

PETERHEAD CREATIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT

ARTIST BRIEF

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1. Background

Peterhead, Aberdeenshire's largest town (pop. 19,000), is facing some serious challenges. Key elements of its economy – fishing, oil & gas servicing and food processing - are all facing anticipated downturns and the threatened closure of the local prison has also dented business confidence and brought insecurity.

The town has areas of affluence and prosperity alongside genuine deprivation. Unemployment is above the Aberdeenshire average and 47% of reported crime in North Aberdeenshire takes place in Peterhead. Complex social and economic issues are present in the town. Problems relate to unemployment, debt, health, drug abuse, educational attainment and overcrowding. Although a major center of population in the north east, Peterhead has little in the way of cultural facilities and local people have very limited opportunity to experience contemporary work, or to make any form of contact with practicing artists.

Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership has shaped the basis of investment in Peterhead during the last six years. Initiatives have been successful in their own right but together do not go far enough to lay a firm basis for future development of the town. This is particularly true in terms of approach to public realm and public art development across the local authority. This new commission will be as relevant outside Peterhead, a test bed for the local authority across the whole of Aberdeenshire.

More than 1300 local residents in Peterhead, young and old, participated in a Planning for Real (PfR) exercise during the summer of 2003 where they gave their views on what they considered priority areas to be developed. High on the community's agenda were the need for environmental improvements to:

- **Kirk Street**, on the town's periphery, considered the most important access point into the town centre. It has seen a decline of businesses over the years and is falling into a state of disrepair.
- **Peterhead Community Education Centre** frontage and grounds on Queen Street, another important gateway to the town from the north.
- **The Lido**, a long stretch of open green space fronting a bay that links to Kirktown and the town centre
- **Balmoor Corridor**, a sparse open space featuring a large roundabout, grassy areas, footpaths and shrubbery.

2. Vision & Context

This commission is being undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council as part of the Revitalisation of Harbour Towns Project (also referred to as Interreg), in partnership with Scottish Enterprise Grampian and Communities Scotland, through the Aberdeenshire Towns' Partnership consortium.

The programme is the only Scottish proposal to receive the support of **PROJECT engaging artists in the built environment**, a new national awards scheme launched 2004.

By teaming a professional artist and landscape architect we aim to:

- rejuvenate key public spaces in Peterhead for the modern age
- develop a shared vision and structure for community-driven improvements that will create a positive identity for Peterhead
- offer useable solutions to help bring about real change
- involve local residents, businesses and a range of community groups in the design process to generate a sense of ownership and pride and allow them to contribute to Peterhead's unique cultural heritage and sense of place
- link fresh, contemporary and innovative designs at a number of Peterhead's public spaces to compliment existing traditional art works and environment improvements in the town centre

In addition, but equally as important, we seek to:

- introduce local authority colleagues and partners to a fresh, innovative and holistic approach to community planning and regeneration
- demonstrate the effectiveness of an artist within the design team to achieve environmental improvements within social and economic conditions
- encourage debate and endorse best practise when working with professional artists in the built environment, to colleagues in planning, roads, landscape and new partners in housing, education and business
- build community capacity so that there is a greater familiarisation with the arts and the creative process
- provide an opportunity for skills transfer between the appointed professional and a local artist through a local gallery on Kirk Street

- use the project evaluation to assist local authority officers in future bids for strategic development

3. Artist Role

We are seeking an artist to collaborate with a landscape architect to deliver a positive identity and visually stimulating environment for Peterhead. It is hoped that this strategic teaming will help to reconcile community ambitions, regenerate some of Peterhead's problem inner town sites, create new spaces and lay a firm basis for future development of the town.

This new phase of work is as much about how spaces work as it is about improving the emotional appeal of run down areas of a town facing economic challenges. It will be community-driven to reflect local opinion, ideas and aspirations, ensure that the designs are fitting to the main users of the locations and to develop a sense of ownership.

The artist's creative contribution to the conception, development and transformation of some of Peterhead's key public spaces will be integral to the design process. In addition to improving and revitalising the general appearance of key sites, the collaboration will consider how the spaces function and link together for all people in the town, from residents to workers, business owners to tourists. It will integrate the arts, landscape and functional elements of the design process at the outset.

The following will need to be considered:

- The involvement of local residents, local businesses and groups in the wider Peterhead community in exploring core ideas and developing a vision to provide a sense of ownership
- Engaging with the local community so they can contribute to Peterhead's unique cultural heritage and sense of place and assist in the delivery of future art pieces (Stage Two)
- Providing a vision that incorporates robust, hard wearing, easy to maintain physical structures for the highlighted development sites
- Combinations of signage, public art and landscaping
- Working in collaboration with other professionals such as the landscape architect

4. Location and Access

The west end of Kirk Street consists of housing with gardens / green areas to the front that are owned and maintained by Aberdeenshire Council. A war memorial and a main roundabout are key features. To the east are around a dozen shops / businesses and a hotel although the vast majority of shop units are empty and boarded up. An artist run gallery has opened on Kirk Street within the last year. At the very end of the street is a major road junction dominated by St Peter's Street flats, earmarked for demolition in 2005.

Peterhead C.E.C. is a large red brick building with no windows that dominates the main entry point into Peterhead, approaching from the north. There's presently very little visual sign of the human interaction and life that occurs within the building. A new Healthy Living Centre is presently being built to the front of the existing centre, constructed largely from glass (completion February 2005). Peterhead Academy is to the rear and partly adjoining the centre. A Morrisons supermarket and car park are located immediately across the road from the front of the centre.

Balmoor Roundabout and Balmoor Terrace offer major areas for improved landscaping. As a main thoroughfare to the north of Peterhead town it is also a high profile location in terms of the town's image.

The Lido area is a key public space for Peterhead, dominating the approach to the town from the south and commanding impressive views across the bay and harbour. A huge expanse of open space has the potential to be made more of in terms of public use and as a positive asset to the town.

5. Timescale

The commission will run over four months, from January to April 2005. It will commence with a joint on-site visit to enable artist and landscape architect to become familiar with the area and gain a mutual understanding of each other's portfolios. Community engagement and outline design work is expected to take place January – February, with a view to agreeing an overall vision and final design concepts by April '05. Implementation of the art / design / landscape work (Stage Two) will take place from May onwards, subject to funding.

Some initial profiling work with local residents will begin in November – December '04, carried out by a local artist. The aim of this work is to get the project known within the local community and get people thinking about the spaces they inhabit. This information will be made available to the lead artist on appointment.

6. Funding and Contractual Details

A fee of £9,000 has been allocated for an artist to carry out this commission to cover the period January to April 2005. This sum includes all artist's fees and expenses. An additional budget will be available for community arts workshops.

Premises on Peterhead's Kirk Street will be available to the design team as a workshop base. It is expected that the artist, and on occasions the landscape architect, will use this space as a visible point of contact for the project and will be available to meet members of the community at pre-arranged times.

The successful applicant will report to the Arts Development Officer (North). Colleagues in planning, landscape and roads will be readily accessible to input to and consult with on the project.

The project structure, methodology and format of a final report will be agreed between the artist, landscape architect and a local steering group, co-ordinated by the Arts Development Officer (North).

7. Application Procedure

Artists are invited to submit a cv demonstrating their creative, technical and design skills. A proven track record within community regeneration or outreach as well as the ability to relate to different groups and people with varying skill levels and ages will also be required. Experience of public realm projects and strategic planning is an essential requirement. Visual documentation of previous, relevant work is also to be submitted, which will be returned within three weeks of the deadline date.

Artists should also provide an outline work schedule to suit the timeframe of the commission, showing a critical path, key milestones and important client-team meetings as well as the expected number of days working in Peterhead. Please also make a note of on-going commitments beyond April '05.

Applications will be assessed by a panel comprising Aberdeenshire Council's Senior Arts Officer, Arts Development Officer (North), the PROJECT Scheme Manager, Planning Projects Officer and a representative from a local arts business.

The deadline for submissions is Friday 26 November 2004.

Short listed applicants will be invited to interview in Aberdeenshire early January 2005.

All applications should be addressed and sent to:

Saskia Gibbon
Arts Development Officer (Aberdeenshire North)
Aberdeenshire Council
Macduff Arts Centre
Clergy Street
Macduff AB44 1LP

8. Project Contact

For further information please contact:

Lorraine Grant, Senior Arts Officer (Strategy & Development) on tel: 01224 664873, email lorraine.grant@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

Or consult websites:

www.atap.org.uk

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

www.aberdeenshirearts.gov.uk
www.visitpeterhead.com

The following reports / information will be made available to the successful candidate:

- Planning for Real, Peterhead's Future – a Community View (2003)
- Landscape / Environment Improvement Strategy (2004)
- The Towns Partnership in Peterhead, a Summary of Strategy 2004-07
- EDAW analysis of town centre gateways (1998, revised 2002)
- Kirk Street & St Peters Development (2003)
- Peterhead Community School News - (May 2004)
- Map of Kirk Street
- Map of Kirk Street Businesses
- Map showing overview of key public sites in inner Peterhead and their relationship to the town centre
- Plans for Healthy Living Centre, Peterhead C.E.C.