

*sunset totters down
Eldon Street trailing
its wedding dress*

‘How To’ Guide

**for Commissioning
Art in Public in
Barnsley Borough**





Image (Left): *Colour Crops* by Lenny & Whale. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums. Credit: Lenny and Whale / Timm Cleasby

www.barnsley.gov.uk/news/new-artwork-at-worsbrough-mill-celebrates-almost-400-years-of-flour-production

Cover Image: *Sunset* by Simon Armitage & Patrick Murphy. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums as part of the Eldon Street Heritage Action Zone project. Credit: James Mulkeen.

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01

What is this guidance all about?

This guidance is for anyone involved in the commissioning of art in public spaces in Barnsley Borough - from sculptural trails to murals, street furniture to temporary happenings, interactive digital installations to artist residencies in public spaces and everything in between.

It has been designed to help streamline processes, encourage best practice and inspire; ensuring that we build on the strong foundations and enthusiasm already established for introducing temporary and permanent art into our places and spaces across the borough.

Image: *Two Headed Lamb* by Emma Parkins, Twisted Festival of Natural Art. Commissioned by Barnsley Council. Credit: James Mulkeen.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHKy-DVx424



Image: Alligator by Twigtwisters,
Twisted Festival of Natural Art.
Commissioned by Barnsley Council.
Credit: James Mulkeen.

[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=WHKy-DVx424](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHKy-DVx424)



02

How does it fit with the bigger picture?

Barnsley is undergoing an exciting period of change with a collective momentum working towards the long term vision set out in the **Barnsley 2030 strategy - 'Barnsley - the place of possibilities.'**

Art in our public spaces can support the ambitions within the Strategy for Health, Growth, Learning and Sustainability, and act as a creative vehicle for bringing people together with a common goal to share the story of Barnsley.

Regionally, culture, arts and heritage are a priority with growing recognition of the significant contribution that these sectors make to our sense of place and identity, our wellbeing, our national and global visibility, as well as the local economy.

There are common regional values that chime with Barnsley 2030 ambitions including:

- Increasing equity, diversity and inclusion
- Increasing community engagement and co-production

- Promoting sustainability
- Promoting fair pay
- Engaging a local supply chain - creative practitioners, fabricators, engineers, installers
- Maximising learning opportunities and skills development

On a National level, recent policy and investment demonstrates an understanding of the value of embedding arts and culture in shaping our places for the benefit of everyone. This can be seen in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) stating *'Public art is therefore a clear opportunity to contribute to the cultural well-being of an area'* and in the Cultural White Paper of 2016 stating that *'Cultural placemaking can shape the fortunes of our regions, cities, towns and villages'*.

Barnsley Borough has been identified as a **'Priority Place'** for investment by Arts Council England (2021-24) which may create further opportunities to engage artists in shaping our public spaces.



Image: *Routed in Barnsley* by Lenny & Whale. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums and Heritage Trust. Credit: Lenny & Whale/ Timm Cleasby.



Image: *Workings of Elsecar* by Will Rea. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums for Elsecar Heritage Centre. Credit: Barnsley Council.

03

What is art in public spaces?

Art in our public spaces should be relevant to its context, it can take many forms and can be both temporary and permanent. Examples include:

- Physical art that can take the form of stand alone or multiple sculptural interventions
- Murals or other two-dimensional art interventions
- Art that is integrated into the fabric of hard or soft landscaping, architecture, infrastructure, glazing etc.
- Lighting
- Digital artworks
- Functional art that is integrated into street furniture or signage
- Temporary physical interventions to stimulate conversation
- Temporary interventions that incorporate performance, sound, dance, festivals, immersive experiences etc
- Artist residencies embedded in a specific place or organisation

For the purpose of this guidance we are **defining 'Artists'** as creative practitioners who may have expertise in numerous disciplines such as: visual art, graphic design, sculpture, literature, poetry, music, performance, socially engaged practice, architecture etc. They may work in a freelance capacity and potentially alongside others in an artist collective. In addition architects, landscape architects and designers may also take on the role of 'Artist'.



Image: Barnsley's Fierce Love
by Ian McMillan. Commissioned
by Barnsley Council. Credit:
Barnsley Council.

www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/love-barnsley/barnsleys-covid-memorial

04

What do we mean by public spaces?



A public space is essentially a space that is open and accessible to the public free of charge. Typically we think of outdoor public spaces such as parks, public squares, high streets, walking trails and public footpaths etc. which could be urban or rural settings, but indoor spaces are also relevant. These could include publicly accessible libraries or museums, public areas within hospitals or GP surgeries.

Image: *Can You See Us* by Andrew Small. Commissioned by Principal Towns Team and the Stairfoot Ward Alliance. Credit: Timm Cleasby.

www.beam.uk.net/case-studies/can-you-see-us

Image: Lion Sand sculpture by Sand in Your Eye, Twisted Festival of Natural Art. Commissioned by Barnsley Council. Credit: James Mulkeen.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHKy-DVx424



05

The potential impact of art in public outlined below has been linked to the Barnsley 2030 ambitions. These demonstrate a range of the potential benefits, but is not an exhaustive list.

What impact can art in public have?

Healthy Barnsley

- Art in public can surprise and delight, having a positive impact on our physical health and mental wellbeing, contributing to our identity, fostering community pride and increasing a sense of belonging;
- It can encourage us to move and explore through improved wayfinding and legibility of a place;
- Increase a feeling of safety;
- Reflect our diverse communities;
- Create opportunities for shared experiences, new connections and promoting dialogue.

Growing Barnsley

- Engaging artists can help us to take risks, driving forward innovation and reflecting the borough's ambitions through the commissioning of contemporary works and the integration of digital artworks;
- We can also support growth through nurturing our creative ecology and embedding opportunities across projects for artists to connect;
- Enhance a sense of place and local distinctiveness;
- Influence longer term change, shaping regeneration schemes and landscapes;
- Art in public can encourage new and return visitors, bringing economic benefits, as well as encouraging inward investment and utilising local supply chains.

Learning Barnsley

- Engaging our communities in arts programmes to explore and connect with their place whether that be physically, sharing our heritage or imagining our future, can encourage active citizenship;
- Inspire young people, enabling them to have a voice and raise aspirations around creative career pathways;
- Projects can embed opportunities to nurture creativity, and for artists and communities to learn from each other;
- Art in public can inspire and challenge audiences.

Sustainable Barnsley

- Artists can shine a light on our relationship with the environment encouraging us to be more aware of our global impact and to reduce our impact on the local environment;
- Artists can utilise renewable technology and even incorporate materials that help to absorb carbon, as well as encouraging active travel;
- Art in public can share and interpret Barnsley's rich heritage through a contemporary lens for all to enjoy.



Image: *As the Stars that shall be Bright when we are Dust* by Rachel Welford. Commissioned by Barnsley Council. Credit: Timm Cleasby.

www.beam.uk.net/case-studies/barnsley-public-art-programme



Image: Man Engine by Golden Tree Productions. Commissioned by WE Great Place. Credit: Barnsley Council.

<http://wegreatplace.com/news/the-man-engine>

06

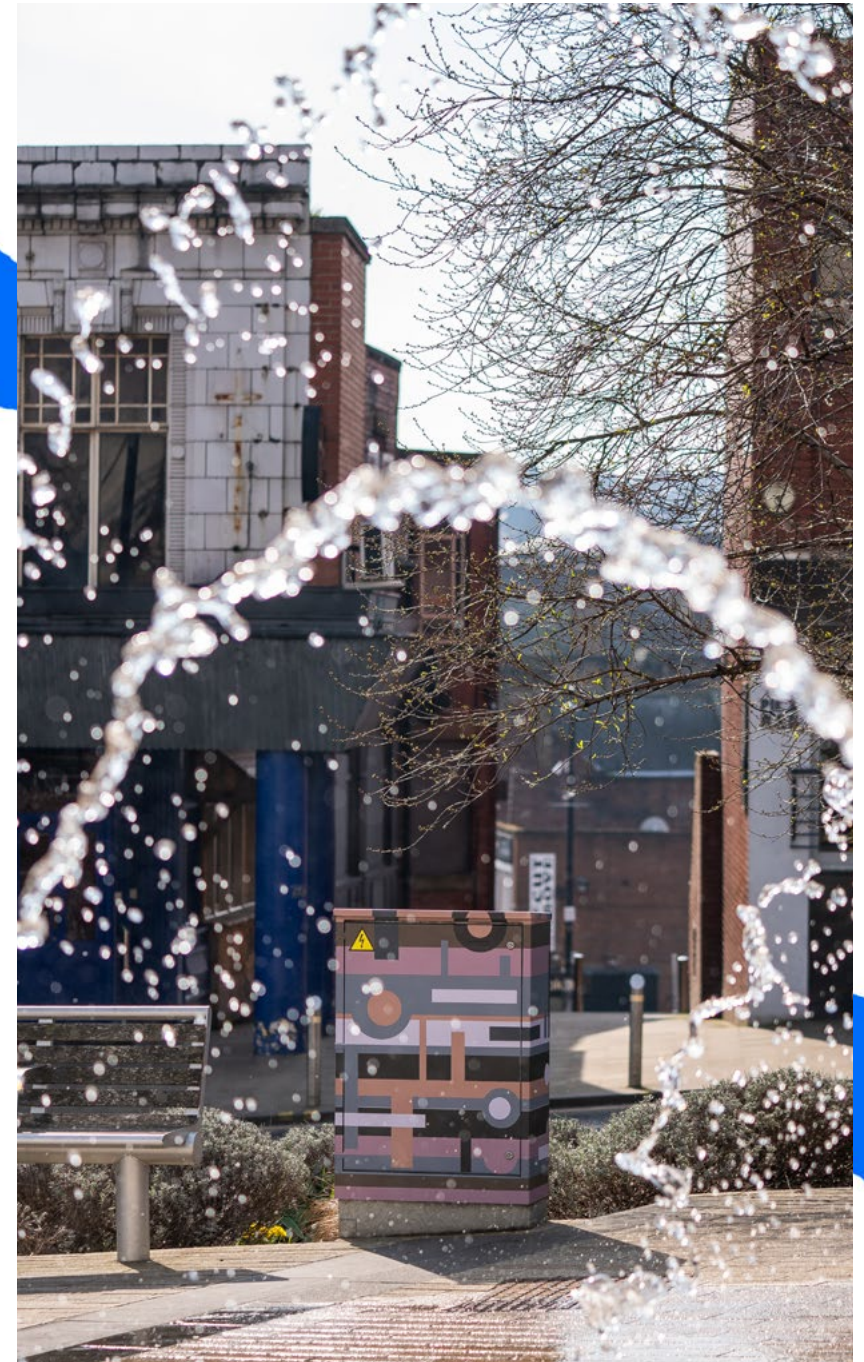
Valuing Artists

Working with Artists is a collaborative process and with the right foundation of a strong artist brief setting parameters from the beginning, alongside key milestones, you should be able to trust in their processes and enter into the project not knowing exactly what the final outcome may be.

By adopting a robust process this will enable you to 'be open to the creativity you invite in' and avoid micromanaging or 'designing by committee'. Artists are experts in their field and should be properly paid and their time and expertise valued in the same way that other professional disciplines are valued.

It is important that the commissioner nurtures the relationship with the Artist and considers ways in which they can offer additional support such as: finding a space to work from; making connections and facilitating opportunities to network; leveraging in kind or discounted support for materials or equipment; crediting the Artist within all communications; and building in photographic and video documentation to support the artist's portfolio.

Image: *Routed in Barnsley* by Lenny & Whale. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums and Heritage Trust. Credit: Lenny & Whale/ Timm Cleasby.





Images: Eldon Street Brides by WE Great Ladies. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums as part of the Eldon Street Heritage Action Zone project. Credit: James Mulkeen.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Q-ayFwoGe0&t=4s



07

Key Values

For any creative project in the public realm it is important to adopt the following values:

- Take a collaborative approach - develop projects for and with local communities;
- Engage the most suitable artist/s with the right set of skills, knowledge and experience;
- Be aspirational and consider how our heritage can be interpreted and shared, taking a contemporary approach;
- Your project should be relevant and place specific;
- Strive for excellent quality and promote good practice;
- Trust in the creative process;
- Empower communities and young people;
- Promote equity, diversity and inclusion;
- Minimise negative environmental impact;
- Create opportunities to share learning.

Image: Tellapoem featuring work by the poet laureate Simon Armitage. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums as part of the Eldon Street Heritage Action Zone project. Credit: Barnsley Council.

www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/placemaking-poetry



Image: *Routed in Barnsley* by Lenny & Whale. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums and Heritage Trust. Credit: Lenny and Whale / Timm Cleasby.



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Where to start?

So, you're thinking of a project, but how do you get started? Perhaps ideas are emerging from a community group, you've identified a need in a particular area, you have identified some funding or an art in public project could meet a planning requirement.

Whatever the spark is, your first port of call should be to review this Guidance and to contact the Barnsley Museums Team at publicart@barnsley.gov.uk

The Team can then signpost you to any relevant Council departments such as the Principal Towns Team, relevant initiatives, research, funding etc as well as directing you to practical things to think about such as planning permissions, licences or any potential constraints etc. This approach also enables the Team to map what is happening across the borough, consider acquisitions to the formal collections and supports them to advocate for more art in our public realm.

Image: Routed in Barnsley by Lenny & Whale. Commissioned by Barnsley Museums and Heritage Trust. Credit: Lenny and Whale / Timm Cleasby.





Image: *The Mute Still Air* by Ed Carter. Commissioned for the WE Great Place Programme. Credit: Scott Merrylees.

www.beam.uk.net/case-studies/the-mute-still-air

09

A Glance at the Commissioning Process

For detailed guidance for each of the Phases outlined below click on the links.

The Commissioning Process

[Phase 1: Project set up](#)

- How to structure your project
- Shaped with the community
- Define the project idea and vision
- Project types
- Build your budget
- Writing a good artist brief

[Phase 2: Recruiting the Artist](#)

- Recruitment methods
- Selection
- Artist interviews
- Interview follow up

[Phase 3: Artist Concept Design Development](#)

- Research and engagement phase
- Develop concept proposals

[Phase 4: Finalising Ideas](#)

- Design development
- Detailed design report
- Site and permissions

[Phase 5: Delivery](#)

[Phase 6: Completion & Legacy](#)

[Supporting Information](#)



Image: Crossing (Vertical)
by Nigel Hall. On loan from
Yorkshire Sculpture Park.
Credit: Barnsley Council.

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For more information visit
[www.barnsley-museums.com/projects/supporting-artists/
commissioning-public-art-guidance](http://www.barnsley-museums.com/projects/supporting-artists/commissioning-public-art-guidance)

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