



# Public Art & Rural Crafts

The Dorset landscape has long been an inspiration for artists and also generates a wealth of materials for rural crafts. Arts, craft and community celebrations all contribute to the quality of our lives, and are a vital feature of healthy communities.

## A few facts

### Public art

Public art strengthens peoples sense of place and commitment to their community. It can encapsulate the history of a parish and create a shared pride and sense of its future.

Public Art is not an artform, it's a principle. It's defined as any work of visual art or craft produced by an artist or craftsperson and sited in a location that's freely accessible to the public.

It can be as diverse as playground design, landscape design, street furniture, sculpture trail, lighting schemes or the internal features of a building such as furniture, flooring or even the crockery! It can be temporary projects such as artists in residence schemes, video projections and internet projects.

### Rural crafts

Rural crafts such as hedge laying, dry stone walling, hurdle making and thatching all use natural materials found locally and so both reflect and contribute to the character of the local landscape. Rural arts and crafts projects offer opportunities to learn new skills, particularly traditional craft skills, which otherwise may be lost.

### Celebrate!

Annual festivals and events engage the community and strengthen people's sense of belonging. They help to reduce isolation and loneliness, which can be part of living in a rural community. Plus they contribute to the local economy by bringing visitors to the parish.

The old traditions of Apple Days and Tree Dressing have been revived and have become popular modern day celebrations. Beating the Bounds is an example of a 5th century custom which many communities follow again as a chance to get together and celebrate their parish.

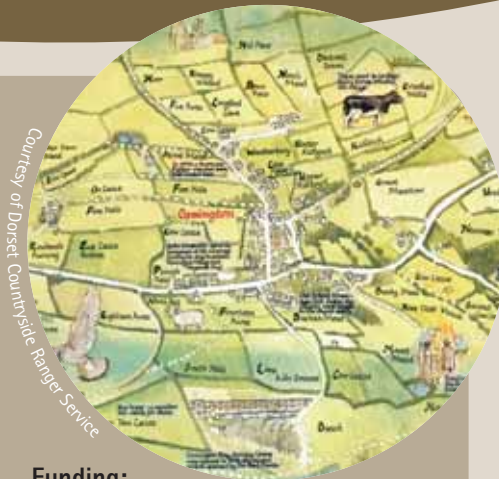
Some areas develop new events – there are good examples of contemporary outdoor community arts events which could become annual celebrations for your parish.

# What you can do

- Design and create a Parish Map

Parish maps don't need to be paper and ink – some stunning maps have been made with tapestry, painted frieze, decorated wall tiles, stained glass ... the options are endless. You could depict interesting information which may have emerged from the parish planning process – such as wildlife sites, ancient trees, field boundaries or field names.

**Further ideas:** Common Ground website



**Funding:**

Awards for All, Dorset Rural Fund, Grants for the Arts, Heritage Lottery Fund, AONBs Sustainable Development Funds, Leisure Development Fund

- Encourage greater use of rural crafts by creating a rural crafts directory in your area

Help keep rural crafts economically viable in your area by getting together with neighbouring parishes to find out where the nearest hedge layers, hurdle makers, thatchers and dry stone wallers are and promote them locally. You may also be able to find local sources of the materials they need, to cut down on transport costs and retain local character.

**Advice:** Dorset Centre for Rural Skills  
**Things to be aware of:** Check that crafts people belong to a professional body to ensure good standards of work. Make it clear that you are not recommending their work, simply listing them as available crafts people.

- Demonstrate good rural skills on publicly owned land

If the Parish, District or County Council owns land in your area, ask if they will lay hedges / rebuild dry stone walls if appropriate to show good practice and encourage others to take interest.

**Advice:** Landscape Officers – District Councils, Senior landscape Architect, Dorset County Council

**Funding:** District/Borough/Parish Councils, AONBs Sustainable Development Funds

**Things to be aware of:** get advice on health & safety issues



- Set up an exhibition

Celebrate the wealth of artists and crafts people you have in your area and support their work with an exhibition or showcasing event. If it works, why not start an annual tradition and look at ways of getting other local people involved for example through artist-run workshops and other creative activity.

**Further ideas and advice:** District Council Arts Officer, Culture and

- Commission environment or public art

If there is place of special significance or an important local anniversary or event coming up, why not commission some art work to celebrate? You can get help to commission an

artist to work with local people to come up with a concept.



- Use your local landscape as a backdrop

How about finding a site locally that would make a good stage for a one off open air performance? Invite established performance artists to put on a show or work towards a community presentation. This could become an annual event to start a contemporary 'tradition'.

**Who can help:** District Council Arts Officer, Culture and Community Planning Officer – Dorset County Council.

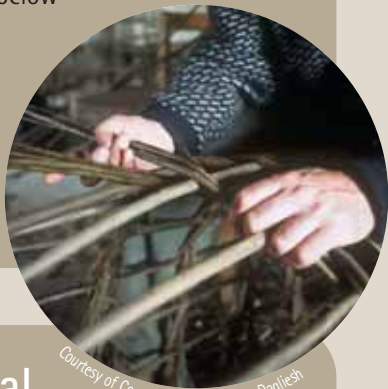
**Funding:** Awards for All, Dorset Rural Fund, Grants for the Arts, Heritage Lottery Fund, Leisure Development Fund

**Things to be aware of:** Health & Safety Licensing.

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Community Planning Officer – Dorset County Council, Dorset Visual Arts Funding: Dorset Rural Fund, Leisure Development Fund

Things to be aware of: see Health & safety below



Courtesy of Countryside Agency/ Ian Dajlesh

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Further ideas and advice: District Council Arts Officer, Visual Arts Development Officer – Dorset County Council, Artsreach

Funding: Awards for All, Dorset Rural Fund, Grants for the Arts, Heritage Lottery Fund, Leisure Development Fund

Things to be aware of: see Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) specialist advice, developing 'ownership', project planning, maintenance, insurance.

- Propose that a public art project be considered with any new build or redevelopment plans in your area

Innovative and creative design adds real value to a building development. Right at the start of the design brief is the best time to do this, not as an afterthought.

Further ideas and advice: District Council Arts Officer, Cultural Development Officer or Visual Arts Officer – Dorset County Council  
Things to be aware of: Planning regulations, developing ownership, project planning, maintenance.

- Celebrate local character and historic names in new development

New housing development often reflects the developers ideas of quaint and rustic charm. Try researching genuine names that have a real significance to your locality or ask the developer to set a competition locally to come up with new ideas.

Further ideas: Common Ground website



Courtesy of Mark Simons, DCC

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Courtesy of Mark Simons, DCC

- Set up a Tree Dressing or Apple Day tradition

Tree Dressing Days take place at the beginning of December ... and Apple Days in October to celebrate the harvest. Ideas for these events are plentiful and it could be a great way to get local people together, to raise funds for an art or environmental project, share produce and seed, with lots of scope to get young and old involved.

Further ideas: Common Ground website

Funding: Awards for All, Dorset Rural Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund

Things to be aware of: get Health & safety advice



Courtesy of Common Ground

# Who can help

## Artsreach

Dorset's independent rural arts development agency and rural touring scheme: 01305 269512  
info@artsreach.co.uk  
www.artsreach.co.uk

## Dorset County Council

- Cultural Development Officer - Mike Hoskin  
01305 224937, m.hoskin@dorsetcc.gov.uk
- Culture and Community-Planning Officer - Pat Pryor  
Can give advice on the role cultural activity can play in community life  
01305 224078, p.a.pryor@dorsetcc.gov.uk  
www.dorsetforyou.com/artsandculture
- Visual Arts Development Officer - Cleo Evans  
01305 224244, cleo.evans@dorsetcc.gov.uk
- Disability Arts Coordinator, Kamaljit Nandra, 01305 224234  
Can give advice on issues of accessibility & inclusiveness  
k.nandra@dorsetcc.gov.uk

## Dorset Visual Arts

admin@dorsetartweeks.co.uk

## East Dorset District Council

Arts Development Officer - Tracy Cooper, 01202 639012  
tcooper@eastdorset.gov.uk

## West Dorset District Council

Cultural Development Officer - Jude Allen, 01305 252261  
jude.allen@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

# Funding

## Awards for All

Grants £500 - £5000 for projects with a sports, arts, heritage or community focus as well as projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community. Criteria exist relating to under-represented groups.

www.awardsforall.org.uk with link to SW page  
01392 849705

## Chalk and Cheese

For projects which add value to local products or improve quality of life in rural areas with emphasis on community led, innovative & small scale projects. Restricted geographical area.

01258 474276 / 474277  
www.chalkandcheese.org

## Dorset Centre for Rural Skills

01747 811099  
info@dorsetruralskills.co.uk  
www.dorsetruralskills.co.uk

## Community Action Fund for Dorset

Rachelle Smith, Dorset Community Action 01305 216411  
rachelle.smith@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk

## Dorset Rural Fund

To support creative arts projects that are innovative, community-led and based in rural areas of Dorset. Grants of between £50 and £500

01305 269512  
info@artsreach.co.uk  
www.artsreach.co.uk

## Grants for the Arts

Arts Council England South West  
0845 300 6200, enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

## Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund gives grants for projects which encourage people to be involved in their heritage, conserve and enhance heritage or improve understanding, access & enjoyment to their local heritage. They encourage would-be applicants to contact a Development Officer at the earliest possible stage for advice.

01392 223950, carolp@hlf.org.uk  
www.hlf.org.uk/English/In Your Area/SouthWest

## Leisure Development Fund

West Dorset District Council supports culture through the Leisure Development Fund. This scheme provides financial support for groups to provide and develop projects that benefit the people of West Dorset. It is managed by the district council's Community Enabling Division. Grants are available for projects costing £1,000 or more with awards normally based upon 20 per cent of the estimated cost, up to a maximum of £5,000.

# Things to be aware of

- Health and Safety issues should be considered for any project, get advice on what to consider.
- Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for artists working with vulnerable people and children
- Specialist advice: Specialised knowledge of such things as planning regulations and technical requirements are vital but specialist advice is often freely available.
- Developing 'ownership': Working with an artist to enhance the built environment can sometimes be a contentious affair. However difficulties can be overcome by working with a good cross section of people in the local community to ensure a sense of ownership. Allow enough time for this process.
- Project planning. It is important to clearly identify the aims of the project and a plan of action. Seek specialist advice at an early stage because in order for the public to have confidence in the project you need to get the planning, selection of artists, the implementation and budget right.
- Maintenance. Every work needs some attention when the artist has gone home. Make sure the artist comes up with a sensible, costed plan for maintenance and that it is clearly understood who is going to pay for that maintenance (e.g. parish council).
- Insurance. You will need public liability insurance if creating a work of public art.

# Further information

## Activate

01202 884340  
info@activateperformingarts.org.uk  
www.dancesouthwest.org.uk/dorset

## Common Ground

Common Ground initiated public / environmental art all over Dorset, inspired celebrations and the making of parish maps. Website packed full of inspirational ideas and practical information.

www.commonground.org  
www.England-in-particular.info

## 'Only Connect'

Arts Touring and Rural Communities by Francois Matarasso ISBN 1 873667825

## Public Art South West

For ideas and information on practical aspects such as commissioning, funding etc.  
www.publicartonline.org.uk

## Voluntary Arts England

www.vaengland.org.uk



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The Dorset landscape has long been an inspiration for artists and also generates a wealth of materials for rural crafts. Arts, craft and community celebrations all contribute to the quality of our lives and are a vital feature of healthy communities.

## Ideas for Action

### Create a parish map

It's important to record what you value about your local area and the information you may have gathered through the parish planning process. Rather than storing this information in files, why not enrol some creative minds in the area to create a parish map? Parish maps don't need to be paper and ink – some stunning maps have been made with tapestry, painted frieze, decorated wall tiles, stained glass ... the options are endless.

### Give rural crafts a helping hand

Layed hedges, thatched roofs and dry stone walls are common traditional landscape features and often both reflect and contribute to the natural beauty of the area. However, these traditional crafts are in decline. Help keep these rural crafts going in your area by developing a directory of crafts people and training available. Look for opportunities to showcase these skills on publicly owned land.

### Public art

If you've got a special place or date in the community, commission public art to make the most of it. Public art is a good way of getting people together to get a feel for what they value and to reflect this in a piece of art. But it doesn't have to be a picture – street furniture, exhibitions, videos, playground design – the possibilities never ending.

### What a performance

Is there a site locally that would make a good stage for a one off open air performance? Invite established performance artists to put on a show or work towards a community presentation.

### Add value to new development

Public art can add a whole new dimension to new development in your local area. Creative design to buildings or their surrounding land can turn an ordinary development into something for a community to be proud of. Public art as part of a new development can be a good way to reflect the character or heritage of an area and an opportunity to get the community involved in design.

### Revive old traditions

Tree Dressing Days in December and Apple Days in October are examples of community celebrations which happen all over the country. There may be a local festival you can revive or perhaps you have an idea for something new. Whatever the theme, celebrations are great way to get local people from all walks of life together.

If you want to take up any of these ideas, there's a lot of help available. See over for how to get started.

# Case study

## Sturminster Newton Statue Project

This is a new public art commission for the former market place site in Sturminster Newton. The Rotary Club is working with local people and community organisations within the town to develop a new approach to the town's environment. They are offering an exciting commission for a visual artist to mark the site of the former cattle market. The idea is to express the significance of the market in the development of the town and how its disappearance will affect the community's future.

It is envisaged that this will be the first of a series of opportunities involving visual artists and design professionals with a community to reinterpret the landscape of the area. It will pilot a new approach using the community planning process to enhance the environment through quality art and design. The results will be readily visible for other community planning groups across Dorset.

This represents a highly innovative way of working for the people of Sturminster Newton and the wider community in Dorset.

For more information contact Sturquest on 01258 471456.

If you are interested in taking up any of these ideas in your local area, we have more detailed information to help you.

For each topic in this pack, you can request our additional sheets which include more actions, a guide to who can help with advice and support, sources of funding available and things to be aware of before you start. These are all free and updated regularly.

For your free copy, contact the Dorset AONB Office:

01305 756782  
dorsetaonb@dorsetcc.gov.uk  
www.dorsetaonb.org.uk



Courtesy of Sturquest



Courtesy of Sturquest