

Bridgnorth Art Trail Project Closure Briefing Note, November 2022

1. The Art Trail was originally approved for a 4 year period from July 2018 – 2022 by Town Council and Shropshire Council.
2. The 13th statue was a later addition in Castle Grounds in 2020.
3. Due to Covid restrictions, a year's extension was granted by both Town and Shropshire Council until Autumn 2023.
4. The Art Trail Working Group has established construction removal requirements for the 13 statues : of which 8 are on Town Council or private land; 5 on Shropshire Highways.
5. The Art Trail working group has a budget allocation to cover the costs of statue removal, originally paid by the sponsors. The Art Trail project has not cost the Council / tax payers any money. All costs and time was provided by volunteers, artists and local sponsors.
6. The Art Trail has been very successful, attracting over 15,000 visitors to the town and providing a healthy walk featuring local artists and history whilst drawing tourists to different parts of the town's beauty spots.
7. There is much interest and support in retaining some of the statues, with most sponsors requesting the opportunity for the statues to remain if possible; however, the working group recognise it would not be appropriate to retain the trail in situ.
8. Instead, at the request of 3 key community sponsors, the working group would like to seek permission from the Town Council to consider retaining 3 statues in strategic locations (1 in high town; 1 in low town and 1 over the river) to draw tourists to all parts of our town and serve as a reminder of our railway heritage and local artists.
9. The proposed locations are: Castle Grounds, Quayside and Hazledine Foundry.
10. A revised legal agreement will be drawn up between the 3 sponsors and the Town Council to hand over responsibility to the sponsors in respect of maintenance, repairs and final removal of their statue. This leaves the Council with no liability for the retained statues.
11. Each of the 3 sponsors have written in a formal request in support of retaining their statue and accepting the legal implications for responsibility.
12. The other 8 statues from the trail will be returned to their sponsors and the pavements returned to their original condition as agreed in Autumn 2023.
13. The Art Trail Working group plan a celebration event to thank the sponsors, artists and volunteers in August 2023 before the statues are removed.
14. The Art Trail is fondly received by the town and carries a positive legacy in terms of a Town Council-led project that has had a positive impact on tourism, local health and pride in heritage.

Cllr Julia Buckley

Chair of Bridgnorth Art Trail