

Milton Keynes East – Public Art Project Newspaper – ‘Passtheparcel’ by Walter Jack Studio

1. Introduction

Milton Keynes Council wish to appoint an artist/writer/creative practice to help develop and deliver a digital and printed newspaper that captures the story of the Passtheparcel project and has aspects of interactivity. The newspaper will help celebrate the completion of Walter Jack Studio's Passtheparcel commission in Brooklands and Broughton Gate.

We are looking for an artist/creative practice with an outstanding track record in delivering written artworks. The practitioner/s will be required to respond to and help edit the text already developed by Walter Jack and Milton Keynes Council to compile a newspaper style publication. The practitioner will need to embrace the overarching themes and ambitions of the Passtheparcel project within their work.

2. Context

The Eastern Expansion Area is a major new conurbation within Milton Keynes. The site covers 224ha and will, when completed include 4,000 new homes. The development includes two primary and one secondary school and has significant areas of public open space, green infrastructure and leisure amenities.

Public Art in Milton Keynes:

Milton Keynes Cultural Strategy outlines the importance of the relationship between public art, growth and community development. It identifies previous original thinking in the commissioning of public art and the emergence of the new town, and the importance of continuing this tradition. In Milton Keynes we consider public art as any work of visual art, craft or design produced by an artist, designer or maker and sited in a location that is freely accessible to the public.

Public Art in Milton Keynes engages people in many ways and contributes significantly to a sense of place - making different areas distinctive and visually stimulating places to live, work and visit. Public art can also make a significant contribution to community cohesion and encourages the forging of relationships across social, physical and cultural boundaries.

The term public art incorporates artist's involvement in a wide range of architectural, urban design, environmental, social and cultural projects. Public art can be a creative process as much as a physical artwork, however all projects and programmes should be artist specific, place specific, people specific and located within the public realm.

3. Walter Jack Studio and Passtheparcel

Walter Jack Studio is a collaborative artistic practice whose approach foregrounds an interest in 'making', 'innovation' and 'transformation'. As an experienced and well-established practice, they are well known for the development and delivery significant of public realm projects. The Studio is interested in animating public spaces - making them more surprising and unexpected; engagement and playfulness are also intrinsic to their process and they are interested in delivering projects where form and function can change over time.

Walter Jack Studio was appointed by Milton Keynes Council in 2009 on behalf of a consortia of organisations, in order to develop and deliver one of the city's most ambitious public art commissions to date. Passtheparcel was developed in response to the unique opportunity of the Eastern Expansion Area, one of the largest development sites within the city. The brief for the commission required the appointed practice to develop an approach which would contribute to the

creation of a sense of place and identity for this new area of the city, encourage community engagement and provide a lasting legacy.

In response, Walter Jack Studio developed Passtheparcel which includes a 'mile of oak' (taking the form of a number of oak beams) which have been configured and reconfigured as they move through the Eastern Expansion Area development, responding to different sites, contexts and opportunities as they arise.

Walter has said 'When we arrived here we found only plans and mud! The idea was this. 'Passtheparcel' would start at the new Primary School (the first civic building). It would stay for a period – but when it left it would leave a gift – made from its own oak. When it arrived in its next location it would metamorphose to be appropriate and useful here. Passtheparcel is a little over a mile of oak beam. Ten years ago we envisaged its final iteration in the urban centre. Porte Cochere is that iteration!'

The first iteration of Passtheparcel was built at Brooklands Farm Primary School from 2012 – 2015 and took the form of an impressive wooden 'Cathedral', formed from the 'mile of oak', where pupils were able to play in and on the structure for the duration of its 'residency'. Elements of the structure remain, offering new pupils continued opportunities for learning and play.



Cathedral (temporary artwork)



A Theatre for Learning (permanent artwork)

In Broughton Gate the third iteration, 'Fallen Oak' has been realised and again offers space to gather, play and interact in a previously under used public space.



Fallen Oak (permanent artwork)

'Oak Store', the second iteration of *Passtheparcel* was installed at Brooklands Meadow, providing new communities with a permanent artwork that offers an informal gathering and social space.

The final iteration of *Passtheparcel*, 'Porte Cochere' was installed at Cooks Place and takes its inspiration from the famous Porte Cochere structures of Central Milton Keynes. Again envisaged as a space of informal gathering, the structure provides a covered meeting place, with seating.



Porte Cochere (permanent artwork)

In the summer of 2018 Endless Square, a community engagement project took place around *Passtheparcel*. During the residency programme the community took part in making, printing and planting activities.



Endless Square engagement – summer 2018

4. **Passtheparcel - Newspaper**

From the outset, Walter Jack Studio has actively encouraged the community to interact and participate with the process and final artworks, and this is something we would like to capture and encourage further with a digital and printed newspaper.

We are proposing a to create a celebration event (delayed due to COVID 19) and are wanting to have information to share during and after this for the community. The intention of the newspaper will be:

- To capture the story of the *Passtheparcel* project
- To interpret and share the story of each artwork and its intention
- For the community to respond and engage in activities within the newspaper related to the pass the parcel project intention.
- To share and include the Milton Keynes approach to public art and funding stream (planning gain)

It is envisaged that the newspaper will have within it:

- Text about the artworks and project – article/reports etc
- Images and drawings of the artworks
- Maps and location plans
- Interactive features (like crosswords etc in a newspaper)
- Cartoons or drawings

The story of *Passtheparcel* started with the school, Walter Jack will revisit the schools as part of the completion of the project and we would like the newspaper to be something accessible for young people and older generations.

As part of the completion of the project Walter Jack proposes to create a small gift for local people; they can then take away part of pass the parcel to keep. This intervention will then be part of the celebration event and will need to be represented in the newspaper.

The successful artist/practice will need to undertake the following:

- Liaise with Walter Jack and Milton Keynes Council to develop and agree the content of the newspaper

- Provide ideas and proofs and respond to feedback from a pilot group of readers
- Propose and create the interactive content
- Provide costings and coordinate printing of the newspaper
- Provide digital versions for download and use by the community, possibly in sections to reduce waste

The project team has discussed whether it might sit on the MK Trails (a free digital trails app) to create a longer term online and interactive platform, this has not be determined and therefore the project team are open to ideas about how the newspaper material could be made more widely available. www.mktrails.org

6. Timescale

Action	Approx. dates
Artist tender deadline	May 26 th
Shortlisting	May 28 th
Interviews	Week 1 st June
Artist appointment, start of works	June
Concept and content development	July
Draft to project team	July/August
Final newspaper ready in digital version	August/Sept

7. Budget

The project team has allocated a budget of circa £10,000 for this brief. As part of the application process we are asking that the creative practise guide and advise the project team on how this showed be broken down and what is realistic for a budget in this region.

8. Selection Process

The commissioners are inviting proposals from artists/creative practitioners with a track record of delivering creative digital and printed outcomes. Applications for this opportunity will be assessed based on submissions of the following information:

- Statement of approach to working on this commission and your initial thoughts on the style and interactive content within the newspaper
- Outline steps and timeframe for delivery
- Examples of previous or similar commissions
- Fees and costs breakdown to include design, development, digital format, print costs for 3000 and 5000 newspapers

Deadline for submissions is **5pm, Tuesday 26th May 2020**

9. Insurances

The selected artist will be required to have the following insurances in place:

- Professional indemnity
- Public Liability

If you have any questions relating to this opportunity, please email culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk