



# BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

# Public Art Plan for Badbury Heights Housing Estate

Adopted on: 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Last amended on:

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# Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. What is Public Art?**
- 3. Why do we need a plan?**
- 4. Where are we now?**
- 5. Our Vision**
- 6. Future Maintenance**
- 7. Rules for New Public Art**
- 8. How will we deliver the plan?**

*Please note that this is a living document  
and will be updated regularly as we progress.*



*Bird Sculpture at Blandford Cemetery*

## 1. Introduction

At present, the Town Council has several items that are considered to be Public Art. These include a mosaic in Woodhouse Gardens (to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Town's Charter), two galvanised steel sculptures (at Woodhouse Gardens and the cemetery extension), three military style benches, a railway-themed bench and matching cycle parking, heritage lighting columns and traditional finger posts. It has a collection of Town Silver, however this is only occasionally on public display.

These items have been introduced over a period of years and the purpose of this plan is to redefine Blandford Forum's relationship with Public Art and to focus on the Badbury Heights housing estate. The developer of the housing estate, Persimmon Homes, has committed £52,000 as a Public Art Contribution on land within Phases 1, 2, 3a and 3b (see Appendix A) that must be spent by 2020. At the time of writing, only Phases 1 and 2 have been transferred to the Town Council.

In view of this contribution, the Town Council would like to offer the public new kinds of cultural experience in both conventional and unconventional spaces. To create opportunities both to the town's residents and visiting artists to respond to and contribute to Blandford's built and natural environment, living culture and heritage.

The plan outlines a set of principles which will form the basis of public art in the public realm over the coming years, set within the context of current funding opportunities. The plan concludes with a set of recommended actions. It has been written with the hope and expectation of involving a wide variety of stakeholders, including local artists, schools, community and resident groups, heritage and tourism sectors, residents and businesses.

The plan supports the development of public art projects and initiatives that can:

- Enable residents and visitors to the town to experience quality cultural activities.
- Improve Blandford's reputation as a desirable place to live and work.
- Enhance the quality of the town including the use or re use of present sites as well as contributing to new environments.
- Create key moments in the town's annual cycle of events, contributing to a year-round programme of cultural activity for residents and visitors.



*Portrait of William Bastard (1689-1766)*



*Alfred Stevens Bust*



*Portrait of John Bastard (1668-1770)*

*Examples of Town Council artwork displayed in the Town Hall*

## **2. What is Public Art?**

Public Art can be seen to encompass a variety of art forms and artistic approaches, both temporary and permanent, that engage with the sites and situations within the area. By its very nature Public Art is open to all and connects directly to people's lives. An encounter with the arts in a public space is also an opportunity for engagement with children and young people. There is no threshold to cross and no do's or don'ts. It can be presented in the everyday – free, available, open all hours and most importantly in a public space.

## **3. Why do we need a plan?**

Although funding is available from Persimmon Homes, it is limited and time-restricted and therefore having a plan in place, which is supported and agreed by the project's partners (local art and non-art organisations, artists and residents), ensures that the available funding is correctly targeted, and the best results achieved.

## **4. Where are we now?**

The Town Council has agreed to take the lead on this opportunity, by creating the Public Art Plan, consulting with the Blandford Arts Society and The Blandford School in the first instance and then seeking approval from North Dorset District Council and Blandford Forum Town Council prior to going out to public consultation.



*Military bench, Wimborne Road*

## **5. Our Vision**

It is essential that the public, especially the residents of the Badbury Heights estate, are included in this process from the start. They need to feel that their opinion matters and that they have a say in the type of Public Art introduced to the area where they live. At this stage, it is anticipated that there will be enthusiasm, locally, for the opportunities this represents. Whether the public choose to have art incorporated into street furniture, or they opt for a sculpture, it is hoped that feedback to a public consultation will be abundant.

It is suggested that the Town Council allocates £5,000 of the budget to the purchase of decorative benches (like the railway and military themed seating already located elsewhere in the town), which will buy five benches (locations to be determined in consultation with the residents). Another consideration is for decorative fencing for the NEAP (shown in Phase 3a of the attached map), to improve the appearance for residents.

## **6. Future Maintenance**

The Town Council will be responsible for all future maintenance of the Public Art. Hence, consideration must be given to the design, materials, installation, insurance costs and ongoing maintenance costs because future maintenance will be funded from Blandford Forum residents via the precept. All commissioned art works should come with a maintenance and decommissioning plan setting it out clearly who has the authority and responsibility to decommission the work.



*Commemorative mosaic at Woodhouse Gardens*

## **7. Rules for New Public Art**

- The plan will allow for artist and stakeholder groups to be at the table as often and as early in development as possible, to help build relationships and share knowledge. The artists process of working and developing ideas will be valued as much as the outcome.
- To move beyond an emphasis on permanent sculpture or architectural embellishment and to promote the possibilities for different types, forms and timespans for the arts in the public realm.
- To create opportunities for the town's children and young people to contribute to the town's culture and natural environment through their involvement with the making, shaping and commissioning of Public Arts.
- The Town Council will, where appropriate, open up the working process of artists to promote a greater understanding and ownership for arts in the public realm and where possible allow for a participatory process to be evident in the presentation of the work.
- To support a culture of co-collaboration through work in the public realm, fostering a culture of generosity between organisations and the sharing of data and skills, whilst maintaining quality and integrity.



*Military bench, Wimborne Road*

## **8. How will we deliver the plan?**

We intend that the principles of the plan should be owned, promoted, and supported by the Town Council and by individuals and organisations within the town. Processes to achieve the desired result should be tailored to each case on merit to realise this vision for Public Art in the town.

The Town Council will carry out the public consultation as follows:

- Initial consultation to be a newsletter targeting residents within the Badbury Heights housing estate
- Survey (hard copies available and electronic copies on SurveyMonkey)
- Face to face public consultation in the Corn Exchange
- Facebook promotion
- Visit to The Blandford School to discuss with art students
- Newsletter to all 7,000 properties in the town



*Jubilee Tree at Woodhouse Gardens*

## **Appendix A – Badbury Heights Housing Estate**

