

Babylon ARTS

Brief for Listen to the Voices of the Fens, Wicken Fen project Local Artist

INTRODUCTION TO BABYLON ARTS

Babylon Arts, (operated by Arts Development East Cambridgeshire) is a charity committed to inspiring, developing and delivering quality arts events and activities to engage communities in Ely and West Anglia. We were established 29 years ago and operate from our venue Babylon Gallery situated on the riverside in Ely where we hold art exhibitions and live events. We run arts projects in communities across East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and West Suffolk and work with many local organisations to bring quality creative projects into communities. We also run Babylon Cinema at the Ely Maltings.

THE PROJECT

Everything in the natural world has a voice; listening together from new perspectives can foster collective empathy with nature and each other. Listen to the Voices of the Fen will cultivate and deepen connections with Wicken Fen Nature Reserve through sculptural sound installations and listening walks by lead artist Kathy Hinde (kathyhinde.co.uk), digital experiences and artist/volunteer-led creative listening activities. People of all ages, backgrounds and abilities will be invited to pause and listen to the hidden sounds of the Fen.

Listen to the Voices of the Fen (abbreviated to 'Voices') is the creative idea of artist Kathy Hinde, in response to the celebration of Wicken Fen's 125th anniversary. The full project length is July 2024 to December 2025.

There are 3 key phases to 'Voices', each centred around the act of LISTENING. Babylon Arts are partnering with Wicken Fen to deliver the 'Voices' project through the following programme strands:

1. SOUND POOLS INSTALLATION: 18 JULY - 29 SEPT 2024 (PROJECT LAUNCH ON WORLD LISTENING DAY)

Kathy finds inspiration in behaviours and phenomena found in nature. Sounds from underwater and underground are elevated into a series of overhead, directional, dome speakers, inviting you to step in and out of different soundworlds as you approach the Brick Kiln pond, enabling visitors to experience Wicken Fen in a new way. The hide is on the accessible boardwalk, popular with families and adults, and is an ideal place to spot dragonflies and small birds like kingfishers. The installation will run on solar power. On site interpretation and content online, including live-streamed underwater sounds, will introduce people to the project and ways they can participate.

2. PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: SEPT 2024 - SEPT 2025

A programme of creative engagement to intrigue and inspire audiences (including children, young people, older people and people with disabilities) to actively listen to nature around them, using high tech and low tech methods to access often inaudible or inaccessible sounds. We will invite schools and communities to collaborate in a way that works for them, from participation to co-creation. Facilitated, self-led and tailored engagement opportunities will be promoted through partners, community groups, local networks, and PR and marketing activities. Creative direction will be provided by Kathy, who will lead a local creative team of 2 artists recruited by producing partner, Babylon ARTS. Kathy will train staff and volunteers at Wicken Fen to deliver regular public listening walks, using wireless headphones and devices to amplify sounds of natural life underwater, underground and inside trees, encouraging participants to be curious, tune in to their surroundings and respond in creative ways. Ambient listening moments will also be introduced at Wicken Fen and incorporated into existing offers such as wellbeing walks and boat trips. A series of public overtone flute and aeolian harp making workshops will be promoted and simpler instrument making drop-in sessions replicated at local carnivals and fairs.

3. SERIES OF INSTALLATIONS: 18 JULY - 30 SEPT 2025 (LAUNCH ON WORLD LISTENING DAY)

Many temporary installations based on hidden sounds of the Fen and creative responses to these sounds will be located across Wicken Fen. This final phase will be launched with a series of public events and a live performance of a commissioned piece by workshop participants.

THE BRIEF

We are recruiting a Local Artist to co-design and deliver creative workshops to deliver to adults with accessibility needs and/or low vision/blindness, with partners Wicken Fen, Babylon Arts and lead artist Kathy Hinde. The adult groups the creative activities will be delivered to are Camsight and Burwell Day Centre.

The Local Artist will deliver the listening walks and workshops to 2 adult groups in the Cambridgeshire area, in response to the theme of the project of LISTENING.

The Local Artist will receive creative direction from Lead Artist Kathy Hinde with support from Programme Manager Florence Tong at Babylon Arts. The Local Artist will design a workshop/activity that encourages people to listen to the nature around them, using high and low tech methods to access often inaudible or inaccessible sounds.

Some creative direction from Lead Artist Kathy Hinde, will provide you with an idea of the current evolving vision; provide access to sound recording equipment including hydrophones combined with wireless headphones for group listening listening games, listening horns, designing listening devices, listening underwater, nature connection activities, and creative responses to the sounds of nature through small sound-making instruments. This is not an extensive nor set list, to be used for inspiration.

Locations and partnerships have been established by Babylon Arts and Wicken Fen. Babylon Arts will manage these partnerships and the artist(s) will be expected to work

collaboratively with the partners ensuring that the creative workshops are relevant and meaningful for the participants. The Local Artist will also contribute to the project evaluation.

What to expect:

Delivery of 2 listening walks and 4 creative workshops to 2 adult groups:

- 1 x Listening walk at Wicken Fen with Camsight group
- 2 x Creative workshops at Camsight community spaces (Ely and Littleport) – this is one designed workshop that is delivered to two different groups
- 1 x Listening walk at Wicken Fen with Burwell Day Centre group
- 2 x Creative workshops at Burwell Day Centre – this is one designed workshop that is delivered to two different groups

TIMEFRAME

This commission would begin on 10 December 2024 and be completed by the end of July 2025.

Below is a draft outline of project delivery with locations, the dates of delivery, unless otherwise specified below, would be arranged and agreed in conversation with the partners and the Local Artist:

Dec 2024 - Feb 2025	Meetings with Babylon Arts and Kathy Hinde to aid the creation of the locally delivered workshops
March - April 2025	1 x Listening walk at Wicken Fen with Camsight group – March (date tbc) 2 x Creative workshops at Camsight community spaces – Ely workshop either 10 th March or 14 th April and Littleport workshop either 25 th March or 22 nd April (<u>please note</u> the appointed artist <u>must</u> be able to deliver the workshop on one of the Ely and one of the Littleport dates, these dates are non-negotiable due to the needs of the participants) 1 x Listening walk at Wicken Fen with Burwell Day Centre group – early April, walk will be between 9.30-11.30am 2 x Creative workshops at Burwell Day Centre – first three weeks of April
May 2025	Contribute to project evaluation

BUDGET

The Budget for this project is £3,230 +VAT (if the appointed local artist is VAT registered), inclusive of all travel and materials. The fee has been developed on the basis of:

- Local artist fee delivering 1 x listening walk and 2 x workshops to Burwell Day Centre across 3 days delivery + 1 day prep = £1200 +VAT (£300 day rate)
- Local artist fee delivering 1 x listening walk and 2 x workshops to Camsight across 3 days delivery + 2 day prep = £1500 +VAT (£300 day rate)
- Travel = £230 +VAT
- Materials = £300 +VAT
- Contribution to project evaluation, conducted by an independent evaluator

Payment will be staged in three instalments – on signing the contract, mid-way and on completion of the project unless otherwise agreed.

NOTES

Babylon Arts is an equal opportunities employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to providing an inclusive environment for all our employees. We believe that representation is vital to a fairer and more equal arts sector and therefore particularly encourage artists who have lived experience of a disability to apply.

HOW TO APPLY

The artist should submit a proposal of no more than two-side of A4 demonstrating their suitability for the commission.

The proposal should detail:

- The proposed approach to delivering the brief.
- Relevant skills and experience of delivering co-created projects
- How you would engage participants and ensure proposed activities are accessible.
- Please include links to relevant past activities.

Person specification:

- High quality, relevant arts practice.
- A strong collaborative attitude to your work, in order to co-create experiences with adults and consult with partners.
- A good track record of delivering inspiring, creative workshops that excite and engage adults with accessibility needs and/or low vision/blindness.
- An understanding of health and safety, equal opportunities, and safeguarding procedures relating to work with adults with additional needs.

Proposals should be emailed to: florence.tong@babylonarts.org.uk by **9am 31 October 2024**.

Applications should also complete the Equal Opportunities form [HERE](#).

Interviews will be held online by Babylon Arts and Kathy Hinde on Thursday 28th November 2024. If you wish to have an informal conversation about this role prior to the deadline, please email florence.tong@babylonarts.org.uk

The Artist(s) will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure. You will be required to provide the necessary documentation for the checks to be carried out. We also reserve the right to request additional DBS checks at any time in the delivery of this activity.

If you have any accessibility needs please do not hesitate to contact us in advance of submitting an application so that we can provide you with support:
florence.tong@babylonarts.org.uk