

Artist's Brief

Project Title: *Interpreting Living Landscapes*

Location: West Dorset



Client: Dorset Wildlife Trust on behalf of Dorset Design and Heritage Forum

Date: March 2013



Introduction

This commission forms project 6 of N3: Nature Network Neighbourhood, a funded programme of six creative projects focussing on developing innovative creative responses in the public realm within Dorset.

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) is the county's leading charitable membership body committed to ensuring there is a future for Dorset's nature – its distinctive wildlife and natural spaces. DWT uses its influence and practical experience of land management and marine conservation to inspire, inform and engage people in Dorset.

DWT are looking to commission an artist or designer to explore new approaches to interpreting the concept of 'Living Landscapes' at a number of its nature reserves in West Dorset. The Living Landscapes concept seeks to restore, recreate and reconnect wildlife habitats in harmony with the way people live and work with nature, giving wildlife a better chance to cope with changes in the economy, communities and climate.

Possible approaches are:

- 1) To integrate static interpretation into existing infrastructure (gates, paths, fences, etc.)
- 2) To use location based technologies to provide a platform for a multifaceted interpretation - oral history, sound art and digital art, material created by conservation professionals, artists and the local community – all encouraging a much wider cultural understanding of sites, their history, present and future.

There could also be approaches that combine these two concepts and that use infrastructure reference points as platforms for digital technologies.

The aim of the project is to communicate the ecological, cultural and social value of Living Landscapes to local people and visitors, helping explain the connections between people and place. The intention is to produce a model which can be adapted or developed for use at other wildlife sites across the county.

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. Read more about DDHF at:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/390645>

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: The involvement of an artist / creative facilitator on the development of Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, North Dorset;

PROJECT 4: An artist commission funded by Dorchester Business Improvement District and linked to highways developments in Dorchester town centre;

PROJECT 5: Animal Architecture – an artist commission funded by Synergy Housing for an artist or designer to design and build a piece of ‘animal architecture’ to be integrated into a new housing development in Littlemoor.

PROJECT 6: (this project)

West Dorset

The landscape of West Dorset is very varied, dramatic and rich in wildlife. It is a working and living landscape with mixed farmland and a rich historic and built heritage. Over 70% of the district falls within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) owns and manages a number of sites in West Dorset, including two outstanding nature reserves- Kingcombe Meadows and Powerstock Common. All nature reserves are open at all times and free to access. DWT also owns and manages the Kingcombe Centre in West Dorset, a leading environmental education establishment. Details of all the reserves and the Kingcombe Centre are available at <http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk>

Current interpretation for DWT's West Dorset nature reserves includes information & interpretation panels, signage, leaflets & maps, website, webcams, video clips and podcasts.

More about 'Living Landscapes'

The Living Landscapes vision takes a landscape-scale approach to conserving nature in the UK. This involves enlarging, improving and joining up areas of land to create a connected ecological network across the UK, for the benefit of both wildlife and people.

In recent history, our landscapes have seen dramatic losses and declines. Habitats that once stretched for miles now exist as small, isolated fragments surrounded by a landscape often inhospitable to wildlife, dominated by intensive agriculture and urban development.

Nature reserves are unique and special havens for wildlife. But nature reserves are not enough – nature can't exist in a box. Wildlife needs room to move, especially in the face of climate change.

To allow wildlife to disperse through the countryside we need to restore, recreate and reconnect habitats on a landscape scale

Continuous corridors of suitable habitat, such as river valleys or diverse hedgerows, act as 'wildlife highways' allowing species to travel through areas disturbed by human influence as they disperse through the landscape to find suitable living conditions.

Habitats can also be connected by a series of stepping stones, rather than a large swath of continuous habitat. Stepping stones are smaller, unconnected natural areas, pockets of wildlife-rich land that act as stop-off points for wildlife on the move – for example a series of copses in a farmed landscape.

There are a range of mechanisms for delivering landscape-scale conservation, such as acquiring new land, advising farmers and landowners, working with business and influencing national policy.

Further information can be found at:

http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/what_are_living_landscapes.html

Map of West Dorset



Project Aims

The overarching project aims are to:

- find new ways to communicate the concept of 'Living Landscapes'
- show the connectivity of people and place
- encourage people to explore and enjoy the natural environment
- work in partnership with Dorset Wildlife Trust on the development of the project
- highlight the links between landscape and food production

The artist may:

- use any form – painting, sculpture, photography, digital media, etc.
- choose to develop the project incorporating some rather than all of the aims

The artist should:

- create a pilot project - an object, digital work, etc. which could be developed for use elsewhere

The work may be situated, or concerned with, one or more of DWT's nature reserves, or may be more generally about the project area.

Timescale

Deadline for submissions: 30th April 2013

Selection of artist: May 2013

Deadline for delivery of project: 30th September 2013

Contracts and Payment

It is expected that payment for the commission will be paid in two stages.

Total budget including fee, expenses and materials: £4,500.

This payment will be made in the following stages:

Stage 1: £2,250 for research, concept design, materials

Stage 2: £2,250 Payable on delivery

All costs are exclusive of VAT

Invoices will be paid as per contract. Invoice should be sent to Dorset Wildlife Trust

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 by email to Jane Franklin **by 9am on 30th April 2013**. Shortlisted artists will be invited to interview on 10th May at the Kingcombe Centre in West Dorset.

Supporting information may also be sent by post to Jane Franklin at Dorset Wildlife Trust (see contact details below)

Contacts

The key contact will be DWT's Communications & Design Manager Jane Franklin.

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