

Creative Cardiff 'Greening Cathays' Artist / Producer Commission Opportunities

Salary / Award:

Variable £1.5K - £6K (depending on commission)

Location:

Cardiff City Centre (Cathays Ward)

Closing Date:

Monday 25 November (TBC, pending translation)

Overview:

Creative Cardiff are currently working in partnership with Cardiff University's School of Pharmacy's 'Pharmabees' project on 'Greening Cathays'.

This exciting initiative, funded with support from Cardiff City Council through the Shared Prosperity Fund, aims to bring together communities by creating nature-rich urban environment which will support biodiversity, re-energize public spaces through creativity and allow diverse residents to connect with the natural world, and with each other.

'Greening Cathays' will achieve this through working with the local community to deliver a number of activities. This includes:

- An engagement project working with local school children to raise awareness of biodiversity and nature.
- The design and development of a 'bee trail', with activation at key sites within the Cathays ward and Cardiff city centre.
- Creation of a wellbeing and pollinator garden in the grounds of Cardiff Muslim Primary School on Maindy Road.
- Revitalising three existing timber-built planters on Fanny Street, and installing two new planters on Crwys Road.
- A placemaking project at Cathays Train Station to create a green, open-air 'waiting room'.
- A pop-up, mobile exhibition (initially at Cardiff University's Centre for Student Life) showcasing a range of related project assets and outputs.
- Working with community groups, including Keep Cathays Tidy.
- A range of under-pinning community engagement activities focussed on promoting wellbeing, social cohesion and providing opportunities for local residents to connect with nature and each other.

Commission opportunities:

The project team are now seeking to work with local artists, creative practitioners and producers to help realise these outputs. As such, the following seven commissioning opportunities are now live and seeking submissions.

This document relates to this commission:

Commission 3 – Wellbeing and pollinator garden at Maindy Road

Cardiff Muslim Primary School was founded in 1999, located in a small urban space between Merthyr Street and Maindy Road. In 2024, it changed its name to ILM to reflect a growing reputation for excellence.

This commission will lead the concept creation and implementation of a small pollinator and wellbeing garden on the north-east side of the school, facing Merthyr Street.

This commission will:

- Have an overall creative theme appropriate for the target audience and context.
- Make use of, and incorporate, pre-existing nature-themed and bee-themed artwork made by pupils from local schools, and which has been digitally scanned. These will be provided to the artist by the project team.
- Incorporate plantlife and pollination sites for insects.
- Provide information that supports wider, age-appropriate education objectives for the target audience relating to local nature and plantlife.
- Incorporate security panelling installed at the public-facing playground fencing on Merthyr Street.

Output – Design and installation of a small pollinator garden at ILM School, incorporating artwork and designs from school children.

Maximum commission value – £4K

Site images:



The images below show two /mber-framed planters on the site that were installed as part of a previous project



All other artist and creative practitioner commissions:

Commission 1 – Placemaking project on university-owned land at Cathays Train Station

Cathays Train Station sits at the heart of the Cathays Ward, next to Cardiff University Students' Union and across the road from many Cardiff University building, as well as a short walk from the Welsh Government and other civic buildings in Cathays. As a key site for local travel – with connection to both the Rhondda Valleys and Merthyr Tydfil train lines, it is Wales's seventh most-used train station. The footpath over the railway bridge is also widely used as a shortcut between Park Place and Senghenydd Road. This makes it a key site within the ward, connecting residents, workers and students.

Cathays station itself is comprised of two narrow platforms, each with a small shelter and information screen displaying train arrivals times. However, surrounded by high-rise civic and university buildings, flanked by alleyways and with tall security fencing on either side, the site is aesthetically unappealing with limited greenery or public realm enhancements. The station also has limited 'waiting room' space.

This commission seeks to create an alternative 'open air' green waiting room next to the northern side of the station (platform 1, trains towards Cardiff Central Station).

Focussed on university-owned land to the immediate north of the ticket office, adjacent to the university's ABACWS building, this commission will:

- Engage with the local community and Cardiff University (especially teams based in ABACWS) to feed into design.
- Develop and plan a creative concept for an 'open air' green waiting room with a nature theme – this could be e.g. a mural, an installation, or a digital / projection concept etc.
- Implement that concept in the space (which is limited) as far as possible within budget.
- Positively enhance the public realm of the station.
- Incorporate existing university-installed planters, supporting increased biodiversity and well-being.

Please note that the maximum dimensions for the space are: c.3.4m (w) x c.32m (l)

Output: Design and implementation of a nature themed 'open air waiting room' at the northern boundary of Cathays Train Station.

Maximum commission value – £6K

Site images:



Commission 2 – Cathays and Cardiff City Centre ‘Bee Trail’

The ‘Greening Cathays’ project also includes the creation of an educational urban ‘bee trail’. This is intended to support biodiversity and increase availability of bee habitats by incorporating plantlife. It will also be an educational resource, informing people about bee life and the natural world, as well as promoting exercise and have a positive placemaking impact.

The trail will begin on the Corner of Whitchurch Road and Cathays Terrace, and initially end at the National Museum ‘meadow’ space. The trail will pass through other key sites including Cathays Train Station, Cardiff University and St David’s Shopping Centre.

The full list of trail ‘stops’ on the proposed trail is as follows:

1. Corner of Whitchurch Road and Cathays Terrace
2. Corner of Maindy Road and Llantrisant Street, in front of Cardiff University’s Sbarc | Spark building.
3. Fanny Street, adjacent to existing project planters (see Commission 4 – ‘Timber planter project’)
4. Llanbleddian Gardens, opposite Sherman Theatre.
5. Cathays Railway Station
6. National Museum of Wales Meadow
7. Possible future extension to proposed new city square being built by Landsec at the site of the old Debenhams department store (St Davids Shopping Centre / Barrack Lane)

The bee trail will make use of existing artwork and assets designed by local school children who have participated in the Pharmabees project. This has been digitised, and will be shared will be commissioned practitioner.

This commission will:

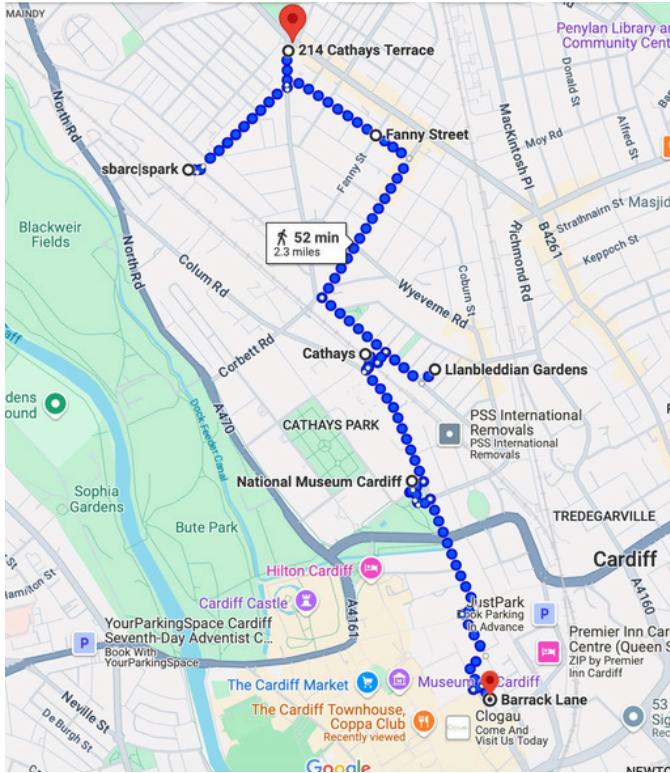
- Develop a unifying, nature-themed creative concept for the trail, which should incorporate flora and fauna.
- Make use of, and incorporate, pre-existing nature-themed and bee-themed artwork made by pupils from local schools, and which has been digitally scanned. These will be provided to the artist by the project team.
- Design the signs and wayfinding elements for the proposed 7 trail ‘stops’.
- Incorporate educational messaging related to plantlife, biodiversity and the natural environment.
- Propose ways in which the trail can make use of technologies and digital platforms to enhance and extend its presence (e.g. through QR codes, gamification elements etc).
- Define and articulate the overall budget and costings for implementation of the trail, informing future funding efforts.

Output: Creation of unifying creative concept, design and plans relating to the ‘Bee Trail’.

Please note that this commission relates to the plans, briefs and overall creative concept for the proposed ‘Greening Cathays Bee Trail’. It is not considered to be feasible at the current stage to physically build and implement the trail itself, although further funding is currently being sought to this end.

Maximum commission value – £3K

Map of proposed trail sites:



Commission 4 – Timber planter project

During 2020, in partnership with the Pharmabees project, Cardiff Council created three timber framed planters along the length of Fanny Street in Cathays. These were seeded with a variety of plantlife and pollinator-friendly seed mix. The plantlife was specifically selected to create patches of rewilded ‘greenery’ in an otherwise urban environment, safeguard biodiversity and to provide food and respite for insects, birds and other wildlife.F

Further planters also exist behind the old Co-Op building on Crwys Road which are currently awaiting re-building.

Since 2020, the planters have been cared for by community volunteers who support with tidying-up the planters and monitoring the health and growth of the plants. However, over time the planters have weathered, leaving the project looking slightly unloved and worse-for-wear.

The commission will help to re-energise the planter project, and reinstate the planters as a local focal point and site of public art, engagement and wellness.

This commission will:

- Develop a unified creative art concept to link the planters.
- Reflect the local community and the nature and biodiversity themes of the Pharmabees project.
- Implement that concept across the three planters currently in-situ at Fanny Street.
- Articulate future plans for the planters awaiting re-building at Crwys Road (which will be actioned as soon as the new planters are installed).

Output: Design of nature-themed creative concept for timber framed planters. Implementation of that concept across 3 x existing planters. Creation of detail designs and plans for a further planters (pending funds to re-build).

Maximum commission value – £4K

Site images:



The images below re of the planters currently awaiting re-building.



Commission 5 – Keep Cathays Tidy rubbish and recycling project

Through a partnership with Keep Cathays Tidy, the ‘Greening Cathays’ project has supported extensive urban cleansing of the Cathays area through a variety of litter-picking exercises working alongside volunteers.

There is now an opportunity to use some of the collected litter, materials and discarded items that have been picked from the surrounding area to create a new piece of nature-themed artwork.

This commission would be best suited to an artist or creative practitioner with experience of using discarded and recycled materials and upcycling.

This commission will:

- Create a large-scale bee-themed artwork using discarded materials and rubbish retained from the Keep Cathays Tidy cleansing exercises.
- Create a piece of art / multiple pieces of art that can be exhibited as part of the Pharmabees pop-up exhibition (see also commission 7 – Pharmabees pop-up exhibition).
- Reflect the themes of the ‘Greening Cathays’ project – nature, plantlife, urban wellbeing, connection and community – in the work.
- Engage with local school children in efforts to collect raw materials for the finished piece through litter-picking, if feasible.
- The project team are especially interested in commissioning work representing bee-heads that can be aligned with a forthcoming strand of work focussed on an experiential representation of bee-vision.

Output: A large-scale bee-themed artwork, or series of artworks, made from recycled and recovered materials.

Maximum commission value – £2.5K

Commission 6 – Placemaking project at Roy Jenkins University Hall

As part of an effort to provide food and friendly environments for urban pollinators the project team recently seeded a 50m² area of grass with a pollinator friendly wildflower seed mix to create a wild flower meadow. This will bloom in the summer of 2025.

To augment this work, the team are now seeking to develop spaces which support the growth of vegetables. This ambition is particularly challenging given the urban location of the work.

An available space has been identified at Roy Jenkins University Hall on Crwys Road. However, there is a lack of available green spaces at the location which needs to be addressed before the work can commence. So we are keen to explore innovative options such as raised planters and green walls to create plant friendly environments which fit around the car park.

This commission will:

- Develop and plan a creative concept for growing vegetables in a small, urban space.
- Explore innovative options for embedding green spaces in urban environments, e.g. raised planters and green walls, to create plant-friendly environments that can fit around the existing infrastructure. Consult and engage with the local community in
- the design and implementation process, including the resident university community in the Roy Jenkins Hall. Implement that concept in the space (which is limited) as far
- as possible within budget.

Output: Creation of a greened space with a positive placemaking impact that is suitable for growing vegetables and plantlife.

Maximum commission value – £2.5K

Site images:



Commission 7 – Pharmabees pop-up exhibition (creative production commission)

A key output for the project is mobile pop-up exhibition which will utilise a range of project assets and elements under a unifying creative concept centred on nature, education and fun. This should ‘tell the story’ of the Pharmabees project in an accessible and engaging way.

The exhibition will launch at the foyer of Cardiff University’s Centre for Student Life in Spring 2025, before moving to a vacant retail space in St. David’s Shopping Centre with a view to engaging a wider audience. Therefore, it will need to adapt to differing spaces and environments.

This commission will:

- Provide creative production services for the pop-up exhibition, managing a range of contributors and stakeholders.
- Develop and implement an overall creative concept and unifying theme for the exhibition that will appeal to a diverse target audience of students, schoolchildren and community stakeholders.
- Incorporate a suite of existing assets developed throughout the work of the Pharmabees project.

The exhibition will make use of assets including:

- A hologram of different bee species.
- Two different virtual reality experiences delivered using headsets which allows the user to fly like a bee across Cardiff, go inside a beehive, and visit a Minecraft beeworld.
- iPads which provide access to the ‘Spotabee’ interactive citizen science project.
- A video which showing bees visiting lavender plants and the highlighting sounds the plants make in response to flowers.
- A display of the colour spectrum visible to bees which bees can see.
- Poster boards displaying nature-themed artwork created by local school children.
- Video monitors showing the movies which local school children have created in partnership with the Sherman Theatre.
- Giant size pollen and ‘seed bomb-making’ activities.
- Creative outputs and images from across the other commission activities.

It is expected that this opportunity will include work across the period November 2024 – March 2025.

Maximum commission value – £3K

Site images:



Other information

Format:

This is an open and multi-disciplinary commissioning opportunity.

The creative medium for commissioned artists could include: visual arts, sculpture, music, video, poetry, dance, spoken and written word, textiles, installation or other creative practices. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

Application Process

Applicants are asked to send us a short response, addressing the following questions:

1. Tell us about your creative practice (200 words)
2. Tell us about your previous creative work (e.g. past commissions etc) with examples (300 words maximum).
2. Tell us about your idea for this commission, and how it relates to the aims and objectives of the 'Greening Cathays' project, and 'Pharmabees' (500 words maximum).
3. Explain in which format you would intend to present the work, and why?
4. Give an indication of total budget (up to maximum value of the commission, and inclusive of materials).
4. Please provide 2 references who we can contact to ask them about you and your work.

Applicants are welcome to submit proposals for more than one commission. However, all proposals should clearly indicate which numbered commission they are responding too.

Applications can be in written format, or short video.

Submissions might also include an illustration, a digital design, an artwork, or photography-based practice. However, these are examples, and this list is not exhaustive.

Maximum commission values include all associated costs, including material costs which should be factored into your delivery budget.

Scoring and assessment:

Applications will be considered by a panel comprising industry, organisational and community stakeholders, and a final decision made in relation to each commission opportunity.

Other considerations:

Where relevant, respondents should possess the required personal public liability insurance policies, relative to the risks of the proposed work.

Proposals must also be fully risk assessed prior to delivery, both for public and personal safety, and including compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

Application Deadline:

Please send your applications to creativecardiff@cardiff.ac.uk with the subject line 'Greening Cathays Artist Commission' by [xx] in case of any questions.

Please also include the commission number that you are responding to in the subject line of your email.

If you are responding to more than one commission opportunity, these should be submitted via separate emails (one per proposals).

Timeline

The 'Greening Cathays' project runs until end of March 2025. All project outputs and deliverables need to be finalised by this deadline.

Activity	Deadline
Deadline for submissions	5 January 2025
Assessment and selection period	week c/ 13 January
Successful artists notified	week c/ 20 January
Artwork completed by	February 2025
Artwork dissemination	March 2025

Background

About Pharmabees:

The University's award winning Pharmabees project works to create a bee friendly city, supports the education of children of all ages and contributes to the fight against antibiotic resistant superbugs.

The project can trace its roots back to Dr Jenny Hawkins, a former student of the School of Pharmacy who in 2015 completed a PhD entitled 'Apothecary Bees: Using the bee as a tool for drug discovery.' Jenny discovered a 'super honey' from Tywyn in North Wales which killed hospital super-bugs and determined that this activity was due in part to specific plants which the bees visited during foraging. To recreate this super honey, the School installed bee hives on the roof of the Redwood building and surrounded the building with the Tywyn plants to provide germ killing food to the bees

Like bees swarming, this idea spread across the university campus resulting in the installation of hives on four university buildings to date. To support these extra bees, the team have planted over 1,000m² of pollinator friendly, carbon-sequestering plants. The Pharmabees project is part of the University's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. In recognition of these efforts, the University was also awarded bee friendly status by the Welsh Assembly Government and in 2017 received a number of national awards which included sustainability awards from the Guardian and Sustain Wales.

To find out more about the work visit [the Pharmabees project website](#).

About the Centre for the Creative Economy:

Cardiff University's Centre for the Creative Economy creates a space for much needed research and engagement projects focused on the creative industries in Wales. Within the Centre, three specific programmes of work are being delivered, Creative Cardiff (established in 2015), Clwstwr (2018-2023) and Media Cymru (2022 – 2026).

About Creative Cardiff:

Established in 2015 with support from founding partners at Cardiff City Council, BBC Cymru Wales and Wales Millennium Centre, Creative Cardiff aims to deliver a vision of Cardiff as a connected, collaborative and inclusive capital of creativity. It does this by:

- Bringing together people from across the Cardiff Capital Region's creative economy to share ideas, information, resources and expertise.
- Promoting creative jobs and opportunities, encouraging new ways of working through partnership and collaboration.
- Fostering a culture of innovation, openness and ambition.
- Strengthening Cardiff's creative sector and creative city identity, and the perception and recognition of Cardiff as a 'creative capital' across Wales, the UK and internationally.
- Embedding the role of the city's creative sector in supporting the economic and social wellbeing of the Cardiff Capital Region.

The network is open to anyone who works, or wants to work, in the creative industries within the Cardiff Capital Region.