

ARTIST BRIEF

Abbotswood – Public Art Commission

Vision

Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) wish to commission an interactive public art trail for the new community development of Abbotswood in Romsey. The art trail will enable residents of Abbotswood and Romsey to explore and enjoy their surroundings. It will uncover their own creativity and provide ideas and activities for the community to continually engage with it throughout the seasons. The trail should be innovative in design and be sympathetic to the environment surrounding Abbotswood which includes the Abbotswood Area for Nature Conservation and Fishlake Meadows wetlands.

Aims & Objectives

- To produce a collection of bespoke artworks that combine to create a trail.
- To provide high quality craftsmanship.
- To provide innovative ways that people can engage and interact with the trail through the seasons.
- To enable Abbotswood residents and the local community to engage with the process of creating public art.
- To deliver a project that demonstrates good practice in terms of community engagement and the commissioning process that is in line with the TVBC Public Art Strategy.

Background

The Abbotswood development site is located 1.5km to the north east of Romsey. The development of 800 new residential units is an extension of the existing residential neighbourhoods of Woodley, Cupernham and Abbotswood and offers approximately 40% of affordable housing.

Facilities at Abbotswood's local centre include the Co-Op, Yellow Dot Nursery, Abbotswood Court Care Home, A Community Centre, run by Abbotswood Community Association, who are constituted as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). The Community centre is used for community groups and events as well as for hire to individuals and organisations. <https://abbotswoodromsey.co.uk> There are 6 more retail/commercial units under construction. Neighbouring the site is the 10th Romsey Scouts and close by is Cupernham Infants and Junior schools.

The Area for Nature Conservation includes conservation woodland, open grassland and new ponds to allow habitation of newts, nesting birds and other wildlife. The Great Crested Newt is a protected species.

Other facilities away from the local centre include a sports pavilion and 2 football pitches, at the southern end of the western footpath/cycle way, and a multi-use games area.



The map above shows the new Abbotswood development within the red boundary line. The Area for Nature Conservation sits to the west of the housing development.

Abbotswood is a very old part of Romsey. It belonged to the nuns of Romsey Abbey in the Middle Ages, when it was known as Abbeis Wood, Abbas Wood or Abbeis Wood Common and covered 400 acres. The land was used for grazing by the tenants of the abbey and they were allowed to collect firewood and timber to repair their houses. The word 'common' meant common pasturage, not public open space. In the 18th century the name was changed to Abbots Wood or Abbotswood as it has been known ever since.

A programme of community consultation was commissioned by TVBC and undertaken by SPUD (Space, Placemaking and Urban Design) between June and September 2014. The report 'Abbotswood Public Art Consultation,' is attached to this artist brief. Clear themes which were emerging included the following:

- Animals, birds, fish, insects
- Happy, funny, distinctive
- Colourful, bright, eye-catching
- Flowers, nature, environment
- Touch, texture, interactivity
- Routes, trails, journey
- Light, illumination, interactivity
- Small, multiple, impact

The idea was to create impact through multiple interventions that connected up routes and areas.



Wordall diagram of themes from the SPUD project

The initial public art commission linked to Abbotswood was for the off-site project and looked at ways to link the new community with the centre of Romsey and its residents. Looking at recommendations from the report with regards to artwork being

through multiple interventions, responding to nature, the history of the area and the sites identified through the project, the 'Romsey to Abbotswood' project by Hampshire artist Nicola Henshaw has provided excellent outcomes for the first stage of the public art commissions for this site.

Nicola's artwork can be found along canal path in Romsey from the green spaces behind the railway station at Mercer Way, and along canal pathway towards the Fishlake Meadows Road. Nicola created floor markers to identify the Sprat & Winkle trail, bespoke Oak carved benches at the start of the route and a community designed mural at the end that encapsulates memories, bespoke poetry and community at the heart of their designs.

We would be interested to hear about ideas that could continue the link from this trail into the development, however are also happy with stand alone projects.

The new Abbotswood commission should use and consider the themes and recommendations from the SPUD report, as highlighted above, when devising their own consultation programme.



Artist's Roles & Responsibilities

The chosen artist will be responsible for:

- The design, fabrication and installation of the art work
- Selecting and evaluating sites for the trail in partnership with TVBC team
- Providing detailed working drawings and designs for the commissioner
- Supplying the relevant information and drawings required for any appropriate planning permissions in partnership with TVBC
- Effectively managing the available budget with the steering group
- Attending regular meetings with the Arts Officer to provide updates for TVBC officers and Councillors on progress, timescales and budget
- Delivery of a suitable programme of community engagement to complement the work of SPUD now that the neighbourhood is fully occupied
- Providing a full maintenance schedule and instructions
- Supplying information required for press releases and promotion

The artist will hold and provide evidence of relevant public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance, and take responsible for any third party contractors.

Community Engagement

In line with our Public Art Strategy we aim that all our public art projects involve community consultation and participation to contribute towards the collection and development of ideas and artworks. Our aim through this process is that residents and local stakeholders are fully involved in the creation of their environments and have a sense of ownership over the places in which they live.

Following on from the work of SPUD as detailed above, we anticipate that the chosen artist will devise a programme of consultation events and activities to engage with the local community including residents and community stakeholders. Key people and partners to involve include:

- Abbotswood and surrounding residents
- Local schools, nurseries and community groups
- Community Development Team
- Parks and Countryside Team
- Romsey Futures
- Test Valley Borough Councillors for Romsey Cupernham Ward; Cllr Dorothy Baverstock, Cllr Neil Gwynne and Cllr Janet Burnage
- Romsey Extra Parish Council: Chairman John Parker
- Hampshire County Councillors: Cllr Roy Perry and Cllr Alan Dowden

Budget

This commission is funded through Section 106 contributions for public art from and project managed by TVBC.

£56,000 is available to cover the full commission and it should be noted that this includes:

- Artist time for design and drawings
- Community events and engagement

- Meetings with steering group and relevant agencies
- Fabrication, transport and installation
- Planning application fees and other fees that may be required.

Maintenance

A budget of £5,000 has been set aside for future maintenance. This is separate to this commission fee. The chosen artist will be expected to provide a full maintenance manual on completion of installation with clear guidelines as to the best way to maintain the artwork and any specialist treatment/knowledge that is necessary. The artist should also indicate the anticipated life span of the work and any decommissioning procedures that should be applied.

Schedule

Description	Date
Deadline for applications	6 March 2020
Shortlisting	By end of March
Artist Interviews	By end of April
Notify preferred artist	By end of April
Reports to Council management boards and Cabinet to draw down funds	13 May Cabinet
Contract artists and start commission	End of May
Project completion	1 year from start date

How To Apply

Your application should be submitted no later than 6 March 2020 to include:

- A proposal outlining your approach to the commission and initial response to the brief to include initial design ideas (Not full worked up designs). Max 3 A4 pages, 6 sides.
- A current CV and Artist's statement of relevant work and commissions. Max 2 A4 pages, 4 sides.
- 6 examples of previous relevant projects, including images. Max 4 A4 pages, 8 sides.

You must demonstrate the following in your expression of interest:

- A track record in commissions for the public realm and any experience of designing art trails.
- Experience of community engagement within public art projects
- Experience of working within a creative team
- Evidence of the ability to produce high quality works of art
- A clear understanding of the challenges and sensitivities of the project

Applications should be sent by email to:

Faye Perkins, Arts Officer, fperkins@testvalley.gov.uk
Please call 01264 368844 if you have any questions

Equal Opportunities

Test Valley Borough Council is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities in employment and service provision, eliminating discrimination, and encouraging diversity amongst the workforce. A full copy of our equal opportunities policy is attached.

Linked documents

1. TVBC Public Art Strategy
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/resident/communityandleisure/artsandculture/publicart/public-art-strategy/>
2. Equal Opportunities Policy
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/equality---diversity/equalities/>
3. SPUD Report (Available on request or found on council website)