



# Public Art Commission: Stony Stratford

**We are looking to appoint a creative practitioner with experience in developing and delivering site-specific public art commissions, e.g. sculptures.**

Expression of Interest Publication	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Commission budget	£60,000 excl. VAT
Commission	Public Art Installation e.g. sculpture

## **Stony Stratford**

Stony Stratford is considered to be ‘the Jewel of Milton Keynes’. Whilst part of one of the fastest-growing cities in Britain, it is a mix of old and new with its own style and charm, retaining the character of a lively market town. “Stony” has a long and fascinating history, seen in its many historical coaching inns and delightful Georgian architecture. The High Street is part of the original Watling Street, in existence since the Romans marched from Richborough to Chester. Writers, artists, and musicians are drawn to the town with its colourful history, its mix of traditional and speciality shops, and the wide range of pubs, restaurants and cafés to be found there.

## **Aims for the Commission**

Stony Stratford Town Council (SSTC) is looking to appoint an experienced creative practitioner or collaborative practice to develop and deliver a permanent public art installation, creating a focal point in the vicinity of the High Street that will celebrate the rich heritage of Stony Stratford. The client has an initial preference for a sculpture in a single location (likely to be Market Square) but wants to leave scope for artist creativity – proposals for other forms of installation will therefore also be considered.

Total commission budget is £60,000 excl. VAT. This includes all fees, fabrication/delivery costs, installation, public engagement and publicity. A sum of £3,000 has already been ring-fenced for future maintenance. The client is Stony Stratford Town Council, with overall project management by the Town Clerk, supported by the Town Centre Working Group (TCWG), which consists of councillors, residents, school pupils and local businesses.

## **Location**

Initial investigations have highlighted Market Square as a suitable location. It is the heart of Stony and the site of various gatherings and celebrations throughout the year.

The artist will need to be aware that the work may be in a conservation area and adjacent to Grade II listed buildings.

## **Considerations:**

The artist should explore and respond to all or any of the following aspirations when developing their ideas:

- to be educational and informative about Stony Stratford.
- to reflect on the culture, history and/or geology of Stony Stratford.
- to activate and animate the chosen space.
- to take a cue from a broad range of researched contexts, e.g. Roman era, local wildlife, Stony Stratford as a historical transport hub.
- to take into account the Stony Stratford Neighbourhood Plan.

Their proposal should also:

- provide for all labour, supplies, materials and equipment needed for the design, execution, fabrication, transportation and installation of the artwork.
- consider a variety of media, but the work should be constructed from a resilient, durable, and low-maintenance material as it will be located outdoors.
- consider maintenance, i.e. the finished work should not be easily vandalised and should be straightforward and economical to repair.
- include specifications and details of installation – drawings of the proposed installation and specifications for materials, fixings, measurements, installation techniques and schedules, as well as any required infrastructure surveys or planning permission.

Collaboration – the artist will work closely with Stony Stratford Town Council to ensure that all works and planning requirements fit in with the overall timeline for the project. Permissions will be sought by the Council.

Publicity – sufficient time and resources should be allocated to marketing and publicity so that the project can be shared with the community.

## **Objectives**

- to create an artwork that captures the interest and spirit of the community.
- to create a focal point that is visually pleasing and sensitive to the location.
- to engage the community and encourage interaction with the artwork.
- to celebrate the identity of Stony Stratford and support community development.
- to create a feature with a minimum life expectancy of 25 years.

## **Deliverables**

The chosen creative practice will be required

- to understand the site(s), context and aims of the Public Art Commission and to develop an initial concept and outline proposal.
- to develop and deliver activities with the community to inform and engage local residents and schools.

- to consider how the community will interact with the finished artwork.
- to present ideas and respond to feedback from the TCWG during design development.
- to support any planning applications or other permissions required. This may also include a review by ROSPA and MK Highways.
- to ensure compliance with any regulations and recommendations of highways and planning officers.
- to develop and deliver an artwork that responds to the brief provided by the Town Council and the TCWG.
- to work to the agreed timescales and to the specified budget.

Some useful websites about Stony Stratford include:

<https://www.stonystratford.gov.uk/>

<https://www.mkheritage.org.uk/archive/mkm/stonystratford/docs/history.html>

<https://www.stonystratford.co.uk/history>

There are also several books available from Stony Stratford Library.

### **Exclusions**

We will not accept proposals for existing artworks or for projects that do not meet the timescales or budget, or approaches that do not respond to the local context.

### **Selection Process**

#### **Stage 1 - Expressions of Interest**

The commission opportunity will be openly circulated.

Artists are to submit an Expression of Interest by **3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**.

Three artists will be shortlisted and invited to visit the site in the week commencing **10<sup>th</sup> June 2024**. This will allow them to engage with the TCWG and help them to develop a proposal. Each artist will be awarded £1,000 for this phase of work.

#### **Stage 2 – Shortlisted artists develop proposals**

Each shortlisted artist will be required to develop their idea and present their proposal to the TCWG during the week commencing **1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**. The proposal should include the following:

- an outline of the idea and inspiration for the design
- information on and details of scale, materials, maintenance needs
- artist's impression of the artwork in situ
- breakdown of costs (design, fabrication, installation)

An initial road safety assessment will be carried out on the proposed design to identify any potential issues. The selected artist will use this information and other feedback to further develop their design.

### Stage 3 – Final selection

During the week commencing **15<sup>th</sup> July 2024**, one artist/design will be selected to undertake the commission, based on their proposal meeting the brief and being suitable for the location.

The selected artist will be contracted to develop/detail their design and support the approvals process. Fabrication of the artwork will be contracted once planning approval has been secured.

### Making an Expression of Interest

To submit an Expression of Interest, please send in the following, as one PDF:

- **up to three examples of previous relevant commissions** (pdf or jpg file types only), including images and indicative budget spends for each, max. 5 x A4.
- **a Letter of Interest**, explaining why you would like to be chosen for this commission and confirming your availability.
- **contact details** (email and telephone) for two referees – from recent commissions.
- **current Curriculum Vitae** or practice profile
- **evidence of insurance cover**

### Assessment criteria

Expressions of Interest (Eois) will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- **Approach** – response to identified themes and objectives; ability to research and respond creatively to a brief.
- **Artistic ability** – ability to produce an innovative, creative and attractive design.
- **Quality of previous projects** – proven track record of high-quality delivery, working with communities and partners to develop and deliver exceptional, innovative and engaging artworks within the public realm.
- **Experience** – successful completion of projects of a similar scale and budget, experience of collaboration with communities, partners and stakeholders, excellent communication skills.

Eois should be submitted to [eoist@stonystatford.gov.uk](mailto:eoist@stonystatford.gov.uk) by **5 pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**. If you have any difficulties in making your submission, please contact the Town Clerk, Lynne Compton on [office@stonystatford.gov.uk](mailto:office@stonystatford.gov.uk) or ring 01908-566726 press 1.

### **Timeline:**

Closing date for Expressions of Interest	5 pm, 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2024
Shortlist of artists	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
Site visit for shortlisted artists	Week commencing 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
Final presentation by artists to the project team	Week commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024
Commission awarded	Week commencing 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Additional and supporting information:**

**Assessed to be the most suitable location:**

