

Brief for Installation Commission at Durlston Country Park NNR

Dorset Council are seeking an artist or arts collective for a project as part of the HLF-funded Durlston Pleasure Grounds Project at Durlston Country Park National Nature Reserve in Swanage, Dorset.

Introduction

The 'Durlston Pleasure Grounds' Project is a partnership, led by Dorset Council to enhance the Victorian landscape at Durlston for nature, history and people, which will be completed by August 2022.

Volunteers are working with Rangers, artists and specialists to create a landscape which is welcoming, accessible, inspiring, educational, surprising, playable and sustainable.

The Victorian landscape and features are being enhanced to realise George Burt's vision for people to 'Look round and read great nature's open book'.

Habitats are being enhanced for wildlife and people, while maintaining the tranquillity of the area.

Opportunities for play, discovery and creativity are being enhanced, along with a base for training, volunteering and community events.

The project will help Durlston become the best place in Dorset for people with disabilities and reduced mobility to enjoy wildlife and the countryside.

The legacy will include a skilled and expanded staff and volunteer group supporting the management of the area, creating a landscape which can evolve to meet the needs of visitors and local people.

Aims of Commission:

The artist(s), in consultation with the Project Team, will design, produce and install an artwork, which explores the heritage of the Pleasure Grounds and in particular, the diversity of responses to this very special landscape.

The work should help tell the story of the Pleasure Grounds through a variety of responses to it, from the Victorian period to the present, creating an artwork which will enrich the experience of visitors walking around the site and encourage them to consider their relationship with the landscape.

This could include philosophical, scientific or aesthetic responses or provocations. These could be incorporated into planned or existing features, enhancing the important historic and natural landscape. The artwork should be presented in a low-impact or possibly transient way, in a variety of media. This could include short pieces of found text or sound recordings. The artwork could be distributed throughout the landscape, be at one location, or exist in a digital or other intangible form.

The commission could include the collection of new material to be included eg. interviews or workshops with users or visitors.

Messages and Objectives of Commission:

- That the Pleasure Grounds evoke and have evoked a wide variety of responses from visitors – for example scientific curiosity, aesthetic appreciation, play, nostalgia etc and these differing responses all have value
- That the Pleasure Grounds are rich in history, wildlife, beauty and human stories.
- Visitors will be encouraged to contemplate their own responses and to have their reactions validated.
- To provide 'snapshots' of the Pleasure Grounds at different points in their history.

Supporting Information:

The artist should take into account the document below:

- Durlston Pleasure Grounds Interpretation Plan

Other documents available to the successful artist include:

- Durlston Pleasure Grounds Activity Plan
- Durlston 'Pleasure Grounds' Conservation Plan
- Durlston Pleasure Grounds Landscape Plan (including Landscape Architect concept designs for viewpoints)
- Durlston Pleasure Grounds Topographic Survey
- Durlston historic archive and photo archive
- Durlston website www.durlston.co.uk

Timings:

The provisional timetable for the design, production and installation of the work is:

- Advertising for artist: October 2021
- Closing date for applications: **5pm Monday 6th December**
- Selection and appointment of artist by interview: **Thursday 16th December 2021**
- Research, design and production: From December 2021
- Installation: tbc on appointment, but installation, snagging and handover must be complete before the end of June 2022

Project Management & Monitoring:

The Client is Dorset Council. The key contact will be the Project Leader. The successful artist will be required to work closely with the client to develop ideas and ensure the work links to other features, interpretation and themes.

Milestones will include:

- A start-up meeting and site visit will take place as soon as possible following appointment.
- Initial concept designs for discussion should be prepared following this meeting.
- Following client feedback on the concept designs, a draft final design should be produced for sign off.

Sustainability

The design and development of the work should consider the minimisation of energy use and the use of sustainable resources.

Budget

A maximum budget figure of **£10,000** has been allowed at this stage for design, production and delivery of work to site.

NB: This will need to cover all costs (for example materials, expenses research, travel expenses, workshops, meetings etc.). A schedule of payments would be agreed on appointment. Some staff and volunteer time may be available to assist with installation where appropriate.

On-site accommodation and studio space may be available to the successful candidate at no cost for short periods during the delivery of the commission.

Selection Process

Selection will be by a panel, which will include project and site staff/volunteers and Project arts advisors. Shortlisting will be made on the basis of written proposals as detailed below, with shortlisted candidates being interviewed.

Appointment Timescale

Written proposals and fee budgets should be submitted to be received by the client's representative by **5pm Monday 6th December**

The proposals should be no more than 5 pages and include:

- Your approach, methodology and initial concept, including supporting visual or audio material
- Your approach to creating public art in a sensitive and important landscape
- Your experience relevant to the outputs
- Particular skills and expertise that you would bring to this project
- An indicative budget showing an approximate breakdown of costs (fees, expenses etc)
- Examples of other relevant work
- Details of referees who we can contact
- Experience of producing high quality outdoor public art
- Details of Public Liability Insurance held

Please use your name, or the name of your collective as the file name for your submission and send to alistair.tuckey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Selection (including interviews) will take place on **Thursday 16th December 2021** with the aim of work commencing immediately.

Copyright and confidentiality:

The copyright of any documents produced lies with Dorset Council.

Item	Commission	Notes
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Commission	<p>The commission should use artistic interventions in the landscape to provoke curiosity, exploration and to explore the range of responses to the Pleasure Grounds from the Victorian period to the present, including scientific, historical, philosophical and personal responses. These should inspire visitors to contemplate it's diverse historic, natural and personal heritage and consider their own response.</p> <p>George Burt's estate was filled with locally quarried stones containing letter carvings with verses from poetry, scientific observations and literary quotes.</p> <p>In the same way that Burt built an intriguing and thought-provoking environment, we would like the new artwork to explore the personal responses of a variety people to the landscape and enrich the experience of visitors.</p> <p>The work might include short pieces of text. This could draw on resources including the Durlston historic archive, the Ranger's Diaries and the words and recollections of Durlston visitors and volunteers</p> <p>It is envisaged that the work would be predominantly 'light-touch', though perhaps with some bolder elements, distributed at a variety of locations throughout the Pleasure Grounds and may include elements incorporated into other features. The artists will work closely with the Project Team to ensure the work fits harmoniously with other design elements.</p>	<p>The artists should provide concept illustrations / images of the proposed design and reasonings</p> <p>We want to continue his ideology by introducing bespoke thought-provoking installations which have an intriguing unusual presence, yet remain very much in keeping with the environment they sit in and its heritage</p>
Ground works	<p>Durlston can provide in-house support to ensure that the area where the proposed commission is appropriate and ready for the installation. The commission will form part of a wider programme of landscape works, which may provide opportunities to support this commission.</p>	
Materials	<p>Choice of material and fixings should ensure that the artwork is low maintenance and have a long lifespan in a harsh, coastal environment</p> <p>All equipment must be guaranteed.</p>	
Additional Information	<p>Discussions and site visits can be arranged to look at Durlston and to get a greater understanding of the ethos of Durlston and how visitors utilise the park</p>	

For more information, or to discuss your application, please contact Ali Tuckey, Project Leader 01929 424443 alistair.tuckey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk