

Art Leading Wayfinding project in Thame

Aims & Ambitions of the project

Thame has a rich heritage with permanent settlement being documented for over 5000 years. Different areas of the town have grown up during different periods. A theme of 'Meeting Places' has been identified for this project as much of the development of the town has been as a result of people meeting for a specific purpose.

We want to create several pieces of high-quality artwork, which celebrates the heritage and history of the town using this theme, at the same time as improving communication routes through the town, and specifically connecting outlying estates into Thame.

Each piece of artwork will be distinct and yet connected to the other pieces in the project and to a central piece of art in the town centre. Each piece of artwork needs to:

- Be of high artistic quality but also durable, functional and easy to maintain
- Reinforce and celebrate the history and heritage of Thame. Each piece must be linked to the distinct history and/or heritage of the place it is located in. Thame has a broad and diverse history and this is well documented and mapped.
- Either support wayfinding around the town being designed in a way that allows the inclusion of directional signage to relevant locations; or be a standalone piece of work that provides a landmark and/or a functional feature such as artistic seating, lighting, railings or similar.

Scope of works

We are looking for an artist (but would also consider a group of artists), specialising in public art who brings the community together and creates special and bespoke features of the public realm.

Our main focus is to create a series of 40 wayfinding route markers of varying artistic complexities around the town. The choice of sites for the location of these have been identified by an external wayfinding company and can be provided. We are also keen to develop artistic focal features in central locations of 3 new estates. These could incorporate additional functionality as notice boards that can be regularly updated if you choose. If not alternative notice boards will be implemented near to the artwork. Details of the 'Meeting Places' theme relevant to each location will also be made clear during the development of the work. The themes are a proposal, and The Public Art Working Group is open to alternative suggestions from the successful artist/s, provided anything proposed meets the aims and ambitions of the project.

There is also scope to create additional pieces of work that are standalone pieces of art on up to 9 identified locations. This could be in the form of a landmark or a functional piece of art, such as artistic seating, lighting, railings or similar. This varies based on the location. In submitting their responses Artists are asked to make clear

how many locations they want to establish their works of art on, opting to propose for as many sites as they choose to.

Medium and materials used must be long lasting as they will be subject to the elements at all times, so we are looking for artists with a track record in mediums such as metal, stone, resin or brick. Consideration will be given to wood.

The wayfinding/noticeboard element of each piece needs to be able to be updated in future years.

Community Engagement

We would like each work of art to have a genuine relationship with the people who live in the locations immediately around it. We would also like the entire project to have a relationship with the population of Thame as a whole. The Public Art Working Group will be keen to help the chosen artist/s make contact with relevant local groups.

Regular updates to be provided by the artist and the Public Art Working Group by attending the Town Centre Working Group, and via the Town Council Website and Newsletter.

We would like to explore further community engagement with our chosen artist in a post-COVID 19 safe and inclusive way with a combination of real time workshops, virtual meetings, remote projects and meet the artist sessions. Each workshop will be fully risk assessed nearer the time.

Proposed Timescale

This is the proposed timescale, but all dates are flexible and subject to change based on times of Council Meetings and impact of Covid-19 restrictions. This will be communicated to artists, as relevant, throughout.

Brief Advertised	Aoril 2021
Submission Deadline	25 May 2021
Shortlisting/applicant assessment	May 2021
Artists interviewed	June 2021
Contract Selected artist	June 2021
Research design	July 2021
Community Engagement/ workshops etc	Aug 2021- Sept 2021
Select final design(s)	Sept 2021
Planning Permission if required	Oct 2021 – Nov 2021
Fabrication contract?	Nov 2021
Fabrication	By Jan 2022
Installation	Feb 2022
Launch Celebration	March 2022

Budget

A sum of £40,000 towards directional signage and information boards on footways has been allocated. This fee should cover all costs associated with the design

process, local research and workshops, materials, fabrication, transport and installation of any wayfinding route markers and associated notice boards. We would like this to take place in 2 phases: the first phase is for research community engagement and design (of up to £2000). At this point we will require a risk assessment, installation and method statement. The second phase (pending fully costed design proposals) for creations, delivery of works, installation and unveiling of the works of art (for the remaining £38,000).

We have an additional amount of £30,000 for up to 9 pieces of public art that are situated within our wayfinding routes, but standalone from them. We would like to commission our chosen artists for this in 2 phases: the first phase is for research community engagement and design (for up to £1,500). At this point we will require a risk assessment, installation and method statement. The second phase (pending fully costed design proposals) for creations, delivery of works, installation and unveiling of the works of art (for up to £28,500)

Commissioning Process

The contract will be managed by Thame Town Council. Installation will be arranged directly with Thame Town Council.

We are advertising this opportunity both locally and nationally. Artists will be shortlisted by The Public Art Working Group based on the quality of their work, their enthusiasm about this project and ability to meet the brief within budget.

Shortlisted artists will be interviewed by a panel appointed by the Town Centre Working Group. The chosen artist will be selected on the quality of their previous work and their approach to design.

Once commissioned the artists will be asked to undertake a design phase, researching the history and context of the site and the town. The artist will be expected to engage with The Public Arts Working Group during this phase to make use of the work and knowledge already in place.

After this research phase designs will be presented to the Public Arts Working Group and The Town Centre Working Group and a short list will be prepared for consultation with the wider community. Further approval for the final design might be needed depending on scale and design.

Thame Town Council will be responsible for ongoing maintenance and priority consideration should be given to the ease of maintenance (e.g. ease of access for regular annual maintenance).

Applications

Expression of interest should be submitted electronically to becky.Reid@thametowncouncil.gov.uk entitled 'Expression of Interest in Art Works for Thame Wayfinding project by 25 May 2021 and should include:

- Examples of at least 6 previous projects you have worked on

- An artistic statement in response to the brief and your interest in the project
- An indication of your approach and ideas to this opportunity
- Ability to deliver this project within the indicated budget and timescales
- The name and contact details of a previous commissioner

Further enquiries about the project should be sent to:

Abigail.brown@southandvale.gov.uk

South Oxfordshire District Council

Or

Becky.Reid@thametowncouncil.gov.uk

Thame Town Council