

Draft Artist Commission: Dowd's Farm Park, Hedge End

Introduction

Eastleigh Borough Council are looking to appoint a dynamic, forward thinking lead artist to produce a public art vision for Dowd's Farm park, Hedge End. With a view of making Dowd's Farm Park a unique, imaginative and exciting place where both adults and children want to spend time.

*"A change from the norm" ... "Interesting to look at and fun - interactive" ...
"Everyone wants somewhere to sit and play, kids and adults!"*

"The lake is a natural feature, so extend on that with other features" ... "Something appropriate to the surroundings" ... "Something to make the community feel proud"

Quotes from consultees, 27.09.2008

The main aims of the public art scheme will be to;

- Enhance the park land, contributing to the quality of life through good design and high quality surroundings
- Engender a sense of place and firm identity for the park
- Bridge the gap between earlier surrounding communities and new residents
- To increase awareness of the parks unique history and biodiversity and help to preserve it.
- To encourage the community to use their park for healthy activities.

Background to commission

The project has been established as a partnership led by Eastleigh Borough Council. Members on the steering group include representatives from Hedge End Town Council, Wellstead Primary School, Local Councillors, residents from the Dowd's Farm development and Swathing Housing Association. Funding for public art was secured at the outset through developers' contributions.

Dowd's Farm Park is the biggest district park land to be laid out in the Borough for many years. Covering approximately 16 acres, it will be a major

asset for the surrounding communities. The landscaping of the parkland has involved large amounts of community involvement and it is hoped to continue this work with a public art scheme. It is required that the local community will be involved in selected parts of the public art process to increase a sense of ownership and enjoyment of the finished works.

In December 2004 Eastleigh Borough Council granted outline planning consent to Bovis for the development of between 680 and 765 residential units on the site. The residential units consist of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and 2,3,4 and 5 bedroom houses that are configured in various ways. Thirty percent of the properties are owned by the housing association, whilst the rest are privately owned or rented.

The Dowd's Farm Urban Parkland is situated on the north easterly edge of the Dowd's Farm residential development. The north, east and south of the park are surrounded by the Grange Park development. To the west, the site is bounded by the B3342 (Tollbar Way). Adjacent to this is a site of special scientific importance (Moorgreen Meadow) and open farm land. The parkland comprises of various activity zones including, picnic area, children's play area, and a youth kick about area. The zones are separated by natural grassland habitat, more formal open space, areas of tree planting, and a lake all linked by a network of formal and informal pathways.

The site has an interesting history and was the subject of an archaeological investigation prior to its development. Archaeological features and artefacts indicate the presence of a Bronze Age settlement, Iron Age ditches, and activity on the site during medieval times. In recent past the site has operated as a farm. Wildlife is prolific on the Dowd's farm site. Bats roost in the old farm house, which was retained as part of the development. An ancient hedgerow crosses the park, connecting the farm house to Tollbar way. The bats use the trees, hedgerows and ponds / lake to navigate and feed on insects.

Artist's role

The artist role will be to deliver a vision for public art within Dowd's Farm Park which responds to the site's unique history. It is intended that the public art should encourage people to move around and/or use the park in a constructive way. Consultation with the public has identified a desire for interactive artworks. Although facilities for families are a priority, it is felt that the artworks should appeal to audiences of all generations. The vision should include potential sites for artworks and detail appropriate artists, as well as the lead artist, that could be commissioned to complete initial permanent works.

The artist will also be involved in the unveiling of the vision at the official opening of the park and will be required to plan a piece of community based art to coincide with this event.

Draft timescale

Deadline for artist's notes of interest	7 January 2009
Artist interviews	26 January 2009
Commencement of physical artworks	March 2009
Unveiling of vision	Official opening of the park April / May 2009.

Budget

Funds available	Budget
Vision	£5000
Available funding for artworks (eg £5000 x2 and £10000 x2) to include all materials, expenses, production, installation etc	£30,000
Total	£35,000

It is hoped that the vision will assist the steering group to secure business sponsorship which will enable the project to be continued beyond the limits of the current budget.

To apply, please submit your expression of interest in written form, including;

A short statement about your interest in the project and how your experience is relevant

Your CV

8 images (max): CD, DVDs, catalogues/reviews

Please send a s.a.e for return of items.

Please send or email this information to the following address by 5pm, 7th January 2009

Joanne Moody
Public Arts Officer
Eastleigh Borough Council
Civic Offices
Leigh Rd
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

Joanne.moody@eastleigh.gov.uk