

CREATIVE COMMUNITY MAPPING IN WHITMORE REANS

MARCH 2022

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OUTLINE OF BRIEF

Newhampton Arts Centre is seeking to commission up to five artists to co-create maps of Whitmore Reans in Wolverhampton, with local communities. These maps will be a creative representation of the area's communities, networks, activities and needs. They do not need to be in the style of a traditional map, the projects could use any artform to create a representation of the area in partnership with local people and organisations.

CONTEXT

Newhampton Arts Centre (NAC) is a community arts centre based in Whitmore Reans, a hyper-diverse area of considerable social deprivation on the edge of Wolverhampton city centre. NAC's programme has always embraced a mixture of creative and community-focused activity. Amongst the 21 resident organisations onsite is a radio station, two recording studios, a group of visual artists and also adult day care. Regular classes weekly include dance, youth theatre and English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Like all cultural organisations in the UK, NAC was forced to shut its doors during the successive lockdowns in 2020-1. It is now in a phase of post-COVID recovery and is seeking to take this opportunity to redefine the role that it can play in improving the lives of the citizens of Whitmore Reans and Wolverhampton. We are sure that there is more that NAC could and should be doing.

Rather than taking a decision ourselves we would like to find out more about what is needed by co-creating work with our local communities. As an arts centre we want artists to lead this process of discovery and display, through the commissioning of 5 artists to work with groups in Whitmore Reans and through a process of discussion and co-creation make maps of communities, networks, activities and needs.

The project concludes with a public exhibition and community sharing event drawing the stakeholders together to debate and ultimately make recommendations to NAC as to what additional role(s) are most needed. Curiosity Productions are managing this project on behalf of NAC.



CREATIVE COMMUNITY MAPPING

As a community engagement process community mapping is about producing maps of a neighbourhood that involve residents, and which may feature assets typically missed by top-down mapping processes such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation or Public Health surveys of neighbourhoods. These may feature deficits and needs, whereas community maps may draw together individual, community or institutional assets within a neighbourhood. Map-making can be an artistic process and many artists have drawn on mapping imagery and used the idea of the map to convey ideas.

Simon Patterson's *The Great Bear* (1992) takes the classic iconography of the London Underground Map and replaces the station and line names with categories of famous people, such as Engineers, Philosophers and Footballers. Grayson Perry's *Map of an Englishman* (2004) draws on seventeenth-century cartography and also early medical diagrams to create a mental map of an imagined Englishman's state of mind.

Maps are a way of ordering and presenting information and the commissions do not have to look like a conventional cartographic representation of Whitmore Reans. They could use any media and could be designed to be listened to, walked around or touched as well as seen.



Artists that have experience of making their work from collaborations where community are central will be key to the success of this project. The maps will be created in community engagement sessions and the coming together of all participants. The final form will be something that someone who is not engaged in the process can regard as artistic, creative and legible in terms of that collective map. We want to generate new narratives and knowledge about Whitmore Reans – and in the process discover where the gaps and needs are that a future role for NAC might tackle.

GROUPS AND PROJECT PARTNERS

We have five commissions available for work with five groups who are connected to Whitmore Reans, as residents and/or through local partner organisations. The five groups are:

The Good Shepherd

The artist will work with a group of service users from the Good Shepherd, who provide a regular food service in the city and, more recently, have expanded the support they offer to include a day centre, meaningful activity programme, Housing First service and private sector supported lettings scheme. They also host a multi-agency hub bringing together a wide range of agencies including health, education, training, and support services.

This year is the organisations' 50th Anniversary and they are interested in exploring film as a potential artform for this project and linking it to their 50th anniversary celebrations.

Gatis Community Space (Acts of Random Caring CIC)

The artist will work with local people of all ages and backgrounds who are interested in celebrating the skills and talents of people living in Whitmore Reans.

Acts of Random Caring CIC better known as ARCCIC (formerly Gatis Gardeners) was established in December 2013, to support the local community by creating a hub on a well known and loved site. A site known as Gatis Community Space that is open to and welcomes all.

They are particularly interested in 'lighting up' Whitmore Reans, exploring light and digital technology, and connecting this project to their lantern parade planned for October half term.

African Caribbean Community Initiative (ACCI)

The artist will work with service members at ACCI.

The African Caribbean Community Initiative (ACCI) aims to provide a culturally safe service that will meet the needs of the African and Caribbean community and their families affected by mental ill health. They strive to develop a better quality of life for their service members through; the Wellbeing Hub Day Centre, Outreach Support, Supported Housing, Housing Advice and Counselling & Therapeutic Services.

Refugee & Migrant Centre (RMC) and Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary

The artist will work with refugees and migrants who have settled or been temporarily housed in Whitmore Reans, where there is a large amount of temporary accommodation. The majority of participants will have English as a second language.

The Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) provides free casework, advice and guidance on immigration, housing/homelessness/destitution, welfare, education and health. Alongside this, RMC also provide English classes, dedicated support with citizenship and employment and run Afghan and Syrian Resettlement Schemes.

Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary is led by a group of volunteers committed to ensuring Wolverhampton is a place of welcome and safety. They run a weekly drop-in centre, occasional community events and activities, and support Schools of Sanctuary.

Families group

The artist will work with a group of families with children mainly under the age of 11, many of whom have accessed the Holiday Activities & Food programme at Newhampton Arts Centre during school holidays.

Many of the families have English as a second language and some of them are recent migrants finding their feet in the community.



WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for up to five artists to work with the five groups outlined above. It is possible that we may commission an artist to work with more than one group.

The artists will need to:

- ▶ Be committed to co-creation practice with a collaborative approach to community engaged work.
- ▶ Have experience of working with participants who would not call themselves 'artists'.
- ▶ Be prepared to be flexible and work with variable engagement from participants throughout the duration of the project as participants' life circumstances could be complex.
- ▶ Have a project approach that will result in something that can be shared within a final event and exhibition in October half term and within a printed project publication (that will also be distributed digitally).
- ▶ Be available to an interview (if shortlisted) on 20th or 21st April 2022. A fee will be paid for delivery of taster workshops.
- ▶ Have a DBS on the update service or be prepared to carry out a DBS check before commencing this project.

We are particularly interested in hearing from artists who are based in Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton or the West Midlands.

We are also particularly interested in hearing from artists who identify as a person of African, Caribbean or Latinx heritage, South Asian, East Asian, or South East Asian heritage or Middle Eastern heritage, and people who identify as deaf, disabled or neurodivergent, and people who identify as LGBTQI+.

TIME FRAME



FEES

£5000 per commission to include VAT, materials and expenses.

HOW TO APPLY:

Please send your CV and a short cover letter or a film or audio file of no more than 5 minutes outlining how your work and practice fits with our project. Please state:

- ▶ Why you would like to work on this project with us
- ▶ Information about your artistic practice (this could include links to images, film, audio etc)
- ▶ What approach you will take to this commission
- ▶ If there is a specific group or groups that you would particularly like to work with (of those detailed above), and why.
- ▶ What experience you have of working with community participants, ideally with a co-creation approach
- ▶ How your approach to making work is collaborative
- ▶ Let us know if you have a DBS registered on the update service

As the core of this project is a co-creation process we will be involving members of the community in the selection process for the commissioned artists, and will ask shortlisted artists to deliver a presentation about their work to a community panel as part of the interview process.

Deadline to apply: 5pm Monday 11th April 2022

Please send your application to: hello@curiosityproductions.co.uk

Further information: If you have any enquiries about applying for this project, please contact Jenny Smith on jenny@curiosityproductions.co.uk or call **07967 187822**



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