

Developing some art for your street

One option for transforming a simple layout plan into a unique and memorable design is to introduce one or more art features. Street art can take many forms for example:

- several small pieces such as humorous signs or decorative plaques on walls which can be added to over time
- painted murals on gable ends of houses
- a decorative trail of footprints between houses and the local shops
- a larger stand alone sculpture on a build out
- an overall artistic design for a wide area

There may well be residents with artistic flare who can design and develop small features. In most cases you will need to involve an artist to develop larger pieces such as a sculpture or an overall design.

Fundraising:

You will need to raise some money to develop and install small features or to pay for an artist to carry out Phase 1 of their work– see below for more information on working with an artist.

A lot more information is available in the **Fundraising** section of this guide.

Planning permission:

It is possible that an art work on the highways or the pavement may need planning permission. As soon as you have a pretty good idea of the designs that you want (including sizes) contact your local council planning office. You will be able to submit a simple pre-planning permission form and the council will use this to decide (within about 2 weeks) if you are likely to need submit a full planning permission application on

which a decision is likely to take about 12 weeks. Alternatively ask your council highways team if they are willing to consider the art work as part of the whole street scheme because it will then be seen as “permitted development” and will not need planning permission.

Working with an artist:

If you do not have time or artistic skills you may want to work with an artist to help you translate your ideas of how you would like your street to feel and look into a piece of art or a whole artistic layout. Find out if your Council has an arts officer and if so, he or she may well be able to help you with the whole process or some at least some aspects of developing an art work. If they are not available you can carry out all the steps yourselves. It can be pretty time consuming but also very rewarding and enjoyable. You’ll need to write and advertise an artist’s brief, short list the applicants, sit on an interview panel and make the final selection of an artist. Once the artist is in post, you will work with them to formulate some design options based on your ideas or aspirations and background research on your street’s history. After the artist has come up with some initial proposals discuss between you how they might work in your street and any alterations you might like.

Writing an artist’s brief:

Once you’ve decided that you want to work with an artist you’ll first need to discuss what it is you’d like them to do. The best way to do this is to hold a discussion session with your neighbours, limit the time and set yourselves clear goals to reach or questions to answer by the end. You could base your discussions on the points below:

- What is the purpose of the art work e.g. do you want a feature that helps to calm traffic or one that is decorative only?

- Do you want a specific type of feature e.g. a seat/sculpture/plaque/gateway, or do you want the artist to develop one for you?
- What should the art work represent e.g. a unifying piece, a memorial, a identifying piece?
- What adjectives would you like to be able to describe the final piece?
- How should it make those that view it/pass by/through it feel?
- Do you want to try and employ a local artist only?

You will need to try and write a brief that is not too vague or too specific so you get applications from artists with relevant skills and experience as well as giving them room for creativity. You should, however include:

- A brief description of your DIY Street project.
- Why you would like an art work and how it would fit in to the whole project.
- The role of the artist with an outline of the skills or experience the artist must have.
- An outline timeline of the project.

The artists fees including details of what is expected for how much payment, bearing in mind that if the artist needs to travel from a distance they you will need to offer higher expenses.

A few lines on the management of the project ie who the artist will liaise with and who the other partners will be (e.g. council highways officers, housing association staff).

Details of what they need to send you (their C.V, images of previous work, letter of application.

Details of closing date for applications, how and who they should submit their application to and when they'll hear back from you regarding the selection process.

See below for an example of an artist's brief

Advertising your artist brief:

It's first worth contacting your Council to see if they have an arts officer who can advertise your brief to his or her contacts. If not, look for information about local artist's groups or networks and ask them about the best way to get to brief to potential applicants. You can also contact the relevant Arts Councils of England, Wales and Northern Ireland web sites because they have facilities for advertising your brief of their web sites. Another good contact is an organisation called 'an'. Contact their advertising section at ads@a-n.co.uk or 0207 655 0390.

Short listing:

Once your deadline for applications has passed, decide whether or not you have enough to short-list (probably a minimum of at least five). If you feel you may not have enough applications then you may want to consider re-submitting the ad and extending the deadline.

You will then need to short-list the applicants for interview and the easiest way to do this is to hold a resident's meeting where everyone can look at the images, read the supporting letters and CV's and vote

for their three favourite artists. You can then work out the four/five artists with the most votes, who will be interviewed.

A couple of the most important things to look for when short-listing the artists are the quality, style and range of their work as well as the different approaches they have used



in the past. It's also important for the artist to demonstrate that they have experience of working with community groups and coming up with a final design by taking everyone's views into account.

Interviewing:

Choose an interview date which at least three of you can make and give the chosen artists at least one week's notice. Inform them briefly on what they'll be expected to do (for example give a five-minute presentation on their previous work, answer questions etc).

Tips to conducting interviews:

- ❖ Make sure you have paper and make notes of the interviewees answers
- ❖ Agree who will be time keeper on the day so they can move the interviews along
- ❖ Decide as a group what the essential things are that you need to learn from the interviewee and prepare relevant questions – see below
- ❖ Plan a quiet, comfortable place to hold the interviews and arrange the seating in an informal relaxed manner
- ❖ Begin the interview by introducing everyone, explaining how the interview will be conducted and give a brief reminder of the post being offered
- ❖ Use open ended questions such as how, why, tell me and what questions
- ❖ Aim for the interviewee to be doing 90% of the talking
- ❖ Allow interviewees time to ask their own questions of you at the end
- ❖ Close the interview by thanking them for coming and let them know when you hope to have made a decision by and how you'll inform them

❖ **Some interview questions**

- Please tell us about any projects which you have undertaken which involved a similar community consultation approach.
- ❖ Have you had experience of running practical participatory workshops with adults/children?
 - ❖ Have you had a chance to look round (*your street*) and what are your first thoughts or reactions?
 - ❖ Has any of your work involved research into architectural or landscape heritage? If so, can you give us an/some example(s) of how you've incorporated the information you've found into your designs?
 - ❖ It's very important to the residents that whatever is chosen as the final feature is durable/robust, weather resistant, does not invite graffiti and is easily cleaned. Indeed, one of the aims of this project is its longevity in terms of maintenance. Furthermore, if placed in the highway it may also need to be strong enough to withstand bumps from cars. What measures could you take to ensure the final piece fits this brief?
 - ❖ What personal qualities do you think will be required of this post?
 - ❖ What skills or qualities do you think you will bring to the post?



- ❖ This project is a partnership between ? Council and the residents of ? area/street. There are likely to be others involved such as engineers, planners, tree officers. What experience do you have of working in

a multi-agency team in this manner?

- ❖ If you were appointed, we would like you to start work and meet the rest of the residents as soon as possible, when are you available to start work on this project?

The artist's contract:

Once you have appointed an artist both parties will need to sign a contract – it can be a simple document so you will not need to involve a lawyer. Ask your local council arts officer (if you have one) or the local / regional office of the Arts Council for a suitable example. Ask your contact as well about a fair rate of pay for your artist. The rate of pay may be affected by:

- The artist's experience
- The amount of travel needed
- How many days of their work you require

It is easiest for you if you state that you'd like them to be registered self-employed and therefore deal with their own tax, this saves you the hassle and time taken to sort this out.

Example of an artist's brief

Great Street, Weytown, Perthshire

Brief for an artist to work in the Community – Closing date Tuesday 23

September

Introduction

The aim of the DIY Streets project in Great Street, Weytown is to transform the street into a safer and more attractive space where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles can share the space on equal terms, with cars travelling at little more than walking pace, and to do so at an affordable cost. Residents are working closely with the Council on the project.

Area description

Great Street is made up of more than 80 mid 20th century houses, many of them semi-detached, and some low rise blocks of flats. The street has a rich history stretching back at least to medieval times when there was a tythe barn in the street, and later a farm.

The area traditionally has heavy industry. There should be some easily accessible information available. The road is level and the properties have sizeable front gardens.

At one end of the street there is a children's playground and at the other, a Council Pay and Display car park although many visitors park outside the houses to avoid parking charges.

This project will complement other regeneration work in the area as well as the character of the street as a whole, while at the same time offering something new and exciting that reflects the ideas of the residents.

Insert photos of your street

Artist's role

We are looking for a local artist to work with the residents to discuss their thoughts and ideas for opportunities for artwork as part of the redesign of the street.

Several opportunities have been already been suggested e.g. an illustrative time line, cast iron 'man hole-cover' type insets into the pavement, steel panels as a gateway entrance or carved relief slate or timber panels. The designs might also be translated into mosaics. It is hoped that the successful applicant will also have his/her own ideas.

We would like the artist to research the extensive rich historic influences that have helped to shape this area and particularly Great Street from the medieval era to the present day and to develop suitable illustrations and text for an art work to be located in the street using appropriate materials.

The project will be run in two phases;

Phase 1 - the artist will survey and research the history of the street, meet some residents and make initial proposals.

Phase 2 – The production and installation of the work will be dependent on securing funding to implement the phase 1 proposals.

The artist will:

- be able to respond creatively to the built environment*
- be a good communicator with experience of working as part of a team*
- be able to develop innovative approaches to engage local residents of diverse backgrounds*

- *have experience of running participatory and educational workshops to reach all sectors*
- *be able to show strong contemporary public art practice with evidence of experience*
- *be based within the region*

Work outline:

- *Consult with key local people and individuals in the Council. Attend meetings and run workshop sessions at accessible times and venues as requested*
- *research the fabric of the area in terms of social, historical and environmental references*
- *collaborate with other professionals as part of the team redesigning the street layout*
- *develop fresh ideas and realistic and appropriate proposals within a small budget to add distinctive and permanent improvements to the quality of the street*
- *compile concrete quotes for carrying out proposed designs, labour and construction*

Art programme Timetable – [some dates would be ‘to be confirmed’]

<i>Tuesday 23rd Sept</i>	<i>Closing date for submission of CV and portfolio of previous work showing similar community based projects. Residents to decide on short-list.</i>
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<i>Monday 29th Sept</i>	<i>Interviews and appointment.</i>
<i>October</i>	<i>Induction meeting with Council partners and residents, and start work.</i>
<i>October</i>	<i>Research and Development of locality and consultation process.</i>
<i>October</i>	<i>Presentation of proposals to residents and council partners. Work with residents to submit funding applications.</i>
<i>November – March</i>	<i>If successful Consolidate proposals with the residents and development of artist's work.</i>
<i>April</i>	<i>Construction work on site</i>

Work phases

Phase 1 - the artist will undertake the investigation of the street, local consultation and discussions with the planning team. They will hold a resident's session to explore possibilities and afterwards present sketch designs with cost estimates to the DIY Streets team. An additional £50 is available to cover expenses.

Phase 2. Once the artist has secured funding they will work with residents on phase two. This will involve discussing their recommendations and proposals, prioritising these, develop detailed designs and once agreed work with the fabricator to devise and install the work.

Please note that the artist must be registered self-employed and is responsible for paying own tax.

Funding

Phase1: £800.00 is secured for the preparatory work over a period of a month, plus an additional £50.00 is available for expenses. Phase 2: the artist will apply for and secure

the funding for Phase 2

Management

The artist will work closely with the residents' group and the Council who will brief the artist, meet to agree different stages of the work and provide day to day support.

If you are interested in applying, please send:

A letter of application including comments about your current work and suitability for this commission

Your current CV At least 10 images, with titles/information about your recent work (on disc) which should be readily understood by the street residents

Any other relevant leaflets or publications

(add your own contact details too)

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION – Tuesday 23 September

Timeline estimate for art project



Hold **introductory meeting** with residents to decide if you want to work with an artist and decide what you would like the artist to do (one week).



Research possible funding bids and choose a couple that are relevant and valid for your project (see funding section for more information).



Write artists brief and issue for advertisement (one week).



Collect CV's and portfolio of previous work from applicants (four weeks).



Meet to **short list 4-5 applicants**. Give applicants at least one week notice for interviews (two weeks).



Interview applicants and appointment one artist (one week).



Hold **induction meeting with artist**, partners and residents. Start exploring options and ideas with artist (one week).



Assist artist with carrying out research on local area and consult with all residents on progress (four weeks).



Work up **final proposals** for consultation and meet as a group to decide (one week).



Write funding bid based on chosen proposal and submit applications (one week).



If funding bid successful, **work with artist to finalise proposals** (four months).



Construction starts (variable)



Celebration and evaluation – arrange a street party to celebrate the finished piece and carry out some door to door evaluation (one month+).

Art case studies

Below are a two case studies from the DIY Streets pilot scheme that look in more detail at the process used, the factors affecting the decisions that were made and the end outputs and outcomes of each project.

1. Location: Heol Degwm, North Connelly, Bridgend

Partners- Residents of Heol Degwm, Bridgend Council, Valleys to Coast Housing Association and Sustrans

Artist - David Mackie

Funding - £15,000 from Valleys to Coast + £1,500 for initial work from Sustrans

What - Dry stone wall with post with etchings

David Mackie was asked to work with the residents to come up with a gateway feature to create an identity for the street that the residents felt reflected their street's history. The art work is made up of a

section of traditional dry stone walling, with an image post one end. There was strong resident interest with 8 residents unexpectedly showing up to sit on the interview panel.

The artist spent a day in a local Connelly school to work with the children (who were already working on a local history project) on the images for the posts. The children drew on the streets history for inspiration which was once home to a farm with tithe barn.





2. Location: Iden Road, Coventry

Partners - Residents of Iden Road, Coventry
City Council and Sustrans

Artists - Gary and Thomas Thrussell

Funding - £15,000 from Coventry City Council
+ £2,000 for initial work from Sustrans

What - A herb garden and a tree guard in
galvanised steel



The residents were keen to brighten up their street and develop a communal planting area, particularly for herbs, as well as creating an ornamental feature to make their street unique and more attractive. They decided that they didn't want to hark back to the area's industrial past but to celebrate nature instead.



The artists held a resident art session in a marquee in the street and then developed some designs for a herb garden and a bee sculpture, that will act as a tree guard for a newly planted tree. The art works were very

popular and the residents were inspired to obtaining some additional funds from Coventry City Council so they could employ a community artist to work with children on a mural to cover up an unattractive concrete wall.

