

Artistic brief for Artworks at West Way, Botley

There is currently an exciting opportunity in Botley, on the outskirts of Oxford. There has been a renovation of an old shopping precinct with development of a hotel, student accommodation, new community hall, library and retail area. The central public piazza with restaurants and cafes will provide an attractive focal point for residents, visitors, shoppers and the local community. When completed, West Way Square will complement the charm of this bustling West Oxford neighbourhood and offer something for the whole community and the many people who visit the city and surrounding rural district.



Vale of White Horse District Council has an active public art policy that encourages developers to utilise this opportunity to benefit the overall design of the buildings and public spaces created. The policy states that public art is always publicly visible, bespoke for the given location and made by a professional artist and it is this celebration of unique identity new developments give us to promote new artistic creations.

The Parish Council would like to use the district council public art fund to work with local residents to create a work of art or a series of works of art to provide a significant artistic feature for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Scope of works

We are looking for a lead artist to draw together a series of art projects to help the people re-engage with this public space and help foster a sense of belonging and identity.

During a recent public consultation event over 200 members of the public were asked about what artwork they would like to see in terms of function, location, artform and themes.



There were a variety of opportunities identified by the parish council, developer and the public, so we have deliberately kept this brief flexible and open for artists to respond to different elements of this brief that could be achieved within the £42,000 budget. The scope of possibilities for the type of work are;

- Artistically improving some of the street furniture metal work (such as railings, bollards and electricity boxes)
- Creating a trail of artworks and sculptures in the main Piazza (combination of wood, metal and stone)
- Exploring the use of creative lighting to enhance the night-time footfall of the piazza
- Creating decorative wall features on the elevations of the community and residential landmark buildings, also potentially some type of shelter connected to buildings or free standing.
- Using this project to encourage artistic interventions within the underpass (including lighting, metalwork and painting)
- To reference and commemorate names of local people who died in service in the world wars as a memorial.





We are seeking Expressions of Interest from artists to lead on one or a combination of these possibilities (depending on what is achieved within the budget) that respond to creative entrance features to the parish and focal features within the new precinct.

Themes that local people identified for any artwork to represent and celebrate include;

- trees and orchards that used to cover the area (many of the roads are named after tree species)
- the agriculture and the farming past (the new centre is located on what was Elms Farm up to the 1930s)
- interesting stories and historical connections and the local characters (such as painters, writers and academics).

Therefore, we would like our chosen artist to draw inspiration from both local history and natural history of Botley and North Hinksey area. Where possible, we would like the creation process to make links with local groups, community centre and events in the area (possibly running workshop/s with local school and community groups during the development of the artwork).

Selection process and role of the artists

We are advertising this opportunity both locally and nationally. Artists will be selected on the quality of their work, their enthusiasm about this project and ability to meet the brief within budget.

Our chosen artist will be selected on the quality of their previous work and their approach to this project.

Artists will be shortlisted and interviewed by representatives of the Parish Council, district council Arts Officer and the developers of the West Way. Only then would we expect the work of art to be designed. The works of art have to be bespoke, one of a kind and uniquely relate to this location.

Once commissioned the artists will be asked to undertake a design phase, researching the history and context of the Botley and the West Way area, but also getting to know the immediate neighbours and residents.

We would like our chosen artist to work closely with local residents, neighbours, visitors, community groups and the local arts community. Ideas for creative engagement and community involvement will be developed at an early stage of the design process.

Artists will be invited to share designs with the commissioning panel and residents of Botley and North Hinksey, after which further planning and approval might need to be sought.

Installation of the final works of art will need further discussion and liaison with the developer and leaseholders.

We would like to unveil and celebrate the artworks to tie in with other local events and celebrations at the completion of phase 2 of the site in 2022 but with options to install some of the work later in 2021 in the areas already complete.

Timescale

1. Brief advertised	December 2020
2. Deadline for submissions from artists	14 th January 2021
3. Shortlisting/ application Assessment	
4. Artists Interviewed	Late January 2020
5. Application for funding (based on the work of our chosen artist)	January 2021
6. Contract selected artist	March 2021
7. Research design and community work	April – June 2021
8. Final designs submitted	July 2021
9. Planning application submitted (if required)	August 2021
10. Fabrication	September – onwards
11. Installation	TBA
12. Celebration / unveiling	TBA

Budget

The total budget for the project is £42,000.

We would like to commission this in 2 phases. The first phase will be a design and research phase, engaging with the community and drafting proposals for the project. The fee for this phase is £2000.

The second phase, after approval of the proposed designs, will be the commission for the making of the work for £40,000.

This fee should cover all costs associated with the design process, local research and workshops, materials, fabrication, transport and installation. This part of the fee can also be used to collaborate with or subcontract other artists.

Commissioner

The contract will be managed by the North Hinskey Parish Council. Installation will be arranged directly with the developer, and we will work in close partnership with the district Arts Officer to develop the project and its community engagement.

Applications

Expression of Interest should be submitted electronically, as a PDF to publicart@northhinskey-pc.gov.uk entitled "**Expression of Interest in West Way Public Art project**" by **14th January 2021** and should include;

- Examples of any previous projects you have worked on
- An artistic statement in response to the brief and your interest in the project
- An indication of your approach and ideas to this opportunity
- Ability to deliver this project within the indicated budget and timescale.

And

- The name and contact details of a previous commissioner should also be supplied.