataloguing information
- the storage of the digitised collections linked to the database, and
- the front-end design of a creative, fully searchable, engaging website with a straightforward content management system to ensure ongoing management of the site is geared realistically to the resources/capacity available once the funded project is completed.

The site will need to ensure online security of the photographs – images will not be available for download for reasons of copyright – though proposals for sharing through digital engagement strategies would be welcomed.

The site will also require an e-commerce facility for the sale of prints, and it is likely that this will be based on a direct link through to the North Yorkshire County Record Office shop facility, from where payment processing and fulfillment of orders will be undertaken. A detailed discussion on the above will be required on agreement of the contract being issued.

3.1   The Database

As noted the database has been built in Microsoft Access, 2013 (desktop version) and the data scheme was been developed with 3 main aims:

- to ensure consistent, accurate data on each record that provides information and context for the images, and will offer a rich and rewarding experience to the end user.
- to increase the 'searchability' and interest levels for the front-end website.
- To record additional technical detail information on the images for ongoing internal management of the collections, but not for online publication.

A broad definition of the data scheme is attached as appendix 1, and whilst the Ripon Re-Viewed team are open to some discussion regarding datasets and functionality, much thought has been given to how the information has been recorded, and which fields should be made available to the general public through the website.

3.2   The Website

The Ripon Re-Viewed website offers the potential to open up the photographic collections to the widest range of audiences. It is the opportunity to create a visually engaging, stimulating site which communicates with, and connects viewers to, the whole range of historic images which document the City of Ripon over the past century.

However, the site should not necessarily take the traditional 'nostalgic' route of image display. RCS is interested in using new creative online technologies to best effect, and whilst clear and simple functionality should not be compromised, RCS believe there is a real opportunity to take a creative approach to this work. RCS will welcome further discussions on the above; however, the following sets out our early thinking and gives some indication of aspirations:

- A visual design and layout that provides an attractive and user-friendly online exhibition platform.
- Creative ways of packaging, presenting and curating the content so that audiences are attracted to the site, and encouraged to continue engaging with Ripon Re-Viewed
- Dynamic across viewing media (all web browsers, Android/Apple tablets, mobile services, etc.).
- Compliant with web accessibility guidelines to ensure all users have equal access to information and functionality.
- An e-commerce facility for the purchase of copy images. The e-commerce facility must be able to provide automatic notification of an order and the customer's delivery details to North Yorkshire County Record Office who will fulfill the orders. Customer details must be handled according to data protection principles (and the GDPR in force from May 2018)

Applicants may find it useful to refer to the Heritage Lottery Fund guidance on Using Digital Technologies as part of HLF funded projects: https://www.hlf.org.uk/digital-technology-heritage-projects

Ripon Re-Viewed may be interested in pursuing options for people to be able to comment on images, and add to information where possible, however once the funded elements of the project are completed, it is important to note that ongoing management of the site will be reliant on volunteer input, and an overall approach to ease of use, and potential limitations on capacity for interactivity, should be a key consideration for the build. A discussion on this point will be welcomed as part of the interview process.

Applicants invited to interview will be asked to present examples of relevant previous work, as well as early thinking for the structure of this project, along with detailed costings and a time line.

3.3   Site architecture

For internal operations, the site will require an easy to use content management system that will enable new images, information, and copy to be added as the project develops, and so have built-in capacity to grow over time. We anticipate publishing at least 1,000 completed records and images upon launch of the site, and work will continue to publish additional batches of images that feed into future marketing and publicity opportunities.

For end users, the site should provide an easy to use full-search mechanism for specific enquiries, but also be designed to engage the general viewer and encourage exploration of the collections through curated packages, news items, or features on specific photographs. The Ripon Re-Viewed team recognise that they will need to balance the capacity to manage and refresh the site with the overall ambitions to create an online resource that is attractive, interesting, and encourages people to re-visit on a regular basis.

Hosting and maintenance costs should be clearly identified, with the first 12 months from final launch, incorporated into the budget for the work, and a clear indication of ongoing costs for the next 4 year period.

4.   Budget

The budget available for this work is £10,000 inclusive of VAT.

5.   Tendering process

5.1   Companies wishing to tender for this project will need to provide the following:

A short tender document of not more than 1500 words that sets out:

- The overall vision and approach for how the company would work with RCS on the development and production of the Ripon Re-Viewed website.

- Examples of two relevant websites that the company has developed that evidence their talent and technical ability to build this site.

- Details of staff allocated to the project including CVs outlining the experience of the contractor and staff members in carrying out similar projects. The project manager / lead contact should be identified.

- A timetable for the work.

- A breakdown of costs.

The fee will be paid in three stages, with milestones agreed upon contract. The supplier will be asked to report on and evidence completed outcomes for each payment stage.

At interview, companies will be invited to give a short presentation (up to 15 minutes) in addition to discussions on the tender submission.

5.2   Contract management

The contract will be jointly managed by Sue Howard, Management Committee representative, and Maxine Willett, Project Manager, who will be the main points of contact for the appointed supplier.

6   Procurement Process

Tenders should be submitted by 5.00 pm Wednesday 1st November, and sent by email to both of the following addresses:

riponreviewed@gmail.com
s.howard@yorksj.ac.uk

Interviews: Notification of invitation to interview will be confirmed by Friday 3rd November

Interviews are likely to be held at the offices of the Yorkshire Film Archive, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO31 7EX

A provisional date of Wednesday 8th November 2017 has been set.

APPENDIX 1

Ripon Re-Viewed Database

A relational database has been built in Microsoft Access, 2013 (desktop version) and comprises both operational/administrative information – depositor details, rights information, original catalogue numbers etc. as well as descriptive metadata about each photograph – title, date, subject matter, keywords, further descriptors etc. that will provide the key information for end users, and which we expect to form the core information for the front-end website.

Key fields likely to be published include:

- Digital File Reference
- Title
- Date
- Photographer
- Keywords
- Free text synopsis (64k characters, long text field)

Technical/Administrative information will include:

- Personal details of depositor/donor
- Copyright details
- Format
- Additional catalogue numbers/details
- Cataloguer notes
- Publishing decisions
- Usage – by Ripon Re-Viewed plus linked to sales of prints.

The screen grab below provides an illustration of how the record is currently displayed for entering data.