

Artistic Brief

Fascinating Fens

A partnership project looking to create a distinctive signature artwork that reflects aspects of what makes the South Lincolnshire Fens a special and distinctive place

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Contents

1. Introduction to the Fascinating Fens
2. Who is Eligible to Apply?
3. Location, Maps and General Site Descriptions
4. The Brief
5. Planning Permissions and Approvals
6. How to Submit Proposals
7. How the Commissioning Process Works

1. Introduction to the “Fascinating Fens” Arts Project

Fascinating Fens is an exciting opportunity for a creative intervention in a peaceful yet dramatic fenland setting to be viewed by walkers, cyclists, visitors and passing cars. It will link art, nature, agriculture, landscape and history.

An ideal project would create a distinctive “signature” artwork that reflects aspects of what makes the area special and distinctive and creates ownership and a sense of pride.

The Artwork will be part of the “[on your doorstep](#)” project working in partnership with the South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership, Transported, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, local communities and farmers in the South Lincolnshire Fenlands area.

The setting and history

Willow Tree Fen is a Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve in South Lincolnshire. It’s a wonderful place to visit and spend time relaxing and enjoying the rare and unique fenland landscape.

Nestling quietly amongst expansive agricultural fields, underneath the big open Lincolnshire skies Willow Tree Fen harks back to a lost fenland landscape.

The nature reserve has been transformed from intensive arable land growing beans and cereal crops to a more extensive grazed agricultural landscape of shallow meres, seasonally flooded pastures, hay meadows and reedbeds. Birds, dragonflies and beautiful fenland plants and scenery can be viewed from the 6km of way marked routes and elevated bird hides.

At one-time the south Lincolnshire Fens were a wilderness landscape. Less than 0.1% of Lincolnshire’s former 1,000 km² of ‘wild-fenland’ remains, many species associated with wetland habitats are lost, rare or threatened.

Archaeological surveys at Willow Tree Fen in 2009 revealed a Romano-British salt making site dating back 2,000 years. Such sites were of great importance, allowing people to overwinter their summer bounty of meat and fish. Fascinating artefacts revealed a comfortable lifestyle, due to its importance, salt could be traded for food, pottery and other more luxurious items. Hair & clothes pins, fine Samian pottery and even a second century cheese press were unearthed on site.

Wildfowling was always an important part of the landscape history. The Fens were a haven for eels, fish and wildfowl providing food and income. Seventeenth century duck decoys can still be seen around Willow Tree Fen. Back then, wild ducks were enticed into small ponds and collected for trading at London meat markets. Wild birds are still attracted to the Fens, where they can now feed and breed uninterrupted at places like Willow Tree Fen.

There have been attempts to drain areas of the Fens since Roman times. A royal charter from Charles I in the seventeenth century enabled Fenlanders to make land fit for “tillage and pasture”. Large swathes of land were reclaimed from the tidal Fens. Early, more

romantic wind pumps have been replaced by steam, diesel and electric pumps over the ensuing years and in present times Internal Drainage Boards in the area are charged with keeping the area drained for people and crops.

A series of interpretation panels at the reserve's information centre depict the fascinating history and geology of the Fens.

A railway line built in the 19th Century ran through the western edge of the reserve. The line and the Counter Drain railway station, which served the hamlet of Tongue End have long since been demolished, but an old railway bridge, still beautiful in its symmetry and design remains across the botanically rich counter drain watercourse. Below is an old photograph of the bridge under construction or repair.



The railway bridge is close to the road and to the entrance of the reserve. The artwork will be mobile and spend some time located on the bridge and also at other sites within the wider nature reserve. As well as providing a feature it must also act as a safety barrier to prevent visitors falling into the watercourse below.

The South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership was established in 2004. Their aim is to help redress the loss of this traditional landscape and recreate fenland and wetlands centred on the nature reserves of Baston Fen, Thurlby Fen Slippe, Pinchbeck Fen Slippe and Willow Tree Fen near Bourne to benefit people and wildlife. The Partnership also wants to tell the story of the history and culture of the Fens and inform visitors about the beautiful fenland countryside and encourage them to come and explore it. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is a core founding member of the Partnership and hosts the Partnership's officer and associated

budget. The Partnership has a vibrant membership from a broad spectrum of organisations, local authorities and individuals with interests in the area.

2. Who is Eligible to Apply?

This commission is for high quality experienced artists with a track record of producing work in open, public spaces. Elements of education and engagement should be included.

Applications can be from individuals or teams.

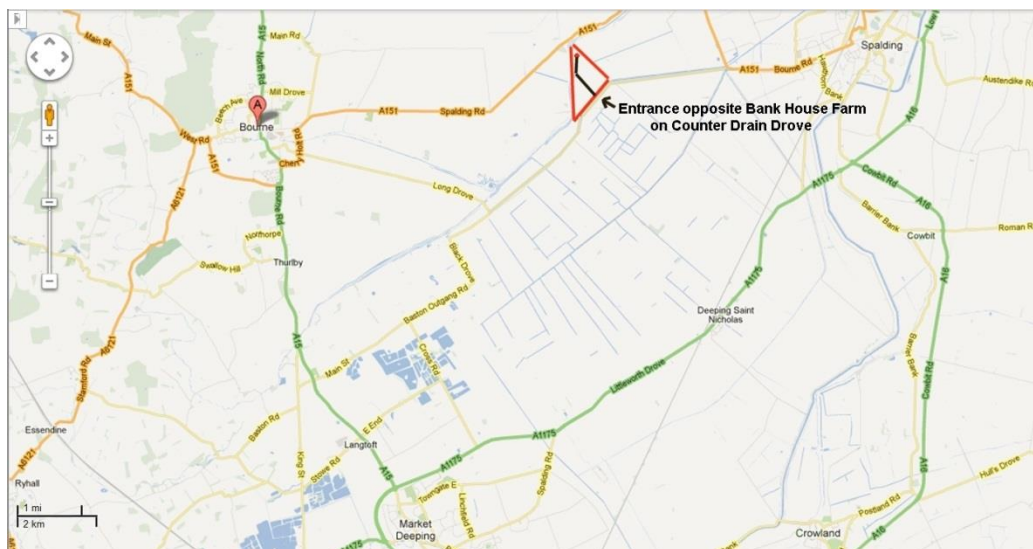
The artists selected will be expected to spend time in the area researching and developing ideas and consulting with local groups and people, for example, villagers, farmers and reserve visitors and volunteers. They will need to work closely with the Reserve Warden and others to ensure that the design is fit for purpose.

We would like to encourage and engage young people with the natural world around them. Applicants should hold an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

The commission creates an opportunity to engage a more diverse audience, perhaps working with EU children and their families living in the Spalding area.

3. Location and Site Descriptions

Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve is situated on Counter Drain Drove; midway between the hamlets of Tongue End and Pode Hole on the Baston to Spalding Road. The railway bridge is east of the entrance to the reserve and Bank House Farm. The nearest postcode is PE11 3JH.



Railway Bridge taken from the nature reserve



The artwork should be a mobile structure that can be moved around Willow Tree Fen. When located on the bridge it will allow access onto the bridge, and a view point down the drain and across the reserve. Safety barriers should be built into the design, to make safe the wide gaps in the bars and prevent visitors falling into the water below.

4. The Brief

The project title is, Fascinating Fens. The commission is for an artist to provide an eye catching piece of mobile artwork in keeping with a peaceful fenland landscape setting to be viewed by walkers, cyclists, visitors and passing cars. The project should link art, nature, agriculture, landscape and history.

We are looking for proposals that are innovative and original that capture the attention and imagination of the audience. We would especially like the artwork to inspire and encourage

local communities and businesses in nearby villages and towns to discover and connect with their local natural landscape. Plus act as part of the destination branding for Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve and the wider approach to promoting and encouraging investment into the visitor economy for the South Lincolnshire Fens.

We would like to encourage pride and ownership of the artwork in the surrounding communities. We would like the artist to engage with local schools, possibly working with local 'A' level arts students on the design and fabrication of artwork.

The commission creates an opportunity to engage a more diverse audience, hopefully building social cohesion within all parts of the communities in the area. This would build on the successes of previous Leader programmes in the Wash Fens where projects looked to link young people and cultures of various nations through the environment.

It will be essential that the artwork also provides a safety element for the bridge. This is to prevent people falling through the current rails into the water below. We would expect the artist to work in close consultation with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Reserve Warden and other staff to ensure that design features are fit for purpose.

We do not want to specify a medium for the artwork but the installation must be able to withstand a harsh, exposed outdoor environment. The maintenance and management needs of the piece must be specified in the artistic brief. Particular attention will need to be paid to the safety elements of the structure along the bridge railings – this will be subject to approvals by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

The installation must not compromise or undermine the structural integrity of the bridge. There should be no encroachment of the design into the waterway area and nothing protruding out onto the bank top to ensure that maintenance and management of the banks are not compromised.

We would like to build up a fenland theme or brand for the area. The artwork should allow us to build up this approach and the artist should demonstrate how this could be achieved in their brief

Transported is a Creative People and Places programme, funded by Arts Council, to encourage more engagement with quality arts. The successful applicant should exploit each stage of the project to increase awareness, appreciation, participation and engagement with the artwork. To gain a greater understanding, applicants are recommended to read the [Transported Business Plan, 2016 to 2019.](#)

Based on previous similar commissions the guideline budget is in the region of £25,000. The process is competitive and costs will be considered as part of criteria.

This is to include all fees, materials, production costs, delivery and installation. Travel costs accommodation and contingency should be costed separately.

5. Planning Permissions and Approvals

The artwork will not need planning permission and to ensure this, it is to fit within the following criteria:

- The artwork will be a small scale, mobile installation; no energy use will be associated with it.
- The piece will be mobile with the ability to be moved around Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve periodically.
- When installed on the railway bridge site at Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve:
 - The space taken up will be minimal – a maximum 6m x 3m so much less than 25% of the size of the existing bridge.
 - The artwork would be wholly contained within the footprint of the bridge structure.

The railway bridge is not listed.

6. How to submit proposals

There is a two part selection process for this brief.

Part 1 – Expressions of Interest

In order to be considered for short listing you need to send the following:

1. A letter stating who you are together with your CV stating your relevant experience in producing artistic work in public places.
2. Your contact details and preferred method of communication.
3. A short (less than 500 words) statement explaining your intended approach to the commission including how you would identify your preferred theme, how you would progress your design and how your approach would answer the brief. Please also mention who will be undertaking the work; will this be all your own work or will you be enlisting the support of other experts. Please provide the details of anyone else you will be looking to work with and their credentials. Within your statement please also provide information of how you can guarantee that you can deliver the project safely, timely and on budget.
4. Up to 10 Images of previous work with short descriptions, locations and budgets.
5. Links to any websites demonstrating your work.
6. Expressions of interest are expected to show evidence of high quality, professional work that shows a strong creative approach. In addition to the 500 word statement please also state any technical or logistical requirements and provide a budget plan.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

ALL EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOON ON **25 February 2019.**

Please email your applications to Nick Jones at Transported - nickgj38@icloud.com

For further information, contact Nick on 07947 157765.

Shortlisted Applicants will be notified in the week commencing 11 March. If you have not heard by the end of this week date then unfortunately, on this occasion, you have not been shortlisted – if there are large number of expressions of interest, as there have been for other public art opportunities, it may not be possible to contact all unsuccessful applicants for up to 3 weeks after this date.

Timeline of events 2019

Date	Event
7 Jan	Advertising
25 Feb	Deadline
25 Feb - 10 March	Shortlisting
11 March	Inform up to 5 x artists
10 April	Interview
12 April	Inform successful artist

Part 2 – Submitting Proposals

Up to five artists will be shortlisted for this brief.

An honorarium of £500 per shortlisted party will be available to assist with the preparation of a specific Maquette or illustrated design and detailed proposal. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their proposal at:

Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve, Counter Drain Drove, Tongue End, Bourne, Lincolnshire (nearest Postcode PE11 3JH)

INTERVIEW DATE: 10 April 2019

The Fascinating Fens selection panel will include representatives from:

- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Local community
- Nick Jones – Transported Visual Arts Director
- South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership

7. How the selection process works

Shortlisting Criteria

We will make our decision on the following selection criteria

40% - Artists costs including time, fabrication materials and installation

- 25% - Artistic quality and innovation
- 15% - Understanding and meeting the brief
- 10% - Evidence of relevant experience & evidence of having capacity & expertise needed
- 10% - Realistic budget and offering value for money

What do I need to submit if shortlisted?

Before developing a proposal please re-read the brief and additional notes in this document very carefully. Your proposal to be presented to the panel in person can take the form of a selection of models, drawings, photographic images or montages, digital images, computer renderings or animations etc. Any format as long as it clearly communicates your proposal to the panel and you can leave a 'hard copy' version with the panel.

In addition, a 1000 word written description of the proposal with any explanatory notes you think will help.

We will make our decision based on interviews and submission, and we may be exhibiting shortlisted artists work as part of an engagement programme for the South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership project.

We will keep the submissions and display them at Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve.

How the commissioning process works

The artist(s) selected to undertake this commission will be heartily congratulated and then given a contract in order to progress the conclusion through to reality. The contract will outline an agreed timetable for payments.

The advertised budget will be the contract value and the budget is to include:

- All materials and production costs
- All professional fees
- Delivery and installation including any necessary ground works and fixings
- All accommodation and travel expenses

The contract will be issued by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and will be managed by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust supported by Transported.