



BENSLOW MUSIC CHIEF EXECUTIVE (2022)

Benslow Music Trust (BMT) dates back to 1929, when Mary Ibberson, a local musician, saw a need for amateurs to be able to continue their enjoyment of music beyond their time at school. She founded the Rural Music Schools' Association (RMSA) to '*promote music education for social benefit through the study and practice of music ... amongst students of all ages*'. As local authority provision for children's music education improved in the 1940s, the RMSA noted the gap in adult provision and changed itself into Benslow Music Trust, which, with special emphasis on adult amateurs, continues to pursue the essence of RMSA's original aim.

Benslow Music Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Its governance is provided by a Council of Trustees, which oversees all activities. Sub-committees of Council prepare and discuss issues for consideration by the main Council. Senior staff members attend Council meetings and those of committees as required. BMT's main activity is a substantial programme of short, residential music courses for adults, spanning chamber, folk, jazz, orchestral, choral, world and solo music for instruments and voice, with composition, wellbeing and related activities. A key project each year has been the staging or semi-staging of a Baroque opera or oratorio. Benslow Music Enterprises (BME) is the trading arm, overseeing the Trust's letting and non-music activities (including Bed and Breakfast provision). BMT is also the sole trustee of the renowned Benslow Musical Instrument Loan Scheme (BMILS), a separate charity that is supervised by a committee of Governors appointed annually by the BMT Council. BMILS lends high quality instruments to talented young musicians across the UK. Collectively the whole organisation is now known as Benslow Music (BM).

Little Benslow Hills, the home of BMT and BMILS, was bequeathed to BMT in 1952 and from then it has expanded to include first-class music and residential facilities in and around the original Victorian house and grounds. Thus,

- Forty-three bedrooms are available for residential courses; many have ensuite facilities and some are in the original house
- The Waldeck Building, including a small recital room and a suite of ensemble rooms and bedrooms, was enabled by a Millennium Lottery Grant and provides contemporary facilities that complement the music and residential accommodation of the original house
- The main recital venue, the Peter Morrison Hall, accommodates an audience of up to 150 and houses two grand pianos including a Steinway, while other rooms contain harpsichords, spinets, uprights, grand and square pianos

These facilities are available to hire for functions when not otherwise in use.

- There is also an extensive library of music, including scores, sets of parts and textbooks which are available for members and course participants to borrow.
- Last but not least, the Aston Building is a modern purpose-built home for the Benslow Musical Instrument Loan Scheme.

A senior management team is responsible for the day-to-day running of the operation, as follows:

- the Head of BMILS runs the Instrument Loan Scheme;
- the Head of Music organises BMT courses, concerts and other musical activities;
- the Director of Operations runs the site and hotel services.

In addition, operating across both the Trust and Scheme, there are: a part time Head of Marketing (0.6 of full-time), a Fundraising and Development Consultant (0.3), and a Head of Finance (0.4) who provides both strategic and day-to-day guidance.

Altogether there are some 30 members of staff, divided into teams in

- registry (music administration and house reception),
- hotel and catering,
- Instrument Loan Scheme, and
- finance

Tutors are engaged on a sessional basis.

In the previous year BMT's total incoming resources were over £1.3M and incoming funds for the Instrument Loan Scheme were over £250K.

The post of Chief Executive was established as part of a new organisational structure in 2014. The successful candidate will join a dedicated team and provide strategic and organisational leadership for all aspects of Benslow Music. He/she will have recognised standing in music and/or music education, a high level of musical understanding, and leadership experience at a senior level. The person appointed will be able to lead Benslow Music as it expands and grows, and will have a good understanding of business management and administration. Critical to the success of Benslow in future will be the ways in which it can realise the maximum potential of its resources, and build on its unique place in providing music education for adults and high quality instruments for talented young musicians.

The appointment is on a part-time (0.8 FTE) basis with a permanent contract, subject to a probation period of six months. The Trust currently offers access to the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) pension scheme and will comply with future legislative requirements. It will be necessary for the post holder to work flexibly, including during evenings, weekends and bank holidays, but Time Off in Lieu will be permitted.

This is an exciting time for Benslow Music as it moves towards its centenary in 2029. It is well-loved by musicians across the country and the local community. It is a time of new partnerships and opportunities. The new Chief Executive will relish the challenges of developing and strengthening Benslow's activities. Under his/her leadership, the Trust will continue to *'promote music education for the public benefit through the study and practice of music, especially in its social and co-operative forms, among students of all ages'* (from the Memorandum of Association).

Prospective candidates are asked to e-mail a letter of application with a copy of their CV and the names and contact details of two referees. Please email them to the Company Secretary at: mark.bowen@bowendawes.co.uk

The closing date for applications (by e-mail please) is *Friday 4 March 2022* (5pm). Interviews are planned for mid/late March.