The Bristol Method

how to use art to inspire change

In it for good

BRISTOL 2015 EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL

BRISTOL WINNER 2015
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How to use art to inspire change

The role of the arts in the sustainability debate is crucial. To quote Professor John Robinson: “our failure to address environmental issues is not a failure of information, but a failure of imagination.” The arts can take a sideways glance at problems. They can provoke, transform, challenge, highlight, create joy, and bring communities together.

Bristol has long been considered a cultural hub. The arts scene is an important component of the city’s identity, and Bristol’s year as European Green Capital provides the perfect opportunity to bring art and sustainability together.

“Artists certainly provide that sense of fun, but most of all they challenge us to think in new ways. We need challenges if we are to make the changes needed as individuals and as a city.”

George Ferguson, Mayor of Bristol

The Bristol 2015 Company has chosen to place the green agenda on a more creative and contemporary platform in order to engage everyone.

Arts Council England made an Exceptional Award of £744,564 – the largest it has ever made – to support a year-long series of events and activities that puts arts and culture right at the heart of the year’s activities. The aspiration is to challenge Bristol’s residents and visitors to think in new ways and stimulate green debate.

One of the aims of the year is to reach out to the city’s furthest edges and reflect the vibrant diversity of the people. The Exceptional Award has enabled a Neighbourhood Arts Programme (NAP) to evolve to engage communities across Bristol in green issues and Bristol’s European Green Capital year. Findings from an initial research phase showed that Bristol residents wanted to be consulted and involved; they wanted to consider green issues of local significance and how the award was relevant to them.

“One of the most powerful ways that artists change the conversation is by causing us to slow down, to consider, to stop debating and to start contemplating.”

Rich Pancost, Director of the Cabot Institute, Advisor to Bristol 2015 European Green Capital

This module of the Bristol Method was produced at the end of 2015 in order to share the role that art has played throughout the year.

“The programme we are supporting will place the green agenda on a more creative and contemporary platform that really engages everyone – artists, audiences and particularly children and young people – in celebrating sustainability and future ways of living. Throughout this year, there will be some amazing, beautiful, surprising, controversial and inspirational works to engage with, debate, and enjoy.”

Phil Gibby, South West Area Director, Arts Council England
The ambition of the Neighbourhood Arts Programme (NAP) was to see 14 unique arts projects spring up across the whole of Bristol during 2015. Initiated in September 2014, this Bristol 2015 Company project evolved to engage communities across Bristol in green issues and Bristol’s European Green Capital Year.

Findings from an initial research phase showed that Bristol residents wanted to be consulted and involved; they wanted to consider green issues of local significance and how the award was relevant to them. Each project was therefore entirely community-led. Projects were delivered through partnership working between professional artists, residents and community volunteers, and managed by the NAP team within the Bristol 2015 Company.

As each of Bristol’s neighbourhoods are different in character, with varied priorities and concerns, each project was designed to express these definitive traits and engage local people in environmental issues in a relevant and meaningful way. ‘Arts projects’ were defined in the broadest possible sense and employed a whole range of different practices, including puppetry, film making, ceramics, illustrative design etc. However all were participatory at some level and were expected to connect with the needs of each community.

### Project timeline

**Sept 2014 – March 2015**
- Six month research & consultation phase
- Wave one: First six briefs created

**15 April**
- Project launched with wider Bristol 2015 Arts Programme

**April**
- Wave one: first six projects commissioned

**May**
- Wave two: next eight briefs created
- Documentary filmmaker recruited

**June**
- Wave two: eight projects commissioned

**May to Nov**
- NAP team support all projects

**Nov**
- All projects completed

**Dec**
- Neighbourhood Arts showcase event
- Decommission
- Evaluation
How did they engage local communities?

The main ambition for the Neighbourhood Arts Programme was to involve local people in decision making and give communities ownership over whatever project happened in their area. Making this vision a reality required motivating the community to engage with the programme from the outset.

Having completed an initial research phase, the NAP team conducted a six month consultation period to maximise local people’s involvement. A key challenge was to communicate with a representative section of the community and not just ‘the usual suspects’ that typically attend every neighbourhood meeting.

To achieve this, the team attended more than 40 neighbourhood meetings and events across the city, and held a consultation event in each of the 14 areas.

These were either led by Bristol 2015 or in partnership with another organisation. The team also ran an extensive social media campaign and created an online form where people could register their interest and/or submit an opinion or idea.

This activity was supplemented with a flyering campaign in community buildings in each area as well as media coverage through local channels such as the Bristol Post and BBC Radio Bristol.

Of course, it was also essential to build good relationships with key community figures, leaders and groups: at the grassroots level, this is how most work gets done.

Communities were asked to consider what green issues affected them, or what place, group of people, or theme might be an appropriate subject for their community’s creative brief. Interested residents and representatives from local arts and community organisations were then invited to form adviser groups, one for each geographical area. These groups shaped the creative briefs based on the consultation findings, and steered the selection process for choosing the artist they would collaborate with.
The brief writing and commissioning stages of the process were conducted in two waves, to make them feasible for the NAP team to manage, and also to allow for any tweaks or refinement. Due to the tight time scales required to complete the programme by the end of 2015, there wasn’t much opportunity to thoroughly evaluate and amend the process before the second round of commissioning began. However the unique experience gained from the first round meant that the NAP team were able to use this learning to respond to challenges that came about during the second.

One particular example of this was in Henleaze, Stoke Bishop and Westbury-on-Trym, where one local adviser applied quite a lot of pressure for one proposal to be commissioned above the others, despite the fact that it did not respond directly to the creative brief. The desired physical legacy of carved wooden benches was enough to persuade the other advisers that this project should be commissioned despite the fact that it didn’t include a strong participatory element in its proposal. In this instance, Bristol 2015 made the decision to go against the recommendations of the community advisers, despite fears that this might potentially alienate these individuals and some neighbourhood committee members. However, the experience gained by the NAP team indicated that participation was essential for communicating the project to lots of people and connecting it to sustainable issues and the European Green Capital year. Also, sometimes the loudest voices were not representative of the whole community’s interests, and so a more inclusive, better themed project was commissioned instead which was very well received by thousands of local residents.

A video of the consultation process can be viewed at: http://ow.ly/VYB84
Who is involved?

- The NAP team was made up of two Bristol 2015 employees: Emma Williams (NAP Manager) who worked full-time and Marietta Kirkbride (NAP Coordinator) who worked part-time. In the interest of generating a skills legacy, the team created a series of paid internships and volunteers posts, including a six-month filmmakers assistant role, to provide young people with work experience opportunities in the cultural sector.

- Bristol City Council’s (BCC) Neighbourhood and Community Development teams played a key and active role in communicating the programme within their localities and supported the NAP team on the ground by providing local knowledge. The BCC’s planning, arts and festivals officers also gave invaluable advice at the brief writing, artist selection and delivery stages of the projects.

- Representatives from Arnolfini and Situations, two highly regarded arts institutions, acted as ambassadors for the programme and fed into the selection process.

- The University of Bristol’s Centre for Public Engagement partnered with the NAP team for two consultation events.

Over the 14 areas of Bristol there are 70+ local advisers from communities and different organisations that have supported the programme, including St Paul’s Afrikan Caribbean Carnival, Refugee Women of Bristol, Knowle West Media Centre and Knightstone Housing Association.
Project Summaries

In total, the NAP team commissioned 14 projects across the Bristol area in 2015. Below is a brief summary of each one.

**Transforma-bin** by Mufti Games and Baggator Young People’s Centre (Ashley, Easton & Lawrence Hill)

[www.bristol2015.co.uk/aelh](http://www.bristol2015.co.uk/aelh)

After consulting residents and community organisations, Mufti worked with local children to create games themed around fly-tipping, and converted a large communal bin into an interactive playable game station. They toured this Transforma-bin through parks and fly-tipping hotspots in order to challenge people’s behaviour around anti-social waste.

This project was successful in the way it found a new, fun and inventive way to talk to residents about an old problem. The Transforma-bin was accessible and didn’t require the English language to be played. It contained a miniature model of Easton which meant residents could connect the game to their local streets and feel ownership over it. The project as a whole directly engaged approximately 660 children and adults, and the Transforma-bin is now a physical legacy piece that can be used as an education tool by schools and community groups to continue conversations about waste.

- 12 workshops across three wards
- Playable game station available as lasting legacy for the community

**Who is the real Goram Giant?** by Alan May, Dee Moxon & Ruth Ramsey (Avonmouth & Kingsweston)

[www.bristol2015.co.uk/akw](http://www.bristol2015.co.uk/akw)

Residents created four giant puppets out of natural, found and recycled materials. Each puppet represented the identity of one of the neighbourhood villages and the concept of the project was deeply embedded in local folk story of Goram & Vincent. The giants were paraded at a well-attended community event, and competed for the title of the real Goram Giant. Young and old were involved in both the puppet making and the final show.

When the NAP team conducted their consultation for the area, there was no specific green issue that was put forward by the community. However, there was a real need for a project to involve people and bring the villages together in a positive way. Thus the commissioned artists tried to involve as many people as possible in an area of Bristol where there are comparatively few opportunities for residents to participate in an arts project. They focused their energies on encouraging participants to consider the natural, found and recycled materials they were using to create the giants, as a way of gently cultivating an understanding of sustainable resources.

- 13 arts workshops in each of the four villages
- 316 people were directly involved and participated in the making of the four giants
- Giant puppets have been stored and are available to be used at community events and for fundraising

“We have been overjoyed at the energy, humour and enthusiasm which has gone into the designing and building of the four Giants. Our participants have shown great invention in their designs and their search for appropriate recycled materials with which to build their giant.” – Alan May, Artist

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The Transforma-bin sessions held at Baggator not only ended in the creation of a great community teaching resource but also demonstrated to the young people who took part that today’s ‘throw away’ society is not the only option.” – Baggator Young People’s Centre
The Green Treasure Hunt by Chrissie Decker
(Bishopston, Cotham & Redland)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/bcr

The artist designed a walking, cycling and scooting trail, featuring five strategically placed street installations, each illustrating one of Bristol 2015’s five Green Capital themes. These artworks were designed to enhance the route, create debate about public space and signpost information about local green initiatives and organisations. At each ‘street pocket’, participants found clues for ten other hidden miniature installations dotted along the way. The project encouraged residents to discover new routes and explore community projects both physically and online.

Despite conducting a thorough consultation process to bring lots of local people, businesses and organisations on board, the artists still found that she faced some confrontation when it came to installing the street installations. Some residents were upset that the installations were taking up car parking space, which raised debate about how we view public spaces along road sides and occasionally prioritise the needs of vehicles above pedestrians. Fortunately, Chrissie was successfully able to negotiate with the complainants and the trail went ahead and was enjoyed by approximately 600 participants.

- Worked with 27 local artists and project partners
- Delivered a month long arts trail

“Activating spaces provides a valuable exercise which both benefits furthering our own skills and knowledge, while collaborating with communities to experiment with their space in a thought provoking manner.” UWE MA Architecture Student.

Sharing Communities by Anna Wilson
(Cabot, Clifton & Clifton East)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/ccce

This experiment tried to put people’s recycling and reuse behaviours and needs in the spotlight, with a view to creating social change. Uniquely themed, artist-led, pop up events happened over the three wards, targeting different sections of the neighbourhood, to offer people new ways of sharing and examining the issue. The overall aim of the project was to try and create a new community-led initiative that could be continued for years to come – like a yearly street swap between new students and local residents, for instance.

Unfortunately, while the concept of this project was interesting and the proposal robust, the necessary engagement skills required were not quite strong enough. Not enough time was invested in face to face engagement and so not enough residents participated in the project strands to enable them to take off. However the artist did work with as many as 17 project partners, so it is possible that some of the ideas that were experimented with might be developed by other organisations in future.

- Worked with 17 project partners
- Held seven workshops and events across all wards
- Tested five different ideas for community re-use activity

“I discovered the wildlife pond in St Andrews Park, never been there before and loads of wonderful back roads and cut throughs that I never knew existed.” Participant.

“The whole route just felt like such a positive statement about the environment and Bristol as 2015 Green Capital.” Participant.
**Adventures of Curiosity and Wonder: the Dundry Slopes**

*by Room 13 (Dundry View)*

www.bristol2015.co.uk/dv

Room 13 is an artist’s studio based within the grounds of Hareclive Primary School. For this project, young artists worked with their mentors Shani Ali and Paul Bradley to explore the Dundry Slopes creatively and, through conversations with local people and physical and visual responses to the area, open up different ways of seeing the Slopes to a new generation.

This project focused on engaging young people and connecting them to the extraordinary natural resource that is available to them. While the physical outcome created by the project mentors (a creative map showing three walks on the slopes discovered by the young artists) is not a resource which will be widely used by the community, the experience gained by the young people has had a positive impact on their understanding and relationship with the Dundry Slopes. Room 13 hope to continue this engagement into 2016 for the benefit of more young people.

- Ran 25 sessions with young people
- Directly engaged 385 people from Hareclive Academy and the local community
- Exhibited work at Spike Island, Festival of Nature, Engine Shed, Make Sunday Special and Arnolfini, taking young people’s artwork and the Dundry Slopes to the rest of the city

“Being involved in the Green Capital commission has made me realise that out of school I’m a ‘stay in my bedroom’ kind of person. Through exploring the Dundry Slopes for this project I have discovered I like to take challenges and risks outside. I’m now going to do the Duke of Edinburgh Award.” Young participant

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**The Lost Toy Compendium**

*by Knowle West Media Centre and Ludic Rooms (Filwood, Knowle & Windmill Hill)*

www.bristol2015.co.uk/fkwh

This project took people on a journey of social archaeology to rediscover and repurpose the playable gems hidden in attics, garages and sheds. Using play, story-telling and art, these re-discovered toy artefacts (from rusty bike wheels and old sledges, to dusty console) were remixed and reborn as new participative games that bring everyday streets alive and build connections between people.

This project had a really interesting concept, and while we would have liked the artists’ engagement of local residents to be a little further reaching, the experiences enjoyed by participants was interesting and appropriately themed around the reuse and repurposing of plastics and electronics. KWMC create three, short, highly-shareable videos for social media for a campaign to encourage people to mend or repurpose their old toys instead of throwing them away before Christmas.

- Worked with nine artists
- Directly engaged 397 local residents
- Taught circuit bending skills to young people through a series of workshops
How to use art to inspire change

Published: December 2015

The Ashton Vale Hub by Elise Hurcombe (Greater Bedminster)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/gbed

The AV Hub was a programme of nature-themed, inter-generational community arts activities and events that enabled 800 Ashton Vale residents to be creative and play an active role in changing the social and physical landscape of their community. Street art, a community café and community gardening were just some of the elements that inspired this area to come together during Bristol’s Green Capital year.

This artist was very successful at engaging and giving ownership of the project to local people. Even before being commissioned, Elise consulted residents while she wrote her proposal which gave her a good head start in gaining people’s support. The community café proved to be so popular that residents have taken on the task of running it monthly into 2016 and, perhaps, beyond. The project began a flurry of community activity in an area of Bristol that was previously identified as needing community development.

- 25 workshops with Ashton Vale community
- Increase in community centre bookings and youth centre attendance

“We are a big community and it is lovely to see different people from different age groups coming together and sharing some time to talk.” Local resident.

“It’s been great having a safe environment locally to take the children that we all benefit from and socialising with old and new friends.” Local resident.

St Anne’s Wood Adventure Trail by APE Project (Greater Brislington)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/gbris

This engaged residents of St. Anne’s Wood in a series of arts and play workshops in the woods and local community venues. Stories were told, wishes heard and a whole range of temporary and more permanent physical pieces were made to be discovered in the woods. Pupils and staff of the neighbouring school were also engaged through weekly arts and nature workshops leading up to the outdoor trail, which culminated in a grand finale on 15th November 2015 for the whole community to come together, explore and enjoy.

The St Anne’s Woods in recent years have been neglected and have become a hotspot for vandalism and flytipping. APE Project’s aim was to reconnect local people with their green space and inspire civic pride to encourage people to protect it. They worked directly with over 600 local residents, including some of the area’s most challenging youngsters, and were successful in bringing people into the space who had not set foot in it in years, or indeed ever.

- 30 workshops held in schools and for the local community
- Seven carved benches created with and for the community for the woods as a permanent legacy for the project

“You [APE Project] have done an amazing job. Children that we were worried about because they usually cause problems with anti-social behaviour and vandalism have shown us another side of themselves. Thank you.” MIISH – local community group.

“This is the first time I’ve ever been in the woods and I live next door to them. Now I will come in for walks and to play.” Local resident.
Where Two Roads Meet by Karen Hayes and Barbara Disney (Greater Fishponds)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/gf

These artists used recycling and reuse arts practices to examine Eastville and express what it’s like to live and work there. The project produced a giant community ‘Domesday’ book, and a series of enamel panels created from recycled oven doors, through a programme of creative workshops held for residents over the summer.

While these artists required some support from the NAP team with project management, they were very successful in the way they engaged lots of different parts of the community in a direct and meaningful way. Residents were able to express and share their experiences of Eastville. They celebrated what they liked about their environment, and creatively explored local green themes and issues.

- 14 workshops
- 326 residents and school children directly engaged
- A community book and six public enamel panels to remain as a permanent legacy for the community

Make Some Noise About Litter by PAPER Arts CIC (Henbury, Brentry & Southmead)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/hbs

This project saw artists working alongside local groups to get children thinking about what they throw away and how. As well as taking part in local festivals and events, PAPER Arts ran a summer school at The Ranch in Southmead, demonstrating how to provide a new artistic lease of life with upcycled materials. The artists also ran music workshops in 7 schools across the whole area using litter to make instruments. The music has been recorded and installed into 18 litter bins via movement sensors, rewarding those who use them with wonderful sounds created by local children.

Through working directly with active community members, organisations and BCC workers, and responding to their suggestions and requests, PAPER Arts has managed to work with local people to confront a long standing issue in the community. The artists’ relentless drive and positivity has inspired people to see how creativity can be used to engage people and instigate change.

- Delivered 18 workshops
- Engaged 400 local children and 200 residents

“I want to make the most of everything, no waste. To create something new out of something old, I hate waste so I always want to turn something into something.”

Participant

“I learnt that you can keep using and using litter.”

Young participant.

“It’s such a positive story about the area and such a great illustration of how art and creativity can unlock imaginative social action.” Bristol City Council.
A Bristol Murmuration by Zoë Cameron (Henleaze, Stoke Bishop & Westbury-on-Trym)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/hsbw

One thousand ceramic starlings were created by residents of all ages in Henleaze, Stoke Bishop and Westbury-on-Trym through a series of public workshops held over the summer. These hand-sculpted birds came together in a spectacular installation on Durdham Down in October 2015, breaking down boundaries between people and raising awareness about the decline in the British starling population.

The concept of this project and the opportunity it presented to residents to participate creatively really captured local people’s imaginations. The installation brought the issue of how industrial farming practices and other environmental changes are impacting migrating wildlife to people’s attention, and provided information on what easy steps people could take to help starlings and other birdlife. For a £10,000 commission this project had an astonishingly broad reach and was positively received by thousands of people.

- 1,040 people made ceramic starlings to contribute to the installation
- The artist delivered 21 workshops
- Approximately 11,000 people saw the artwork during its 11-day installation
- The project received extensive media coverage, including features in BBC Autumnwatch, ITV West news, Bristol Time Out, Bristol 24/7, BBC Radio Bristol, Ujima, BCFM, Bristol Post and several local community publications

“Such a wonderful artwork. I absolutely loved it! It’s so lovely to see how each bird has its own character, and also a super way to raise awareness…” Part of comments book

Flagged Up by Deborah Weinreb (Horfield & Lockleaze)

www.bristol2015.co.uk/hl

This project created a visual route between Stoke Park and Horfield Common, designed to motivate people to get out and explore their local green spaces. The images for the banners installed on lamp posts, were produced through an exciting array of creative workshops held in different areas of the neighbourhood. They communicated good environmental messages, including thoughts on how we treat each other and how we promote a sense of community.

The success of this project depended very much on the artist taking the community on a journey, and fortunately Deborah’s engagement strategy was very effective. While it is difficult at this stage to evaluate whether or not the banners have encouraged more people into local green spaces, the banners have been positively received by residents, and express local people’s community and sustainability interpretations and ambitions.

- Delivered 20 arts workshops for all ages in the community
- Directly engaged 360 people
- Banners have planning permission for five years, meaning that continued engagement of the project is approximately 2000 people

“I thought the engagement was really good, the workshops worked especially well. The artist helped boost my confidence by helping me lead a walk.” Participant.

“It was genuine engagement with local communities. The outcome is visible, lasting, positive and gentle.” Participant.
Discover East Bristol by David Bain and associated artists (St George)
www.bristol2015.co.uk/sg

Bristol 2015 worked in partnership with BCC’s neighbourhoods departments to commission a beautiful, accessible and informative map and guide of all the public green spaces in St George and Greater Fishponds. Content, derived through a series of interactive and creative community workshops, has been incorporated into both the physical and online versions of the map, which is now available for residents to enjoy for many years to come.

Based on advice from local people and parks groups the artist worked tirelessly to create an invaluable resource for both these neighbourhoods and also wider Bristol. In January 2016, Bristol 24/7 have committed to do a magazine feature on the map to raise its profile, and the local neighbourhood partnerships aim to re-launch the map in the spring to encourage people out in warmer weather. We hope that this will be a lasting legacy for the area and connect local people to nature and their environment.

- Worked with 8 different artists & directly engaged 468 people
- Printed 10,000 physical maps identifying public green spaces in St George and Greater Fishponds to be used by local residents and wider Bristol
- Created online interactive map with downloadable activity sheets

“The concept of the project has proven to be so much wanted by people who are learning to cope with a new scenario in their life…it works; Jo and Ivor get people talking.” Participant’s husband.

The Ivor Project by Once Arts & Ceremonies (Stockwood, Hengrove & Whitchurch)
www.bristol2015.co.uk/shw

This project saw Ivor, a friendly and warm elderly gentleman puppet, and Jo, a young woman in her 30s, get to know Stockwood. After attending a whole range of local groups and gatherings, from Tai Chi sessions to singing classes, Once, the commissioned artists, devised a series of performance tea parties, inviting residents of Stockwood from different generations and sections of the community to come together and get to know each other. People chose from a variety of questions, or ‘starters’, available on the tables to trigger conversations. A series of tea cups were made for each of the participants, decorated with one of these questions, as a lasting reminder of what the project was about.

During the NAP team’s consultation phase, no clear green themes or issues emerged to form the basis of the area’s creative brief. What was clear was that there was a lack of communication in the area and many local people weren’t aware of what community opportunities were available to them. Once were successful in building strong relationships with local people and connecting different groups together. We believe that connecting the community together like this will provided essential building blocks for future projects and development.

- Delivered 19 workshops to community groups in Stockwood
- Directly engaged 330 people
- Delivered three well attended performance tea parties bringing people together in a hard-to-reach area

“This story, this meeting, this basic human interaction, that I wish more people would do…is now helping other people to react and be human.” John Darvell, Radio Bristol
What did the team learn from the programme?

The Neighbourhood Arts Project team share what they learned during 2015, offered here as helpful advice to others planning to do something similar.

It’s a race against time

As with any community consultation process, building enough time in to make it genuinely engaging is key to its success. The NAP Team had a three-month lead-in time building up to 2015, but to get into 14 neighbourhoods and connect with a good cross-section of residents was a real challenge. The way we got round this was to stagger the projects over the year, but if we had our time again we’d have begun the consultation process much earlier.

Reach out beyond the usual suspects

Using the existing Bristol City Council neighbourhood structure was a great way to get straight to the heart of Bristol’s communities. The challenge it gave us was that we were only talking to those who typically engaged in community activity. In order to create projects that were representative of the wider community we needed to employ a range of other strategies alongside.

Social media and online campaigns played a big part in getting the word out but many areas of Bristol were not active online. Lots of face-to-face meetings with community leaders and groups, and leaving information in community buildings was also built into the consultation phase – as well as having some great cake at our community consultation events!

Put residents in charge

Creating an artistic brief and having communities select artists for their area had its challenges – particularly as most weren’t experienced in the commissioning process. As Project Managers it was our role to mediate between artists and communities and at times demystify ‘arts language’ which some local advisers found obstructive. Getting local advisers to meet artists at a ‘brainstorming’ session really helped open up local people’s eyes to artistic possibilities and, equally, helped the artists understand local issues and community constraints.

What we might have commissioned as Arts Managers was not the same as what the residents themselves decided on, but what was very clear was that ‘parachuting in’ an artist would have been much less effective than allowing the residents to hand pick who they wanted to work with, and on what.

What was the experience like for artists?

While we feel that the decision to make NAP a community led, as opposed to artist led, process was the right one to engage as many different people across Bristol as possible, it did mean that some creative briefs may have been a little too restrictive for artists to develop ideas that challenged conventions and pushed artistic boundaries. Local advisers were sometimes prohibitively concerned about physical legacy outcomes and reluctant to allow artists room to imagine original ideas, or develop outcomes as the project evolved.

As well as this, the emphasised requirement in the briefs for artists to engage residents and create opportunities for participation, may have been off-putting to some of Bristol’s artistic talent who either felt intimidated by, or were un-practiced at engaging lots of people in their arts practice. Community engagement is challenging, and not all creative practitioners have the necessary skills to involve people.

This said, the vast majority of artists commissioned through NAP were exceptional at engaging people in their projects. The combined total of residents directly engaged by the programme by artists and the NAP team came to just short of 10,000, with approximately 50,000 engaging with the programme as audience members or through encountering physical pieces. Furthermore, the overwhelmingly positive feedback we have had from artists demonstrates how rewarding a creative engagement process such as this can be for arts practitioners and participants alike.

‘My experience working on A Bristol Murmuration this year has been an incredible opportunity to really work on a larger scale. It has completely reaffirmed my belief in the power art has to affect people for the good and to simply express a depth of meaning. I’ve been incredibly moved by how much this project has engaged people and really took on a life of its own.’

Zoë Cameron, artist
How was the programme evaluated?

Each artist commissioned to deliver a NAP project was required to capture data and complete a case study of their work by December 2015. Documentation and publicity materials were also gathered by the NAP team; some of this information has been presented through Storify.

Independent film makers (Biggerhouse Film and Ideal Eye) were commissioned to create a series of miniature documentaries about each project and the programme as a whole. The intention of this was to capture the story from beginning to end; to share what was learned as well as capturing the enjoyment, sticking points and successes of the programme through the voices of all the people directly involved.

These evaluation materials were handed over to Bristol City Council’s community development, neighbourhoods, and arts development departments at the end of the year, so that the learning gained from this programme could be passed on.

Want more information?
To read more about this project visit www.bristol2015.co.uk/nap or Facebook www.facebook.com/b2015nap
CASE STUDIES: Supported by Bristol City Council

Bristol is one of the leading cities in the UK for public art commissioning and for its programme of projects with artists of local, national and international significance (www.aprb.co.uk).

Its programme focuses on the development of visionary public art works across the city, outside of the conventional gallery and museum setting. To date over 100 commissions have been produced within a diverse range of contexts. Below, we summarise a number of projects related to sustainability that the local authority has helped to co-create or fund.

Future Perfect Orchard – David Thorpe

Artist David Thorpe has been commissioned to support an ambitious public art programme for Hengrove. Working with local residents, he will create a community orchard made from large growing fruit and nut trees planted according to the floor plan of a cathedral, which will provide food in abundance as well as a grand meeting place for the community. The project will include long term involvement from the City of Bristol College Horticulture Department at South Bristol Skills Academy, allowing students to develop skills and receive training in growing, fertilisation, cross-pollination and tree shaping, within a unique yet local environment. Local people, including primary and secondary school children, will be involved in the initial stages of planting and growing, but also later on in the harvesting. There will also be a wide-ranging events and training programme open to residents of all ages to get involved with the orchard. [http://www.futureperfectbristol.org/](http://www.futureperfectbristol.org/)

Seeds of Change – Maria Thereza Alves

Alves turned a disused grain barge into a garden, populated with a variety of non-native plants, grown from seeds found in its ballast. These ballast seeds can lie dormant for hundreds of years and are a living link to the city’s trade and maritime past.

Feeder Canal Sand Martin Colony - Tue Greenfort

Greenfort worked with a specialist fabricator to create a roost - a nesting and breeding structure - for Sand Martins. This protected, migrating bird has made small incursions into the outer areas of Bristol to roost in areas that are not its natural habitat. His work often deals with ideas of ecology, and often directly tackles our relationship with the natural world and how we use its resources. As a counterpoint, he created a ‘roost for people’ on the other side of the canal.
The Bristol 2015 Arts Programme has been created to give everyone living in or visiting the city this year a chance to pause and reflect on the topic of sustainability. Below, we share a brief summary of the various projects that the Arts Council grant has enabled, in order to provide a sense of the scale and range of the programme.

**Fog Bridge - Fujiko Nakaya**

In February 2015, In Between Time invited a conjurer of unusual weather, artist Fujiko Nakaya, to Bristol. Over 40 years, Nakaya has used fog as a sculptural medium. Collaborating with the elements, Nakaya’s clouds are created by water pumped at high pressure through many micro-fine nozzles.

Nakaya’s long career has seen partnerships with a host of renowned artists and architects including Robert Rauschenberg, Trisha Brown, Bill Viola and Diller Scofidio + Renfro. For ten days, Pero’s Bridge in Bristol Harbourside disappeared behind a changing veil of fog, inviting visitors to pause for a moment and consider the changing climate and how it might disrupt our lives.

[nakaya image]

www.inbetweentime.co.uk

**Withdrawn - Luke Jerram**

In the depths of Leigh Woods, visitors discover a flotilla of fishing boats resting in a tranquil glade. Sat in the ancient broadleaf woodland with the breath-taking backdrop of the Avon Gorge and Brunel’s world famous Clifton Suspension Bridge, the quiet discord of the scene immediately prompts questions: how did the boats arrive here and what previous adventures had they been on? What environmental changes could lead to this scenario?

Withdrawn is a new artwork by Luke Jerram which asks us to reflect upon the impact humanity is having on our seas and how our oceans and climate are changing. Whether it is through commercial exploitation by overfishing, or climate change and pollution, the future of this complex environment is uncertain and there are many challenges ahead.

The installation is open daily and, over the summer of 2015, the boats will provide a backdrop for a programme of events including music, theatre, storytelling and film.

**The Bristol Whales**

In July 2015, a temporary art installation on Bristol’s Harbourside will represent the beauty of ocean life and the growing human threats to it. The life-size sculpture will show two whales swimming together – the emerging tail of one, and the head and blowhole of the other. The sculptures have been designed and built by Bristol-based Cod Steaks, and initiated by Artists Project Earth and Bristol 2015.

The whales will be created from locally-harvested willow - a natural, fully sustainable and biodegradable material. The whales will be depicted in a sea of plastic bottles, representing the detrimental effect of plastics in the oceans. Young people across the city will be invited to take part in workshops, where they will try their hand at willow sculpture, and prepare green messages to go into the bottles. Other messages will come from politicians, musicians, writers, actors and conservationists from around the world. The bottles will be recycled after the sculpture is dismantled.

**Time and Space - Richard Long**
The Downs, Avon Gorge and the countryside surrounding Bristol are particularly significant to Long. The roots of his work with the landscape can be seen in his childhood connection to these places, which have remained a personal and enduring reference point for him.

As well as an exhibition of his work at the Arnolfini gallery, Long will create a footpath across the Downs. Using white limestone, he will pick out the ‘desire line’ made over many months by the footprints of people walking across the Downs, instinctively following the same route and establishing an unplanned path through the grass. [www.arnolfini.org.uk](http://www.arnolfini.org.uk)

**Theaster Gates**

Theaster Gates is one of the foremost American artists of his generation renowned for his acts of transformation, such as the re-activation and redemption of abandoned spaces and the redeployment of disused objects and materials.

His project for Bristol will be revealed in the autumn and is expected to transform, repurpose and hear this city through the temporary occupation of a very special space. [www.situations.org.uk](http://www.situations.org.uk)

**Arcadia Spectacular**

Fusing, environmentally-conscious themes, ground-breaking performance and cutting-edge technology, Arcadia – a core part of Bristol’s creative community – has dazzled audiences from Glastonbury to Bangkok with their unique shows. Having built their award-winning giant spider entirely from recycled materials, and following an ethos of reshaping military and industrial machinery into celebratory spaces, they will be setting Bristol alight with a new event in September 2015.

The event will bring awe-inspiring art, music, theatre, and uplifting spectacle to the heart of the city while a new performance show explores themes of change and sustainability through extraordinary drama and breath-taking visual effects. The show will use new green technologies with the conversion of the Arcadia Spider’s signature flames to biodiesel. [www.arcadiaspectacular.com](http://www.arcadiaspectacular.com)

**The Energy Tree – John Packer**

The Energy Tree is a ground-breaking exhibit, designed to engage the public in energy issues. Designed by John Packer, delivered by Bristol-based Demand Energy Equality, and hosted by At-Bristol Science Centre, it is a community-led public art installation and renewable power source that also provides a number of interactive functions for the public – including phone charging and WiFi. The 15ft-high metal sculpture uses bio-mimicry to imitate a natural tree form. Its leaves are composed of solar photovoltaic panels fabricated by participants from the Bristol Drugs Project during workshops delivered by Demand Energy Equality.
Sustrans is a national charity, headquartered in Bristol, which enables people to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys. It has led numerous art projects in the local area that have improved public spaces, united communities and inspired people to walk and cycle.

The Dings ‘Home Zone’

Home Zones are based on the Dutch concept of ‘woonerf’ (living yard), where a group of streets are designed to meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists rather than solely drivers. They usually involve introducing a level of uncertainty for car users to encourage them to reduce their speed. Typical features include removing any distinction between the road and pavement, and using paving materials and street furniture to make the whole street feel like a pedestrian area.

The seven streets that made up the Dings in central Bristol had become a residential island surrounded by little activity. In addition, its proximity to Temple Meads train station had led to it being used as a free car park by some commuters.

This motivated residents and the council to look for an innovative solution. Sustrans was commissioned to work with local residents and the council to reimagine the space and create a more people-centred environment. Sustrans provided public art expertise, urban design skills and experience of community engagement.

Artists joined a team of local residents to redesign their streets, integrating unique and creative elements into the new street masterplan, and fostering community pride in the neighbourhood.

Distinctive new gateways were added, signalling to drivers that they are entering a Home Zone. Stories from oral history and creative writing projects place the ‘old community’ into the fabric of the new streetscape.

For more information, visit: http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/national-cycle-network/art/art-and-people/dings

Bristol to Bath Railway Path Art Trail

The Bristol to Bath Railway Path provides a tranquil walking and cycling path between the two cities along the length of a disused railway line. It was Sustrans’ flagship walking and cycling path completed in the mid-1980s and largely constructed through a youth employment scheme and many volunteers.

In 1990, artists were first commissioned to add colour and interest, elevating it from a route to a destination in itself. Sculptures now mark the sites of former stations, many of which were no longer visible, and a series of unusual water fountains, way-markers and gateways have made it a popular route for cyclists and walkers.

Fish on its Nose by Doug Cocker marks Fishponds Station. It was inspired by the ponds which supplied fish for the tables of Bristol noblemen, which gave the area its name. A local supermarket provided forty items selected by local school children to be concreted in the belly of the fish as a time capsule.

For more information visit: http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/themed-routes/bristol-bath-art-trail
BRISTOL 2015

European Green Capital is a prestigious annual award designed to promote and reward the efforts of cities to improve the environment. Bristol is the first ever UK city to win the award.

European Green Capital is run by The European Commission, recognising that Europe’s urban societies face many environmental challenges – and that sustainable, low-carbon living is vital to the future of our cities and our people.

The award was first won by Stockholm in 2010. Since then, Hamburg, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Nantes and Copenhagen have carried the torch. Bristol will hand over to Ljubljana at the end of the year.

THE BRISTOL METHOD

The Bristol Method is a knowledge-transfer programme aimed at helping people in other cities understand and apply the lessons that Bristol has learned in becoming a more sustainable city, not just in 2015 but in the last decade.

Each module of the Bristol Method is presented as an easy-to-digest ‘how to’ guide on a particular topic, which use Bristol’s experiences as a case study. The modules contain generic advice and recommendations that each reader can tailor to their own circumstances.

The Bristol Method modules are published on the Bristol 2015 website at www.bristol2015.co.uk/method

THE BRISTOL FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

Some of the text in this module was first used in a brochure created by the Bristol Festival of Ideas to celebrate the Bristol 2015 Arts Programme. The Bristol Festival of Ideas aims to stimulate people’s minds and passions with an inspiring programme of discussion and debate throughout the year. Learn more at http://www.ideasfestival.co.uk

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