



**Director, Totleigh Barton**

**Information Pack**

**May 2024**

Dear Applicant,

Thank you very much for your interest in the position of Director, Totleigh Barton. I am delighted to provide you with some information about Arvon, our work and the role itself.

Arvon is a thriving and ambitious arts charity, celebrated for its unique ability to discover and develop the writer in everyone. It has been described by former Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy as 'the single most important organisation for sharing and exploring creative writing in the UK'.

For over 55 years, Arvon has produced an annual programme of residential creative writing courses, which take place at three historic houses in Shropshire, Devon and Yorkshire. Tutored by leading writers, the week-long courses offer a powerful mix of workshops and individual tutorials, with time and space to write, free from the distractions of everyday life. Almost a third of Arvon's residential weeks are with schools, young people and disadvantaged adult groups. We run a grant scheme offering bursaries to writers on low incomes to attend our open programme courses. Arvon at Home, an online programme offering live readings, masterclasses and 5-day courses via Zoom was launched in 2020 and is now firmly established as Arvon's "Fourth House".

Totleigh Barton, the first ever Arvon house, is a 16th-century manor house in one of the most peaceful and idyllic parts of Devon. The Director will manage all aspects of Totleigh and ensure that the house is run to the highest possible standard. This three-day per week role reports to the Artistic Director and is also part of the Leadership Team. We are looking for the new Director ideally to begin in late July.

The documents accompanying this letter give you more information about the activities of the organisation. You are also strongly advised to visit [our website](#).

In this Information Pack you will find

1. Job Description and Person Specification
2. Details of how to apply and timetable
3. Staffing Structure
4. Arvon's Vision and Values

Please also download and complete the separate [Equal Opportunities](#) form from the website Careers page [here](#).

We welcome your application for Director, Totleigh Barton. If you have any questions about the role or the organisation, please get in contact with Arvon's Artistic Director and Totleigh Barton's current Director, Mary Morris, at [mary.morris@arvon.org](mailto:mary.morris@arvon.org)

Again, your application should consist of an up-to-date CV, a personal statement, and a completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, and it should be emailed to Kerensa Wilton at [totleighbarton@arvon.org](mailto:totleighbarton@arvon.org) by Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June at 12pm. We will be holding interviews at Totleigh Barton during the week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> July.

We look forward to hearing from you.

With all best wishes,



Andrew Kidd  
Chief Executive Officer

## **Job Description**

**Job Title:** Director, Totleigh Barton

**Reports to:** Artistic Director

**Base:** Totleigh Barton Manor, Sheepwash, Beaworthy EX21 5NS

**Hours:** Part Time, 22.5 hours per week (0.6x FTE)

**Salary:** £21,600 per annum (equivalent to £36,000 p.a. for a full-time post of 37.5 hours per week)

**Start:** As close as possible to 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Purpose of the Role:** To ensure that all aspects of Totleigh Barton are managed to the highest possible standard, overseeing the smooth running of Arvon's courses and retreats, while also holding ultimate responsibility for the upkeep of the buildings and facilities. This role is key to providing a welcoming and hospitable environment for a regularly changing cohort of guests and school groups who arrive every week for up to 40 weeks per year. It is an exciting opportunity for the right candidate, providing a uniquely creative environment in a national charity praised for its outstanding artistic programme.

**Context:** Totleigh Barton is run by a team of six staff who manage the house and its buildings and grounds and host Arvon's writing courses. We are looking for someone with strong interpersonal and management skills for the fulfilling and vital role of Director. This role line-manages the Deputy Director, Administrator, House Managers and Cleaner at Totleigh Barton; it is part of the Leadership Team and reports to the Artistic Director.

## **Responsibilities**

- Provide leadership, taking overall responsibility for the management of the house, including all activities, staff, buildings and grounds
  - Ensure the security, safety and comfort of all course students, tutors, visitors and staff, and that the hosting of courses and retreats meets the highest possible standards
  - Lead by example in creating an inclusive and respectful environment in which creativity can flourish
  - Provide support to the visiting writer-tutors, who are themselves responsible for the course structure within the existing Arvon framework, and guide them where necessary

- Host and facilitate readings by visiting writer-tutors and guests
- Facilitate the evaluation of all courses in line with Arvon policies
- Manage the finances of the house to deliver activity within budget and liaise with Arvon's Finance team
- Line-manage all staff effectively at Totleigh Barton
  - Implement Arvon's employment policies and procedures
  - Ensure that essential training – including safeguarding, first aid, fire safety, food hygiene and legionella – is regularly arranged and that the team's qualifications are kept up to date
- Take overall responsibility for buildings maintenance, ensuring the property and grounds are kept in the best possible condition
  - Ensure the regular annual programme of inspections and services are planned and managed by the Deputy Director
  - Identify general maintenance work as it arises and manage the house staff to develop and commission investigations, find contractors, obtain quotes, liaise with consultants, commission and supervise contractors, ensuring that they follow our Health and Safety and procurement policies
  - Work within and follow the agreed recommendations from expert reports and condition surveys
  - Take the lead in making sure the house operates in accordance with health and safety and fire safety legislation

General:

- Promote and implement Arvon's sustainability, EDI and other policies as outlined in the Arvon Staff handbook
- Attend Arvon staff and Board meetings held across the country, as required, as well as regular online meetings
- Uphold Arvon's vision and values
- Carry out any other task that may reasonably be required by Arvon in order to meet the specific needs of the organisation and the running of the centre

## **Person Specification**

### **Essential:**

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and the ability to work positively with people from all backgrounds
- Demonstrable skills of exceptional people management, team building and leadership
- Experience and understanding of financial management
- Strong planning and organisational skills
- The ability to solve problems and deal with any issues that arise calmly and with authority
- An interest in literature and creative writing
- A sympathetic understanding of the needs of developing writers
- An awareness of the challenges and issues of managing and maintaining a historic building
- IT literacy and the ability to learn how to use new programmes
- A commitment to equal opportunities and ensuring access for all to Arvon's courses
- Ability to work flexibly, as the demands of the job require, within the contracted hours, including one evening per week and occasional Saturday mornings
- Ability to reach the house in less than 60 minutes from home

### **Desirable:**

- Experience of managing buildings or venue management
- Experience of working with people from a range of backgrounds and

with a range of individual needs, including people with disabilities

- Experience of working in the education or the arts or literature sector
- Experience of working with young people

**The successful applicant will be expected to obtain a new enhanced DBS check before starting work and must hold a full UK driving licence.**

Arvon is committed to openness and equality of opportunity in every activity, from the way we employ staff to the way we deliver services. Arvon expects board members, managers, employees and contractors to ensure that every individual with whom we come into contact is treated with dignity and respect.

### **Additional Terms and Conditions**

**Holiday:** 25 days per annum (plus Bank Holidays), pro rata for part-time role. Annual holiday entitlement increases by one day with each completed year of service up to maximum of 30 days (pro rata)

**Pension:** 5% employer contribution, minimum 3% employee contribution, after three months of employment

**Probation Period:** 13 weeks

### **How to apply and timetable**

**How to apply:** please send your CV together with a personal statement explaining why you are interested, how you meet the Person Specification and what you will bring to the position of Director, Totleigh Barton to Kerensa Wilton at [totleighbarton@arvon.org](mailto:totleighbarton@arvon.org) by Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June at 12pm.

Please also submit a completed [equal opportunities monitoring form](#).

**Recruitment timetable:** Please ensure that you will be able to meet the application deadline and date for interview. If you have any concerns about this, please do let us know:

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June:** closing date for applications (12pm)

**Week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> July:** interviews at Totleigh Barton

We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving your application.



## **Staffing Structure**

Arvon operates from three physical locations – its writing houses in Devon, Shropshire and West Yorkshire – and its national team works remotely in different locations across the country. Staff from all locations communicate and collaborate with each other frequently.

Arvon's residential Writing Houses are each managed by a Director or two Co-Directors. The other staff at each of the houses are the Deputy Director/s, House Managers and Administrators. From time to time, each house engages relief staff to cover permanent staff when they are either on training, planned leave or sick leave.

Arvon's national team includes the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer & Operations Director, the Deputy CEO, a Finance team, a Learning & Partnerships Manager, our Digital, Comms and Development teams, our Artistic Director, and our Arvon at Home and Administration teams.

## **OUR VISION**

We believe creative writing can change lives for the better. Creative writing allows us to harness our imagination and find our voice. It creates new possibilities, new ideas, new futures. It unlocks our potential, our empathy and our hope. And we're keen to share the opportunity for transformation with as many people as possible.

## **WHAT WE DO**

We produce residential and online creative writing courses and retreats for schools, groups and individuals, led by highly respected authors.

Founded in 1968, we now have four Writing Houses, in Devon, Shropshire and Yorkshire and Arvon at Home, our online writing house and offer courses across a wide range of genres.



We offer a home for the imagination, where anyone, regardless of writing experience, can step away from their normal routine, immerse themselves in the creative process, be inspired by experienced writers and release their imaginative potential.

## **OUR VALUES**

**Inclusive:** We believe everyone is creative. We create a space that is open to all, where anyone, regardless of writing experience, feels welcome and included as part of a community of writers.

**Inspiring:** Step away from routine, be inspired by writers and beautiful physical settings, or welcoming online spaces, and release your imaginative potential. Arvon is a place for contemplation, challenge and going beyond what you thought you were capable of achieving.

**Supportive:** Creative writing is a craft that can be learnt, through guidance from experts, and through the peer support that comes from creative friendships with fellow writers. At Arvon, writers teach writers, and everyone encourages each other to become a better writer.

**Transformative:** Immersing yourself in creative writing nourishes the imagination, deepens the connection to self and to the world, and can lead to transformative change.