



ARTIST OPPORTUNITY - PUBLIC ART COMMISSION LLYNFI VALLEY, MAESTEG, SOUTH WALES

BRIEF FOR ARTISTS

BACKGROUND

Sustrans Cymru has appointed Elbow Room to work with them to develop and manage a public art commission adjacent to the Llynfi Valley Cycle Trail recently completed in Maesteg. This trail is part of 'the Valleys Cycle Network' project - a new network of over 100 miles (400km) of cycling and walking trails throughout the South Wales Valleys.

Sustrans Cymru are the UK's leading walking and cycling charity. Sustrans work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in. This project is a collaboration with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and the Welsh Government, who are partners in the Valleys Regional Park initiative, through a project part funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The overarching project aims to connect users of the trail with the wildlife, schools, communities and facilities of the Llynfi valley and Maesteg, promote everyday journeys by foot or by bike, present opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and work with artists within the community thereby improving the public spaces, the environment and accessibility for the local towns and people.

THE PROJECT

The site for the artwork is next to Maesteg Comprehensive School and the newly opened Llynfi Valley Cycle Route which connects Maesteg and nearby Caerau and will soon link to the Afan Valley. It is a triangular shaped piece of flat scrub land (approximately 100 x 300 metres and totalling 1 hectare) reclaimed in 2004 and defined by three tarmac paths with views of Maesteg and the surrounding hills. It occupies a slight plateau bounded by a stream leading to a small pool on one side and an incline descending to Maesteg town on the other. The site has newly made oak seating and six stone way markers inscribed with poetry written by local school pupils nearby. The surrounding landscape has been sculpted from the waste heaps and workings of a now demolished coal mine and the resulting slopes have been planted with native mixed woodland trees interspersed with locally occurring wild plants and shrubs.



Left – Map with cycle routes shown in blue with seating area in red



Above – land immediately to the north of the site.



Above – cycle routes converge at the north-western tip of the site.



Above – the seating area looking towards the site.

The site used to be at the northern end of the Maesteg Washery. The triangular shape of the cycle routes mimics the junction of railway lines which previously brought wagons of coal from different collieries to be sorted and cleaned. Today the area is already regularly used by cyclists and walkers and we are looking for an appropriate artwork that gives a sense of intrigue and counterpoint to the surrounding views. Sustainability and the environment are key aspects of the project and the appointed artist would have these concepts as a primary concern in their own creative practice.

It is felt that the site lends itself to the use of natural materials, planting and the possible re-distribution, addition or sculpting of some of the land surface itself to create a 'land art' piece with a strong but subtle profile. However, we are not prescriptive or hard-and-fast about this and want artists to follow their own practice and materials. There is the expectation that the whole area will be very simply landscaped in some way, but in terms of the footprint for the actual artwork it is not necessary to think about using the whole of the site, which is quite substantial. The addition of small, sympathetic interventions or structures could also be considered. It is worth noting that the area is slightly set aside from the town itself, vehicular access is limited and there is little provision for on-going maintenance therefore, any artwork placed at the site will need to be extremely robust and self-sustaining with the acknowledgement of health & safety issues. The site is also open to the elements and windy, with drainage issues which would need to be considered during the design stage.

The appointed artist would be expected to create links with the nearby schools and community to enhance their interest, involvement, engagement and 'ownership' of the project and discuss issues such as sustainability, biodiversity, the environment or landscape through their work. The nearby Comprehensive School is embarking on a project to create an allotment in their grounds and a market garden is being created in Caerau at the northern end of the site. Such skills in community food and land management are developing in the area.

THE ARTIST

The artist will be experienced in high quality, contemporary, public artwork and social engagement projects, self-motivated and pro-active with an interest in interacting with the people who live in the area. They will have sustainability, the environment and biodiversity as significant aspects of their creative practice and approach.

They will also be aware of the requirements of health & safety, structural, maintenance and other issues and be able to converse with contractors and other professionals. They will have £5Million public liability insurance plus it may be necessary to have a CRB check depending on the type of project undertaken.

The artist will work with the Arts Development Officer of Bridgend County Borough Council and Sustrans to encourage community awareness and involvement. The artist will liaise with Elbow Room who are managing the commission to ensure that deadlines, budgets and other project details are clearly defined and adhered to. There will be key meetings with the partners (Sustrans Cymru, BCBC and any other appropriate stakeholders) to agree the proposals and then to agree all design details prior to realisation.

TIMESCALE

Artist application deadline: 29th February 2012.

Artist Interviews: Week commencing 5th March 2012.

Research / proposals / design details: 15th May 2012.

Fabrication / construction / planting etc: May – September 2012.

Final completion and sign-off: September 2012.

BUDGET

The overall budget for this project is in the region of £45,000 and includes all artist fees, research and design, materials, planting, any sub-contracted costs, transport, structural reports, fabrication

and installation.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this project you must be registered on the Sell2Wales procurement site. You can do this by visiting www.sell2wales.co.uk and filling in the simple form.

Please send a letter (no more than 2 sides A4) stating your interest in the project and outlining why your practice and approach would be suitable along with a current CV. Please also provide up to 10 images of recent, relevant work in PowerPoint, jpeg or PDF format. Images should be numbered and accompanied by a corresponding list that includes title, date, dimensions, location and media as appropriate. Applications should be no larger than 6MB.

If you would like a brief informal discussion regarding the brief please contact Walt Warrilow on 07906 654091.

Please send applications to: walt@elbowroom.org.uk

THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IS 29th FEBRUARY 2012

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection panel will be made up of representatives from Sustrans Cymru, BCBC, Valleys Regional Park and Elbow Room. This panel will compile a shortlist of up to 5 artists who will be invited to interview. One candidate will be appointed following the interview process.

NOTES TO THE BRIEF

Sustrans

Sustrans is a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. In 1995 they were the first charity to receive funding from the newly-created National Lottery, enabling them to build the first 2,500 miles of National Cycle Network. Since then the network has grown enormously, now spanning an incredible 12,000 miles across the UK. These walking and cycling routes are available to everyone, passing within a mile of 55% of homes and carrying over a million journeys a day.

To find out more about Sustrans please visit their website: www.sustrans.org.uk

The Valleys Cycle Network

Sustrans is working in partnership to extend the National Cycle Network in South Wales by a further 100 miles. Following former tramways, towpaths and railways, the new paths will enhance the existing 250 miles of Valleys routes, providing even more opportunities for exploring the beautiful South Wales Valleys on foot and by bicycle.

