



**St Neots**  
Town Council

## TENDER BRIEFING DOCUMENT

### PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

Artist or Creative Group to devise  
and implement an art installation in  
St Neots Town Centre

September 2023



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## 01 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St Neots Town Council is inviting Tenders from artists or a creative team that includes at least one artist to engage, devise, consult and implement on a new public art installation or installations for the centre of St Neots.

The process and resulting artwork must include public engagement and participation, creating a permanent unique attraction/s for our town and growing community.

Proposals for the art and its themes will be led by the work of the appointed artist/creative group, but it may recognise St Neots' history, heritage, geography, communities and/or its future.

Through sensitive development, the artwork will compliment and continue the regeneration work undertaken through the Future High Street Fund, adding vibrancy to our town.

The final location of the artwork will be in the vicinity of one of the areas which are to be enhanced from the fund.

The Town Council invites Tenders from across the creative disciplines and welcomes collaborative approaches between artists, creative groups and appropriate delivery partners of their choosing.

The art Commission is funded from St Neots Masterplan Legacy Funding, which Huntingdonshire District Council is delivering in partnership with the St Neots Town Council, with the project approval of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

St Neots Town Council are taking the lead on the Commission and will act as the client to the successful tender.

The core objectives of the project are;

- To actively engage local communities in the development of a public artwork/s that provides a visually compelling contribution to the local streetscape
- To create a shared sense of ownership and pride in the works and the public space they occupy
- To provide opportunities for people to interact creatively with the scheme as it develops
- To create a permanent art installation/s that enhance/s the street scene, celebrates St Neots and acts as an attraction to our town centre.

The project will have three clear stages;

- 1) Research, engagement, consultation and theme development
- 2) Design and recommendation/proposal
- 3) Implementation, creation and installation

## 02 | CONTEXT

### Project Context

As part of the Future High Street Fund Huntingdonshire District Council is undertaking several refurbishment and improvement projects in St Neots, including revamping the town's large Market Square, implementing highway improvements along the High Street and refurbishing the Priory Centre, a key venue in our town centre.

Legacy funding for the town has been allocated to deliver a community public art project in the town centre, with an agreement in place between Huntingdonshire District Council and St Neots Town Council that the town council will deliver the project.

The budget for the project is £50,000 excluding VAT. This cost must cover all aspects of the project and the three project stages which will be delivered by the successful tenderer. There are no defined themes, mediums, or locations for the works at this stage and a key part of the successful tenderers first stage of work will be to engage residents and develop the vision for the art project. It is crucial that the project is community based, is accessible to residents and visitors, relevant to the local historic, cultural and demographic context, is durable, permanent and enhances the town centre.

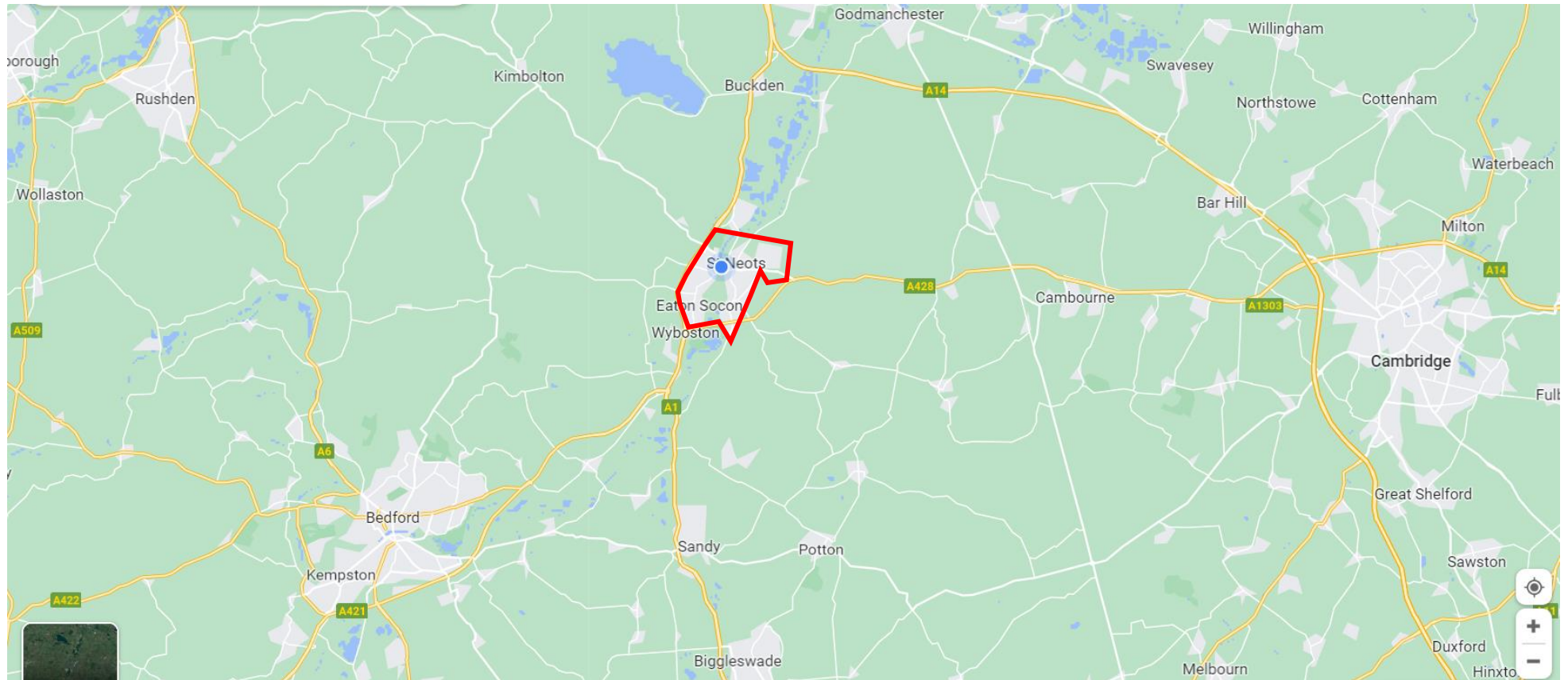
### Site Context

The Council is a town council within Huntingdonshire in the county of Cambridgeshire, England. St Neots Town Council is an elected statutory body of 21 members with legal powers to provide services for the community of St Neots, Eynesbury and Eaton Socon. The Council works with partners, such as Huntingdonshire District Council, to help improve local service delivery.

St Neots is Cambridgeshire's largest and fastest growing town with a current population of over 30,000. Located in the south west corner of the county and nestled along the banks of the River Great Ouse. Close to the A1 and A421 Bedford Bypass, St Neots is commutable from many nearby towns including Milton Keynes, Bedford, Stevenage, Hitchin, Biggleswade, Peterborough, Huntingdon and more. Fast train links also connect the town directly to London and Peterborough.

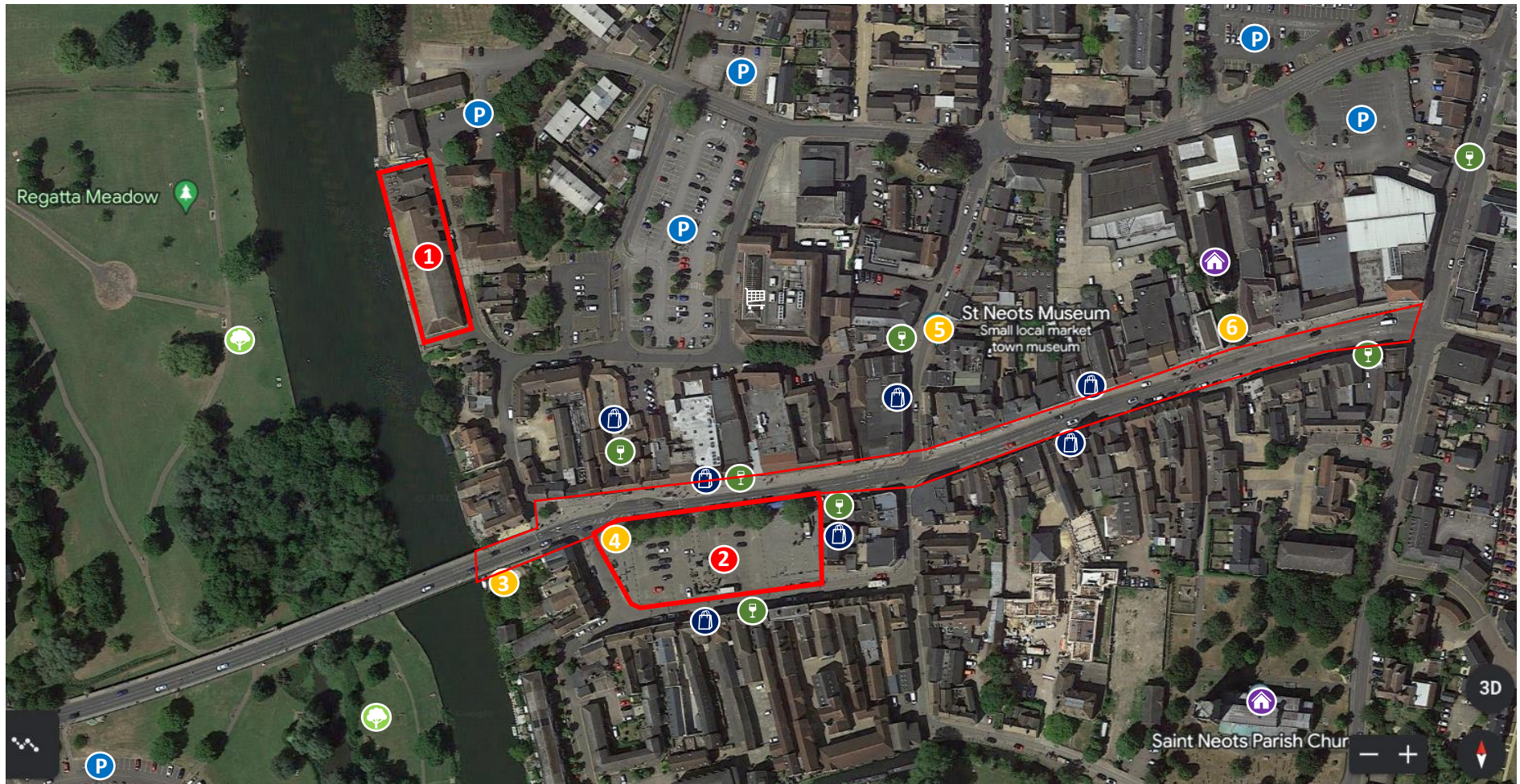
The town's Market Square is one of the largest in England and is housed next to the site of a former Medieval Priory. It hosts regular markets including a weekly Charter Market and twice monthly Farmers Market as well as events throughout the year. The town centre includes the St Neots museum displaying the history of our town. There is a mix of national and independent retailers as well as restaurants, bars and cafes. Just a short walk from the town centre there is a multitude of green space to explore including the 72 acre Riverside Park, offering beautiful scenery to enjoy at leisure.

## 02 | SITE CONTEXT





## 02 | SITE CONTEXT



### LEGEND

- |                              |               |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Main Car Parks               | Priory Centre | Jubilee Garden      |
| Shopping/Retail/Eating Areas | Market        | St Neots Mosaic     |
| Accessible Green Space/Parks |               | St Neots Museum     |
| Places of Worship            |               | Public space/garden |

Areas outlined in red form part of the Future High Street Fund works and are key areas of focus for the location of the proposed art installation.

## 02 | HISTORY OF TOWN

**Set within a conservation area and nestled around the banks of the River Great Ouse, the town dates back over 1000 years to the Medieval Priory of St Neot.**

St Neots is not in the Domesday Book but the parishes of Eaton Socon and Eynesbury were thriving as rural communities at that time. A small priory and settlement existed to the north of Eynesbury. Around 1080 the priory was rebuilt nearer the River. A market place was set out to the south of the priory and the present settlement grew up. By 1180 this became known as St Neot's, named after St Neot, whose bones could be seen in the priory attracting many visitors and pilgrims. The town soon broke away from Eynesbury Parish and built its own parish church south of the High Street.

The wealth of Eaton Socon depended on the agriculture, its position on the Great Ouse with its watermill and its closeness to the Great North Road. Local excavations have shown the Great North Road existed when the Romans came to England. During the 12th century, a castle was built in Eaton Socon alongside the River Great Ouse with clear views over the countryside, the river and the watermill. The site is privately owned but the earthworks can be seen from the Eynesbury side of the River. In the early 14th century John, son William de Sudbury, held the manor of Sudbury, a settlement that once existed in Eaton Ford. In the 1320s, John represented Eaton at parliament.

When King Henry VIII dissolved monasteries and priories the St Neots Priory was closed and the building materials used to build many local buildings. A few miles to the west, in the parish of Eaton Socon, Bushmead Priory was closed and became a family home. While just a few remnants can be located of St Neots Priory, it is possible to visit Bushmead Priory which is in the care of English Heritage and is occasionally open to the public.

Up to the 20th century the three settlements of Eaton Socon, Eynesbury and St Neots continued with their three parish churches and local shops. St Neots slowly dominated Eynesbury, holding festivals and markets on the Square and the weekly livestock market. Eaton Socon was still in Bedfordshire and had its own festivals, including the annual May Day celebrations and autumn Statute Fairs. The arrival of railway in the mid 19th century had a serious impact on the village coaching inns. Industry at this time included breweries in St Neots and Eaton Socon and a brickworks in Eynesbury.

In the 20th century each parish had its own schools with Eaton Socon having the first secondary school. Bushmead School opened in 1958 and Longsands in 1961. In 1965 the decision was made to build a new dual carriageway on the land to the west of the Great North Road. This split the old parish and all the land to the east of the road went into Huntingdonshire and the villages of Duloe, Staploe, Wyboston and other hamlets in Eaton Socon remained in Bedfordshire. In 1974 Huntingdonshire went into Cambridgeshire and as the town grew another secondary school was built in Eynesbury.

Since this date the area between the A1 and the river has been steadily built up as well as the area between the river and the railway line. In the 1980s the southern bypass was built to reduce the traffic through the town centre. In 2006 development to the east of the town began, creating a new area known as Loves Farm, which is still continuing to grow now.

## 03 | PROJECT BRIEF

### PROJECT AIMS

The Project seeks to actively engage local communities in the development of a permanent art installation or installations providing a visually compelling contribution to the local streetscape.

The project will help create a shared sense of ownership and provide pride in the works and the public space they occupy. Whilst providing opportunities for people to interact creatively with the scheme as it develops.

The project will support areas of further investment in St Neots town centre and must involve the engagement with the local community to produce a design for approval by the Council and then implementation by the appointed tenderer.

### PROJECT THEMES

At this stage there are no agreed themes for the artwork, and it will be for the successful artist /creative group to engage with stakeholders to develop and bring forward key themes of importance to St Neots on which the artwork will be based designed around.

Example themes could include:

**Heritage and Cultural Identity** – there are a number of historic associations within St Neots, as well as potential ‘hidden gems’ that could be uncovered through stakeholder engagement.

**New and Existing Communities** – St Neots has a growing community that can help the town centre thrive. Can art play a role in community cohesion and connecting residents to our town.

**Sense of Place** – Creating a sense of identity and pride in St Neots for people across our communities.

**Ecology** – Important formal and informal spaces that contribute to the biodiversity of the area as well as providing attractive areas for socialising and community cohesion.

### PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Effective and creative community engagement is key to the development and success of the project.

Tenders should outline how they will ensure active public and stakeholder engagement in the process of designing and agreeing the artwork.

This may include elements such as;

- Online questionnaires/engagement to facilitate the design process and establish, for example, what residents see as important to them about St Neots, what do they connect with and feel pride in, what is their interpretation of St Neots’ identity.
- Workshops
- School visits
- On-site walk abouts
- Regular social media updates and finding other mediums in which to update and engage with residents



## 03 | PROJECT BRIEF

### Partnership Working

The project will be delivered in partnership by St Neots Town Council and Huntingdonshire District Council and partnership working with the community will be key in delivering the project.

Creative consultants, whether local or not will be encouraged to collaborate with locally based creative groups and the wider public to deliver the project.

### Key Project Criteria

The art work must;

- promotes St Neots
- be accessible to residents and visitors
- be relevant to the local historic, cultural and demographic context
- be an enhancement to the public realm
- be a durable and will act as a permanent feature.

### Form of Public Art Interventions

There is flexibility within the project for a number of approaches to be taken and this will be determined to some degree by the subject, theme and final location of the art installation, and as a result of the findings of public engagement.

There is scope for the artworks to take a number of forms, including but not limited to:

- Free-standing “sculptural” pieces
- Embedded interventions within the public realm such as façade or paving treatments
- Play spaces or play sculptures
- Street furniture
- Lighting
- Any other medium that is considered appropriate

### Environmental Impact

The Council requires the successful tenderer be aware of the Council’s environmental ambitions to work towards carbon net-zero and that materials and work used in the project are sourced and implemented with this in mind.

Using local services and materials wherever possible, along with ensuring the environmental credentials of partners and services that might be used will be key.



## 04 | BUDGET & DELIVERABLES

### LEGACY FUNDING

A total Commission of **£50,000** excluding VAT is available for the project to cover the cost of producing the associated Project Deliverables.

The funding is part of legacy funding for St Neots, which has been approved for Huntingdonshire District Council to use on the delivery of the arts project by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. A grant funding agreement between Huntingdonshire District Council and St Neots Town Council is in place to allow the Town Council to deliver the project.

### PROJECT DELIVERABLES: THE VISION

A number of deliverables will need to be agreed, namely;

- 1 Development of a project plan outlining the design and engagement process through to a final proposal/recommendation.
- 2 Innovative and engaging responses to the character of the area to inform the art development.
- 3 Development of key themes, concepts and potential locations for public art, including details of features, materials and functions that the artwork could incorporate while providing flexibility to innovate.
- 4 Robust public and stakeholder engagement to inform themes, opportunities and proposals
- 5 Regular updates to the Town Clerk and Council and attendance at Promotion & Event Meetings and any Steering Group meetings as required.

### PROJECT DELIVERABLES: THE DESIGN & INSTALLATION

A number of deliverables will need to be agreed, namely;

- 1 A final robust concept for the artwork, developed and refined through public and stakeholder involvement that will enhance St Neots town centre.
- 2 Detailed working drawings of artwork, at a recognisable scale.
- 3 Commissioning and fabrication of the artworks to an acceptably high quality.
- 4 Installation of the artworks on site having full regard to current health and safety legislation.
- 5 Attendance at any launch or publicity events.
- 6 Regular updates to the Town Clerk and Council and attendance at Promotion & Event meetings and any Steering Group meetings as required. Updates must include illustrations and photographs as the artwork progresses.

## 05 | Invitation to Tender

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

To tender for this project, please provide;

- A statement (no more than three sides of A4) outlining your proposed approach to this project brief and the delivering of an art installation. Please illustrate with examples of relevant experience, knowledge and skill. Please include:
  - Details of any research you intend to carry out as part of the Commission
  - Ideas for stakeholder engagement and how this will feed into the project
  - An initial list of the type of public art interventions/concepts that could be considered
  - High level details of any initial concepts for potential art installations
- Details of the proposed Project Team and details of any collaboration with other creative professional/groups
- Estimated costings broken down into the three key project stages;
  1. Research, engagement, vision, and theme development
  2. Design
  3. Implementation, including installation
- A completed Invitation to Tender – See **Appendix A**

### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Please also supply;

- The names, roles and contact details of referees previously worked with to deliver projects, and examples of other similar projects completed.
- Evidence of, or an agreement to provide Employer's Liability Insurance (if applicable) of not less than £5,000,000
- Evidence of, or an agreement to provide, Public Liability Insurance of not less than £5,000,000
- Evidence of, or an agreement to provide, Professional Indemnity insurance of £2,000,000

### SUBMISSION

Please email your Tender submission to:

[chris.robson@stneots-tc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.robson@stneots-tc.gov.uk)

No later than 5pm on **26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**



## 06 | Selection Criteria & Timescales

### SELECTION CRITERIA

#### Criteria 1

Evidence of capability to carry out necessary research, designs and produce a high quality outcome

Assessment: CV, written statement, references

Weighting: 30%

#### Criteria 2

Evidence of devising and implementing creative and imaginative site-responsive concepts and themes.

Evidence of strong stakeholder engagement.

Assessment: CV/s, written statement, references, portfolio

Weighting: 30%

#### Criteria 3

Creative Flair

Assessment: Portfolio/submission, references

Weighting: 25%

#### Criteria 4

Clear, coherent and logical presentation of tender

Assessment: Portfolio/submission

Weighting: 15%

### NEXT STEPS

Once the Tenders have been reviewed, applicants will be shortlisted and invited to a short interview.

Please note that St Neots Town Council reserves the right not to appoint any of the Tenderers in the event that none of the submissions are considered suitable and may approach others to submit proposals.

### APPOINTMENT

A contract will be drawn up that covers artist and commissioner obligations, scope of works, insurances, budgets, schedules, ownership and maintenance responsibilities – with decommissioning criteria where applicable.

Ownership of the public artwork becomes the sole-property of St Neots Town Council after installation by the artist/team and acceptance by the Council. A contract for this project will provide for the appropriate care and maintenance of the work, outline expected lifespan, decommissioning arrangements, artist's copyright and acknowledgement.

### INDICATIVE TIMESCALES

Deadline for Submission of Tender

Noon on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Interview of shortlisted Artists/Creative Groups

Week of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Decision on Appointment of successful Tender

7<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Project Commencement

As soon as possible from appointment

Project Target Completion

April 2024