

Blossoming Creatives:

Green Communities Creative Commissions

We're excited for spring blossom and we want to celebrate it with you!

As part of the Green Communities Blossom project, we are thrilled to be offering 3 Creative Commissions, celebrating nature, blossom, and community. This project is funded by, and delivered in collaboration with, the National Trust as part of their national Blossom project.

The Commissions are focused around the theme of blossom and will be co-created with Plymouth communities (namely Devonport, Keyham, and/or Central Park), with an emphasis on nature connection.

Each of the 3 Commissions will take place between February and May 2025, and creatives are able to apply for up to £3,000.

Background

The Green Communities team is working alongside communities in Devonport, Keyham, and Central Park to offer a range of activities, from free nature themed events, green skills sharing sessions, nature education sessions through education initiatives, digital badging, and opportunities to make a difference for their local wildlife. These are spaces for people from across the neighbourhood to shape their local nature places. Not only is this giving people the chance to get out and about and feel more connected with nature on their doorstep, but also means that nature spaces across the neighbourhoods are being improved for wildlife, too. Good for people, good for wildlife.

Green Communities is a partnership project between Plymouth City Council, National Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust, Real Ideas Organisation, and Zebra Collective. The project is funded through a combination of grants and contributions, including support from Heritage Lottery Fund Urban Nature Development Grant and Natural England.

The Commissions

We're really interested to hear about your blossoming ideas on the following proposed commission themes:-

- 1 Blossoming Diversity-** working specifically with under-represented communities
- 2 Naturally Blossoming-** looking to work alongside nature to create art and encourage regenerative practice
- 3 Blossoming Stories-** looking to promote nature inspired storytelling in its broadest sense

These themes are guidelines, so please don't worry about putting yourself in one theme, we're keen to hear your ideas in whatever form they take...

Engagement focus: Green Communities will support you to focus on key community groups/greenspace sites.

Creative medium: Any creative medium is welcome, with a preference given to those that uses a range of media.

Commission 1: Blossoming Diversity

Theme: In nature, the most healthy, stable, and blossoming ecosystems are invariably the most diverse ones. This commission aims to explore the question, "How are, and how could, the diverse communities of Plymouth access and engage with the city's natural environment?"

A key feature of your proposal should be celebration of the blossoming diversity in the city and should include organising and leading participatory workshops for public and community groups. These workshops will explore these themes from their own experience and perspectives; and engage in removing barriers to creatively support connection with nature.

We will be particularly interested in applications from artists who are from one of the many diverse groups within the city, or already work with those communities.

Commission 2: Naturally Blossoming

Theme: This commission invites creatives to explore ways of working with natural materials to produce a form of art, in its broadest sense. Celebrating nature through nature, resulting in a form of regenerative art that actively enhances or improves the natural environment and actively supports small acts of kindness for nature.

We encourage proposals that explore individual and collective action in the restoration of nature. There is flexibility within this brief for artists to consider either delivering directly to target audiences, or to focus on developing the skills within relevant gatekeepers and professionals who will then help deliver the programme, for example teachers or community leaders.

Commission 3: Blossoming Stories

Theme: This commission invites creatives to explore nature inspired storytelling. Our stories, collective and individual, bloom every day- they are sources of hope and comfort, and help us to navigate change, be that through shared celebration or gifting empathy in our challenging times. Like stories, spring and blossom signify change and, to many, nurture hope and we would love this commission to reflect this. By 'story', we mean this in the broadest sense- it can be abstract, personal, traditional, but is strongly rooted in the fact of our being *part* of nature.

We encourage proposals that explore and celebrate storytelling through mixed media, be that written, performative, through illustrative or photographic means- whatever your medium, we are keen to see you explore how it can tell nature inspired stories.

Application Guidance

To apply, please read the guidance below and the criteria specific to the commission you are applying for and respond to them in your proposals. Proposals should be **no more than 3 sides of A4** and it is up to you to present your ideas how you wish- including text, design,

photos etc. The main thing is that you show how you meet the criteria for the commission. Please note that your DBS, insurance details, risk assessment, and accessibility statement can be added as appendices to your application and won't be counted as part of the 3 page limit.

If a written application isn't your preferred application format, please drop us a line on the e-mail addresses below and we can talk through how best to accommodate your proposal.

The **deadline for submissions is 12 noon on Wednesday 15 January 2025**, with commission activity beginning in early February and ending late May/early June. In order to submit your proposal, please read through the below eligibility/proposal details and respond to them in your application.

Please send any questions and/or proposals to Liz Cole Liz.Cole@plymouth.gov.uk and Emmie Readman Emmie.Readman@plymouth.gov.uk. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you would like to chat through any element of your idea, we're open to being adaptable to different approaches.

Guidance

1. Creative Engagement- Co-Creation and Nature Connection

- We expect a co-creation approach in the development of each commission; and expect the selected creative to be able to facilitate engagement (with some support from the project team) and develop the piece in collaboration with local residents and relevant groups. Artists must be either based in, or happy to collaborate with, communities in which Green Communities works- Devonport, Keyham, or Central Park.
- The individual/organisation must engage creatively with the community/groups and the project partners to shape and grow the ideas and content. Community participants will bring to the project knowledge, wisdom and experiences, which must clearly influence the creative work.
- The activities should enable participants to develop new skills and explore, document, and share their experiences through the process in a friendly, empowering, productive, visual, and fun way.

- Through the Blossom partnership between Plymouth City Council and the National Trust, we plan to take the 3 Creative Commissions on tour around various sites within Plymouth and National Trust properties around the Plymouth area, including Cotehele, Saltram, and Antony. This will form part of the celebrations towards the end of the Blossom project (around May). In your submission, you will need to consider what this touring element will look like for your art.

Nature Connection

The Nature Connectedness Research Group at the University of Derby recognises that:-

“...our story is nature. The human relationship with the rest of nature matters for our well-being, yet the climate and environment emergency shows that the human relationship with the rest of nature is broken. To fix it we need a new more connected relationship that recognises that we are part of nature.”

Each proposal will need to support some of the five key pathways to nature connectedness:-

- Senses - tuning in to nature through the senses
- Emotion - feeling alive through the emotions and feelings nature brings
- Beauty - noticing nature's beauty
- Meaning - nature bringing meaning to our lives
- Compassion - caring and taking action for nature

2. Eligibility/Monitoring and Reporting

The selected creative must:-

- Be registered on the Plymouth City Council supplier's portal on this link: <https://procontract.due-north.com/Register>
- Provide us with information to support evaluation activities led by Green Communities such as numbers involved in activities, recording process, images, quotes, video, etc. This will be through the Green Communities Event Record Form
- Inform us in advance of any issues that may impact on the project delivery
- Provide their own public liability insurance and risk assessments for all events and engagement activities

3. Your Proposal

Your proposal should include:-

- Background to your work and experience
- Your creative industry sector/s (including but not limited to): createch, digital, games, graphic design, augmented/virtual/mixed reality, visual arts, photography, illustration, sculpture, moving image, craft, performing arts, poetry, sound, literature and creative writing
- Your methods and approach to co-creation
- A clear ethical approach to working with communities and that includes providing information to participants about the nature of their involvement that seeks consent
- Identified community or groups you will work with
- Outline plan for the development of the creative concept, production, and opportunities for engagement/celebration and promotion/dissemination
- Methods that will be used for evaluating the work
- Outline timeframe for engaging relevant communities/key groups
- Budget breakdown
- Please submit evidence of successful completion of similar pieces of work including examples of co-creation approaches and evaluation activities. Please provide a link to an on-line portfolio, website, or folder
- Submitted proposals should include a disability and accessibility statement. This should include a reflection on the accessibility/limits to accessibility of the project at each stage and outline of adjustments made to enhance accessibility. This should be reflected in the budget proposal as appropriate.
- Each proposal should include a risk assessment that details risk specific to the activity. You may be required to have a valid DBS check if working with children or vulnerable adults.

4. Timeframe for Key Outputs/Outcomes

- Applications open: 9 December
- Deadline for proposals: 12 noon Wednesday 15 January
- Commissions awarded: End of Jan
- Commissions set up calls: First week of Feb

- Project start up beginning of stakeholder engagement/co-creation: Mid-Feb
- Project delivery with communities: Beginning of March to end of May
- Final evaluation/impact report by beginning of June

5. Budget

We hope to offer 3 Commissions and anticipate each commission budget being approximately £3k depending on the medium and scope. There will be opportunities to collaborate with the other 2 successful creatives for the duration of the project.

A payment schedule will be worked out between the selected creative and commissioners once the work has been commissioned.