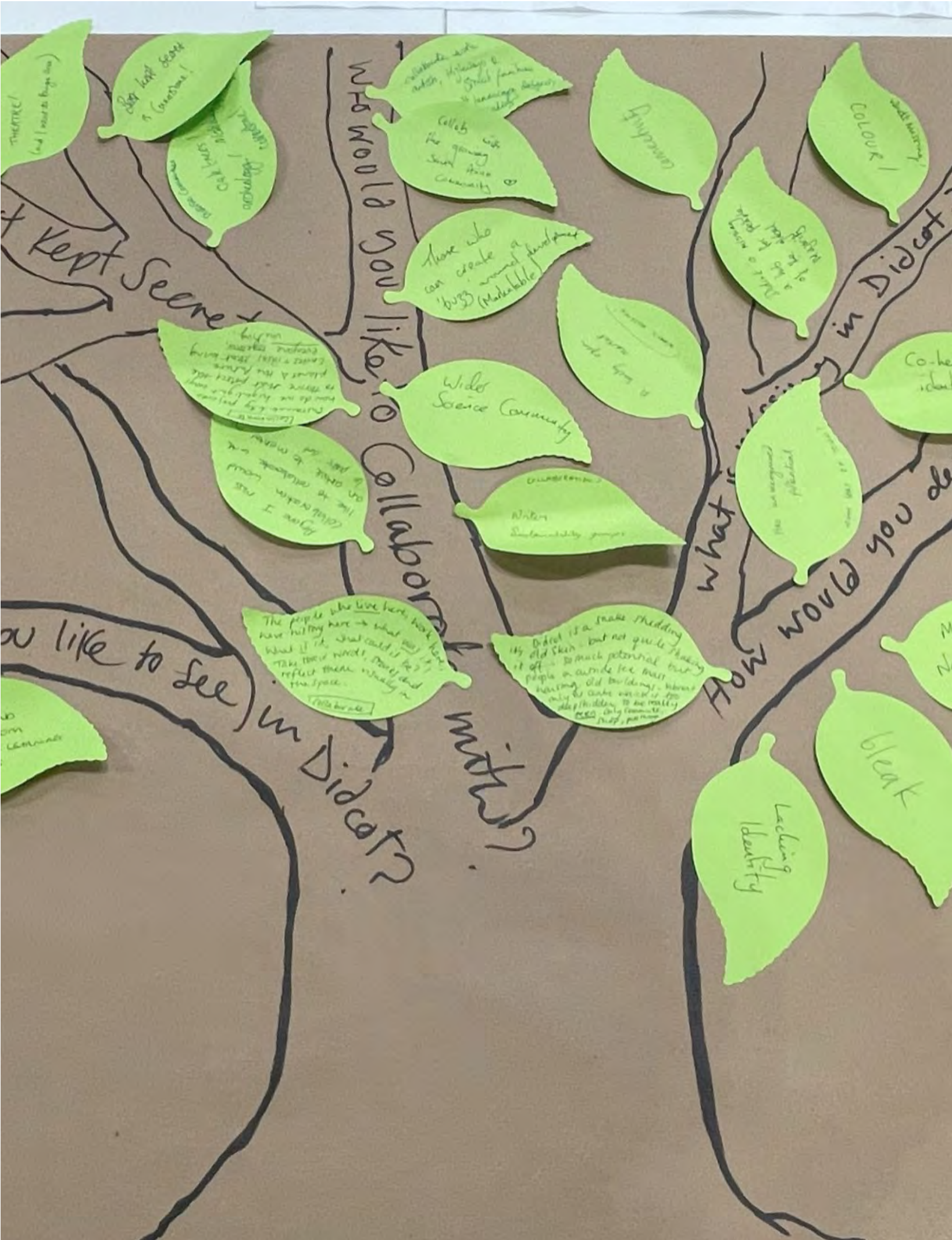


# Draft Didcot Public Art Plan





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# Introduction

The Didcot Public Art Plan focuses on Didcot’s town centre extending to key routes leading into the town and covering existing residential developments. Outside of this boundary sits an area of influence of surrounding villages and science parks in Science Vale. Elements in the Didcot Public Arts Plan, such as the principles, themes and commissioning approach could assist in commissioning public art in this wider area of influence. It is worth noting that the plan excludes Great Western Park, which has its own Public Art Strategy in place, and is currently in the process of being delivered. Public art provision in Valley Park is also addressed separately.

Didcot Garden Town masterplan principles place great emphasis on design, local character, transport and movement, landscape and green infrastructure, social and community benefits. The Didcot Public Art Plan will inform the procurement of public art projects on the ground that will result in reinforcement of character areas and enhanced placemaking:

- inspiring built environment and fantastic green spaces,
- celebration of our visionary scientific and advanced technology sector,
- clear brand, character, and distinctive and identifiable landmarks
- revitalising areas such as underpasses, public spaces, gateways and reinforcing character areas.

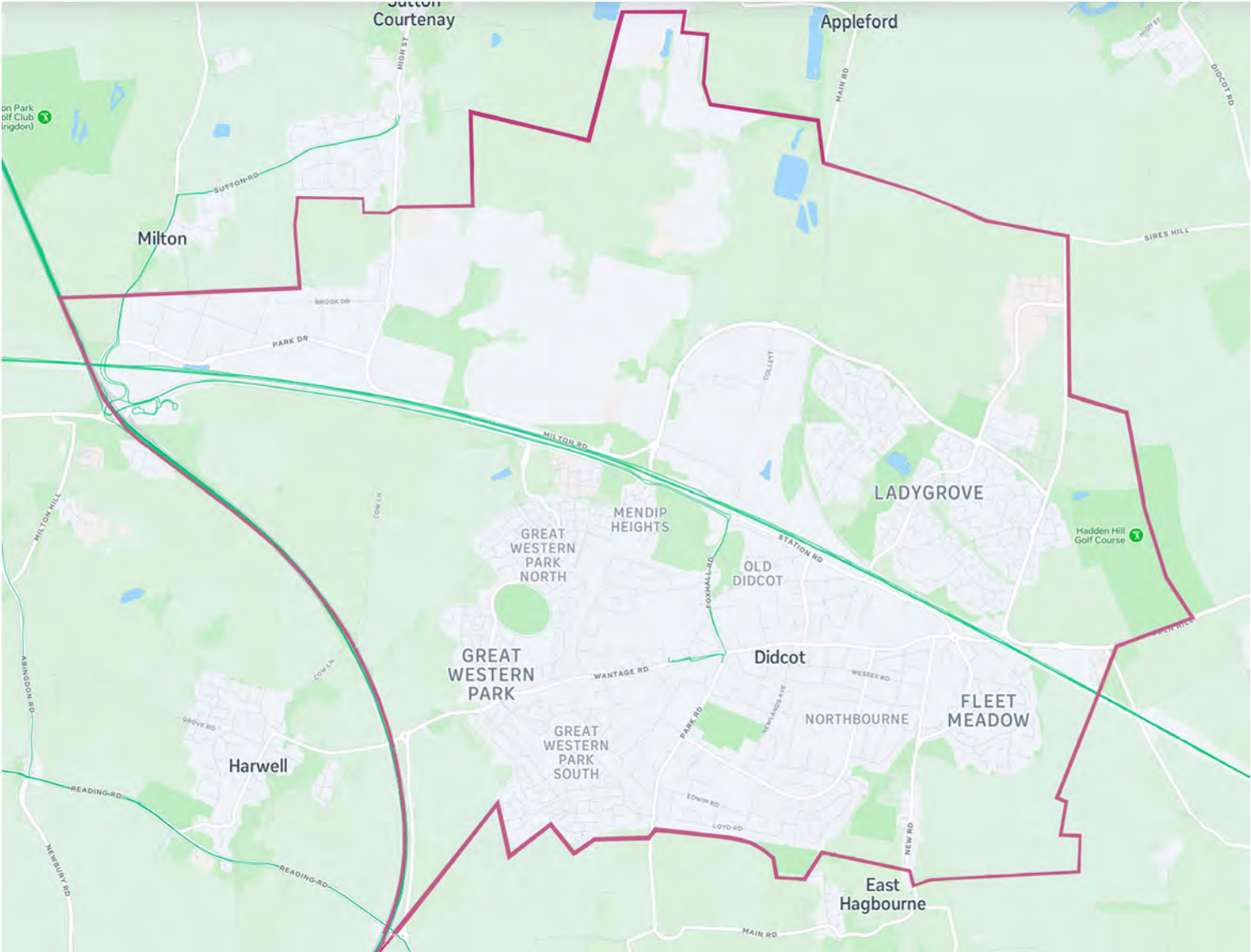
For the purposes of the Didcot Public Art Plan, the following council’s corporate plan objectives are relevant, however, it should be noted that the councils have emerging corporate plan priorities.

**Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate plan 2020 - 2024 Objectives**

- Tackling the climate emergency
- Building healthy communities
- Working in partnership Working in an open and inclusive way

**South Oxfordshire District Council Corporate plan 2020 – 2024 Objectives**

- Protect and restore our natural world
- Action on Climate Emergency
- Improved economic and community well-being



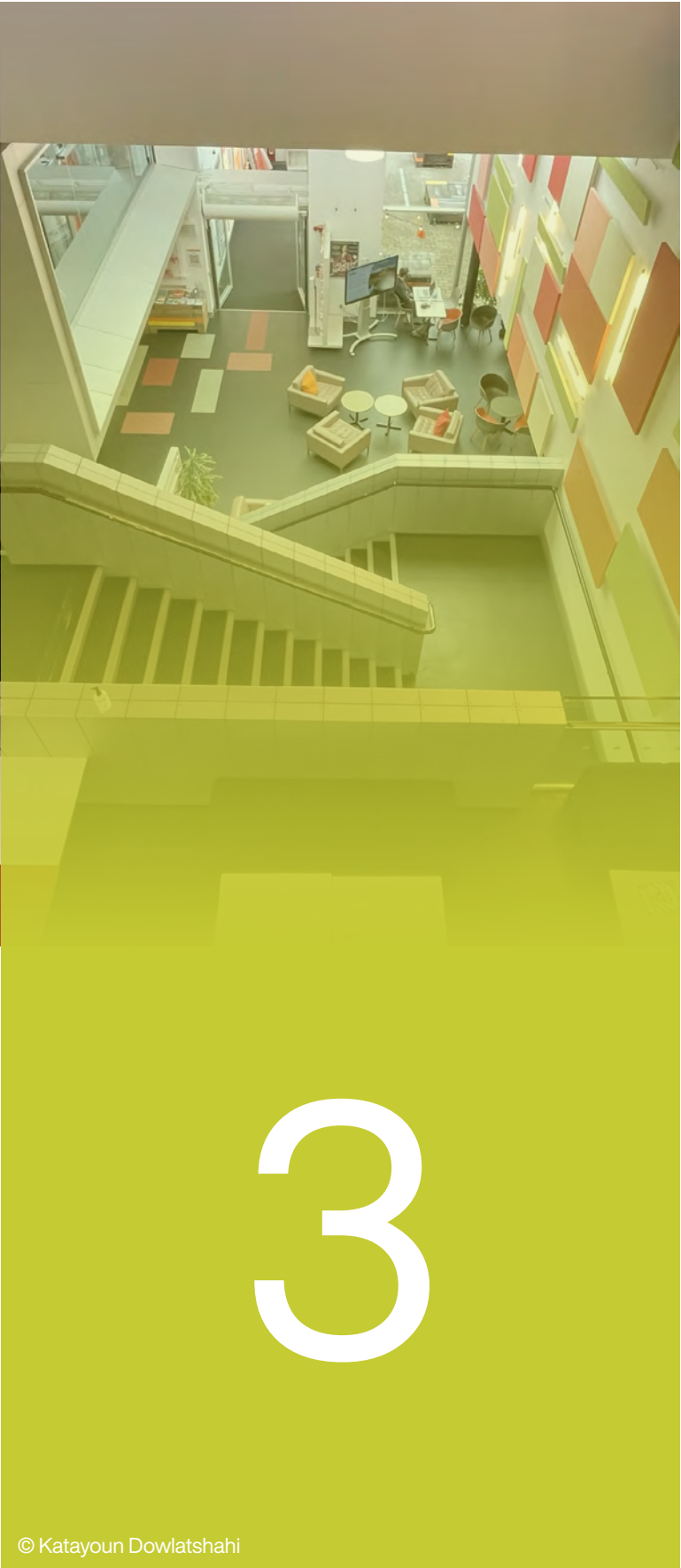
This map shows the Didcot Garden Town boundary.



© Katayoun Dowlatshahi



© Katayoun Dowlatshahi



© Katayoun Dowlatshahi



# Executive Summary

This public art plan provides a fresh opportunity to review how public art is commissioned in Didcot Garden Town. It builds on the pivotal role arts development and planning have developed over the past ten years, working with developers to commission artists and artwork that helps to create identity and pride as well as welcoming residents to new community settings. The plan acknowledges the transformative journey Didcot Garden Town is undergoing and acknowledges the thriving network of partnerships and communities and their desire to reconnect with nature. It includes a review of current documents and aligns to new strategies such as the Wayfinding Strategy, where public art and wayfinding are intrinsically linked.

The plan builds on the community's desire for positive engagement captured in 'Reflecting Conversations', while 'The Artist's Statement' places the emphasis on quality placemaking, where artists can help to reinvigorate and re energise Didcot Garden Town's evolving identity with a focus on community action, outreach and a green legacy.

Importantly it highlights a dynamic community spirit which connects diverse entities, including businesses, scientists, charities, and cultural initiatives, showcasing a shared desire for positive change. There is a strong interest in building further relationships between Didcot Garden Town and its "world-class" science community.

The plan reflects the research and findings in a set of public art principles and themes, supported by a commissioning approach. It also identifies public art commissions, taking a curated approach and building on the community development work that has been successful in the past.

The public art commissions show examples of artwork from welcome features to civic space to green spaces and temporary projects helping to guide efforts towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and cohesive public art programme.

*“Bringing everyone together, uniting”*



The Didcot Window © Martin Donlin





# Research

## Past

Over 9,000 years of occupation have left a rich archaeological tapestry in Didcot, with notable Neolithic and Iron Age finds, along with traces of Roman influence. The historical landscape reflects a feudal system of ownership, characterised by rural isolation. The shift from that rural isolation to village life caused a tension that, resulted in poverty for some and increased wealth for a select few due to the enclosure of land. The advent of railway technology during the 19th Century, to what was essentially a rural community, draws parallels to the earlier clash, both causing fundamental changes to the community. Rail induced population growth in the mid-19th century, coupled with the enclosure of rural lands, and the growing presence of the military after WWII, each led to a shortage of housing, mirroring contemporary challenges.

The arrival and rapid expansion of the railways was a double-edged sword, bringing new migrant workers, economic growth and increased rural trade but also contributing to housing shortages and income disparities. The presence of the railway had notable effects on the town’s layout, transportation, and community connectivity. The advent of modernity altered societal relationships and divided the town, and later with the development of Ladygrove, created a physical barrier that separated different geographic areas of Didcot.

In the 20th century, during the turbulence of two world wars, and because of the central rural location of the town in England and close proximity to the railways, the Royal Naval Air Service, Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force, founded military and

ordinance sites at Harwell, Milton and Culham. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search regiments remain a consistent feature, based at the Vauxhall Barracks. Some of the military land in Sutton Courtenay, was sold to establish a coal power station, on a site which is now on the edge of Milton Park, and land at Harwell and Culham evolved into hubs researching nuclear and fusion power, reflecting technological changes to the landscape.



© Oxford Archaeology



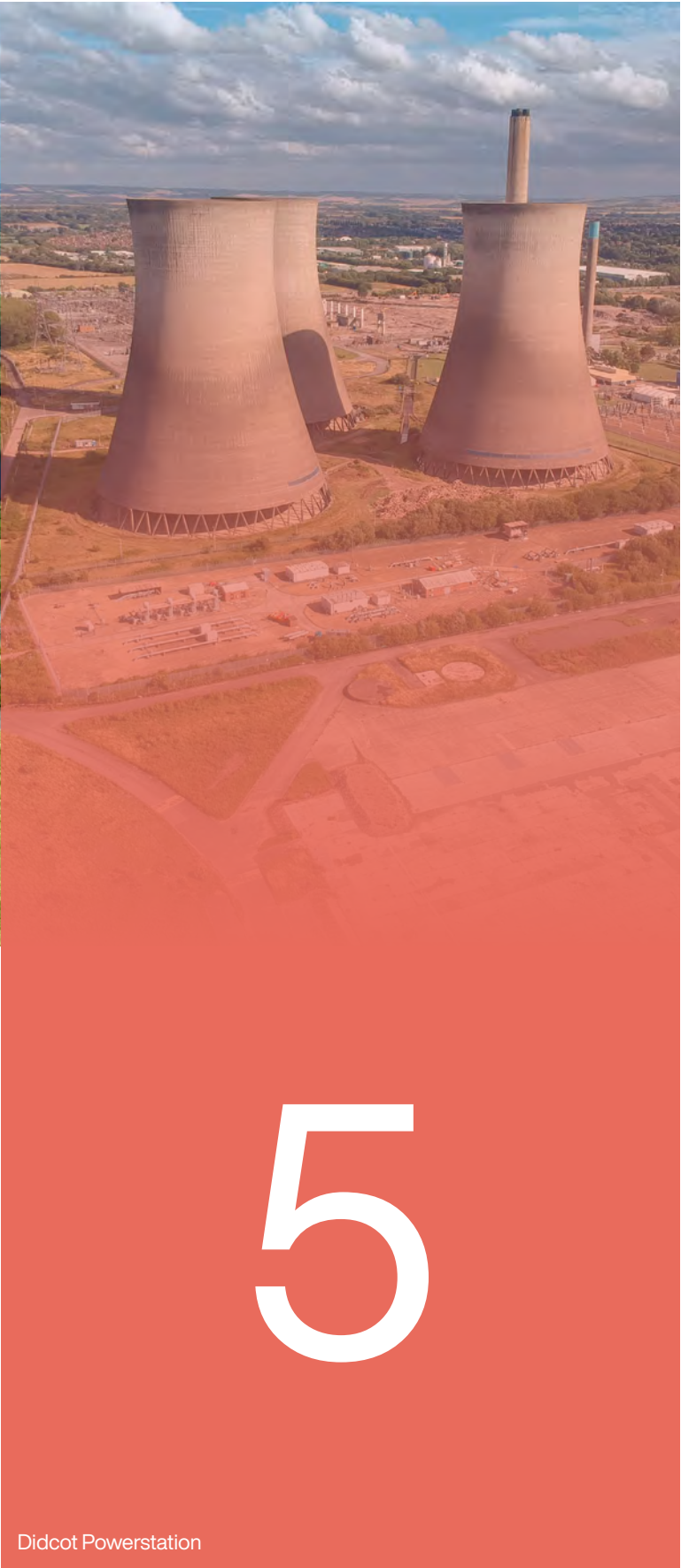
© Katayoun Dowlatshahi



© Katayoun Dowlatshahi



A Short Stirling Mark IV LK115, 8S-Z of No. 295 Squadron RAF, taking off from Harwell, Oxfordshire



Didcot Powerstation



# Research

## Current

Creative and ethically driven social enterprises are thriving in Oxfordshire and taking root in Didcot. A network of partnerships is also emerging between mutual social housing (a system in which individuals or families who are already living in social housing have the opportunity to exchange homes with each other) and other not for profit local initiatives with funding provided by a powerful lobby of local business. The community is actively engaged in fostering connectivity through initiatives like growing food and allotments, sustainable activities and support for refugees and those on lower incomes.

There is a strong inclination towards the creation of green corridors and swathes, conservation of community woods, and local engagement with pocket parks, reflecting a deep desire to reconnect with nature and to improve wellbeing for residents. Sustainability is a central focus, with grassroots activities seamlessly blending culture with the environment.

All three former military sites are now world leading fusion energy science hubs and constantly expanding, with a notable link to fusion, biotech and space research. The presence of the military ordinances is evident. Innovation is seen as synonymous with growth, driving housing expansion and a heightened desire for green connectivity. Cultural expansion is marked by a keen aspiration for outreach.

Currently the community is experiencing an influx of migrant workers and refugees, potentially operating under the radar. The energy landscape is evolving from carbon polluting and nuclear to cleaner, electric options, spurred by innovation. Space-age transport related technologies are making an appearance, originating from the excellent science and research hubs that also prioritise connectivity with nature and the wellbeing of their community. The symbiotic relationship between science, growth, innovation, and the community's desire for outreach is evident in this dynamic environment.



Memorial post box topper by Yarnsy, © Gee Harland



Carnival @ Ed Thompson



@ Louise Francis



Street Party



# Links to other Strategies and Projects

The Didcot Garden Town Wayfinding Strategy places public art central to the wayfinding solutions. The lessons learnt are also relevant to public art and could be considered when commissioning public art as a wayfinding enhancement:

- Being mindful of visual clutter.
- Curating a cohesive programme of public art that raises the quality of the town centre environment.
- Addressing graffiti and vandalism to maintain a positive town centre appeal.
- Maintaining overgrown areas to retain a visual prominence.
- Adhering to maintenance schedules to maintain and extend the life expectancy of artwork.
- Decommissioning public art when the integrity of the artwork becomes compromised over time.

The Wayfinding Strategy suggests a public art focus at key destinations and routes, also detailed in the Didcot Central Corridor project, namely Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot

Parkway Train Station, Wantage Road and Cow Lane as well as the cycling and pedestrian route between the train station and Milton Park Science Park. Welcome feature roundabouts are highlighted as potential locations for public art too.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy proposed projects across Didcot that improve the accessibility and amenity of green spaces. These will enhance public enjoyment and the health-giving benefits of those spaces as well as improve biodiversity across the town. A number of those spaces correspond to the areas defined in this plan and could be considered in parallel.

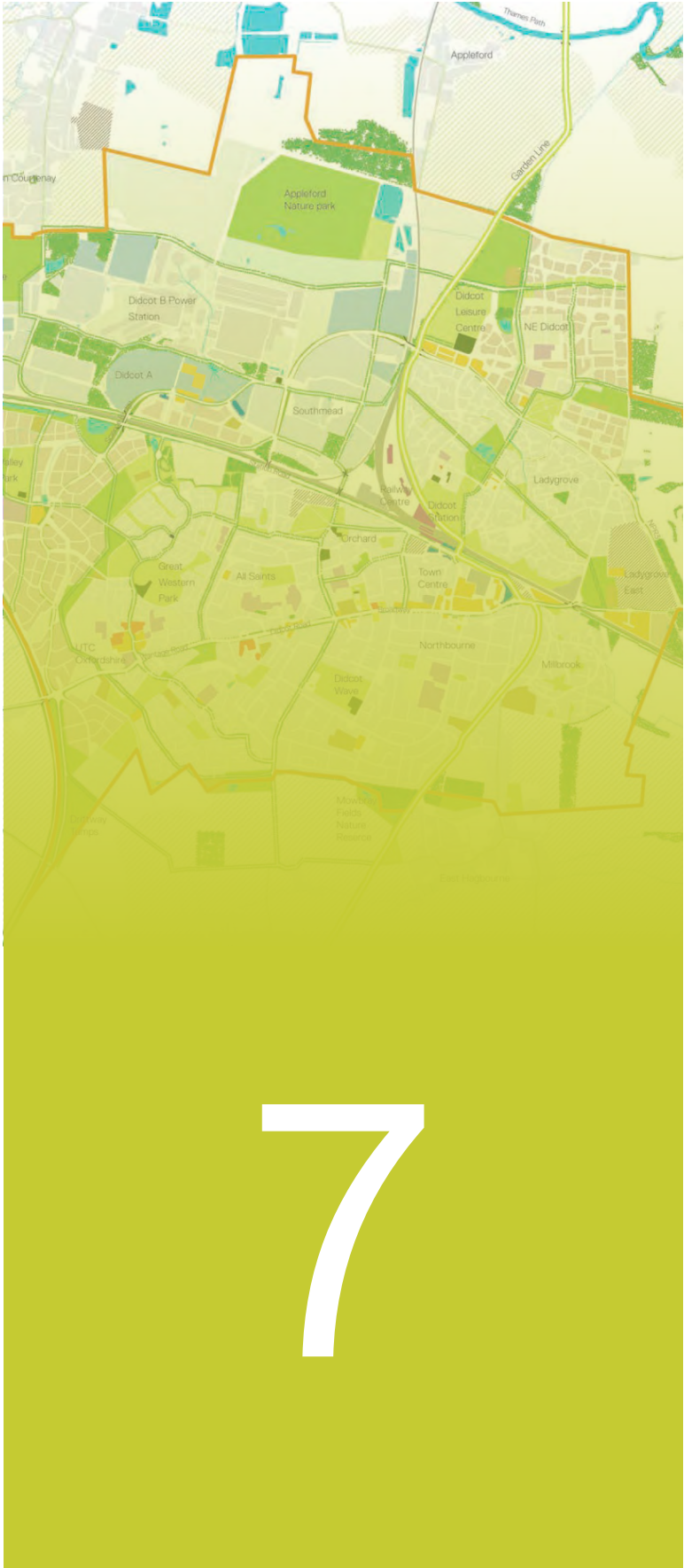
The Didcot Central Corridor project looks at three important routes into Didcot, the current issues with transport and movement and the aim to improve and make Didcot a better place for residents with improved routes to and from Didcot that are attractive and enjoyable for walking, driving and cycling.

The report concludes that all routes into Didcot have no sense of arrival or identity. Ideas to create a sense of welcome focus on better cycle and walking routes as well as facilities at bus stops, enhancing planting and places to sit, rest and socialise. A unique style and character in the town centre, with a reflection on the town's heritage, is included within

the Broadway area with the aspiration to develop a town square feel incorporating new and existing community space. Attractive public spaces including underpass improvements with lighting and public art are also highlighted.

The Didcot Gateway Masterplan recognises the lack of good connections within the town, with main streets designed for cars, when priority is needed for pedestrians and cyclists. Through consultation, the perception of Didcot is seen as a transitory place, with emphasis given on the need to enhance the Garden town as a destination. The town centre lacks a true heart and would benefit from increased vibrancy, quality and diversity.

The Didcot Gateway masterplan sets out potential improvements for development and public realm at land bounded by Station Road, Haydon Road and Lydall's Road with the opportunity for new public realm enhancements with a plaza and central usable open space to regenerate a key entrance into Didcot.



Illustrative views



Illustrative views



Illustrative views



# Public Art Commissioning Review

Didcot Garden Town is mainly in South Oxfordshire District but some of the villages in the Didcot Garden Town area of influence are within the Vale of White Horse District.

Commissioning public art in and around Didcot Garden Town is aligned to the planning process, secured through Section 106 Agreements for public art and public art strategies written for individual developments. Opportunities are identified and commissioned using agreed ring fenced and index linked funds. This has been enabled by the public art policy detailed in the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan. It is worth noting that the District Councils' joint Local Plan is being prepared to replace the adopted Local Plans.

The commissioning process complies with the financial rules and regulations for both South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council and depending on proposed contract value, artist appointments may be required to go through a tender portal.

Public art commissions have touched on nature but more generally focused on local history, heritage and science. The most recently commissioned projects have included REACH, Didcot UTC, by Michael Condron, Didcot Civic by Suzanne O'Driscoll, Starburst, Harwell Science Park by David Harber, Boundary Park Pavilion, by Martin Donlin, District Community Centre wall feature, by Rodney Harris and Valda Jackson.

The appointed artists have a track record in delivering permanent public art works. Smaller, village-based projects attract locally based artists. Materials feature stainless steel, glass, brick, stone and timber and in some cases the artwork is integrated to create functional as well as bespoke responses. Some materials are sourced locally, or artists use local fabricators, such as a blacksmith. Artist's work is incorporated into wayfinding, signage, noticeboards, tree grills and new buildings.

Commissions incorporate community engagement, are intergenerational, at community level, with new and existing residents and across schools.



Harwell Science Park by David Harber, © Louise Francis



Didcot Civic Centre by Suzanne O'Driscoll, © Katayoun Dowlatshahi



# Reflecting Conversations

Our conversations with keys stakeholders dived into past, current and future aspirations for the Garden Town. The answers touched on current perception, colour, best kept secrets, favourite activities and cultural opportunities.

## How would you describe Didcot? And colour?

*“Reflective of the communities, cultures, voices within it”*

*“Seems tired, grey, a bit forgotten”*

*“Didcot is a snake shedding it’s old skin – but not quite shaking it off...”*

*“Didcot should be orange – the colour of cornerstone & creativity”*

*“Grey! Not enough green spaces or beauty”*

*“Lacking identity”*

*“Has unrecognised potential”*

*“Bright and energetic – so much potential”*

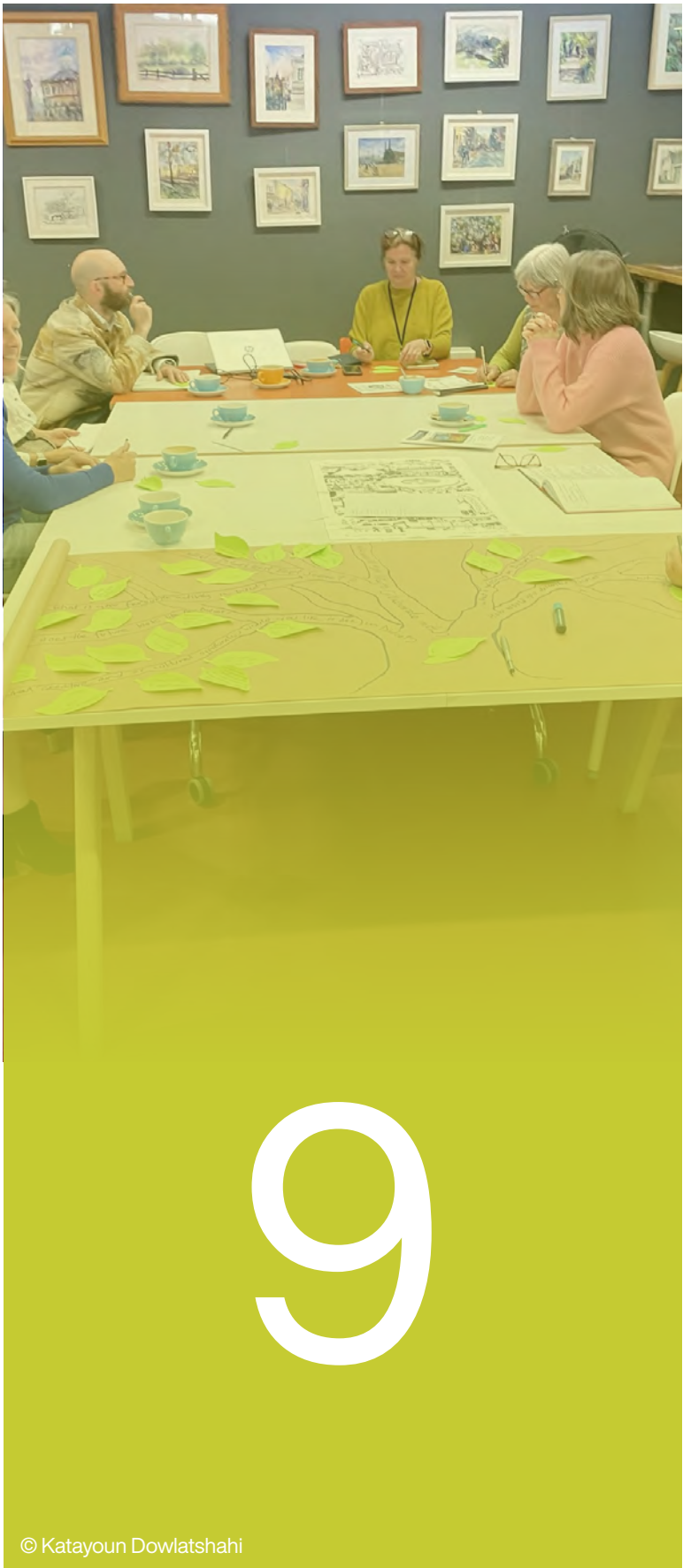
*“My hometown”*

## Favourite activity and best kept secret:

*“Finding hidden green spaces”*

*“All the walking routes in and out of the town”*

*“Diverse communities, Oak Trees! Archaeology! Cornerstone! Mowbray Fields!”*





# Reflecting Conversations

Our conversations with keys stakeholders dived into past, current and future aspirations for the Garden Town. The answers touched on current perception, colour, best kept secrets, favourite activities and cultural opportunities.

## What is missing in Didcot?

*"Lack of co-herent identity"*

*"Connecting old & new"*

*"Reasons to visit"*

*"Integration of different community groups – coming together"*

## Potential collaborations and the Future?

*"Street art, public planting, street dance, sculpture trails, surprises!"*

*"Collaboration with a wider science community"*

*"Greener, healthier, more integrated, more inviting"*

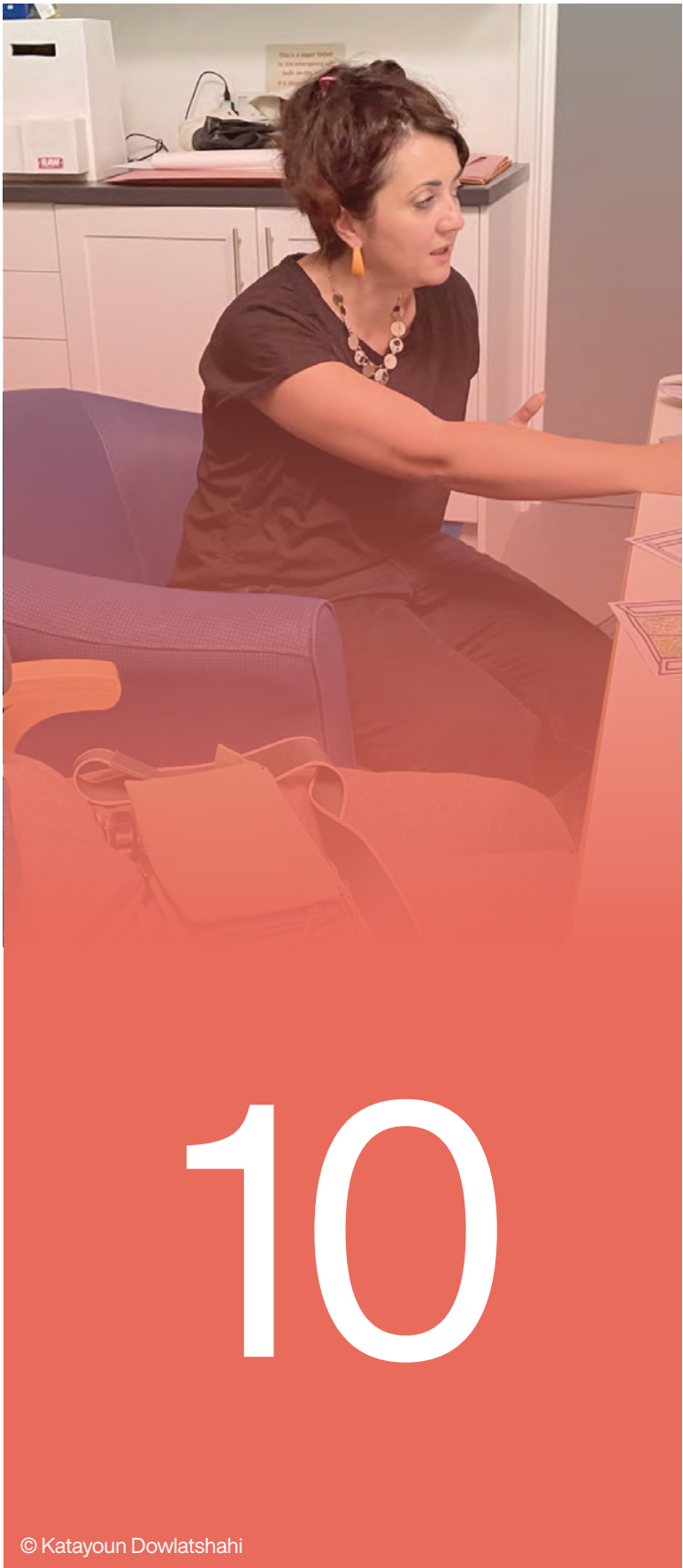
*"More opportunities for mentorship and collaboration"*

*"Collaborate with the growing South Asian Community"*

*"To be a destination"*

*"Short term projects – temporary projects are important"*

*"Maybe new secrets can be made?"*





# Reflecting Conversations

## An Acorn for your Thoughts

This event gave us the chance to show the emerging plan and test out the public art principles, themes, and Public Art commissions. Feedback from the evening was positive, with some great comments and thoughtful suggestions.

- Enthusiasm and an appetite for change and bold commissioning
- Great emphasis on reflecting on identity and the diversity of Didcot.
- Need to create support through mentoring and collaboration
- Consideration of the environment
- Encourage connections when commissioning and involve communities.

*“Temporary and meanwhile to foster local creativity and raise expectations”*

*“Be bold, be prepared to annoy people. If you try to please everyone it will be boring”*

*“Love the idea of mentorship and making a mark on Didcot that makes people happy”*

*“Gateways to Didcot must be appealing”*

*“Public art needs to be accessible and informed by all demographics. Talking to LGBTQ+ people. People of colour, disabled people, elderly, young and all in-between”*

*“Like the commissions that are multi use and help nature”*

*“I’m a fan of artwork with a sense of whimsy and wonder. Didcot needs more colour and personality”*





# Artist's Statement

"Human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together." Sir Ebenezer Howard, British urban planner and social reformer.

Several thoughts have emerged from my research into Didcot Garden Town, but worth highlighting is how community action, the desire for outreach and a green legacy are inspiring a movement that is an important part of the narrative of the town and helping to foster an evolving identity, whilst also informing the basis for a public art plan.

I am reminded of the simple truth that "When a flower doesn't bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower." This quote reflects on the value and significance of quality placemaking and public art to aid transformation in communities. Culture led regeneration is an aspiration and can be very successful when allowed to blossom from the

grass roots up. Artists and public art engagement can help to nurture connections to foster pride and a sense of belonging, by embracing the wider community into meaningful discourse about Didcot.

This community spirit is also evident and emerges as an invisible web connecting powerful business, scientists, charities, environmental groups, mutual based social housing, social enterprises, cooperatives, cultural initiatives and support groups.

There is a clear desire to raise the aspirations of the town; to be positive; to engage; and to welcome new residents and visitors to precipitate change. The level of advocacy in Didcot is high and demonstrates a clear desire for change in the material fabric and perception of the town to reflect its changing identity as proactive, expansive and energised.

There is a strong appetite for greater connections between the "world class" science community and Didcot Garden Town, in the form of meaningful collaborations, education, creative engagement and public art.

Didcot also sits in a verdant vale surrounded by spectacular geological and historical features, adding context to the aspirations of the Garden Town to seed and nurture a green legacy for the future. Public art can be a transformational tool to aid this vision when the whole is considered, not just the parts.

Artists can help nurture this process of transformation.

**Katayoun Dowlatshahi**



*"Human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together."*  
*Sir Ebenezer Howard, British urban planner and social reformer.*

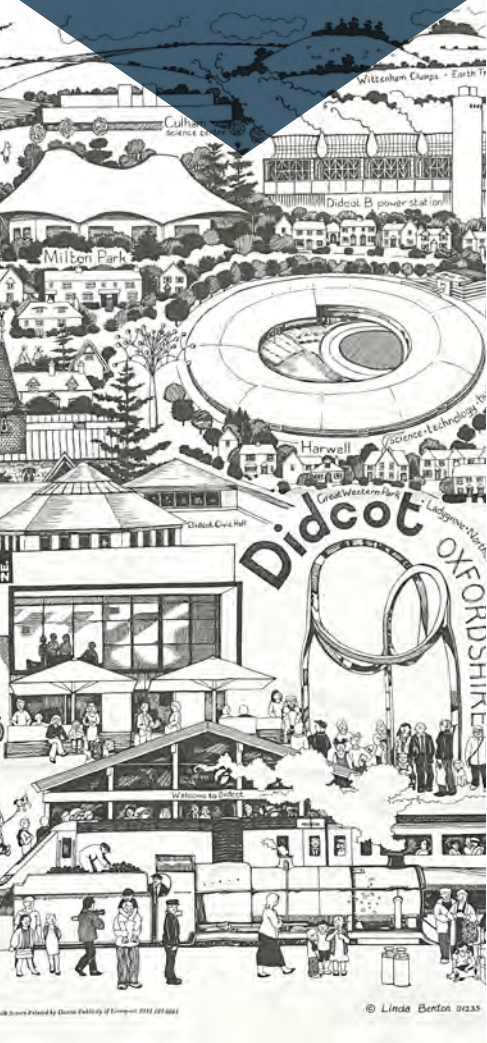




# Creating the Public Art Plan

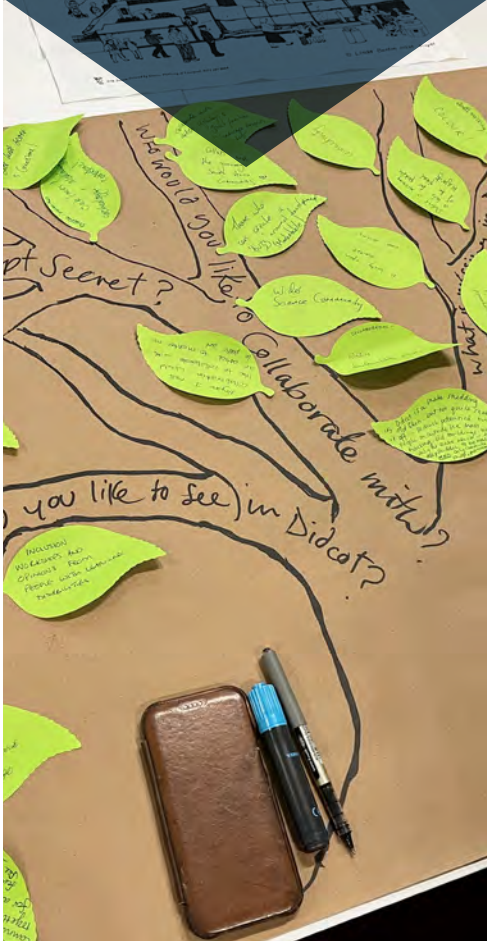
The public art plan has been created through a combination of first impressions, research, and consultation. Integral to this has been the creative response from artist Katayoun Dowlatshahi. Katayoun has brought a forensic enquiry in her research and engagement to help identify the unique place that is Didcot Garden Town.

**Research** has involved reviewing the most up to date and relevant documents to gain a thorough understanding of the Garden Town and the areas that will benefit from the public art plan.



© Linda Benton

**Conversations** began at Cornerstone Arts Centre, posing a set of questions to capture local knowledge and aspirations. Conversations continued with the wider community, including the Garden Town Team, civic representatives, arts organisations, artists and businesses.



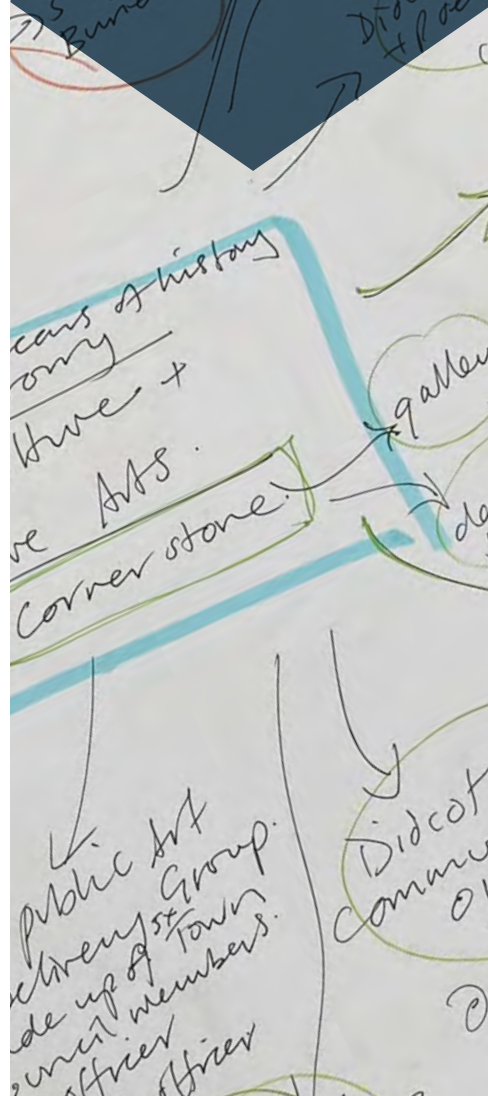
© Katayoun Dowlatshahi

**Visits** included a tour around the Garden Town, science parks, archives, Didcot Railway Centre, artists' studios, the community hospital, new housing developments and parks and open spaces.



Harwell Village Hall © Julie Grose

**Artist's Statement** provides an artist's voice as a creative response to the brief, a statement that provides oversight and best practice for how the plan can work.



© Katayoun Dowlatshahi

**Creating the Plan** combined the research, conversations and artist's statement to form a set of principles and emerging themes to influence a programme of public art commission opportunities.



© Katayoun Dowlatshahi

**Meeting the Community** with a community engagement event at The Junction, Makespace, to share our initial ideas on the public art and to get some feedback. In exchange for thoughts, we gave away packs of germinated acorns, with planting instructions ready to plant in a new home.



© Katayoun Dowlatshahi




# Public Art Principles

The following principles have been developed as part of the ongoing research and conversations with stakeholders and the community. They are informed by best practice in public art and critical thinking between FrancisKnight and Lead Artist Katayoun Dowlatshahi. They draw on the good work that has already taken place in Didcot Garden Town and surrounding areas while offering a refreshed approach to future public art commissioning.

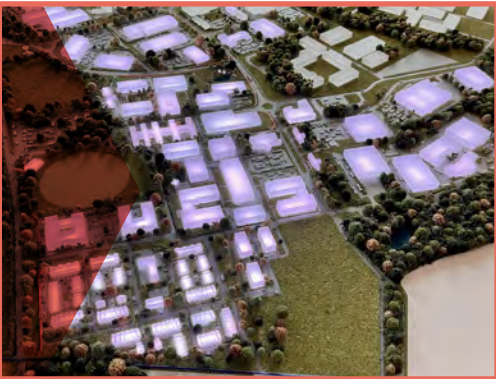
### Leading by Example

- Keep an open brief for artists to define the narrative.
- Offer artists, the time and space for ideas to grow and evolve.
- Make it easier for artists to apply for opportunities, placing the emphasis on quality.
- Commission a cohesive and curated public art programme to add strength and aid connectivity.




### Evolving Identity

- Embrace an identity that at its heart is about change and transition.
- Cultivate and celebrate community grassroots activity.
- Make space for cultural expansion and the desire for outreach.
- Invite communities to contribute stories and share cultures.




### Proactive and Sustainable Choices

- Support the circular economy by carefully considering each and every action throughout the commissioning process.
- Encourage exchange and collaboration across sectors and the adoption of new green technologies.
- Share knowledge and understanding of environmental issues.
- Consider sustainable materials and the context in which they are placed.



### Temporary and Meanwhile

- Acknowledge that temporary can be as important as permanent work.
- Utilise opportunities for temporary work to engage community participation.
- Nurture a next generation of creatives through training opportunities.







# Public Art Themes

The following themes are designed to inspire and inform the way public art is commissioned in Didcot. They align to the Didcot Garden Town Principles, and both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils objectives. Key overlapping strands address climate change and fostering community well-being indicating a commitment to sustainability and reflect a shared vision for creating resilient and inclusive communities.

The Public Art themes provide the framework for the public art commissions, and act as prompts when writing the commission briefs for artist and continuing engagement

**BALANCE**

**Sustainability and Nature**


Balance is the overarching theme and provides a green thread that runs through the commission narratives. At the heart of The Garden Town principles is the desire for balance; for sustainable growth, sustainable industry, sustainable living and to live in balance with nature. It is also evident in the council's Climate Emergency objectives.



**FLOW**

**Connectivity and Movement**

Engenders a warm welcome and looks to understand how the town connects, highlighting routes into the town, places of interest, as well as areas to stop, rest and enjoy.



Chatham Placemaking @ Chris Tipping

**PROGRESS**

**Innovation and Technology**

Progress defines Didcot – it has not stood still, this theme focuses on professional development for artists, support, and meaningful cross disciplinary collaborations



Chatham Placemaking @ Louise Francis

**TRANSFORMATION**

**Change and Transition**

This theme is about change and transition, with Didcot undergoing transformation and change through new housing, changing industries and diverse communities.



@ Laura Knight



# Commissioning Approach

The commissioning approach recommends that the procurement process will be accessible and open, and the commissions will be collaborative.

**Artist Appointments:**

- Appoint Artists, each dedicated to one or more commission schemes and locations, but forming an integrated and curated programme of commissions.
- Encourage opportunities for knowledge exchange between experienced artists and those looking to widen their skills in the field of public art.
- Where appropriate encourage meaningful collaboration between design teams, and commissioning artists early in the design development could lead to integrated and embedded art in new public realm schemes.
- Explore creative opportunities with other relevant collaborators.

**Diversity of Voice:**

Ensure appointments reflect a diversity of voices, fostering a rich and inclusive artistic programme.

**Artistic Freedom:**

Empower artists with the freedom to identify opportunities and approaches through research, guided by the themes.

**Micro Commissions:**

Integrate micro commissions as opportunity-led initiatives, providing emerging artists with the chance to build confidence and establish a track record in temporary and/or permanent public art.

**Green Connection:**

Stipulate a green connection for each commission, linking it back to Didcot Garden Town principles, ensuring thematic coherence across projects, recycling and using sustainable materials.

**Diverse Artistic Range:**

Encourage artworks ranging from process-driven projects to socially engaged initiatives, digital creations, land art, or sculptures, ensuring a dynamic and varied public art landscape.

**Continuity:**

Embrace themes to create continuity in both concept and approach across the diverse range of artworks.

**Site Specificity:**

Highlight the importance of artworks being site-specific and relevant, enhancing the unique qualities of each location.

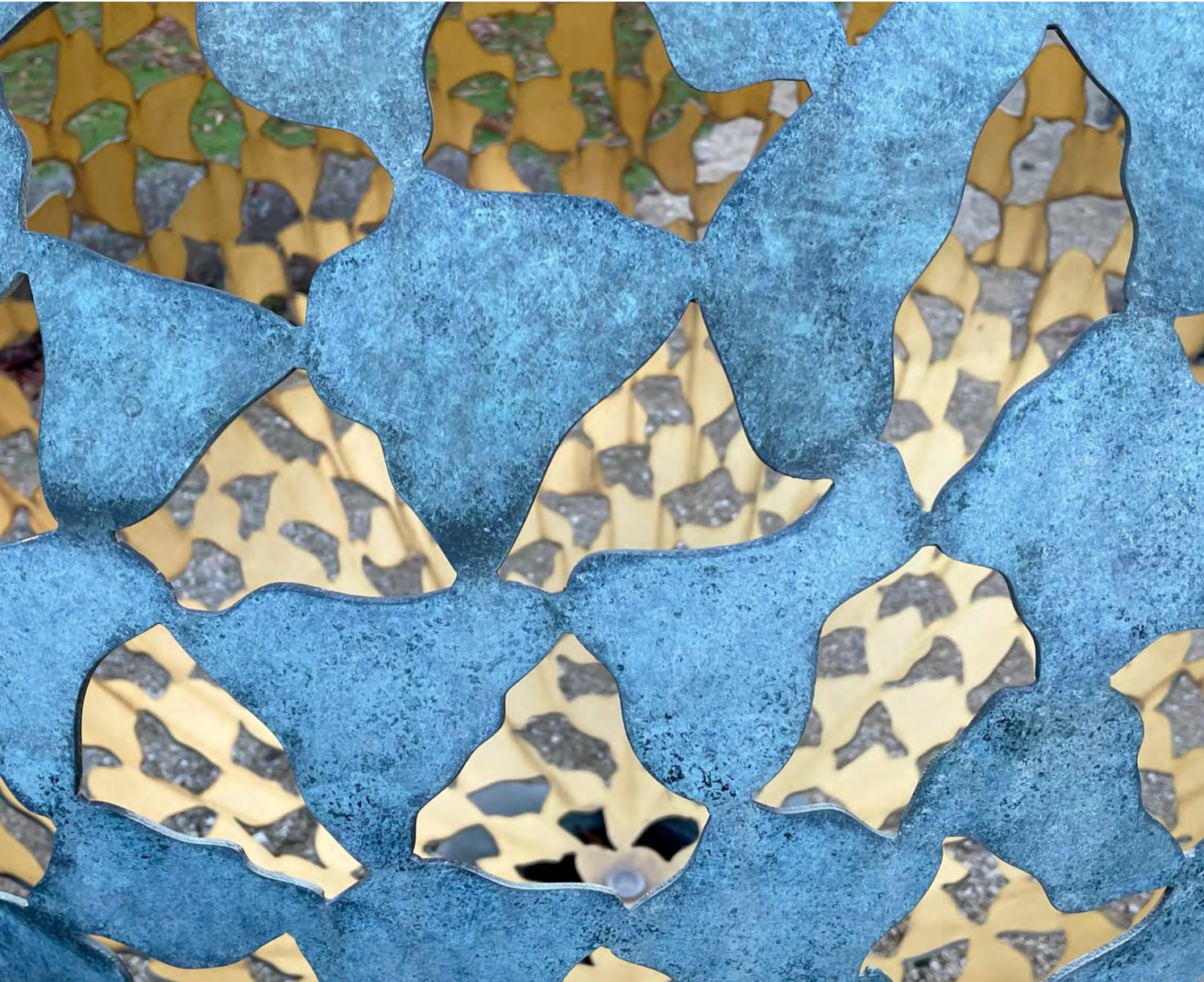
**Collaboration and Community Engagement:**

Promote collaboration and enhance community engagement with social enterprises, environmental charities, existing art

organisations and local groups for example those linked to arts and culture, parks and allotments, local history, youth organisations, green technology, innovation hubs and Science Vale enterprises.

**Legacy and stewardship:**

All commission briefs could include provision for maintenance and care of the artworks and may include identifying short or long-term maintenance budgets and local or other groups willing to take on responsibility for caring for and celebrating the works in perpetuity.



Abstract sphere - Mantle© David Harbour



Chalk Stack by Jo Chapman © Louise Francis



# Welcome Commissions

The Welcome Commissions present an opportunity to enhance the key routes into Didcot, improving the arrival experience and first impressions of the town. Artists could be invited to create connections within the town, from roundabouts to bridges and landscaping to underpasses.

Artworks could help to define gateways to Didcot, for existing and new residents, as well as visitors, providing a warm welcome whether driving, walking or cycling. Links could be made with the Science Vale, through the location of artworks or potential collaborations.

The Welcome Commissions could link to any of the themes, however the overarching theme of Balance: sustainability and the link to nature, would ensure a thematic coherence across the Welcome Commissions opportunities.

Potential opportunities could include:

- Creative approaches to landscape features, such as existing planting, verges and roundabouts.
- Innovative and collaborative approach to public realm design and the urban fabric such as lighting, design elements or material choices.
- Iconic, site-specific artwork to create a visual impact and identity for the town, such as stand-alone sculptures.
- Functional artwork such as a signage, seating and wayfinding elements.
- Temporary artworks to enliven and animate public spaces, both urban and green, such as hoardings and murals.



Image © tsai-yoshikawa.com, Rainbow-Friargate Float, 2011, commissioned by Hull City Council and Arts Council England, and project managed by the city's architecture centre, Arc, as the part of an 'Arts in Empty Spaces' initiative in Hull City, England.



Flow - © Jessica Lloyd- Jones



© Richard WolfStröme - St James' Street, Kemp Town



The Birds - © Julia Clarke. Photo © Richard Gooding



Ashford Geese @Bruce Williams



© Richard WolfStröme - St James' Street, Kemp Town



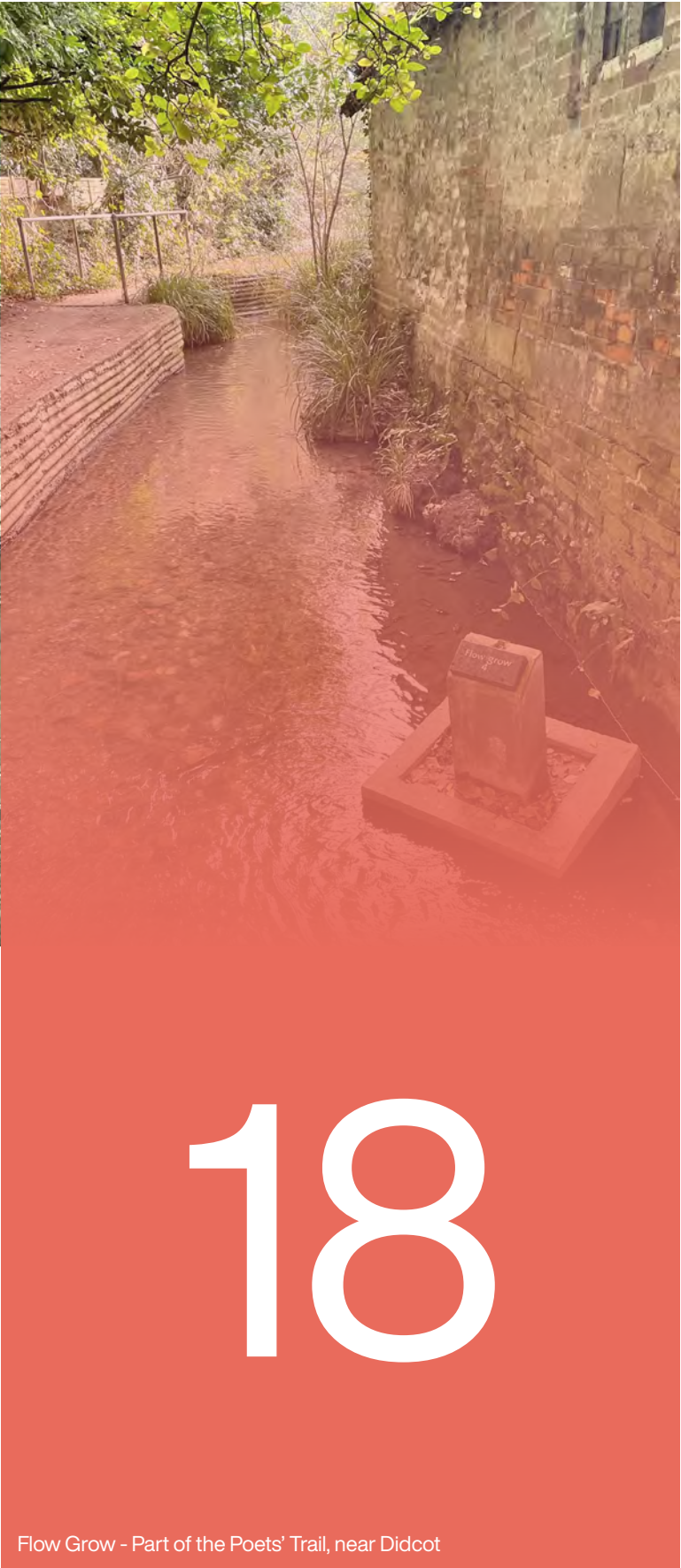
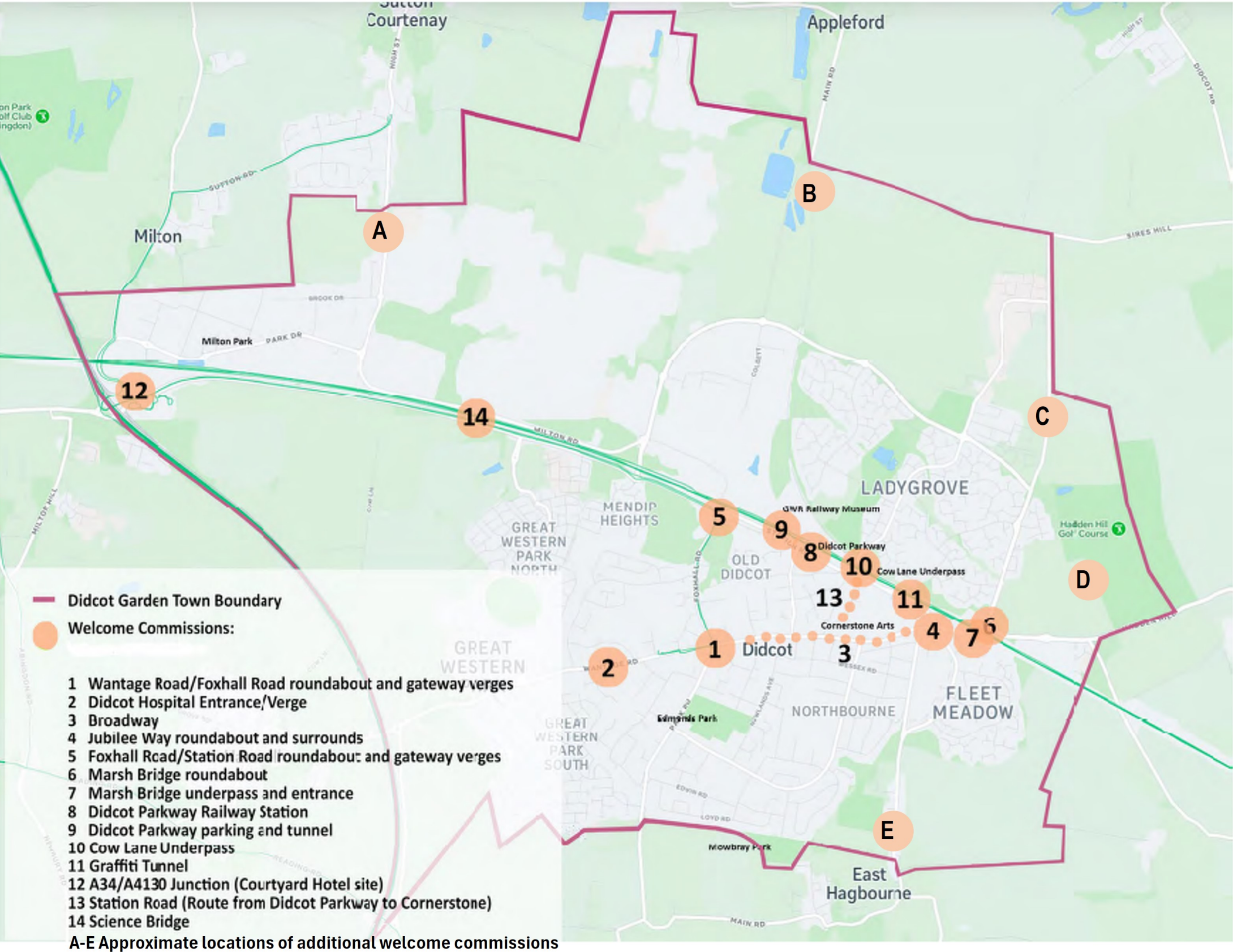
Goozer & Watermen © Christopher Tipping. Photo © Richard Gooding



Chalk Stack - © Jo Chapman



# Location Map - Welcome Commissions





# Civic Space Commissions

The Civic Space Commissions offer the opportunity for enhanced pedestrian environments created through more inviting public realm improvements. Artists could be included in design teams to influence material and inspirational planting as new civic spaces are designed and constructed.

Regenerated spaces could include integrated artwork as part of the landscape design, creating areas for residents and visitors to sit, gather and dwell. Temporary artworks could be installed during periods of construction.

The Civic Space Commissions link to the theme of Transformation, however the overarching theme of Balance: sustainability and the link to nature, would ensure a thematic coherence across the Civic Space commission opportunities.

Potential opportunities could include:

- Integrating public art into functional street furniture, such as seating and paving, wayfinding and interpretation.
- Innovative and collaborative approach to public realm design and the urban fabric such as design elements and material choices.
- Iconic, site-specific artwork to create an impact such as wall based and sculptural artworks.
- Temporary artworks to enliven and animate public spaces, both urban and green, such as hoardings, murals and community outreach.



Curtis Hylton © Ady Kerry.



© Rona Smith



A Stitch in Time by Michael Pinsky. Photo © Michael Pinsky



Dance Diagonal designed by Lothar Götz. Photo © Jim Stephenson



© The Caravan Gallery at the Bluecoat in Liverpool



Chatham Placemaking © Christopher Tipping



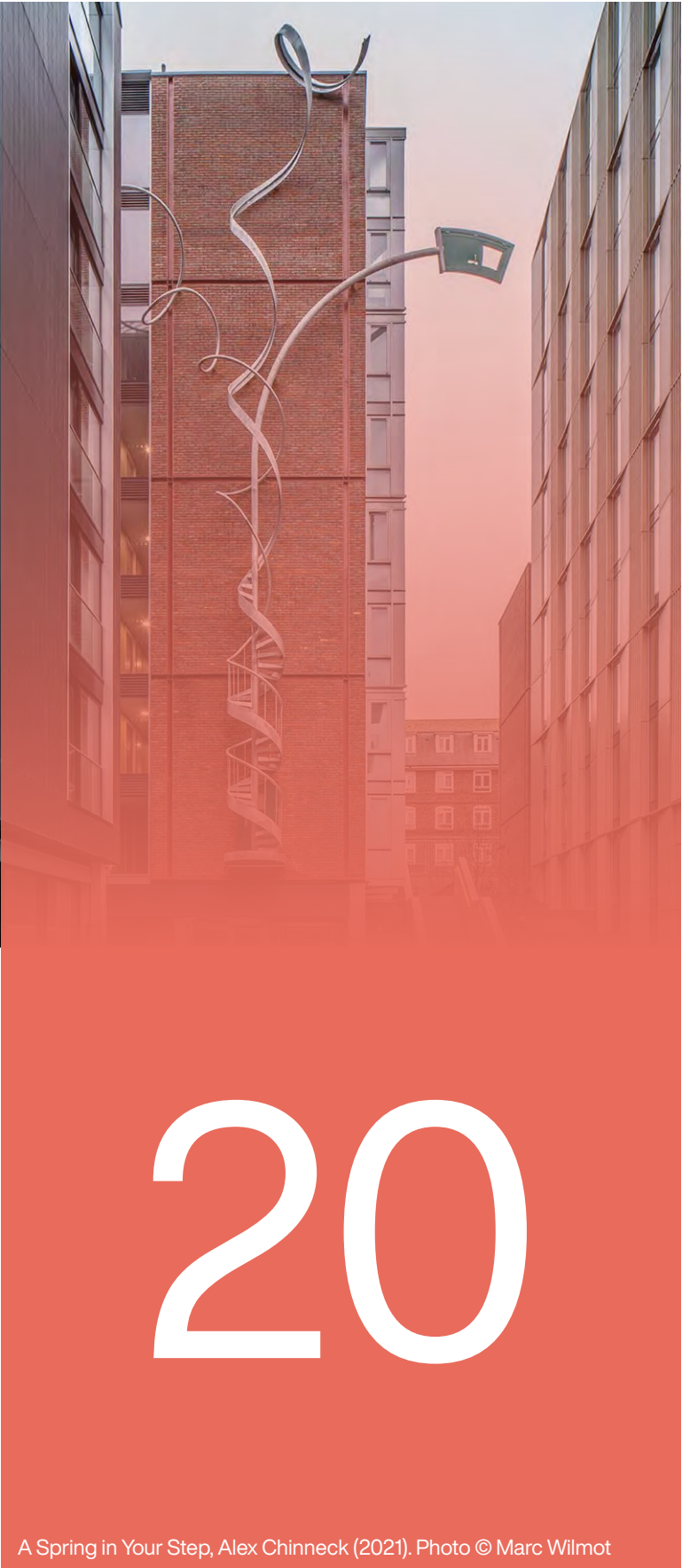
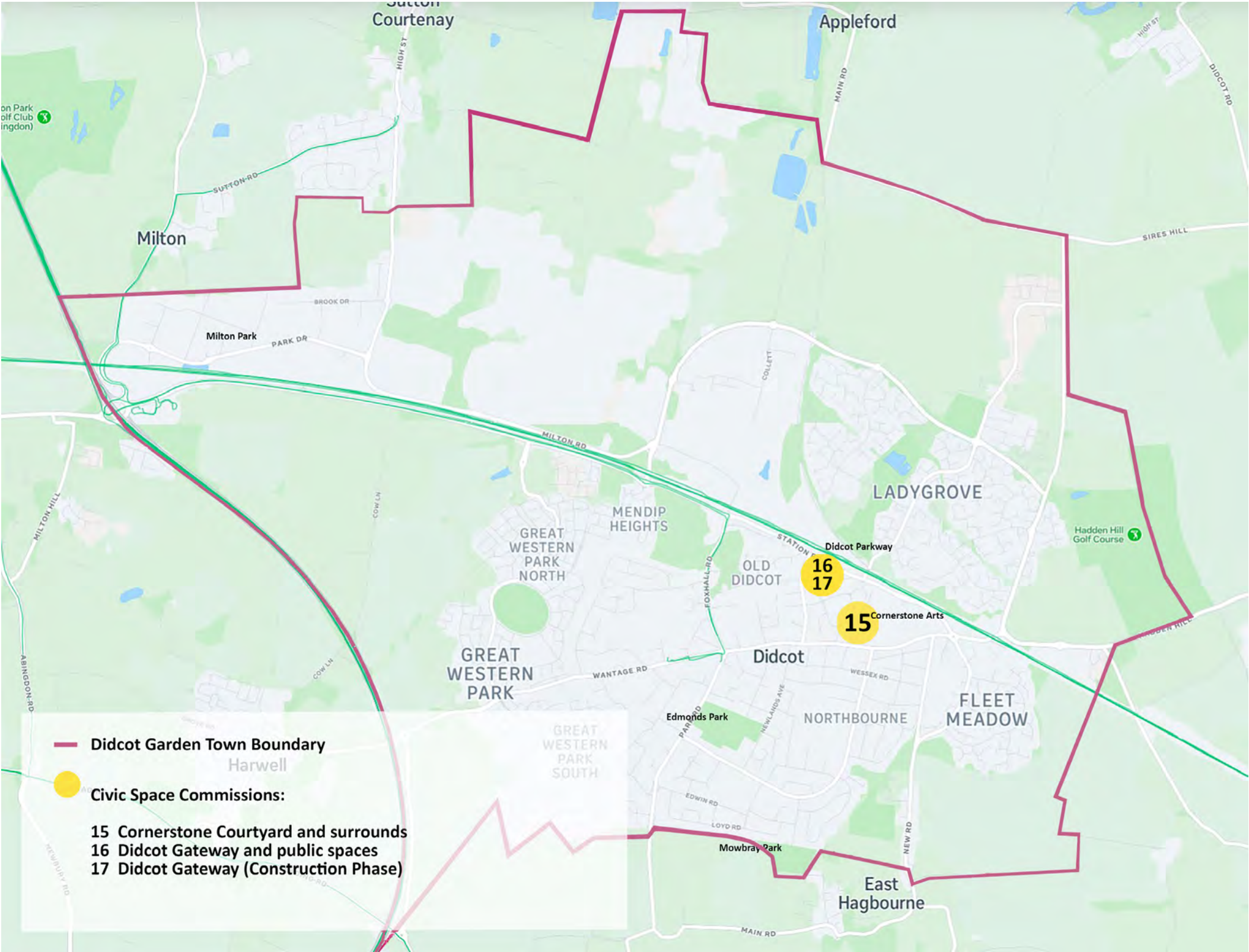
Trout, Jonathan Wright, 2018. Commissioned by Eastleigh Borough Council.



A Spring in Your Step, Alex Chinneck (2021). Photo © Marc Wilmot



# Location Map - Civic Space Commissions



A Spring in Your Step, Alex Chinneck (2021). Photo © Marc Wilmot



# Green Space Commissions

The Green Space Commissions focus on three distinct parks in Didcot, two of which are big open spaces and one of which is a local nature reserve. These artist interventions lend themselves to micro commissions providing emerging artists with the chance to build confidence and establish a track record in temporary and/or permanent public art.

Artists could be invited to work with community and local narratives to help create a green thread throughout the town. Artworks could be integrated into the park, enhancing natural features and offering potential collaborations on planting schemes and habitats. The heart of these commissions could reflect sustainable living in balance with nature.

Artist could explore any of the themes with this commission opportunity, however Balance: sustainability and living in balance with nature, is at the heart of these commissions.

Potential opportunities could include:

- Temporary artworks to enliven and animate public spaces, both urban and green, such as interactive and playful artworks.
- Artist led collaborations and engagement, such as community outreach.
- Micro commissions with an emphasis on learning and development.



Tom Hare © Katayoun Dowlathshahi



© Tom hare



© Katayoun Dowlathshahi Hoole Park Chester



© Lille Tilde by Thomas Dambo. Photo: Abdellah Ihadian



© Outdoor Studios.



Spiral Coppice Arch © Tim Norris



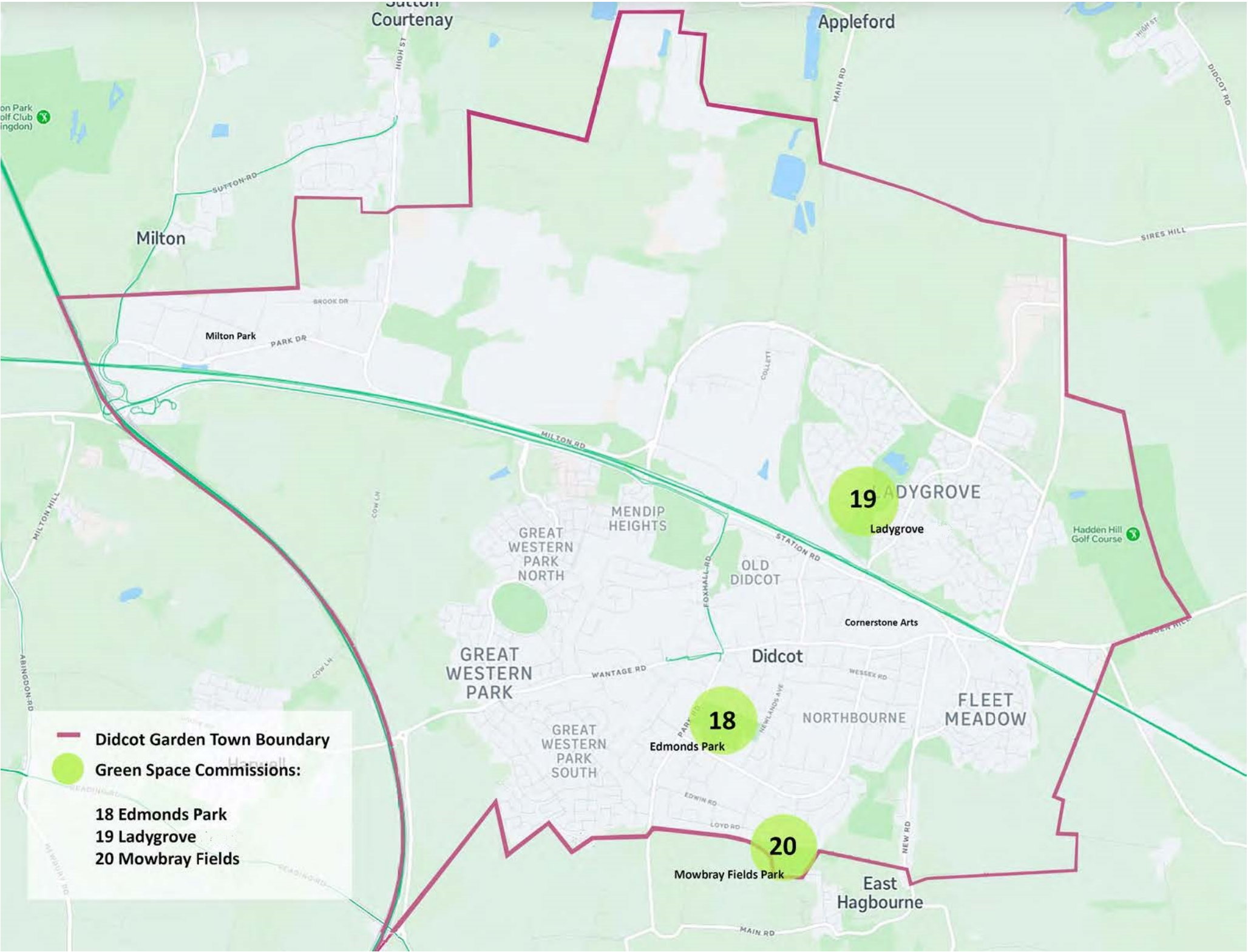
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A Tropical Flock of Avian Avatars by the Myth Makers: Donna Dodson & Andy Moerlein. Photo © www.insightfoto.com



# Location Map - Green Space Commissions



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# Project Options

No.	Location	Potential art work	Commissions	Theme	Land ownership	Project owner	Stakeholders	Timescales
WELCOME								
1	Wantage Road / Foxhall Road roundabout *	Welcome artwork(s) / landscape art to complement existing trees	Artist 1	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	County council	District council	County council, district council, town council, local businesses	2025 - 2027
2	Didcot Hospital entrance / verge	Wayfinding / signage within verge landscaping	Artist 1	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	County council, Health Trust	District council	County council, Oxford Health Partnership	2025 - 2027
3	Broadway	Welcome artwork(s) - subject to DCC detailed design	Artist 1	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	County council	District council	County council, district council, town council, local businesses	2025 - 2027
4	Jubilee Way roundabout and surrounds *	Welcome artwork(s) - subject to DCC detailed design	Artist 1	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	County council	District council	County council, district council, town council, local businesses	2025 - 2027
5	Foxhall Road / Station Road roundabout and verges *	Welcome artwork(s) / landscape art to complement existing trees	Artist 1	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	County council	District council	County council, district council, town council, local businesses	2025 - 2027
6	Marsh Bridge roundabout	Welcome artwork	Artist 2	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	County council	District council	County council, district council	2025
7	Marsh Bridge underpass and entrance	Lighting and/or wall based artwork	Artist 2	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	Network Rail, county council	District council	Network Rail, county council;	2025
8	Didcot Parkway railway station	Feature wrtwork - uplift on materials	Artist 3	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	Great Western Railways (GWR)	District council with agreement from GWR	GWR, Network Rail, county council and GWR Museum	2026
9	Didcot Parkway parking and tunnel	Enhance pedestrian / passenger experience of using amenity	Artist 3	Progress - Innovation and Technology	Great Western Railways (GWR)	District council with agreement from GWR	District council, GWR, GWR Museum	2026
10	Cow Lane underpass	Lighting and/or wall based artwork	Artist 4	Transformation - Change and Transition	Network Rail, county council	District council with agreement from county council and Network Rail	Network Rail, county council, Ladygrove community	2025
11	Graffiti tunnel	Enhance existing 'public generated' art feature	Artist 4	Flow - Connectivity and Movement	County council	District council with agreement from county council and Network Rail	Existing informal community graffiti artists	2024
12	Station Road (route from Didcopt Parkway to Cornerstone Arts Centre)	Welcome artwork	Artist 5	Transformation - Change and Transition	Unknown (potentially Milton Park)	tbc	Asset MEPC, Science Vale, Enterprise Zone	2026
13	Station Road (route from Didcopt Parkway to Cornerstone Arts Centre)	Wayfinding enhancement	Artist 12	Transformation - Change and Transition	District council, county council	District council	District council, county council, Cornerstone Arts Centre, GWR, local businesses	2026 - 2027
14	Science Bridge	Artist collaboration to enhance design, material choices and surface treatment	Artist 13	Progress - Innovation and Technology	County council	County council	District council, county council, Cornerstone Arts Centre, GWR, local businesses	2025 - 2028

A-E are five additional locvations to be assessed on a project by project basis with funding from emerging s106 funds - Didcot entrances from Sutton Courtenay, Appleford, NE Didcot, Hadden Hill & East Hagbourne



# Project Options

No.	Location	Potential art work	Commissions	Theme	Land ownership	Project owner	Stakeholders	Timescales
CIVIC SPACE								
15	Cornerstone courtyard and surrounds	Embedded artwork - seating / railings / landsape treatment / enhancement e.g. paving	Artist 6	Transformation - Change and Transition	Private Lease arrangement	District council with agreement from Lease	District council, Cornerstone Arts Centre, the Orchard Centre, town council	2025 - 2027
16	Didcot Gateway and public spaces	Scuplture - living artwork / water features / natural materials	Artist 7	Balance - Nature and Sustainability	District council, Homes England	District council	District council	2026 - 2027 (depending on landscape
17	Didcot Gateway (construction phase)	Temporary features / hoardings project during construction	Artist 8	Transformation - Change and Transition	District council, Homes England	District council	District council, Homes England	2026 - 2027
GREEN SPACE								
18	Edmonds Park	Micro commission	Artist 9	Balance - Nature and Sustainability	Town council	Town council	Town council	2025
19	Ladygrove	Seating / wayfinding and interpretation	Artist 10	Balance - Nature and Sustainability	Town council	District council, town council	Town council, Ladygrove community	2025
20	Mowbray Fields	Micro commission	Artist 11	Balance - Nature and Sustainability	District council, Earth Trust	District council	District council, Earth Trust	2025

\* in the tables above denotes priority projects



# Funding Options

## Funding

Funding for public art projects can be sourced from a number of channels:

- Funding related to planning and development.
- Central government funding.
- Independent funds, trusts and foundations.
- Enterprise Zone retained business rates.

### Funding related to planning and development.

Section 106 Agreements (S106) are legal agreements made between developers and South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. The obligations within a S106 may be financial or non-financial and are used alongside Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to ensure infrastructure is provided. The use of S106 agreements may include securing financial contributions for social housing and infrastructure or securing non-financial infrastructure such as open spaces and play areas, which applies to new development proposals.

For developments that are not CIL liable, financial contributions are secured through S106. Major developments that are CIL liable still have a S106 agreement which sets out the non-financial obligations for the site and may still secure certain financial contributions through S106.

## Central government funding

Central government periodically launches funding initiatives that may be able to be used to public art projects that benefit the community, examples of these include:

- The Levelling Up Fund Rounds 1-3
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Future government funding opportunities should be monitored for opportunities to bid for projects outlined in this plan if they meet the required objectives.

## Independent Funds, Trusts and Foundations.

Several funds, trusts and foundations support projects that address issues around enhancing the fabric of communities. However, most trusts reserve funding for registered charities or small community organisations and do not invite applications from local authorities. One example that does allow applications from local authorities is the Great Western Railways Customer and Community Fund which organisations can bid for funds that enhance and encourage the rail use experience of passengers and potential passengers.

## Potential national funding sources include:

- The National Lottery - Heritage Lottery Fund
- Arts Council England – Place Partnership Fund
- Trust and Foundations with specific thematic interests such as.
- Henry Moore Foundation
- Welcome Trust
- Science and Technology Facilities Council
- Didcot Powerhouse Fund
- GWR Community Improvement fund

## Enterprise Zone retained business rates.

The continued development of employment sites around Didcot Garden Town will attract business rates of which retained funding may be used for projects that could include public art, active travel and green infrastructure.

Secured S106 Funds			
S106 REF	DEVELOPMENT SITE	TERMS	AMOUNT
S106 21V25	Land at Former Didcot A Power Station Milton Road Didcot	Public Art in the vicinity (within 5 miles of the site) S106 funding expires 14 January 2032	£84,585.30
S106 – 14S16	Land at Park Road Didcot	Public Art Capital Contribution - in the vicinity of the site. S106 Funding expires 19 June 2035	£37,622.66 +£5,158.71 maintenance
S106 - 18S05	Land Adjacent to the Village Hall Main Road East Hagbourne	Public art on or within the vicinity of the Site (East Hagbourne) S106 Funding not received yet and will expire 10 years from payment date	£30,031.04
S106 – 17S19	Land to the north east of Didcot	Public Art at the Site and/or at Didcot Gateway, Didcot town centre, other public realm projects in Didcot. S106 funding not received yet/ expires 10 years from payment.	£193,332
		Total	£350,729.71







# Organisations Consulted

Community artists

Cornerstone Arts Centre

Didcot Cafe Scientifique

Didcot Community Hospital

Didcot Garden Town Team

Didcot Oaks Project

Didcot Powerhouse Fund

Didcot Town Council

Fusion Arts

GWS Railway Museum

Harwell Science and Innovation Campus

Locally based artists and performers

Make Space Oxford

Milton Park

Oxford Health Arts Partnership – NHS

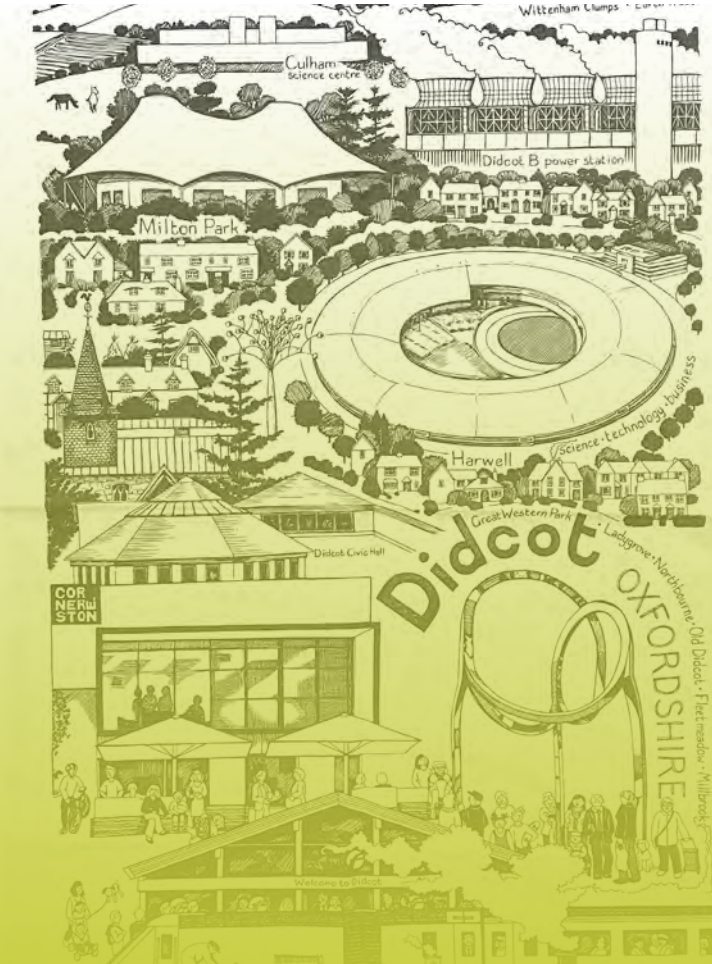
Sabali Pots Community Studio

Science Vale UK

Soha Housing

South Oxfordshire District Council

Vale of White Horse District Council





# **South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils Public Art Plan addendum**

Opportunities for public art in and around Didcot continue to grow and some developments, such as Great Western Park and Valley Park have their own site specific art strategies. Other projects are reactive to funding and land ownership status of each location. The Didcot Public Art Plan looks at optimising current funding opportunities that have already been identified within priority areas by other adopted strategies such as the Didcot Wayfinding Strategy 2024, and assesses agreed terms for each s106 contribution. Further significant s106 art funding opportunities are emerging and such opportunities, to be explored on a project by project basis, increase the potential for new art in north Didcot.

Since Francis Knight prepared the draft Didcot Public Art Plan for the district councils, five additional 'welcome' commission locations, A-E, have been added to the Welcome Commission map on page 18 and referred to in the schedule on page 23. These locations will be on entrances to Didcot from Sutton Courtenay, Appleford, NE Didcot, Hadden Hill and East Hagbourne. All locations shown on all maps in the Plan are indicative and each will be subject to further review and consultation.