

Public Art Commission: Dowd's Farm Park, Hedge End

Youth Shelter: Artist's Brief

Eastleigh Borough Council are looking to appoint a dynamic, forward thinking Artist to design, fabricate and install a Youth Shelter at Dowd's Farm Park, Hedge End.

The main aims of the Youth Shelter 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, helping to foster respect for all the park's facilities and users.
- Increase awareness of the park's unique history and biodiversity and help to preserve it.
- Provide a meeting place and shelter that is both practical and visually stimulating.

Background to the 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, residents from the Dowd's Farm development and Swathling Housing Society. Funding for public art was secured at the outset through developers' contributions.

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 society, whilst the rest are privately owned or rented.

Dowd's Farm Park 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 a picnic area, children's play area and a youth kick about area, separated by natural open grassland, pathways, trees and a lake.

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 is a major asset for the surrounding communities. From February to June 2009, Adrian Moakes worked with the community to create a public art vision for the park. Further details of the full public art vision for Dowd's Farm Park can be found at <http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/ebc-4113> One of the most popular ideas to come from the consultation and form part of the vision is a youth shelter.

The existing youth kick about area is an important facility that has been created in the new park with the support of the local community. It is felt that this area could be further improved by the provision of a youth shelter. The youth shelter should not only be practical

and very robust, but an inspiring, welcoming place for young people to meet and spend their leisure time.

History and Subject Matter (a detailed version is included in the vision document)

All the artworks commissioned for Dowd's Farm Park will be unique interpretations of different aspects of the site's history, wildlife and environment. There is a wealth of interesting subjects to inspire both artists and community participants.

An archaeological investigation in 2006 uncovered significant evidence of the site being a settlement and agricultural land since the 4th Millennium BC. Extensive field patterns and ditch systems dated back to Romano-British times, carefully reused until the farm closed in 2000. Due to the longevity of human occupation and agriculture, Dowd's Farm is important to our understanding of the rural past, the extensive remains making it a place of regional importance.

The park greatly benefits from being partly surrounded by majestic 17th century Oak trees and ancient hedgerows with a fine variety of trees and shrubs, enhanced by wild Dwarf Daffodils, Snowdrops and Ferns. The old Ivy and tree roots form intriguing natural sculptures and there are a number of coppiced Hazels nearby, evidence of a secondary industry that once thrived in the area.

The new park incorporates native tree and shrub planting, wetland and grassland areas with an array of wild flowers. The existing lake has been enlarged and is a marvellous feature that already attracts various ducks and gulls. It shouldn't be long before fish inhabit the lake, distributed by birds to join the toads, frogs and dragonflies which have found their own way to the water.

As one would expect, the area attracts all the common British birds as well as a great variety of seasonal visitors. The hedgerows and wetlands are natural habitats for field mice, rats, squirrels, moles and hedgehogs, plus occasional badgers, stoats and foxes. The old farmhouse has been retained, not least because it has Pipistrelle Bats and protected Brown Long-eared Bats roosting in the roof. They fly along the ancient double hedgerow connecting the farmhouse to Tollbar Way.

Artist's role

The artist role will be to design, fabricate and install a youth shelter at Dowd's Farm Park, reflecting a key aspect of the above subject matter. We would like the artwork to facilitate a visitor to the park's discovery of some part of the site's unique history, wildlife and environment. The artist may wish to undertake detailed research further to inform the development of the design. The design will need to be submitted to the Public Arts Officer for approval by the steering group, with a risk assessment for the installation of the work. Planning permission may be required if the shelter is over 2 metres high and further advice will be given by appropriate officers.

It is proposed to invite the Hedge End Youth Council and young people who visit 'The Box' to be involved in the development process of the shelter. The Box provides a venue for young people in the Hedge End, West End and Botley areas, bringing together young people's services and providing exciting projects for young people aged 13-19 years.

In order to undertake the commission as a true collaboration between artist and young people, a comprehensive series of workshops will be required. Existing projects around the country have shown there is a good chance that involvement in the development of such unique features will engender a genuine sense of ownership. It certainly increases the likelihood of participants encouraging all users of the park to look after the community facilities, planting and other artworks.

The artist will be required to provide regular photographic and written updates throughout the project that can be uploaded on to the Eastleigh Borough Council public art website, used in the Borough News magazine and other press releases.

The artist will also be involved in the unveiling of the youth shelter and will be required to provide an exhibition to coincide with this event that explains the thought processes behind the youth shelter, charts the development of the work with young people and the construction and installation of the finished piece.

Draft timescale

Deadline for artist's notes of interest	2 nd October 2009
Artist interviews	16 th October 2009
Unveiling of the Youth Shelter	May 2010

Budget

A budget of £10,000 +VAT is available for this commission. The budget is to cover all fees, materials, fabrication, delivery, installation, consultant fees and expenses. The artist will not be an employee of the Council and will be responsible for his/her own National Insurance and income tax contributions. The artist must also have appropriate public liability insurance and be subject to a CRB check where required.

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

A statement about your interest in the project and how your experience is relevant (Please make it clear which commission you are interested in)

Your current CV

10 images (max) from your current portfolio

Please provide all information in electronic form as all notes of interest will be circulated to the commissioning panel for short listing on CD-ROM. Unfortunately work cannot be returned.

Please send or email this information to the following address by 2nd October 2009 5pm.

Joanne Moody
Public Arts Officer

Joanne.moody@eastleigh.gov.uk
Tel: 023 8068 8822