ST. GEORGE'S GUILDHALL
EST. 1406

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk

Operations Director

St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub

Join our team at the
Borough Council of
King's Lynn & West Norfolk





Operations Director

St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub

We are seeking an outstanding Operations Director to help bring one of the UK's most extraordinary historic places back to life as a leading international heritage and cultural destination.

St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub in King's Lynn is moving towards reopening in autumn 2028 after a major programme of restoration and renewal led by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

At its heart is the UK's oldest working theatre, where William Shakespeare is believed to have performed in the 1590s. The wider site will become a living theatre, creative hub and community asset where 600 years of history inspires creativity, learning, enterprise and pride in place.

Conservation work is transforming the medieval venue, surrounding buildings and courtyards into welcoming spaces for performance, events, exhibitions, education, creative workspaces, hospitality and commercial uses.

This new and exciting role will shape the operating model, visitor experience and commercial future of a nationally significant destination from the ground up.

The Guildhall is West Norfolk's flagship cultural regeneration scheme, with the potential to raise King's Lynn's profile, grow the creative economy and open up heritage, creativity and learning to wider audiences.

We are looking for a leader who understands the power of culture and heritage to transform places, and who brings the commercial, operational and financial acumen to run a complex public-facing destination.

Working with the Creative Director and Development Director, trustees, senior stakeholders, you will build the systems, teams, partnerships and commercial foundations needed for successful reopening and long-term sustainability.

You will bring:

- Senior leadership experience in a cultural, heritage, visitor attraction, arts, leisure, hospitality, charitable or comparable environment.
- Strong financial management, business planning, budgeting and performance-management skills.
- Ability to mobilise staff and volunteer teams in a complex venue or destination setting.
- Commercial experience across income generation, hospitality, retail, venue hire, leasing or partnerships.
- Knowledge of governance, risk, compliance, health and safety, audit and resilience.
- Excellent stakeholder engagement, communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills.

St George's Guildhall and our exciting vision

St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub is King's Lynn's flagship regeneration and cultural project. Our vision is to transform this nationally significant site into one of the UK's most distinctive heritage and cultural destinations: a living theatre, creative hub and community asset where 600 years of history inspires creativity, learning, enterprise and pride in place.

The site centres on a theatre of extraordinary character and cultural importance, with a Shakespearean story few places can match. Around it are historic buildings, yards and riverside spaces ready to be rediscovered and opened up in new ways through careful restoration, improved access, richer interpretation and better facilities.

Once complete in autumn 2028, the Guildhall will become a local, regional and international centre for arts, creativity and theatre, offering year-round performance, exhibitions, festivals, learning and community activity. It will also provide creative workspaces, studios, hospitality, retail, venue hire and improved public spaces.

This transformative project will safeguard precious heritage, attract visitors, support jobs, grow the creative economy, create opportunities for artists and entrepreneurs, improve cultural access and give local people, schools, volunteers and communities new ways to connect with their town's story.

The project is led by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, in partnership with King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board, Historic England, the Guildhall Charity and Norfolk Museum Service, and in collaboration with the National Trust.

Discover more - **stgeorgesguildhall.com**



Discover the Operations Director role

The Operations Director is a new, exciting post at the heart of turning the Guildhall vision into a successful, sustainable reality. This is a rare chance to help shape the future of a nationally significant historic site, combining passion for heritage, storytelling and public engagement with commercial, financial and operational expertise.

Working with trustees, senior stakeholders, the Development Director and the Creative Director, you will lead the operational and financial management of St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub, establishing the systems, structures, services and partnerships needed to welcome audiences back in autumn 2028.

You will oversee premises and facilities, front and back of house operations, visitor services, staff and volunteers, hospitality, retail, workspace lettings, venue hire, business systems, finance, compliance, risk and performance.

You will shape a new operating model from the ground up, advise trustees and partners at senior level, and build the teams, income streams and culture that will allow the Guildhall to thrive as a vibrant, financially sustainable destination open to the widest possible audiences.



St George's Guildhall: a unique Shakespearean history

St George's Guildhall is one of King's Lynn's most remarkable historic buildings and a site of national cultural importance. The Guild of St George was founded in the 14th century and acquired land beside the River Great Ouse in 1406 to build its hall. The building was in use by the early 15th century and still retains extraordinary historic fabric, including its medieval floor and roof.

The earliest recorded performance took place in 1445, and the venue has hosted drama and performance across the centuries, making it the UK's oldest working theatre. It is also the only theatre left that can credibly claim to have hosted William Shakespeare.

In 1592/93, when London theatres were closed by plague, the Earl of Pembroke's Men, the company associated with Shakespeare, are recorded as having performed in King's Lynn. Local tradition, supported by academic research, places Shakespeare himself at the Guildhall as an actor.

King's Lynn was also the birthplace of Robert Armin, Shakespeare's leading comic actor.

Over time, the Guildhall has served as civic hall, courthouse, merchants' exchange, school, armoury and performance venue. Today, its story brings together medieval King's Lynn, centuries of theatre, Shakespearean heritage and an ambitious future as a cultural destination of international interest.





Living and working in King's Lynn and West Norfolk

King's Lynn and West Norfolk is a place of rich heritage, cultural life and distinctive identity. At its centre is the medieval port, with Hanseatic trading links, historic streets and listed buildings, ancient churches, museums and venues that tell the story of a town shaped by commerce, creativity and connection.

The borough offers a strong platform for culture, heritage, tourism and the creative industries. King's Lynn is home to St George's Guildhall, the Corn Exchange, Lynn Museum, True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum, GroundWork Gallery, the Custom House, Hanse House, the South Gate, Redmount Chapel and a growing programme of festivals, exhibitions, performances and community events.

Annual highlights include King's Lynn Festival, Festival Too, Hanse Festival, Heritage Open Days, RHS Sandringham Flower Show and a wide programme of arts, music, theatre, comedy and family activity.

Beyond King's Lynn, West Norfolk offers historic villages and towns, fenland landscapes, stunning coastline, wildlife, country estates including Royal Sandringham, churches and archaeological treasures.

Heritage here is increasingly a driver for regeneration, learning, participation and pride in place. Nearby, conservation work is beginning to restore and revive the riverside Custom House as a flexible, welcoming and accessible space for residents and visitors.

For a cultural or heritage professional, this is an exciting place to live and work: ambitious enough to offer major opportunities, connected enough with London to build strong partnerships, and distinctive enough to make a visible difference.

Discover more - Visit West Norfolk – visitwestnorfolk.com



Find out more and apply

If this sounds like the perfect opportunity for you, we would love to hear from you. Please apply below, where you will also see the full job description.

For an informal conversation, contact: Kate Blakemore, CEO, on **kate.blakemore@West-Norfolk.gov.uk** or Robin Lewis, Development Director for the Guildhall Programme, on **robin.lewis@west-norfolk.gov.uk**

Applications are via CV plus a supporting statement, as one document of maximum three sides. Please state your current salary on your CV.

For more information and to apply visit www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/JoinUs

Salary: Up to £70,170.

Closing date: 2nd November at noon

Assessment centre shortlisting: Monday, 16th November

Interviews: Tuesday, 17th November

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