

Get Involved

In Public Art for Botley West Way Square

Meet the artists involved in the West
Way public art project & get creative!



North
Hinksey
Parish
Council

FusionArts

#WestWayPublicArt

19th March, 2-5pm
Seacourt Hall
Open to all!



About

For this project, Fusion Arts is working in partnership with North Hinksey Parish Council (NHPC) and the Vale of the White Horse District Council to manage the creation of several exciting new public artworks in and around the West Way Square development in Botley, Oxford.

Meet the Artists

Nor Greenhalgh



Nor Greenhalgh is an Oxford based artist and illustrator whose public art practice takes in local history, urban research and mural design.

Local projects include a Fusion Arts & Oxford City Council commissioned COVID-19 'Stay Safe' mural on the Bullingdon, Cowley Road, a Makespace Oxford commissioned mural for their Community Works building in Frideswide Square, and the Elder Vernacular public research and engagement project with Fig Oxford.

Meet the Artists

Clare Goodall



Clare Goodall is an Oxford based artist who has over 24 years of experience creating mural, mosaic, textile and painting artworks for interior and exterior spaces.

Clare facilitates arts workshops for all sectors of the community and has coordinated groups and projects in and around Oxfordshire with schools, children's centres, adult education, care homes, and community health and well being settings, as well as private commissions for people's homes and gardens.

Her passion is inspiring people to create and find their own individual creativity alongside bringing people together to transform public and individual spaces.

Meet the Artists

Alex Wenham



Alex Wenham is an award-winning stone carver based in west Oxford. He specialises in architectural stone carving, restoration of stone carvings, statuary and letter cutting. He produces sculptural works for both publicly commissioned art projects and exhibitions.

He has been involved in restoring some of the most prestigious buildings in the UK and France, including St Paul's Cathedral, The Houses of Parliament, Château de Versailles, Magdalen College, Oxford, The Louvre and St Pancras Station.

Community Engagement

To inform and develop their work, the artists have been undertaking a number of activities to learn more about the area and engage with Botley's community.

They spent two days meeting with local residents and councillors and consulted with the Botley GAP action group, both of which were valuable opportunities to determine what was required from the project and discuss the type of public artworks that might be desirable in and around West Way.



In August 2021, the Botley GAP and the artists hosted a pop-up cafe and activity session for the artists and public to share ideas and thoughts, learn more about the project, and create art from mosaics and biscuit wafers!



Community Engagement



The artist group also spoke to members of the Botley Lunch Club about what the area around West Way means to them, and their views and hopes for the new development. Local councillors talked the group through the history of Botley and introduced them to volunteers at the local food bank. A volunteer, who grew up on the farm that used to be where West Way Square is now, walked Nor around the site, showing her some original milk bottles which had just been unearthed by the builders.

The artists were also taken out on a nature walk by local residents to explore Botley's wildlife, wetlands and ecological habitats.



Top: A volunteer examines an egg that has been nibbled by a fox.
Bottom: Autumn leaves.

Community Engagement



Meanwhile, the Botley GAP action group helped artist Nor to physically investigate her commission site, walking through A40 ring road underpass after dark to assess how it could be improved, helping her understand what is required of a public artwork there by drawing interpretative maps of how the site fits into the surrounding landscape.



The Commissions Clare Goodall

Clare intends to produce a series of vivid wayfinding mosaic panels for the front of the Seacourt Community Hall.

Inspired by the wildlife she encountered while on the Botley nature walk, she has conducted a number of workshops with year 6 students at local primary schools. During workshops, the pupils were given images of local insects and plant life that had been photocopied by Clare at different scales.

The pupils were given tasks to either look at the shapes of the flowers, leaves and bugs, and paint or draw them boldly, or to use magnifying glasses and focus on drawing the nature in detail.

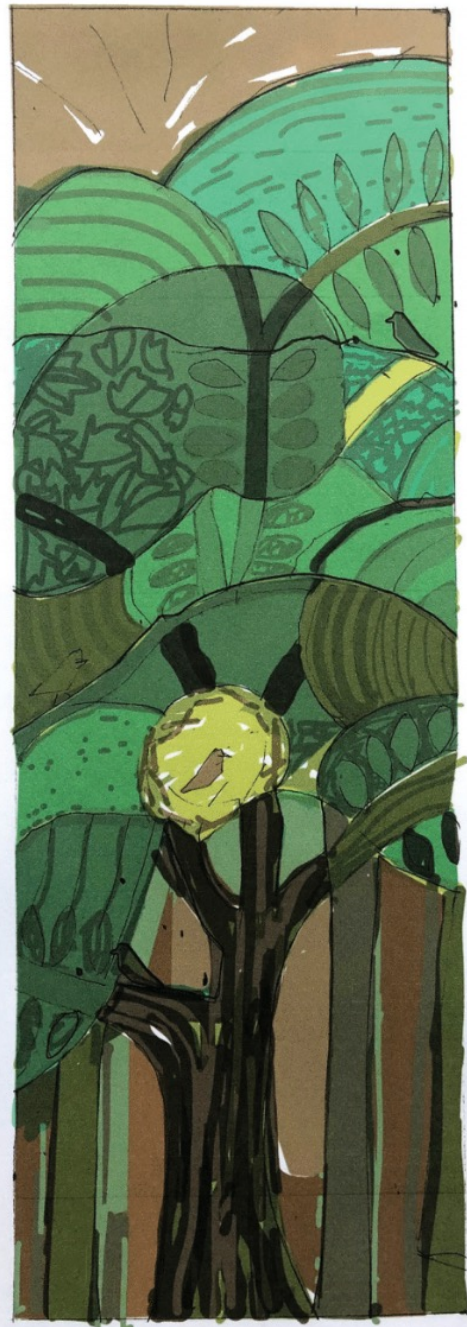


Clare is now incorporating these drawings into designs for the mosaic panels, which will depict Botley's wetlands and wildlife in different scales and perspectives.

"After speaking with members of the Botley Lunch Club about how the area has changed during their lifetimes, it became clear to me that there is a need to bring some natural elements back to West Way."

My hope is that this commission will add a unique new organic aspect to the development that connects with the greenery and wildlife of the surrounding area and engages the community for years to come, showcasing the amazing creativity of local primary school students."

- Clare Goodall



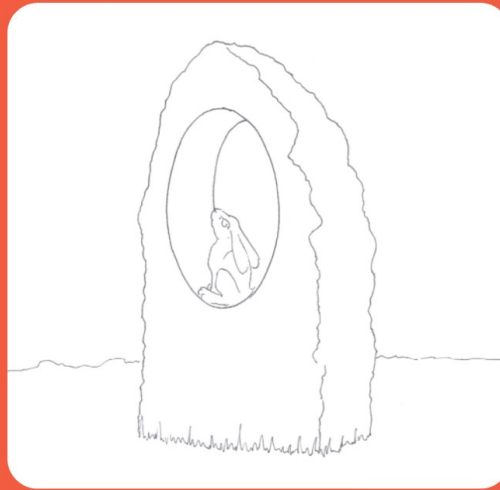
The Commissions

Alex Wenham

Alex has also been inspired by the nature walk and for his commission, plans to install a number of playful stone boulders in West Way Square, including two standing stones featuring pierced circular openings, one that is climbable and one showcasing a carved hare in tribute to the local wildlife.



Glamorous assistants demonstrating how one of the standing stones could look

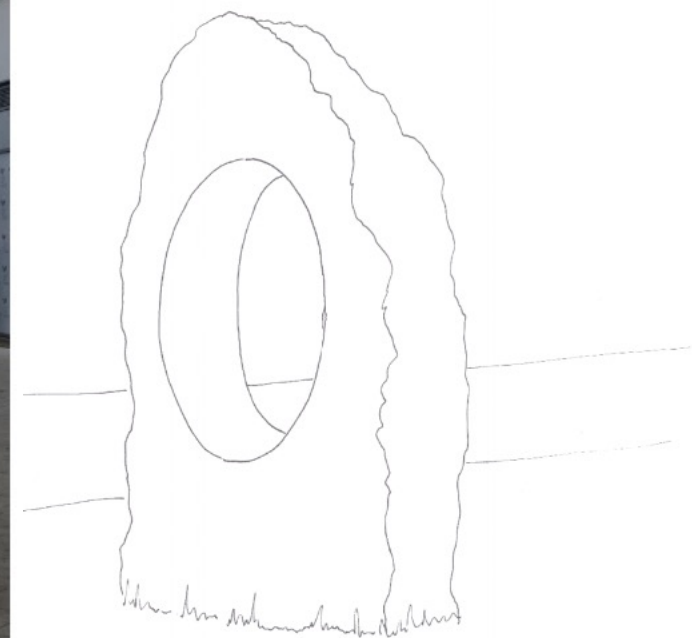


Sketch and to-scale mockup of the hare standing stone.

“

When we met with Botley GAP, we learnt that Botley is viewed as a ‘gateway’ to Oxford and that there is a local desire to see this connection and relationship represented through public art. The circular opening in my stone piece will pick up on this theme of Botley as a ‘gateway’ to the city, while the wild hare feature will be presented against a backdrop of Clare’s mosaic pieces. When looking through the pierced stone circle at different angles, you will be able to see the hare come alive against these local wildlife-inspired backgrounds. This panoramic interaction is an ode to Botley’s beautiful panoramic views.”

- Alex Wenham



The Commissions Nor Greenhalgh

For her commission, Nor plans to brighten the pedestrian area beneath the Botley ring road flyover with a colourful new mural that is informed by the needs and concerns of the community and reflects the local character of the area. Nor's piece will also evoke Botley's wildlife, with its colour palette taking inspiration from the purple and green-hued feathers of the pigeons that roost in this underpass.



Prototype feather motifs inspired by Botley's pigeons



The Commissions Nor Greenhalgh

Picking up on the need identified by the Botley GAP action group to showcase Botley as a 'gateway' connecting with Oxford, Nor intends to include extracts of historic local poetry that celebrates those travelling on the pavement. This will link with the long history of paths and bridges leading from Oxford to Botley, which have been walked by pedestrians and pilgrims for centuries.



The flyover's pedestrian walkway

Like Clare, Nor has been inspired by the idea of contrasting scales and her piece will embrace the large scale of the flyover:



"My mural designs aim to capture the experience of being a human looking up at this large modernist bridge from the lowly position of the pavement, highlighting how the human-scale body relates to this much larger structure."

- Nor Greenhalgh

To do this, Nor plans to incorporate scaled and cropped versions of the wildlife motifs created by primary school children in workshops led by Clare.



In keeping with the desire to connect the artworks across the West Way development, Nor is collaborating with Clare to explore how the flyover mural could tie in with her mosaic pieces. The artists have produced a range of bespoke tiles in ceramic using local plants and motifs that could introduce some relief texture into the mosaic panels and mural.



Some tiles were produced by directly pressing into the clay with local plants. Others were screenprinted with motifs drawn from Clare's school workshops. The motifs were then enlarged and cropped across tiles, an effect Nor plans to reproduce for the mural.

Studies show pedestrians are happiest when the visual scene reveals new sights roughly every 5 seconds.

My own walking pace was used to divide up the space into 5-second blocks, each containing new visual elements. (Dotted lines for reference only, not to be painted.)

Public workshops with different users could yield other rhythms too.

Extract of an old local poem links the historic causeway with this modern structure as a place where people continue to walk through.

The typeface will be measured out using proportions from the human body, inspired by hand-painted road markings.

Mauve & turquoise-green colour scheme inspired by the pearlescent feathers of pigeons who roost here.

Text and other details in metallic bronze paint, which will shimmer and catch the light as users walk through.

A background of subtle repeating motifs gives a sense of texture & movement.



Public workshops will generate large-scale motifs tying in with those in mosaics elsewhere, such as these drawings of teasels (left), drawn from Clare's work with local schoolchildren..

Details of these will be enlarged by scaling-up using the human body to measure - giving a sense of the body interacting with and subdividing this very large structure. These motifs will be applied in acrylic paint by hand and using stencils, cropped within by the pre-existing 'grid' of paving slabs.

Proposed colour palette will coexist happily with existing yellow/brown bricks. However, these currently look dated & unsuitable for such a dark space. Consider painting white, if community volunteers available.

Concrete tiles on slope to remain as-is except for painted motifs as shown.

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