

OPEN CALL for
TEMPORARY CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS in
SEASIDE SHELTERS during
A Clifftop Wander -
Margate Coastal Park
Celebration 2016



Creative Brief: Imagining a new future for Margate's seaside shelters

Proposals are invited for the temporary, creative transformation and / or animation of two or more of Margate's seaside shelters, with the aim of re-igniting the public's passion for these historic structures and helping them to find a new role in contemporary coastal life.

This commission is offered by the [Margate Coastal Park](#) Promotion Group with funding from Arts Council England and Kent County Council, with the agreement and support of Thanet District Council.

A minimum of two temporary interventions will be commissioned for presentation over the weekend of 9 - 11 September 2016, alongside a restaging of 'Blushing Pavilion' – a previous commission supported by the HOME project in 2015 which sought to challenge negative perceptions of the area. This current project is a legacy of that work.

A fee of up to max. £3500 is available, per commission.

Your proposal may be for a three-day-long transformation of a shelter or a one-off and short event (ie performance, etc). The fee will need to be commensurate with the duration and impact of the event.

Context

Historic maps indicate that there used to be over fifty public shelters around the Thanet coast, built to encourage exploration and contemplation, and bring health and well-being to visitors and the local population. Shelters were built by Margate Borough Council as places of rest along the seafront promenade, affording views both inland and out to sea and acting as windbreaks. They could be social places, but they were also inspirational sites for creative thought – as evidenced by their key role in the creation of TS Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1921) and Ralph Vaughan-Williams' *The Lark Ascending* (1914).

Constructed mainly at the end of the C19th and early C20th as an evolution of bandstands, covered benches and transportation stops, these 'Primitive Hut' structures have played an important part in the development and identity of our coastline over the last 150 years. However, as much as the fortunes of our seaside resorts have been mixed, so too have the fortunes of the shelters.

In Margate, of the twelve original shelters that we have identified from historic maps and photographs, only seven now remain as illustrated in our analysis document available [here](#). Of those still standing, the majority are in a poor state of repair – whereas the shelter at Nayland Rock was restored and ultimately given [Grade II Listing status by Historic England](#), based on its association with the poet T.S. Eliot.

In Ramsgate, fourteen historic shelters have recently been restored, with the support of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, and [responsibility for their ongoing maintenance has been taken on by The Ramsgate Society under a 24-year lease](#). Despite the care and attention paid to them, these shelters have continued to attract occasional vandalism.

As leisure time has become a luxury, and public space has become increasingly privatised, the shelters will need to find new roles and relevance to contemporary life to guarantee their future.

Introducing Margate Coastal Park

Research by Kent Gardens Trust reveals that: "In October 1895 the Council bought from Messrs Lewis the strip of land lying between Lewis's Crescent and the edge of The Cliff, subject to conditions: *that the promenade and land must be open to the public in perpetuity and no erection of buildings might be made, other than covered seats and a Bandstand.*"

Over time, further land was assembled by the Council to promote healthy walks and leisure in general: "In 1920 the Council acquired the cliff top land from Sacketts Gap to the Borough's eastern boundary, sixty-one acres in total, as public walks and pleasure grounds. This was a continuation of the nineteenth century concept of promoting Cliftonville as a health-giving place where the benefits of sea water and, especially, sea air were unparalleled" (Cliftonville Conservation Area report, 2011).

Together, this series of 'public walks and pleasure grounds' helped to establish Margate and Cliftonville as one of the most successful seaside resorts in the country. Today, they continue to form an invaluable resource for the community, although the historic environment has become degraded. By shining a positive light on the park as a unity, we hope to encourage greater care for and investment in the area - while protecting public access and preserving its heritage assets, including the Clifton Baths (1820s) / Lido (1920s), the Walpole Bay Tidal Pool and Cliff Lift (1930s), The Winter Gardens, and shelters (Edwardian).

Public consultation is being currently carried out with regard to the designation of the cliff top between the Lido and the east side of Walpole Bay as a Conservation Area. Further actions will be required to realise the site's full potential to foster community cohesion, well-being and cultural pride.

The role of creativity

In 2015, the founding members of Margate Coastal Park Promotion Group participated in HOME: a project that sought to challenge negative perceptions of Cliftonville by inviting artists to work in / with the local community and to identify and celebrate the special qualities of the area, with reference both to its contemporary culture and its rich heritage. The project unearthed a bright seam of inspirational material for creatives.

Members' involvement culminated with '[Blushing Pavilion](#)': a temporary intervention and exhibition at one the shelters at Palm Bay, by Vividero Colectivo and Studio Sam Causer, which explored the evolving role of the landscape and architecture of the English seaside in the expression and repression of body, gender and sexuality.

Attended by 400+ people, on a cold weekend in February, the event highlighted the immense potential of the shelters for social gathering and the discovery and promotion of collective histories.



[Evaluation](#) showed that 'Blushing Pavilion' successfully supported the commissioners' aims and revealed an appetite for similar projects: 94% of respondents wanted to see more creative projects in the area; 84% of respondents had learnt something new about Cliftonville through the project; 67% reported HOME had made Cliftonville 'feel like a better place to live', while over half suggested the HOME project had made them 'feel proud to be living here in Cliftonville'.

Following on from those successes, we have been inspired to fully explore how the shelters can once again become beacons for community engagement, cultural enrichment and pride, and to develop associated strategies for their reinvention.

We are also inspired by the wider potential of the coastline to be re-envisaged as a public park and as a heritage site of international significance. The University of Kent has supported initial research into the history of the site and its current user groups, which has informed this brief and an extensive [analysis](#), available in full to support the development and delivery of proposals.

Aspirations for the Commission

We believe the shelters have a continuing role to play in encouraging the enjoyment of our coastline. Further to our strategic analysis of the Coastal Park, our desire is to develop, test and enrich our collective understanding of their potential by commissioning further creative interventions within them. We propose to award two or more new commissions via open call to artists and multi-disciplinary creative practices. The commissions should be impactful and engaging, drawing people to these parts of Margate and Cliftonville. They should reinforce the unique identity of the area, reveal the continued relevance of the shelters to its enjoyment, and contribute towards the wellbeing of a vibrant and diverse community.

The resulting work will be presented over a long weekend in September, accompanied by a re-staging of Blushing Pavilion, featuring an exhibition of our findings, other artists' work and related talks, and a long list of events

We will work with local groups, institutions and businesses to animate the cliff-top greens and areas between the shelters, and encourage visitors and locals to explore the coastal park in all its extension, engaging and attracting diverse user groups, and piloting a Margate Coastal Park Celebration in 2016, titled "A Clifftop Wander".

Margate Coastal Park Promotion Group

The Margate Coastal Park Promotion Group is a not-for-profit community group established in 2016. Our aims are twofold:

- 1- To develop a shared understanding of the history and significance of the continuous stretch of open space that lines the coast of Margate, from Westgate to Botany Bay, including:
 - Its potential as a heritage site of international importance
 - Its value as a public park and amenity
- 2- To celebrate and connect the diversity of contemporary user-groups associated with the Coastal Park, working with them to develop a shared agenda for the protection and enhancement of this public space and the rights and well-being of the community.

We approach this through (1) the research, promotion, conservation and rehabilitation of such historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological and natural heritage as may exist in and around the Coastal Park and (2) the establishment or running of a site-specific celebration that showcases the diverse communities, cultural practices, heritage and natural and built environment of the Coastal Park.

The Margate Coastal Park Promotion Group consists so far of a steering committee:

- Carlos Maria Romero – artist, pedagogue, curator
- Sam Causer – architect
- Sophie Jeffrey – creative producer and consultant

Our initial proposals have the backing already of a large number of individuals, institutions and governing bodies, and we are in the process of organizing an open democratic forum and consultation, including a structure of community participation and support that can make the reaching of our collective goals a long term fair, manageable and sustainable reality.

Roles and payment structure

The MCPPG has prepared extensive research about the area and each of the shelters, which will be made fully available to the creative teams. We intend to play a collaborative and supportive role throughout, and will take a lead on the promotion and evaluation of the commissions, at the same time as providing curatorial and practical advice.

The commissioned artists / creative teams will have full responsibility for the design and delivery of their proposals, including method statements, risk assessments and public presentation, within the bounds of their initial budget.

The shelters don't have running water, internet, electricity or facilities for locking precious items. Unfortunately MCPPG can not provide these on behalf of the project. We don't discourage proposals that include their use, but we encourage simpler and more affordable solutions (than hiring generators or a water tank). All of the shelters are easy accessible by car, but we recommend also to create space around them so they can be experienced without visual blockade.

Priority sites for interventions are:

- Fort Hill
- Walpole Bay
- Hodges Flagstaff
- Newgate Gap (it is in terrible condition but something creative could be done with the fence, around it or in the gap itself)
- The site where the Koh-i-Noor Pavilion used to be, just beside the Palm Bay Cafe

We will also consider other sites, including:

- Marine Terrace
- Nayland Rock

Fees will be paid in two parts: 50% upon appointment and 50% upon completion of the project.

Application process

Artists and creative practices interested in participating in this process should submit the following information to margatecoastalpark@gmail.com by 12 noon on Thursday 23rd June 2016:

- A summary, not exceeding 500 words, illustrating design approach and / or a creative proposal
- CV not exceeding 1 A4
- Proof of public liability insurance of at least £5 million.
- A lump sum fee proposal, not exceeding £3500, to include all design and presentation costs, expenses and VAT to practical completion of the project.

Selection criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the MCPPG against the following criteria:

45% Creative proposal

- 25% Experience of delivering public realm projects
- 20% Experience of public and community engagement
- 10% Viability of delivering the proposal

There is a desire for proposals with striking visual impact or capable of attracting and mobilizing community and visitors, but each proposal will be evaluated on its own terms and potential.

Drawing on our research into the Coastal Park and the profile of its users, we are particularly interested in exploring the contribution of the following to the fair social transformation of the shelters, the clifftop, the park and Margate:

- Architecture
- The Arts (in all its fields), and creative and community practices
- Coastal / cultural tourism
- Digital culture
- Diversity (multicultural, intergenerational, sexual and functional)
- Dog walking and picnicking (including connection with painter George Morland)
- Health and wellbeing (including sea bathing, parkour and park-running)
- Historically marginalized, oppressed or invisibilized ones
- Local history / cultural heritage (material and immaterial)
- Regeneration without gentrification
- Skate & BMX heritage in Margate
- Sustainability and celebration of local flora and fauna, wildlife and gardens / community gardens
- Youth culture

Timetable 2016

23rd May	Launch of Open Call
23rd June	Deadline for applications
30th June	Selection of artists
14th July	Presentation of initial design proposals
4th August	Submission of completed design, method statements and risk assessments
11th August	Announcement of selected commissions
9th–11th September	Presentation of selected commissions



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