

**ST AUBYN'S COMMUNITY FIELD
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION**

ARTIST INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



St Aubyn's Field, CGI

**ROTTINGDEAN PARISH COUNCIL
FAIRFAX (ROTTINGDEAN) LLP**

1. INTRODUCTION

Rottingdean Parish Council are seeking an artist(s) to propose a creative scheme which will integrate with and enhance a new public open space - St Aubyns Community Field - at the heart of Rottingdean.

We want the space to be welcoming, engaging and accessible to celebrate this beautiful addition to open space in Rottingdean, a historic village with a strong tradition of cultural activity.

1.1 Background

Rottingdean is a small downland village by the sea within the administrative area of Brighton and Hove. **St Aubyns Community Field** is 50 metres from the sea, surrounded by hedges and providing an important green space adjacent to a busy High Street in a Conservation Area. The village is a gateway to the South Downs National Park.

This new public space, previously formed part of the sports playing field of St Aubyns School. The school was prominent in shaping the history of Rottingdean village from the 1830s until its closure in 2013.

The school closure prompted Rottingdean Parish Council (RPC) to partner with the City Council to put together a Design Brief to ensure a mixed high-quality development to meet local housing needs, respecting its position next to the Conservation Area. The strength of local feeling that the playing field should be preserved as far as possible, was evident in the support for the campaign led by SAFE (St Aubyns Field Evergreen). This community reaction has been recognised by the inclusion in the planning consent of a requirement for the developer (Fairfax) to offer the transfer of assets for public use under the stewardship of RPC.

1.2 The Site and Local context

St Aubyns Community Field comprises **3.5 acres of land** which formed the northern half of the former St Aubyns school sports field. This land borders Steyning Rd, Newlands Rd, and the Twitten and has been designated as a public open space for recreation only. The land and its assets include a sports pavilion, war memorial and water fountain in the northwest corner and the old school Chapel near the High Street, situated next to the original main school building. Fairfax, the developer of the new estate, was required to restore these buildings to a good state of repair and landscape the field, providing five separate access points around the field, leading onto pathways criss-crossing the site, before transferring these assets over.

The **sports pavilion**, a key feature of the open space, has been fully restored. Next to the sports pavilion, is a **Celtic Cross** commemorating pupils who died in the First World War. There is also a **water fountain** built around 1911 to mark the coronation of George V. In the near vicinity is the recently renovated **old school Chapel** situated next to the main school building. It is of modest external design but contains plaques and photographs commemorating the 102 former pupils who died in the First and Second World Wars, among them Rudyard Kipling's son about whom he wrote the poem "My Boy Jack" after he died in 1915.

Appendix 1 includes further local context.

2 The Art Commission

RPC is inviting artist(s) to propose an artistic response to the site.

RPC wishes to encourage people of all ages to enjoy the new community field in safety and relative tranquillity, particularly as the site is bordered by several care homes in residential streets, to be joined by families and individuals taking up residence on the newly created adjacent estate. **It will be an area where people can meet and mingle, a place where friendships can be strengthened and new relationships can be forged.**

2.1 The Commission Aims to:

- Provide a welcome and inspiration, encourage relaxation, playfulness and enjoyment of the new community space, the priority being to engage and inspire residents and visitors, while acknowledging the area's rich cultural heritage.
- Complement or enhance an environment designed for informal recreation and exercise.
- Create a visual landmark/s that reflects and celebrates the things that make historic Rottingdean and this location unique, including its creative communities and celebrates the field as a new community space.
- Formulate an encounter that is accessible to all, that draws people to the site and enhances views in and views out from within the site.
- Have relevance to the many and diverse users of the space and bring to light the social and cultural aspects of the site and village.
- Is responsive to the landscaping of the field (working in harmony with the landscaper's palette) and the community aspirations for the site - a wild flower area has been planned for and a community orchard is under consideration.
- Engage the community in the artistic concept and its realisation, connect communities emphasising learning, creative enquiry and a sense of community agency and ownership. This may take the form of an event, workshop, display or consultation with the local community, to form an element of the artist/s proposal

2.2 Scope - Opportunities/Themes - the public art in this location could:

- Comprise either a single structure, numerous features or treatments notated/integrated around the site
- Bring awareness to/ marking entry points into the Field - there will be five separate access points around the field, leading onto pathways criss-crossing the site
- Integrate with the landscaping of the site which is scheduled ahead of the asset being handed over to RPC and the completion date for the commission
- Consider walking routes to and from the Village, to the sea, to the Downs
- Sensory experiences – touch – visual - scented - working with the landscaping and landscapers for the site
- Provide areas for meeting/ relaxation such as artist designed seating
- Views out/ views in drawing on and enhancing the visitors experience, notating the site.

2.5 Commissioning Budget

The budget allocated to this commission is:

- Shortlisted artists concept design fee: £500

- *3 to 5 artists will be selected to develop their concept design, the fee to include the production of drawings/ models - digital/ made and travel expenses.*

- Commission fee: £45,450 (plus VAT)

This comprises the Artist fee, Production, Fabrication and Installation of the artwork and any public engagement activities the artist has proposed to undertake and travel costs.

3 ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

RPC will work with the developers Fairfax Properties and with Brighton & Hove City Council (the local Planning Authority) to agree a scheme that can be implemented before completion of the site and the transfer of the assets planned for end March/early April 2024.

3.1 Timeline

The process stages and minimum timescales intend to be:

November 2023

- Invitation for Artist Expression of Interest - circulated via key announcement sites

EOI submission deadline: 8 December 2023

mid December 2023

- Art Selection Panel meet for Artist shortlisting from artists' submitted Expression of Interest
- 3-5 artists sent Brief to Artists and invited to develop their concept designs

Concept Design proposal deadline: 12 January 2024

wk commencing 15 January 2024

- Shortlisted Artists' concept designs (where in agreement with all artists to be displayed in the local community and available digitally.
- Art Selection Committee meet to Select winning Proposal
- **Artist appointed by 26 January 2024**

late January 2024

- Artist commissioned: detailed design commences and planning application submitted were required followed by Production and fabrication of commission

end March/ early April 2024

Commission completed and launch

3.2 Submission Requirements

Artists are asked to provide the following as part of their expression of interest:

- **Up to 800 words describing:**
 1. your interest in the commission and relevance to your practice
 2. initial thoughts on how you would respond to the opportunity (we are not asking for any concept drawings or designs at this stage) and relate to/ engage with the local area
- **Up to 500 words describing your relevant experience and examples of work with up to 5 jpegs**
- **1 page CV**

Where possible, please combine the above into 1 pdf file, saved with your name. Images may be attached separately.

Email to:

Poppy Heron, Artistic Project Manager: staubynsfieldrottingdean@gmail.com
including your contact details: Name, Address and contact number.

Please contact us to arrange an alternative submission format, if due to a disability, or digital access requirements, you need to submit by video call, or post.

EOI deadline: 8 December 2023

Any queries/ questions regarding the commission and submission requirements should be directed to:

Poppy Heron: staubynsfieldrottingdean@gmail.com

3.3 The Selection Panel

The Panel will include representatives from Brighton and Hove City Council, including a local Ward Cllr; Rottingdean Parish Council, Fairfax, and representative of the local community.

3.4 Selection criteria

Submissions will be judged against four essential criteria which the Selection Panel will refer to when selecting the winning concept design proposal.

Quality

- Excellence in conceptual approach
- Quality of artist’s response to the brief and site

Ability and Experience

- Ability to work to commission principles
- Ability to work to given time-line
- Evidence of or interest in site-specific/ integrated art
- Ability to collaborate with other design professionals

Feasibility

- Feasibility of proposal (to include approach to materials choice and fabrication processes in relation to site, artwork installation and maintenance requirements).

Innovation and Experimentation

- Evidence of innovative approaches to creating public art (or in other locations if no experience of public art to date)
- Imaginative, sustainable use of materials and techniques.

Appendix 1

Further information on the history of St Aubyns school can be sourced from the local Archivist at Rottingdean Museum & Art Gallery.

Rottingdean Village's main livelihood was farming with a strong Quaker presence via the Beard family from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The Copper family who go back many generations locally were traditionally farmworkers and folksingers – members of the family of renowned singer Bob Copper still perform here today.

Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones took a home here at North End House on the Green from 1880 until his death in 1898. His wife Georgiana served as a Parish councillor, championing the building of public washhouses and campaigning against the Boer War. Two of their nephews were Rudyard Kipling who lived with his family at The Elms on the Green from 1896 to 1902 and Stanley Baldwin who married Rottingdean resident Lucy Ridsdale and went on to be Prime Minister. Kipling's renowned poem "A Smugglers Song" was inspired by real-life episodes of contraband being smuggled inland through underground tunnels either side of the Green, including with the assistance of local Vicar and schoolmaster Dr Thomas Hooker in the early 18th century.

In more recent times, the picturesque village with its windmill, pond and downland views has attracted artists, writers and celebrities. The smock mill on Beacon Hill is said to have been the inspiration for the logo adopted by the Heinemann press. It can clearly be seen from St Aubyns Field.

Audrey Hepburn did a photo shoot at the Windmill and on the seafront here to help launch her modelling career. Many stars came to stay at the mock-Tudor hotel in Tudor Close in the thirties and forties, inspiring the creation of the game Cluedo. Authors D H Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield both spent time here and famous Rottingdean residents have included artist William Nicholson and Wimbledon champion Fred Perry.

A number of artists and designers have continued to make Rottingdean their home as evidenced by signage and murals around the village, as well as participation in the Artists Open Houses event each year. Rottingdean Heritage runs the Art Gallery and Museum, hosting permanent and visiting exhibitions with local links as well as organising live events and talks at The Grange, former home of artist William Nicholson, adjacent to the Village Green and pond. Later occupants of the Burne Jones residence were Roderick Jones, chair of Reuters and his wife Enid Bagnold, playwright and author of *The Chalk Garden and National Velvet*, prompting a visit from child actor Elizabeth Taylor.

Culture and Creativity in Rottingdean

The benefit of having an older age profile in Rottingdean is that there is a thriving pool of talented volunteers. Consequently, the Drama Society has put on performances in the Village Hall since the 1930s and the Preservation Society (now Rottingdean Heritage) moved

to secure the Kipling Gardens for the community in the 1980s; volunteers work alongside the gardener to maintain this beautiful, peaceful space which also hosts the Croquet Club. Rottingdean supports Rottingdean in Bloom, regularly winning prizes for its floral displays. Rottingdean Arts, formed in 2011, organises an annual programme of concerts ranging from classical and operatic through to more popular and contemporary offers, many of which take place on the seafront Terraces. And Rottingdean Heritage runs the Art Gallery and Museum, hosting permanent and visiting exhibitions with local links as well as organising live events and talks at The Grange, former home of artist William Nicholson, adjacent to the Village Green and pond.

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