

Project Title: Cow Lane Underpass Connecting Communities art project

This commission is part of the Didcot Garden Town Public Art Plan. The Public Art Plan focusses on sustainability and nature, connecting residents to their surroundings and celebrating visual responses to our landscapes. Focusing on leading by example, the evolving identity of Didcot and inviting people to share their stories and celebrate different cultures. With connectivity, movement, innovation, science, technology, and transformation as our commissioning approaches.

Project Overview:

Project number 10 from the Didcot Art Plan is the Cow Lane Underpass. This Connecting Communities arts project aims to increase confidence in the use of the underpass, facilitating a more positive and uplifting version of the space, which is a key connection point either to the town centre or to access green corridors leading to the north of Didcot. Wall mounted art will create a pathway from Didcot Parkway, railway station to and from the Ladygrove estate, forming an outdoor gallery for the community and visitors to enjoy whilst traversing through the town.

The artwork will be informed through community engagement including primary schools, community groups and collaborations with the community safety team. The project will enhance visibility, safety, and aesthetics, transforming the underpass into a welcoming and navigable space, whilst achieving Didcot Garden Town's Public Art Plan's artistic ambitions and its Wayfinding Strategy aim of promoting active travel links to and from the station, through inspiring signposting.

A future more ambitious project to enhance the underpass with distinct lighting is also in exploration stages, which may be initiated this year.

Project Brief:

Working in response to community engagement to design, create and install up to four wall-based artworks that respond to the project goals and meet the artist selection criteria. Cow Lane Underpass Connecting Communities art project will improve the experience and restore confidence in using the underpass, benefitting both customers and community. Artwork will create a positive, uplifting and engaging pathway between Ladygrove and the railway station, leaving the legacy of an outdoor gallery, for people to enjoy for years to come. We are looking for applications that answer the project aims and creative plans that address the needs of the spaces visually. Enabling an awareness and conversation about the use of the underpass and creating visual landmarks that create a destination to and from the station.

This commission will create a vibrant and welcoming space for commuters and pedestrians. The artwork should reflect themes of transformation, change and transition combining the station's history, local community, and promote a sense of place. We are looking for submissions in two dimensional form; mosaic, paint, printed and carvings, reliefs all providing work that can be wall mounted.

Project Aims:

To design, create and install up to four wall mounted artworks that

- Enhance the visual appeal of the underpass, transforming it into a positive and engaging space.
- Celebrate the history and heritage of the railway in the community and local landscapes.
- Engage local community groups in the design and creation of the artwork.
- Create a lasting piece of public art that fosters community pride.
- Improving safety, especially for women and girls
- For the artwork to promote Increased accessibility, sustainable travel and improved community confidence and safety
- The artwork creates an enhanced arterial route to North Didcot's green spaces
- Enriches local identity, pride and sense of belonging
- Positive engagement with under-represented groups
- Develops a future legacy, creating tomorrow's heritage
- Work within the project budget of £10000 to deliver community engagement, materials, artwork design, production and installation

Art installation:

Informed by community consultation and workshops, the commissioned artist will identify key visual indicators that embed the railway's heritage, responding to the landscape, and helping implant a sense of ownership and community belonging, facilitating a safer space through positive imagery celebrating Didcot's rich heritage.

Artist Selection:

The selection panel will prioritise artists who:

- Demonstrate experience in creating and installing public art, particularly large-scale wall-mounted works.
- Have a proven track record of successful community engagement in art projects.
- Show a strong understanding of and appreciation for railway heritage and local landscapes
- Propose innovative and creative approaches to the project brief.

Community Engagement:

The selected artist will be expected to:

- Conduct workshops and meetings with the following local community groups to gather ideas and stories related to the station and its history.
 - Groups that must be consulted include the Ladygrove resident group, Didcot Railway Centre and local schools.
- Incorporate community input into the design of the artwork, ensuring it reflects the collective identity of the area.

- Provide opportunities for community members to participate in the creation of the artwork, where appropriate.

Artwork Requirements:

- The artwork must be durable and weather-resistant, suitable for outdoor installation in a public space.
- The materials used should be low-maintenance and easy to clean.
- The design should consider safety and accessibility for all users of the underpass.
- The artwork must comply with all relevant building codes and regulations.
- Insurance to be supplied on application.
- Risk Assessment and Method Statement must be supplied.
- Cost/factor in road closures and maintenance requirements

Budget:

Up to £10,000 – The budget range cannot be exceeded

Payment will be made in 3 stages as set out below subject to receipt of a non-disputed invoice.

Stage 1: 25% of total project costs Payment 1: 1 June 2025 for June – July 3 x Community engagement workshops and design time.

Stage 2: 25% of total project costs Payment 2: 1 August 2025 on completion of design, production and materials in progress. This also includes appropriate licence costs.

Stage 3: 50% of total project costs Payment 3: 25 November 2025. On completion and sign off the project and installation. This includes all wall preparation and installation costs.

Timeline:

May - June shortlisting

June Artist appointment

June - July Community engagement and design time.

August - November artwork production and installation

Submission Requirements:

- Provide three examples of previous work relevant to this project.
- Detailed proposal outlining artistic approach to the project, including community engagement plans and preliminary design concepts.
- Budget proposal.
- Timeline for project completion.

South and Vale District councils reserves the right to request modifications to the design before final approval.

Please email didcotgardentown@southandvale.gov.uk for further details on location specifics.