



## **Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum**

### **Artists Commission Brief - First World War Commemorative Woodland**

#### **Summary**

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust would like to work with a visual artist to create an exciting artwork for a designated commemorative woodland at Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum, that considers the impact the First World War had on the people and the landscapes of Herefordshire.

The landscape of Herefordshire, and the UK at large, was changed forever by the Great War effort. Ancient woodlands were stripped, with wood playing a vital role within the War effort, a generation of young men were lost, and rural traditions and communities were changed forever.

We are looking for an artist who can make connections between the history and context of Queenswood, physically and conceptually and help people to think differently and has some awareness and considerations of a heritage or non-traditional artspace context for a commission.

#### **Background**

Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum is the most popular outdoor tourist destination in Herefordshire, with 450,000 annual visitations from a broad range of visitors. The site includes 123 acres of semi-natural ancient woodland and an arboretum of 1,200 rare and exotic trees. A site of special scientific interest (SSSI) for semi-natural ancient woodland, Queenswood is also a Local Natural Reserve with open access under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act. The entire woodland was saved from housing development in the 1930s following a successful public appeal led by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England. Management of the Country Park and Arboretum was transferred from Herefordshire Council to a partnership between Herefordshire Wildlife Trust (HWT) and New Leaf sustainable development by way of a community asset transfer in spring 2016.

HWT has been awarded funding from Heritage Lottery and a range of other funders including the European Structural Investment Fund on behalf of the partnership to improve access and understanding of the cultural and natural heritage of Queenswood. This commission is part of that funding.

In 2016 the First World War Commemoration Committee, set up by the Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, the Dowager Countess of Darnley JP, considered establishing a piece of woodland as a memorial to all the people of Herefordshire in the First World War. In consultation with the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust it was agreed that Queenswood would be ideal, as the site had been clear felled for timber for the war effort. The Herefordshire Wildlife Trust took on the project in 2017

Queenswood will host a FWW centenary event on 29 June 2019, to mark the signing of the treaty of Versailles. The commission will be completed in time for this event.

### **What we want to do**

- Draw out the historic landscape context and the impact of the First World War on the people of Herefordshire
- Draw a broad range of visitors to the triangle of woodland that has been designated as the First World War commemorative woodland at Queenswood. This triangle of oaks are all 100 years old, following clear fell of the site to supply the Great War effort. This is approximately 5 mins walk from the main carpark and visitor centre area of the Country Park
- Encourage our repeat visitors to experience Queenswood and its historic context in a new way and to encourage exploration and curiosity
- Attract new audiences to Queenswood
- To expand visitors, staff and volunteers' knowledge and appreciation of contemporary art
- To encourage visitors, staff and volunteers to be actively involved with the creative process, as well as with its presentation (particularly through the delivery of two workshops with interested communities as part of the research phase)

### **We will support the artist and the commission by**

- Supporting the artist to research, create and present an artwork which is exciting, thought provoking and of a quality which responds to the site at Queenswood, creating a dialogue with the materials and site
- A part-time project manager and curatorial advisor will work closely with the commissioned artist throughout the process
- Provide research support from members of the FWWCC, the QW Coronation Fund, New Leaf, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust landscapes team and project staff
- Provide advice and support from the rangers on location, wildlife and access
- Provide support for any health and safety considerations
- Provide marketing and interpretation for the artwork (We will agree interpretation with the artist. We also ask that the artist support the marketing through their own channels)

### **Considerations**

**Materials** - materials will be decided by the artist, but the artwork must be durable, able to withstand the elements and ensure longevity of the piece (10 years +). We would like the materials used to reflect the sustainability aspirations in the partnership vision. There are many wood products available from Queenswood, harvested as part of an active management programme to benefit the flora and fauna of the site. The availability to use this wood and other natural materials from the site can be discussed with the project manager.

**Weather** – the artwork needs to be robust enough to withstand the British Weather - rain, frost, wind, ice and snow as well as the heat and the sun.

**Visitors** – thousands of visitors of all ages will view and interact with the artwork and we are not able to provide invigilation.

**Maintenance and security** – the artwork will need to be reasonably maintenance free and will be a shared responsibility with the artist (there is little to no budget for ongoing upkeep). The work will be insured by the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.

**Wildlife** – as the artwork will be located in the woodland environment it will be accessible to the woodland wildlife; squirrels, birds, badgers

**Accessibility** – the location for the site for the artwork is accessible by electric mobility vehicle. If the proposed artwork is to enable public access within it this must be accessible to all visitors and

adherence to health and safety is essential.

### **Budget**

- We have secured £7,500 for the commission, which includes the artist's fee and associated costs (including the facilitation of two workshops with communities of interest as part of the research and development phase), production costs, transport and installation of the artwork.
- A separate budget will be used by HWT to appoint contractors to undertake ground works required for the creation of a footpath to the artwork.
- HWT volunteer work parties will be available to undertake some physical works that may be required as part of the artist's commission. HWT will require an indication of the level of labour required from volunteers as part of the artist's full proposal, to ensure that the organisation can meet these requirements with volunteer support.

### **Timeframe**

Open afternoon (informal), where potential commissioned artists can visit the site, meet the project manager and curatorial advisor and other members of staff: 4 September 2018, 1pm-3.30pm.

Expression of Interest deadline: 30 September 2018, 5pm

Shortlisted artist contacted: 3 October 2018

Shortlisted artist interviews: 8 October 2018

Artist notified of appointment: 12 October 2018

Research and development period (including undertaking workshops). During this period the artist will have access to archival materials and information about the heritage of Queenswood, contact with staff and access to arrange site visits: 15 October – 30 November 2018

Artist to present final proposal for artwork: 30 November 2018

The commissioned artist(s) artist will have from end of November 2018 through to the end of February 2019 to realise and install the commission to ensure there is no disturbance to breeding birds. Queenswood will host a FWW centenary event on 29 June 2019, to mark the signing of the treaty of Versailles – incorporating the commemorative woodland and artwork into the event. This will include the Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, the High Sheriff, and a number of Herefordshire dignitaries. The commission must be completed in time for this event.

### **Selection Process**

Selection will be made through an Expression of Interest proposal, which should include:

- A statement demonstrating why you are interested in the commission and how it will fit with your practice. We will consider artists at all stages of career.
- An illustrated response to the commission giving a clear connection to the context of the brief. This should be highly visual with sketches or images that give a clear insight into your ideas for the commission, as well as a written description. This response will need to

demonstrate artistic quality, artistic ambition, quality of ideas and inventiveness as well as a realistic response to the considerations of the commission.

In addition, you will be required to submit a CV, visuals of recent commissions / artwork and a link to a website for examples of previous work.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed by the following panel members:

- Lieutenant General Sir John Foley KCB OBE MC DL - chair of the Herefordshire First World War Commemoration Committee
- Major James Hereford MBE DL - Herefordshire First World War Commemoration Committee
- James Hitchcock – Estates Senior Manager
- Rose Farrington – Queenswood Heritage Gateway Project Officer
- Wendy Cotton - New Leaf, Queenswood & Bodenham Partnership Sustainable Development liaison officer
- Tamsin Clive, Chair of Queenswood Coronation Fund or Jerry Ross - Coronation Fund - Arboretum - Arbourculturalist
- Mandy Fowler – Curatorial Advisor

#### Contact details

**Open afternoon 4 September 2018 – please RSVP by Friday 31 August.** You can of course visit Queenswood independently.

Please RSVP and address any queries to:

Rose Farrington Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.

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Queenswood Country Park & Arboretum website:

<http://www.queenswoodandbodenhamlake.org/>

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

[www.herefordshirewt.org](http://www.herefordshirewt.org)

New Leaf Sustainable Development Ltd

<https://www.herefordshirenewleaf.org.uk/>

