

ARTISTS BRIEF

Garndiffaith Public Realm Improvements

Millennium Hall Entrance Sculpture

Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) is inviting applications from artists to design, produce and install a small sculpture as part of the Garndiffaith public realm improvements. The artist will engage with the local community to develop a design which best reflects the identity of the village.

1. Background and Context

This public art installation will form a part of a wider programme of public realm improvements taking place in Garndiffaith throughout 2013 and 2014. Cumulatively, these works aim to upgrade the quality of the public realm; to improve connectivity between the residential areas, shopping precinct, enterprise facilities and community centre; and to create a sense of identity and arrival at the village core.

Identity, history and heritage are key themes that have emerged from the community consultation events. Residents and businesses noted that the traditional identity and character of the village has diminished in recent years. It was hoped that the construction of a new community centre in 2000 would provide a focal point but the building is unsympathetic to the history and traditions of the area and is poorly integrated into the wider community both physically and culturally.

Geography of Garndiffaith

Situated in Torfaen, South Wales, Garndiffaith is a small village on the outskirts of the market town of Pontypool (approximately 3 miles north of the town centre) and a short distance from Blaenavon town centre, and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (3.5 miles away). It is one of a series of interconnected villages between these two towns. As a result, the identity of Garndiffaith is closely aligned with these other villages.

History of Garndiffaith

Like many communities in South Wales, Garndiffaith has a strong connection to traditional industries. A major coal mine and iron works – known as the British – was situated a short distance to the south west of the village. This industrial site still features heavily in popular mentality because of its undeveloped potential as major regeneration site.

The area also has a strong agricultural heritage. As late as the middle of the twentieth century the main shopping street – Stanley Road – was often an impromptu thoroughfare for grazing sheep.

Garndiffaith today has a few small shops a Public house and a police station – all situated on Stanley Road. It also houses the local English-medium primary school –

Garnteg – which was opened in 1995 following the merger of Varteg and Garndiffaith primary schools.

Garndiffaith primary school was later demolished and the Millennium Hall was constructed on the site. The Millennium Hall – the main community facility in the area – was finished in 2000 and looks to provide activities and classes that cater to the community, as well as a meeting place for local residents.

Regeneration Programme

Pontypool and the residential communities which it serves are undergoing a transformational regeneration project which aims to improve the connections between the town centre and its main residential neighbourhoods. These neighbourhood hubs have seen significant investment to develop stronger business incubation, training and community facilities, and then to improve the connections (both physical and in terms of identity) between those facilities and Pontypool Town Centre. The current investment in Garndiffaith is part of this project.

The first phase of the Garndiffaith public realm improvements – which was completed in June 2013 – saw the installation of a new landscaped entrance linking the community facility – known as the Millennium Hall – to the main shopping precinct.

The second phase of the works, which will commence in Autumn 2013, will focus on improving the range of activity in the Millennium Hall grounds, upgrading the quality of street furniture, improving signage, and exploring the historical interpretation of key sites in the village.

Creativity is a key part of the programme of works in Garndiffaith. As part of a separate commission 4 medium-sized wicker sculptures will be created reflecting the school, grazing, retail and heavy industry.

2. Project Overview

TCBC is inviting applications from artists to design, produce and install a small sculpture as part of the Garndiffaith public realm improvements. The artist will engage with the local community to develop a design which best reflects the identity of the village.

Design

This project requires the artist to spend a period of time in consultation with the local community **before** developing designs for the sculpture. During this time, the artist will be expected to engage in a creative way with the community to galvanise interest in the project and to develop design ideas. TCBC anticipates that this process will take at least 2-3 days but no longer than a month depending on the artist's preference.

It is anticipated that the artist will undertake between 2 and 4 workshops during this time to gather ideas from the community, however the timings and format of the engagement are negotiable with TCBC on appointment. TCBC will endeavour to identify the consultative groups, and to find suitable venues for workshops, on request from the artist.

The artist will then spend a period of up to 6 weeks developing between 2 and 4 designs (either graphics or models) to present to a Steering Group made up of representatives of the local community and TCBC. The designs should be a representation of how the residents, businesses and community groups of Garndiffaith

view their community past, present and/or future. The Steering Group will select a final design for the artist to produce.

Production

The project and funding also requires the artist to produce, or procure production of, the final sculpture. There is no pre-determined medium for the sculpture, though thought should be given to the installation and maintenance requirements in the paragraph below and in section 5. The sculpture should be suitable for permanent installation. **The artist should also bear in mind that the cost of production and installation are both part of the project budget, and that no further funding is available.**

Installation and Location

The sculpture will be located on Council-owned property which is leased to the Millennium Hall. The installation will be on an elevated circular space but will be directly adjacent to the public realm and will be accessible to members of the public (see below).



At present, the pedestal comprises soil covered by a membrane with aggregate on the top, but should be suitable for concreting (if appropriate) at the artist's expense

TCBC reserves the right to ask the artist to commission a structural design and structural calculations at their own expense if it is considered necessary.

3. Timescales

- Consultation and initial design ideas: up to 4 weeks
- Initial design development (2-4 designs): up to 6 weeks
- Final design development (1 design): up to 2 weeks
- Production and Installation: up to 10 weeks

The final sculpture must be installed by March 10th 2014.

4. Budget

A total of **£15,000** is available for this project which includes community engagement, design, production **and** installation. It should include all artists' fees throughout the process, consultation costs, expenses, materials and installation costs. Fees will be payable on the completion of pre-agreed project phases, to be set out in an agreement with Torfaen County Borough Council. The budget is exclusive of VAT but should cover all costs including travel.

5. Maintenance

The artwork should not have any costly on-going maintenance requirements and any maintenance schedule must be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council. Other issues to be taken into consideration will include street cleansing, underground services, and health and safety.

6. Professional Practice

The selected artist will be expected to have experience of creating and installing a project of comparable scale/complexity and have an awareness of the technical issues likely to arise and experience of cost control on a project of similar value. The artist will need to provide evidence of £1M Public and Product Liability Insurance and observe CDM requirements where appropriate.

7. Applying for the commission

Artists should submit a CV (relating to their experience of similar work), slides, photos or a CD of work and a letter outlining their interest in the project. Applications should be submitted to:

David Leech
Senior Regeneration Officer
Neighbourhood Services
Torfaen County Borough Council
Ty Blaen Torfaen, Panteg Way
New Inn, Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 0LS.

Up to 6 artists will be shortlisted and invited to interview. The shortlisting panel will consider the following in making its decision:

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| - Creative originality in their previous work | 40% |
| - The ability and experience of working collaboratively with the public and other partners | 30% |
| - Track record of delivering projects of a similar size or scale | 20% |
| - Previous experience working with civil engineers or construction contractors | 10% |

Shortlisted artists will be expected to speak at interview about their past experiences and their creative practice

The chosen artist will be required to begin work from **23rd September 2013** working towards a completion date (final installation and sign off) by 10th March 2014.

8. Further Information

For further information please contact David Leech, Senior Regeneration Officer on 01495 766084 or email david.leech@torfaen.gov.uk

Deadline for submissions:	2 nd September 2013
Interviews:	16 th September 2013