

Artist/Creative Facilitator Brief: Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, Dorset



Client: Dorset Wildlife Trust on behalf of Dorset Design and Heritage Forum
Art Consultant: Ginkgo Projects Ltd.
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Introduction

This commission forms project 3 of *N3: Nature Network Neighbourhood*, a funded programme of six creative projects focusing on developing innovative creative responses in the public realm within Dorset in 2012.

The project will engage an artist/creative facilitator to work with the group of local councillors and residents developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Gillingham in the Blackmore Vale, North Dorset. The aim of the project is to explore through this pilot commission how creativity can be embedded into Neighbourhood Plans and other community-led planning documents, ensuring that the value of culture, creativity and cultural assets in the area are recognised and reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan developed, alongside areas identified for house building, areas for economic development, and environmental issues. The Neighbourhood Plan should take account of how culture has shaped the town, as well as identifying what creative opportunities there may be in the future.

The appointee will be in the role of creative facilitator and researcher, helping the community to access and use creative resources and people as part of the Neighbourhood Plan development process. The findings can then be used to advocate for the engagement of creative practitioners in the development of all future community-led planning documents, such as Neighbourhood Plans, Town Plans, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements in Dorset and beyond.

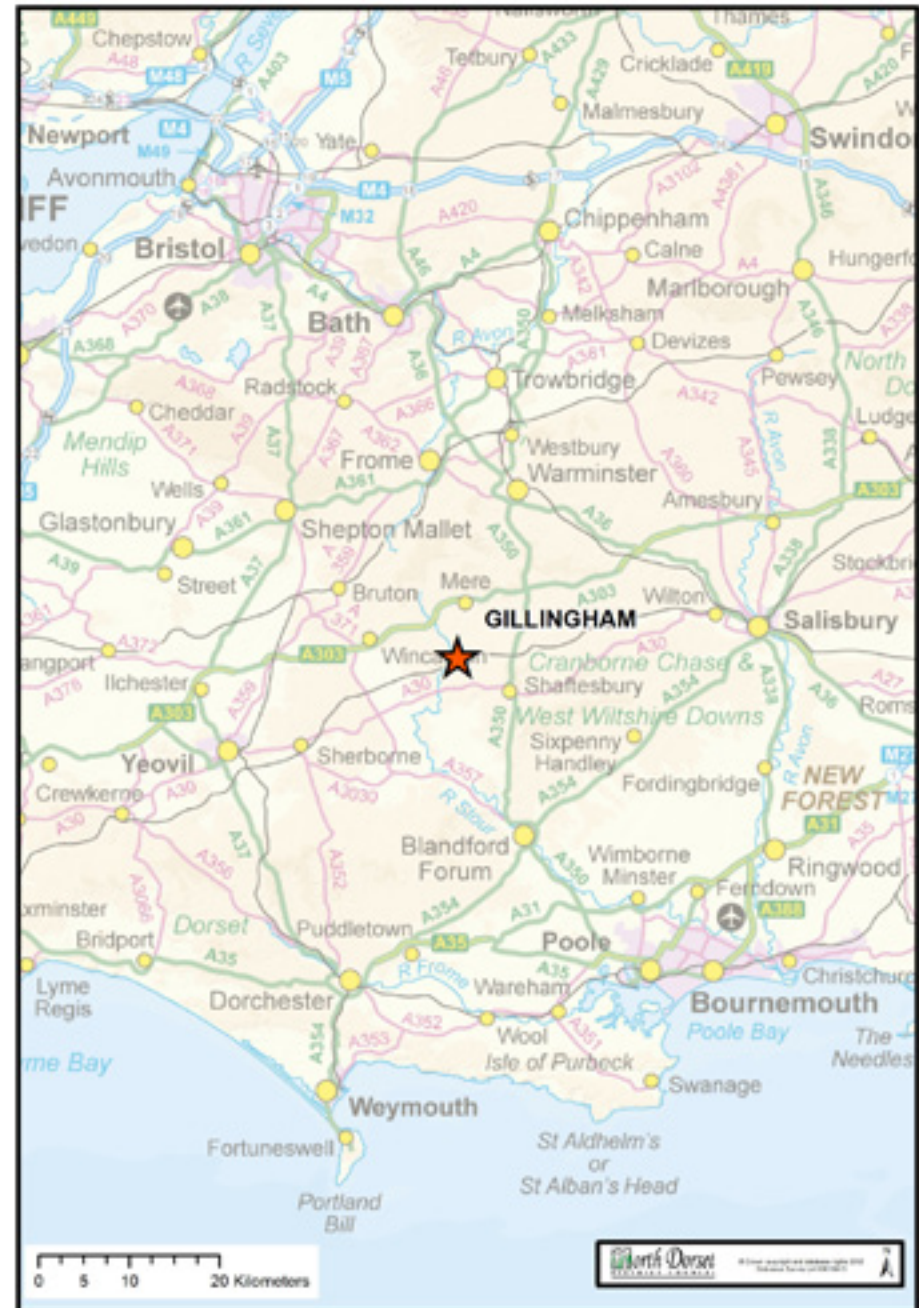


Image: map showing location of Gillingham



Background

N3: Nature Network Neighbourhood

N3 is a £62,000 programme of projects funded by Arts Council England. It also has in-kind support from Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Dorset County Council. N3 is managed by a sub-group of Dorset Design and Heritage Forum, which champions design quality in the built landscape of Dorset.

The N3 projects are:

- PROJECT 1: The production of guidance advising groups developing community-led planning documents how to engage with culture and use the skills of creative practitioners within the planning process;
- PROJECT 2: Development of networks and skills through a series of related events;
- PROJECT 3: This project (Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan)
- PROJECT 4: An artist commission funded by Dorchester Business Improvement District and linked to highways development in Dorchester town centre;
- PROJECT 5: A project to investigate ecological mitigation for housing development through animal architecture (such as bat/bird boxes);
- PROJECT 6: A series of new creative interpretation/signage to be commissioned for sites managed by Dorset Wildlife Trust.

Projects 1 and 3 are closely connected, as the guidance produced in Project 1 is intended to help steer the pilot commission in Gillingham. In turn the findings from the pilot commission in Gillingham should inform revisions and additions made to the guidance in future, through lessons learnt.

Neighbourhood Planning

The current government have radically altered the planning system by introducing neighbourhood planning through the Localism Act 2011. This makes provision for local communities to be more involved in planning for their area through the production of neighbourhood development plans, neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders.

These plans:

- through a neighbourhood plan, set planning policies to influence development in the area
- through a neighbourhood development order, grant permission for certain types of development
- through a community right to build, grant permission for certain developments that deliver economic, social and environmental benefits for the area



Neighbourhood Plans must reflect the strategic policies within the Local Plan drawn up by the Local Authority, however beyond this, Neighbourhood Plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. The policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood.

You can download a copy of the National Planning Policy Framework from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

Gillingham

Gillingham is a town in the far north of Dorset in the south west of England with a population of around 12,000 people. It incorporates the former hamlets of Wyke, Peacemarsh and Bay, and is 6 miles from Shaftesbury and half an hour by train from Salisbury in Wiltshire. 35% of residents are retired and in the town there are three primary schools (Wyke, St Mary the Virgin and Gillingham Primary) and one secondary school, Gillingham School (<http://www.gillingham.dorset.sch.uk/>). There is a primary school in the village of Milton-on-Stour, which is in the Parish of Gillingham. (NOTE: Gillingham Town Council has applied to North Dorset District Council for the Parish of Gillingham to be officially approved as the Neighbourhood Plan area.)

Although there is some evidence of Roman settlement, Gillingham was primarily established by the Saxons in the Middle Ages. In 1348, half of the 2,000 residents died of the Black Death in four months. Gillingham became a centre for local farming, gained the first Grammar School in Dorset in 1516 and a mill for silk in 1769. Many buildings in the town are of Tudor origin. In the 1850s, the arrival of the railway brought prosperity and new industries including brickmaking, cheese production, printing, soap manufacture and at the end of the 19th century one of the first petrol engine plants in the country.

In the Second World War Gillingham's railway station (which is on the line from London to Exeter) was also key to its rapid growth, as many evacuees were relocated there. Gillingham's position 4 miles south of the A303, the main London to southwest England road, means it remains a popular commuter town.

To find out more about Gillingham, visit the Town Council's website: <http://www.gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk/>

To read the Gillingham Town Design Statement that will inform the forthcoming Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, visit: <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/405456>

Commission Aims

The ambition is for the artist/creative facilitator to influence and add value to the Neighbourhood Plan under development for Gillingham. The project should set an example for best practice in creative engagement in community-led planning, and leave a legacy of tools and ideas which might be taken up by other Neighbourhood Plan groups who may not have a creative facilitator in place.

The artist/creative facilitator selected will be expected to undertake a period of research to acquaint themselves with Gillingham, the wider Neighbourhood Planning process and specifically the intentions for the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, with a view to informing their ideas and the other outputs (see page 5). The appointed creative facilitator will be expected to gather information and contribute ideas to be embedded into the wider Neighbourhood Plan.

The artist/creative facilitator will need to consult and collaborate with the client, project manager and the Neighbourhood Plan group to fully understand the opportunities and constraints offered by the project.

Where the production of a specific document or output (such as the cultural audit) is mentioned within the project aims, the role of the artist/creative facilitator is to enable and support its production through joint working with the Neighbourhood Plan group.

The key project aims are to:

- Ensure that best practice in culture and creativity is reflected in, and incorporated into, the finished Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan
- Broaden the Neighbourhood Plan group members' understanding of what engaging artists and creative practitioners in this context means and what unique opportunities this may offer
- Build confidence and awareness within the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan group around commissioning artists and creative practice
- To complete a cultural audit outlining cultural assets in Gillingham for incorporation into, and to inform the findings of, the Neighbourhood Plan
- To identify opportunities for the provision of arts and culture in Gillingham, and through the research process to help create the space for these opportunities to develop
- Demonstrate the value of creative consultation/community engagement in the development of community-led plans.

Questions that might be asked and answered through the process might be:

- How many creative practitioners are based in or near Gillingham, and what are their skills and interests?
- Does Gillingham offer sufficient cultural opportunities and facilities through its current built environment? If not, what might these include in future?
- Are there any buildings in Gillingham that might be suitable for and identified for cultural community development, such as an old building (cinema/theatre) which could be brought back into use?
- Are there any sites in the public realm that may be suited to public art commissioning (temporary or permanent)? This may include festivals or one-off live events/street theatre as well as more permanent design improvements.
- Are there any existing cultural opportunities that could be developed or built on (eg youth centre, skate park, library)

The N3 steering group would like this project to explore how culture can benefit different aspects of the community, and consider if and how the arts can bring a diverse community together. However, these are much broader questions to bear in mind rather than answer through the project.

Approach

Project development

It is expected that the artist/creative facilitator will engage in an initial period of research and development. This will involve working closely in collaboration with the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan group and lead to the outputs outlined on this page.

Maintenance

While it is not expected that design proposals will be produced through the process, it is important that the artist/creative facilitator has an understanding that any realised design proposals should require minimum maintenance, can be easily cleaned as part of the area's general cleaning and maintenance schedule and should have a design life of at least twenty years.

Programme

The project will include two interim meetings. At these meetings the artist/creative facilitator will present ideas and proposals to the steering group which will comprise of client representatives and Ginkgo Projects. Other relevant individuals may be invited along if necessary. The programme for interim progress meetings will be agreed with the client and artist upon selection.

Artist appointed	mid August 2012
Interim progress meeting 1	end September 2012
Interim progress meeting 2	end November 2012
Artist project completion	January 2013

It is hoped that the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan will be completed by 2013.

Outputs

The outputs from the project will be:

- The production of an audit of cultural assets and opportunities in Gillingham
- The production of a list of identified opportunities for the provision of arts and culture in Gillingham
- Research material
- A detailed budget for community engagement events
- A delivered programme of creative community engagement events that demonstrate the value of culture and creativity and help to prove their value in a local planning context, feeding into the conclusions of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The events programme should include ideas that might be replicated by other Neighbourhood Plan groups elsewhere. It is hoped that the way of working developed through this project will provide a model to support Neighbourhood Plan groups to lead the process on their own in future.

NOTE: It is important that the creative facilitator is aware that their role is to *facilitate* and *support* the production of the cultural audit, list of opportunities and events programme by the Neighbourhood Plan group. It is not intended that they should produce these on their own.

The appointed creative facilitator will be expected to:

- spend time in Gillingham, attending meetings with Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group

Requirements

The artist/creative facilitator should:

- have experience of delivering creative community engagement events
- have experience of working with members of the community
- have an understanding of how the arts can be integrated successfully into the public realm
- have some knowledge/understanding of, and interest in, the planning process (particularly community-led planning)
- hold public liability insurance up to £5m.



Contracts and Payment

It is expected that the fee below will be paid on approved completion of the project, however if required an intermediate payment point of 50% of the fee can be paid at a point agreed between the artist/creative facilitator and client.

Artist fee: £4,200 exclusive of VAT (14 days @ £300 per day including expenses)

Materials budget: £ 300

Invoices will be paid in arrears following the agreed approval points to be outlined in the contract. Invoices should be addressed to the client, Dorset Wildlife Trust, but sent via the project manager at Ginkgo Projects.

Copyright

The copyright of all submitted research and any other work will be held in favour of the artist/creative facilitator. Ownership of all submitted research material and other work will be held in ownership of the client.

How to Apply

If you are interested in applying for this project, please send:

- A recent copy of your CV
- A brief written statement about your work
- Up to 10 images or other material showing examples of your previous work
- A brief outline of how you might approach this project (no more than a side of A4)

Applications should be sent via email to suzanne@ginkgoprojects.co.uk by:
5pm, Friday 10th August 2012.

Supporting information may also be sent by post to Suzanne Heath at Ginkgo Projects (see contact details below). If you have any questions or would like further information please contact Suzanne.

A shortlist of artists will be invited to interview in Gillingham on the afternoon of Friday 17th August 2012.

The appointed artist will be required to attend a visioning session in Gillingham on Tuesday 28th August 2012, with a view to producing material to feed in to a public visioning session to be held in October 2012.

Contacts

The key contact will be the art project manager at Ginkgo Projects. Other contacts will be available from the project manager upon commencement of the project.

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