



Tongham Sculptural Benches Commission

Background

Surrey County Council's Placemaking Team are transforming a small area in Tongham into a community pocket park. This roadside space will have new pathways, native planting and improve the local journeys between a residential area and Tongham village. As part of this scheme, Surrey Hills Arts would like to commission an artist to create three sculptural benches that attract and provide a shelter for a suitable species. The bench must also bear some reference to the local history.

Aims

Through the *Sculptural Bench commission*, we aim to:

- Contribute to a welcoming place to dwell
- Create a link between the residential area and the village
- Provide a quality piece of art using sustainable materials
- Support the biodiversity of the location
- Improve access to the site for all, including visitors with disabilities
- Engage local residents through associated activities

The Brief

- To produce three sculptural benches that demonstrate high quality, consider the local environment in the materials used, and are designed specifically for local wildlife. As in our previous HABITAT projects, this would require research into a chosen species and to build a habitable element into the design. This could be a focus on local butterflies, bees, beetles or birds. We are not looking for these to be depicted on the work at all, but to provide a perch, shelter to support them. See previous HABITAT art works <https://www.surreyhillsarts.org/habitat/>
- To incorporate a local WWII story about men who prevented a disaster with a munitions train during a bombing and were awarded the George Medal. Some reference to this should be incorporated into at least one bench to honour them and highlight this piece of Tongham's history. Artist/ craftsperson will be provided with some information on this and put in touch with Parish Council and local historians who can share further information.
- To include a QR code on all or one of the benches from which visitors can listen to facts about the wildlife, the history and include community members voices to create an interactive element.

Budget

£20 – 26,000 dependent on the design and materials.

The sculptural benches should be:

- Relevant to the cultural and environmental context of the area
- Constructed in natural, locally sourced or recycled materials where possible. (we can make introductions to the local saw mill)
- Durable and requiring minimal maintenance
- Safe and not constitute a hazard to public or the environment
- Environmentally sustainable
- Approximately 1965mm x 500mm in size
- Ergonomic seat height, depth, and armrest(s)
- Ready to be installed by March 31st 2026. Assistance can be provided with installation.

The Role of the Artist/Craftsperson

The artist will be responsible for the concept, design and fabrication of the sculptural benches in consultation with Surrey Hills Arts, the SCC Placemaking Team and Parish Council. The artist will work within the budget and deliver an agreed amount of community workshops.

The Surrey Hills Arts Programme Manager will oversee the project delivery and support the appointed artist. The artist will provide drawings and specifications and plan the installation. On completion of the project, the artist will be required to provide a maintenance plan to the commissioner to preserve the life of the finished sculptural benches.

Please note that any costs for travel and accommodation incurred by the artist are included in the overall commissioning fee.

Application and Selection

To apply, artists/craftspeople must send the following on **one pdf document**:

1. Current CV with two references and website link
2. Up to six images of relevant work
3. Expression of interest including initial ideas, ways of working, a draft budget breakdown and availability to deliver within the project timelines.

Applications will not be accepted unless in one pdf document. Ensure it is no larger than 8mb.

A panel consisting of representatives from Surrey Hills Arts, Surrey County Council Placemaking Team and the Parish Council will select the artist. The panel are looking for a high level of craftsmanship, originality of ideas, sympathy with the environment and a willingness to engage with local people.

Surrey Hills Arts and Surrey County Council are committed to ensuring equality. We consider diversity a strength and are keen to make the artists we work with more representative of different backgrounds and experiences. We encourage applications from people who identify as Black, Asian or minority ethnic, young, disabled, LGBTQI+, working class, or living or working in areas of socioeconomic deprivation in our region.

Deadline for submissions: **15th October 2025.**

Interviews: **28th or 29th October 2025.**

Submissions can be emailed to surreyhillsarts@surreycc.gov.uk

For further information, email ali.clarke@surreycc.gov.uk

www.surreyhillsarts.org