

# Midsomer Norton Outdoor Bench Trail Project – Inviting Expressions of Interest



## 1. Overview

The Midsomer Norton Cultural Consortium is seeking Expressions of Interest from local artists to design and paint one of three upcycled outdoor benches which will form part of a trail around the Town Centre. **Up to £1,000 of funding per bench is available to cover artist fees/materials.**

## 2. Background and Context

The Midsomer Norton Bench Trail Project is part of Midsomer Norton Cultural Programme, a project which showcases all that our medieval market town has to offer – from cinemas and carnivals to music and markets, and everything in between. It is run by Midsomer Norton Cultural Consortium, a group of representatives from local schools, arts organisations, charities, High Street businesses, churches, and community groups. It was set up as part of the Midsomer Norton High Street Heritage Action Zone 2020-24, supported by Midsomer Norton Community Trust, Midsomer Norton Town Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council, with grant funding from Historic England, Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

## 3. Project Aims

- To encourage people to pause and enjoy our Town Centre
- To encourage people to spend time together outdoors
- To explore aspects of local culture and artists' perspectives on Midsomer Norton (its past, present, people and places)
- To celebrate diverse individual artists' experiences of the place they live in

## 4. Project

Applications are welcomed from local artists - individuals, studios or collaborations. We have suggested a scope for the project but varying approaches are welcomed. Applications for more than one bench will also be considered.

### Specification

- The benches are iroko wood slat benches with metal ends. They have been prepared, primed and disassembled ready for painting.
- There is a mixture of benches with and without backs.
- Bench ends have been painted black - these may be left as they are or repainted.
- The artist must use paint colours/materials which can withstand local weather conditions (target lifespan of 5+ years outdoors) and are appropriate to their immediate environment.

### Theme

- Your proposed design must have a strong theme which relates to Midsomer Norton and its past, present, people and places.
- The design must appeal to all visitors to the Town Centre – it should be engaging, creative, enriching, and executed to a professional standard.

## Budget

- **£1,000 per bench** (incl. VAT where applicable)
- The budget should include: time, materials, expenses, contingency, maintenance (1 year).
- Any costs incurred and not agreed in advance will be met by the artist.
- Grant funds will be paid half in advance and half on completion.

## 5. Process

- Design: Once selected, the artist will be asked to prepare drawings to illustrate their proposal for approval by the project team. They must also submit a proposed budget, list of materials, and 12-month plan for maintenance.
- Production: Bench parts can be delivered to a location of the artist's choosing within 15 miles of Midsomer Norton. There is some limited studio space available in Midsomer Norton for painting, if required – please indicate if this applies to you.
- Installation: Once painted, the bench will be assembled and installed by our project team. Bench locations will be selected in collaboration with the artist.

## 6. Timeline

| Stage                    | Deadline                                       |
|--------------------------|--|
| EOI submission           | 31 January 2023                                |
| Artist selection         | 6 February 2023                                |
| Commencement of contract | 17 February 2023                               |
| Installation             | Within 3 months from the start of the contract |

## 7. Artist Selection

### Eligibility

- Artists do not need to have extensive experience of creating art for the public realm, but they must demonstrate good understanding of what materials will be required to create a robust and eye-catching piece.
- Artists must be located within 15 miles of Midsomer Norton. Residents of Midsomer Norton, Radstock and surrounding villages are particularly encouraged to apply.
- We are especially keen to appoint artists who are representative of the diversity in our local community. Young artists, disabled and neurodivergent artists, LGBTQ+ artists and artists of colour are particularly encouraged to apply.

### Expressions of Interest should include the following:

- A covering note explaining your work and interest in the project. This may be written (no more than 300 words) or video/audio recorded (no more than 3 minutes). At this stage you do not need to provide a proposal for your bench design, but you may share initial ideas if you wish.
- Images of up to three previous relevant projects.
- Details of one referee.

## 8. Contact

All enquiries should be sent to Beth Whalley, Engagement Coordinator, Midsomer Norton Community Trust [culture@midsomernortoncommunitytrust.co.uk](mailto:culture@midsomernortoncommunitytrust.co.uk)

## 9. Appendices

### Bench examples

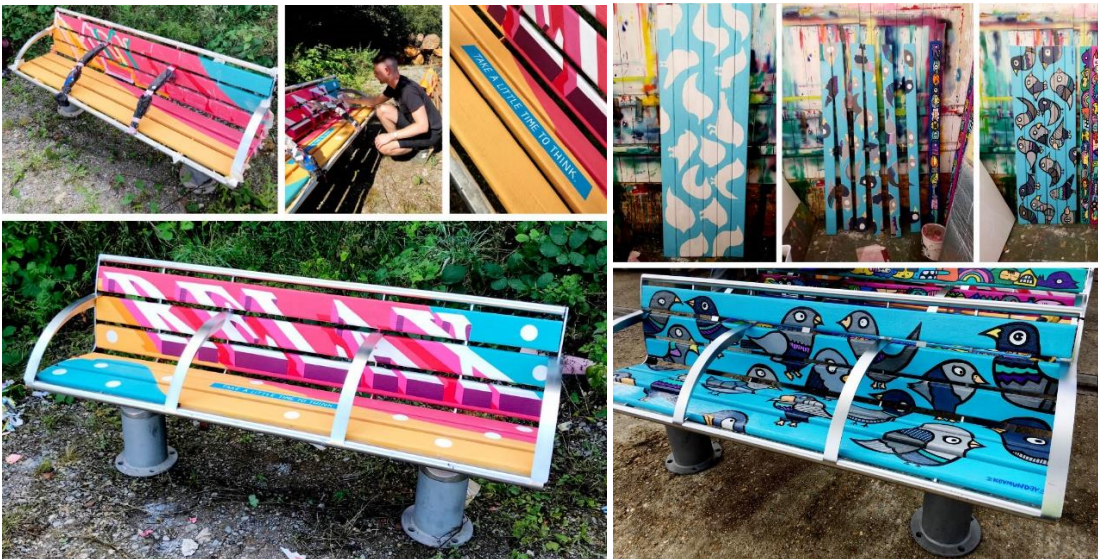


### Inspiration

Solent Bench Project <https://www.solent.ac.uk/work-with-us/community/bench-project>

Buddy Benches <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-45958313>

BookBench <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/gallery/2014/sep/01/londons-book-benches-readers-photos>



## Catchment area for artist eligibility

