

SCULPTURE TRAIL 2021

Summary: To present a proposal for the Sculpture Trail 2021.

Recommendation: The proposal is endorsed by the Board with the recommendation to delegate authority to the Exec Committee to make the final approval decision, subject to sufficient project finances being secured.

Reviewed by the Executive Committee: Yes / No

If yes, the Committee's comments: The Committee record their approval of the principle of the Trail and the work undertaken thus far by the Officers and encouraged the Officers to continue working on it. The Committee was mindful of the current financial climate and the potential risk to the reserves position of the Board. The year-end reserves position must not be negatively affected by this project. The Committee was also mindful that deferring a decision on the Trail to the September 2020 Committee Meeting would not enable Officers sufficient time to prepare for the Trail and seek the required funding.

Report by: James Webb – Partnerships and Fundraising Officer

BACKGROUND

1. In 2018 the Board partnered with Florence Beetlestone to run the Cotswolds Hare Trail. The Hares were painted by recognised and upcoming artists and then installed at a variety of tourist attractions, hotels and venues.
2. A total of 86 Hares in three different sizes were located across the Cotswolds. An enjoyable activity for families, residents and visitors, the Hares were widely visited over the course of the summer.
3. Board members may recall that one of the Hares was located in the grounds of the Old Prison, which proved to be popular with visitors. The interest generated by the Hares was the motivation for attractions like the Old Prison paying a fee to host the Hares.
4. In the early autumn, the Hares were auctioned off and these were the two forms of revenue generation. The Board invested £12,000 and this generated a £30,000 return, as well as receiving the initial investment back. In pure financial terms, the 2018 Trail was a success and helped with the Board's finances at a difficult time. However, running the trail was not without its challenges. The partner relied on hand written notes, rather than IT so information sharing was impaired. This impacted on communications and general organisation. Running the trail also required significant CCB employee resource, often at short notice, as roles and responsibilities were never defined or ascribed.

KINGFISHER TRAIL 2021

5. We will be working with The Art of Fundraising; a well-established and professional company with a tried and tested model. They have an excellent track record of successfully delivering sculpture trails in the UK and Ireland. The shortcomings of the first trail have been eliminated by working with The Art of Fundraising.
6. A recent example of their work is the 2017 'Moor Otters' trail. It was incredibly successful in terms of public engagement and was run in partnership with Dartmoor National Park Authority. The trail was also a financial success with net income of £60,000, which was equally allocated to three projects: Junior Rangers, Invasive non-native plant control and Repairs to footpaths and bridleways. For more info, see: <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/enjoy-dartmoor/moor-otters>
7. Coronavirus has ceased activity this spring and it seems likely this will continue into the summer - followed by a recovery. We would like to start putting plans together now for a sculpture trail that will launch in April 2021, to capitalize on the upward trajectory of the recovery. It will also be well timed for better spring weather and a general increase in community celebrations and outdoor events.
8. As the country comes out of the Coronavirus crisis, the Kingfisher Trail will convey a positive message about engagement with nature. A common theme throughout the crisis, and amongst survivors of the Coronavirus, is the desire to connect with nature; hear bird song, see wildflowers in bloom. A simple appreciation of the natural world.
9. The kingfisher itself is a survivor; pollution from heavy industry, Victorian collectors and non-native predators all contributed towards population decline. However, in recent decades its numbers have grown and it has returned to many waterways. It represents adaptability and resilience. A beautiful bird that is easily recognised by the public, its reliance on both land and water captures the imagination.
10. The Kingfisher Trail will in fact be a series of trails focused on and around the rivers in our region: the Thames, Severn and Avon and their tributaries. This clustered effect will create a strong story for many of our towns and villages to work together and celebrate what makes the Cotswolds special. For example, the heritage link with the wool trade centred on rivers that powered the mills. The strategic clustering will drive interest and footfall.
11. This approach will allow us to work with businesses and communities inside and outside of the AONB.
12. There will be 60 kingfishers in two different sizes. Kingfishers will be at host locations from April – August inclusive.

KEY OUTCOMES FOR THE BOARD

13. The trail has the potential to generate upwards of £50,000 of unrestricted surpluses for the Board.
14. Should the Board approve this proposal, an early decision will be made on the projects that will receive support (the surplus funds). This will form a key part of the pitch to headline sponsors of the trail. Careful consideration will be given to align the projects to the Glover Review. Two projects that could receive support are:
15. **Rural Skills** - Reaching Out – providing funding to enable young people (KS3/KS4) from surrounding schools the opportunity to take part in a rural skills experience (which could be for a day or part of a residential, spending a night under the stars). We will target harder to reach/ disengaged learners giving them the opportunity to learn a new skill in the countryside and, perhaps, the start of a new career that they had never considered.
16. Cotswolds Landscape - Learning, Living, Loving – an **Education Officer** will be employed to support and enhance the incredible work of the Cotswolds Voluntary Wardens as they look to expand their education programme. Aimed primarily at KS1 and KS2 children, the project will focus on encouraging young people to better understand what makes the Cotswolds such a special place to live and to develop a long lasting appreciation and connection with nature.
17. It meets two of our ambitions – (1) To promote the Cotswolds AONB as the Walking and Exploring Capital of England and (2) To ensure that communities and businesses within and around the Cotswolds AONB identify and celebrate being part of a nationally recognised landscape.
18. Visiting the sculptures will be family orientated, inclusive and free. The cluster approach promotes healthy activities including, walking, cycling, family days out and general wellbeing to locals and visitors. In this respect, it could be an early win re. the Glover Review – using the trails as a way of engaging young people and families in the towns and cities around the AONB that don't currently visit the countryside.
19. The environment will be a key consideration; most of the clusters will aim to offer routes into Cotswolds by train or bus.
20. It could tie in very nicely with the Gateways project – each Gateway town hosting a sculpture.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES

21. We are collaborating with Cotswolds Champions - the name of the programme set up with the Network Rail money and being delivered by Scott Brown.
22. The Cotswolds Champions programme aims to develop a suite of projects that showcase how we work with key local partners and stakeholders to deliver the Board's statutory purposes.
23. With outcomes spanning fundraising, the arts, community engagement and access – together with the potential to finance additional projects – we believe the Kingfisher Trail is a distinct example of how we can bring people together to support, participate in and benefit from our work in a variety of ways. As such, it's a good match for the Cotswolds Champions programme.
24. The Cotswolds Champions steering group met recently and approved £25,000 of funding towards the Kingfisher Trail. This funding would be available at the start of the Kingfisher Trail project and has been included in the Cashflow forecast that accompanies this paper – see row 15.
25. This means the project opening balance is £25,000 credit. Coupled with the Art of Fundraisings willingness to flat-line monthly payments, this keeps the project in credit and significantly reduces the risk to the Board's reserves – see row 53. However, this is subject to the income lines being realised, in particular the main sponsor and trail sponsors in the months ahead.
26. CCB overheads will be charged to the project – see row 44. This represents employee time (James Webb and Alana Hopkins) dedicated to the project.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- Appendix A – The Art of Fundraising proposal
- Appendix B – Cashflow forecast

JUNE 2020