

## **Faringdon Public Arts Plan**

### **The Pink Pigeons Plans**

Throughout our history, towns and public spaces have been enhanced by the use of decorative arts, crafts and design, from historic monuments and sculpture to innovative designs of signs, gateways, paving and the interpretation of locations.

Working with artists offers opportunities to design schemes that go beyond the purely functional and create places that reflect the life and aspirations of an area and its people. Works of art can give quality, character and a human dimension to new development. They can make a positive contribution to the character of the place, especially if they draw inspiration from local themes or associations, creating a positive image for an area.

The effects of both temporary and permanent Public Art not only creates this long lasting social and cultural legacy but has an impact of which can be seen in growth in creative industries, tourism, enhancing perceptions of an area and positive economic effect.

During a recent consultation for the Vale of White Horse District Council Public Art Policy colleagues, artists and local people were asked what they felt the benefits of Public Art were. Here follows some of the main benefits identified;

- Creates unique identity for an area
- Adds interest, quality and distinctiveness in the physical environment
- Pride among communities
- Provides a legacy for the future - creating tomorrow's heritage
- Provides employment for artists and craftspeople
- Encourages debate about art and change in public spaces
- Enjoyment and interest of local people and visitors
- Encourages Individual well being, aspirations and empowerment
- Integrates new developments into existing townscapes
- Gives places personality and a positive image
- Indicates a passion for a local community
- Gets the local community involved in art
- a good consultation tool - empower local communities and allows people feel listened to
- Celebrates local communities creativity
- Identity and heritage
- Makes sense of surrounding and sense of belonging

Here follows a considered and informed 5 year plan of how to drive as well as react with the newly adopted Public Art Policy. The Public Art Policy is the framework to which Public Art operates within the planning process. This plan in a more strategic look at Public Art within the Town and it's future plans and ambitions.

The opportunity in Faringdon exists to create a plan for art works/ art trail that is desired by the community, so that in some cases developers can make an off site contribution to arts projects and with a voluntary and independent group further funds can be sought to commission works identified within this plan.

### **Vale of White Horse and Public Art Commissioning**

The Vale of White Horse has an active Public Art policy. It states that "The council is committed to improving the physical environment through public art. This policy promotes incorporation of Public Art into building projects in the Vale as a percentage of the build cost. The District council will adhere to this policy in its own capital building programme as well as promote the policy with developers through the planning process" (refer to page 38, DC4 of the Local Plan)."

The Percent for Art policy seeks to encourage developers of public and private buildings to devote a proportion of their expenditure to the provision of a public work of art. Works of art can give quality, character and human scale to new development. They can make a positive contribution to the character of an area, especially if they draw inspiration from local themes or associations.

The key elements to the work the Council will support are:

- Increasing access to the arts by creating work in non-arts locations (public space rather than a gallery or theatre etc)
- encouraging public engagement
- creating innovative approaches to commissioning and interpreting Public Art
- encouraging ambitious ideas
- development of local, professional artists
- ensuring artistic quality.

### **Vale of white horse district council public art and current process**

The current practice of Public Art Commissioning in the district a reactive strategy to commissioning works through the planning process – either as an 'on site' contribution as part of the planning conditions or a pre

agreed sum (often stipulating the art form and location) commuted to the council to commission a work of art on or 'reasonably related to' the development site.

Over the past 10 years the Vale of White Horse District Council has commissioned over 20 public works of art through the planning process. In the past 5 years the Vale of White Horse District Council has commissioned 9 Public Art works on behalf of developers, totaling over £245,000 in financial contributions. There are 6 projects currently in progress exceeding the value of £225,000, with an expected 4 larger projects (developments of over 1000 units) potentially contributing over £1.2m towards public art commissions.

Below; some examples of recent commissions in residential locations (from left to right);

'Voices from the Brook' by Steve Geliot at Letcombe Brook, Wantage

'Boots@ and 'Apron' by Diana Belle at Merchants Place, Abingdon

'Mosaic' by Rob Turner at Chapel Close, Wantage

'The Abingdon Sword Bridge' by Richard Farrington at Thamesview, Abingdon

Railings by Jon Mills at the Vineyard, Abingdon

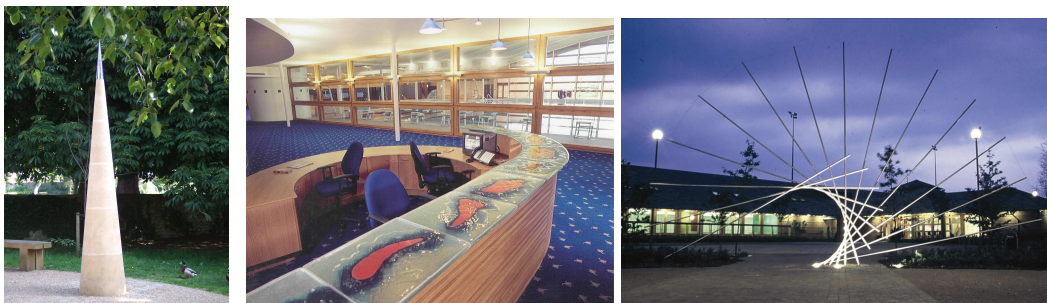
Carving by Giles McDonald

Abingdon A by Philip Bews and Diane Gorvin



On rare occasions funding has been sort for projects that have been devised through need or opportunity (a historic celebration/ commemoration or a new public/ civic building. Recent examples include the following;

Needle MLFIVX, by  
White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre  
Tiblesly Park Entrance feature



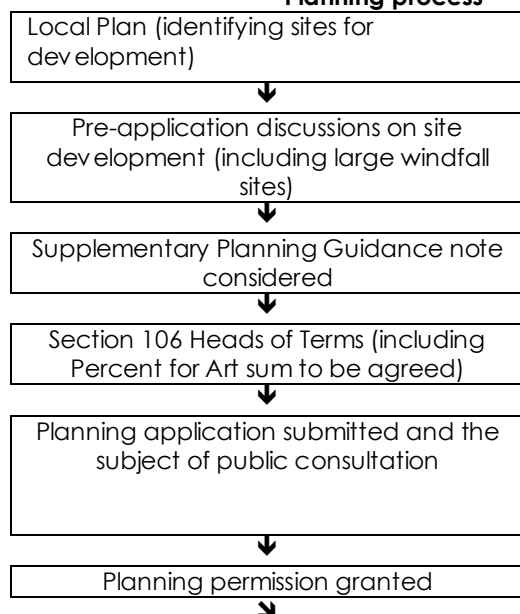
### **What is Vale of White Horse District Council's role?**

Vale of White Horse District Council as the planning authority has main responsibility for encouragement, implementation and enforcement of the Public Art obligations through the planning process. This will also include granting Planning Permission for public works of art themselves. The Arts Development Officer works on many different projects throughout the district, across different art forms and many different communities, although retains a specialism in Public Art Commissioning. Therefore the main functions of ;

- Advise planning officers on Public Art potential in new large scale developments (specifically on public art priorities, timescales, value and project planning in order to incorporate into Section 106 Agreements/ planning conditions)
- Identify opportunities for Public Art in new schemes, developments and initiatives
- Advise, guide and steer developers the development of Public Art within new developments
- Manage specific projects
- Develop future plans and encourage off site contributions
- Develop and encourage local artists
- Encourage local communities to participate public art creation
- Document, maintain or decommission previously commissioned works of art
- Publicise and promote existing work of art in the district

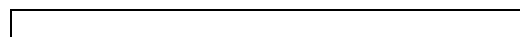
## Current process of acquiring Percent for Art contributions

### Planning process

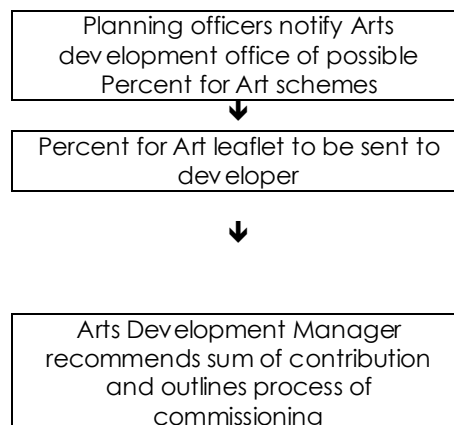


### Option One

Developer agrees to provide a work of art on the site of development and commissions directly with the assistance of the Arts Development Manager. Further planning approval by the council will be needed unless otherwise specified.



### Arts Development process



Case Office agrees terms of % for art contribution and agrees on one of the following 2 options

### Option two

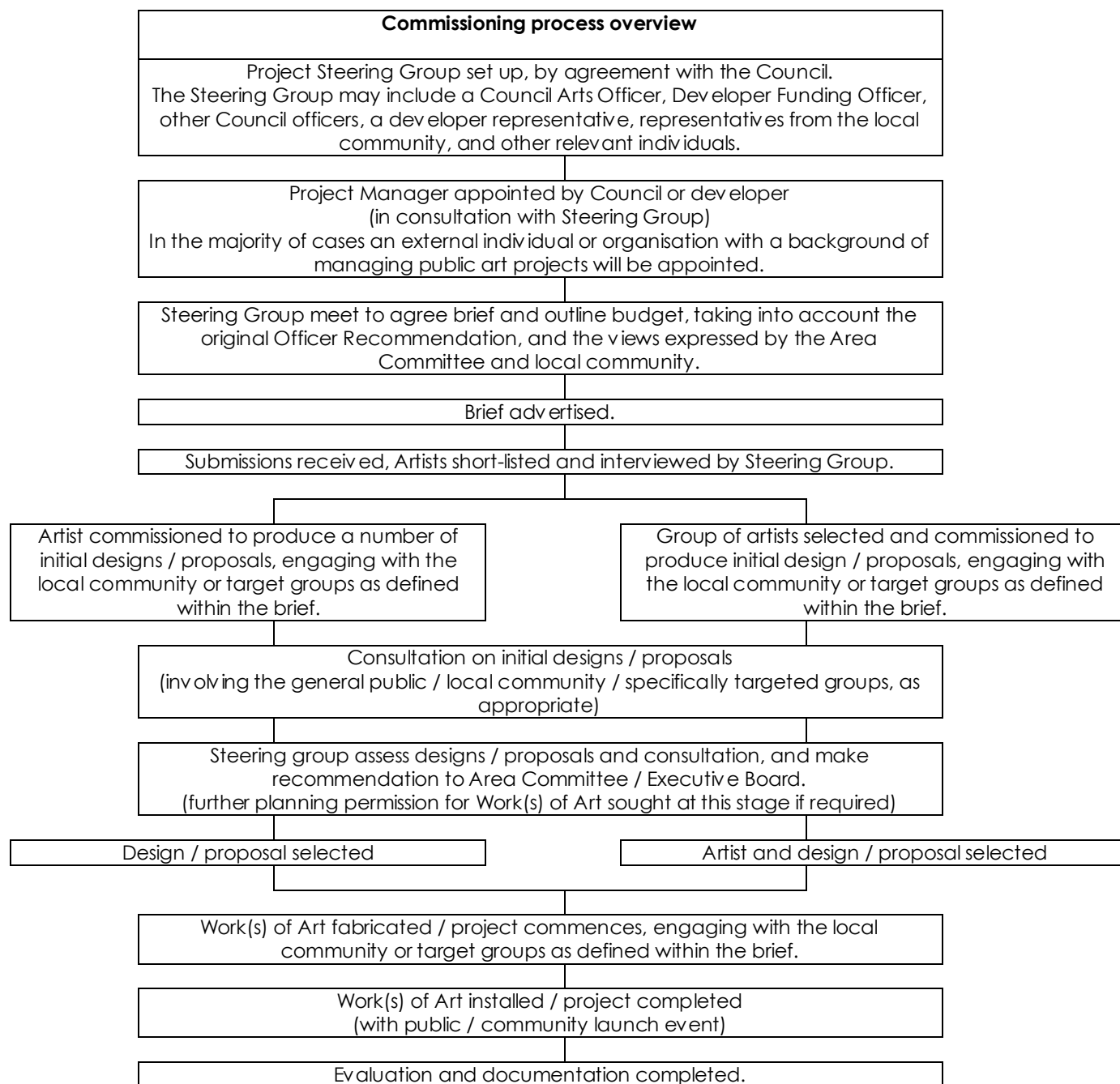
Developer gives the contribution to the Council to manage the commissioning of the work of art on their behalf. Developer will work with the Arts Development Officer to select appropriate artists and give design brief.

Percent for Art sum received

Commissioning process begins (see appendix for a template of a predicted timescale and standard practice).

Arts Development Manager will liaise with colleagues in other departments of the council such as...

- Legal to draft contracts for artists and developer
- Accountancy department to ensure the S106 funds have arrived and are being held in an appropriate account.
- Engineers department for health and safety implications
- Estates department (if on public land it needs to be officially adopted and put on asset register)
- Grounds maintenance (to calculate any costs or implications the work would have on the space in the longer term).
- Community Safety to liaise with Thames Valley Police to advise on human interference impact.



## Context of work in Faringdon

Faringdon has a collection of intriguing and quirky works of art within the landscape, although they are not immediately obvious to the passer by.

There are examples of artworks within the town already such as the following;



However the following areas within the town have been identified as places that could be artistically enhanced:

- The Folly Tower and woodland – providing a community facility enhancing a tourist attraction for the town
- The market square
- Gloucester Park
- New developments within the town could be artistically enhanced and new communities engaged through dynamic arts projects.
- Entrance features to the town – building on the success of the Lechlade Road gateway marker points and welcome feature have become a desire for the town to develop. Opportunities on Coxwell Road, Radcot Road and London Street.

Future partners in these ventures will include Faringdon Town Council, Faringdon Joint Environmental Trust, Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council High Ways Department and The National Trust.

Further areas to explore are identified in the Faringdon District Action Plan and the Health Check from 2002 where areas in need of attention were identified as;

- The Telephone Exchange

- The Crown Stables
- The Market Place
- Swan Lane
- The Lees
- Park Road

Some of the above will be developed and rejuvenated in the next five years and the Pink Pigeons will endeavor to work on these plans as well as dives there own permanent and temporary artistic interventions.

A series of proposals from the founder members of The Pink Pigeon Trust [as referenced/ planned in appendix I, ii and iii]. These are all proposed to be commissioned ' In the spirit of Lord Burners'. A distinctive and inspirational character that is in danger of being forgotten within the town.

Lord Burners who lived in Faringdon up until his death in 1950 and is often referred to as the "last great eccentric", provides us with a wonderful opportunity to develop a public art collection for Faringdon that will be uniquely different in being playfully surrealist; whimsically humorous; frivolously silly; surprisingly curious; not only attractive but also a real attraction. Lord Burners showed us the way, realising that his eccentric behaviour was also extremely good for publicity. We now have the opportunity to build on Lord Burners' legacy by developing and commissioning pieces that will make visitors laugh and want to take photographs to show their friends and post on the web. Faringdon's reputation as the market town capital of surrealism will be on its way to being assured.

It is this quirky and eccentric approach that could be captured by a public art trail within the town to make it a distinctive and unique place to live as well as a destination to visit.

### **The Role of The Pink Pigeon Trust**

It is proposed that the Pink Pigeon Trust act as an advisory and commissioning body.

A constitution for a voluntary group that supports current opportunities for Public Art Commissions will help drive new opportunities that need the support and enthusiasm of the community.

The proposed aims of the Group are;

- to improve Faringdon for the benefit of residents, visitors, retail & hospitality sectors
- to encourage involvement of the wider community in the celebration and creation of public art and landmark features of the town



- to foster community spirit and encourage local pride and distinctiveness
- to create works of art
- to support and promote local artists and talent works

These aims will be promoted and achieved through the following ways

1. Promote and celebrate existing artworks in and around the town
2. Seek out opportunities and funding to create new artworks in public areas working in partnership with similar groups and organisations.
3. Act as an advisory board for the Vale of White Horse District Council Arts Development service
4. draw together a plan for Faringdon that will encourage the commissioning of artworks that respond to an artistic vision for the town
5. Publicise and promote the work of the Group and organise meetings, events, projects or festivals etc.
6. The Group, and to open a bank account to manage funds and pay for projects that promote the objects of the group.

## Appendix

- i) FOLLY SCULPTURE TRIAL
- ii) FARINGDON'S CURIOUSLY CLEVER CLEPSYDRA
- iii) FARINGDON'S FAMOUS ANALEMMATIC SOLAR CHRONOMETER
- iv) FARINGDON F.U.N. (Frivolously Unnecessary Notices) TRAIL
- v) Faringdon Local Plan
- vi) Vale of White Horse District Council Supplementary Planning Guidance for Public Art (2006)

### Recommendations/ work plan

Potential locations	Potential art forms	Key aims and artists briefs	Key partners	Funds needed	Timescale	Potential funders
The Folly Tower and woodland	Willow Metal work Environmental arts		Folly Tower Trust	£5K		Community spaces
The market square	Sculpture Clock Weather stone Sun dial	As per Analemmatic solo chronometer proposal	VWHDC OCC Faringdon Town Council	£25K		
Gloucester Park	Sculpture	As per Fibbertigibbet Proposal	Faringdon Town Council	£50k		
New developments a) Bloor Homes b)		a) half on site half off site b)				
Entrance features to the town –Coxwell Road, Radcot Road and London Street.	Metal and stone entrance features	Distinctive, unique and robust				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developer contributions</li> <li>Faringdon Joint Environmental Trust</li> </ul>
The lees underpass	Mural painting		Faringdon Community College	Vale funded		
	The Burners Sign					
	The Phone Box					

## Potential funding sources

[http://www.acre.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment\\_comma.html](http://www.acre.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment_comma.html)  
<http://www.ahfund.org.uk/index.html> (folly tower)  
<http://www.old-possums-practical-trust.org.uk/page.cfm?pageid=300#>  
<http://www.skinnerhall.co.uk/charities/lady-neville-charity.htm>  
<http://www.artfund.org/grants/artfund-collect.html> (are we curators of the Public Realm?)  
<http://www.elephanttrust.org.uk/docs/intro.html>  
[http://www.jpgettytrust.org.uk/funding\\_artsheritage.html](http://www.jpgettytrust.org.uk/funding_artsheritage.html)  
<http://www.wren.org.uk/>  
<http://www.postcodetrust.org.uk/>  
<http://www.biffaward.org/about/soverview>  
<http://www.wolfson.org.uk/>  
<http://www.oxonrcc.org.uk/activities.php?smid=19>

## Commissioning process and artistic policy

There is a huge desire to explore locally based artists such as

- <http://www.koomen.demon.co.uk/garden.htm>
- <http://www.hamishmackie.com>
- [www.gilesmacdonald.com](http://www.gilesmacdonald.com)
- <http://www.vonstumm.co.uk>
- <http://www.wezjacobs.com>
- <http://www.alecpeever.com>
- <http://www.siobancoppinger.co.uk>
- <http://www.michieherbert.co.uk>
- <http://www.brionylawson.com>
- [www.christophertownsend.co.uk](http://www.christophertownsend.co.uk)
- [www.alecpeever.com](http://www.alecpeever.com)
- [www.reddogforge.co.uk](http://www.reddogforge.co.uk)
- <http://www.bewsgorvin.co.uk/work/spiralel.htm>
- <http://www.melissacole.co.uk/>

Each opportunity will be advertised and judged on each artists ability to respond to the project brief. Advertisements and searches will be conducted through these website;

[www.oxonarts.info](http://www.oxonarts.info)  
<http://www.axisweb.org/>  
<http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/craft-directory/>  
[www.artsjobs.org.uk](http://www.artsjobs.org.uk)

In the pursuit of artistic ambition and the unusual artists from a national and international perspective will be encouraged.