

# CREATIVE PRACTITIONER BRIEF

## Ideas:People:Places Project, Maindee Library, Newport

**Budget:** Creative Practitioner Design & Consultation Fee of up to £13,000 +VAT. There is a £45,000 +VAT budget to implement creative/design interventions based on capital works budget of £121,000 + VAT.

**Project Duration:** May 2017 – March 2018

**Deadline for Applications:** Midnight 23 April 2017

**Interviews scheduled for:** 09 May 2017

Maindee Unlimited are inviting applications from Creative Practitioners (artists/designers/architects, as individuals, studios, partnerships or group practices) to work on a project within Maindee Library, a volunteer-run community space on the eastern side of Newport city centre. The commission is to work with the Maindee Library Working Group and other key stakeholders to identify, prioritise and develop creative/design solutions and oversee their implementation towards the renovation and improvement of the library building as a flexible and creative space for community use.

There is a £45,000 budget for creative/design solutions proposed by the Creative Practitioner. These interventions may be undertaken by the Creative Practitioner or involve commissioning/collaborating with others. This is to be determined through the Design Phase of the project and in consultation with the Maindee Library Working Group.

This commission is part of *Finding Maindee* – a three-year project supported by the Arts Council of Wales' *Ideas: People: Places* strategic programme, which aims to test new models of regeneration and collaboration through the arts (<http://www.arts.wales/arts-in-wales/inspire/sustain/ideas-people-places>). The project is part-funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Garfield Weston Charitable Trust, the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme through Newport City Council and others.

*Finding Maindee* is now in its third year and so a great deal of work has been undertaken to date, including: an ongoing programme of cultural activities and artist interventions; a series of surveys, feasibility studies and obtaining of permissions relating to the redevelopment of the building; establishment of a broad and committed network of volunteers, community groups and individuals passionate about the future of Maindee Library. It is expected that the Creative Practitioner will work with Maindee Library Working Group to build on these foundations and engage key stakeholders in the development of proposals and their implementation, both through consultation, as well as opportunities to undertake practical tasks where possible and appropriate.

## 1. Context

Maindee is a large inner-city commercial and residential area on the central eastern side of Newport in south Wales. The library is at the western end of Chepstow Road: a collection of bakers, bookies, butchers and backstreet boozers that used to typify British urban life until the 1980s. Multiple retailers have recently left Chepstow Road (such as the Co-Op and Greggs) but there is vibrancy from smaller shops and a Wetherspoon and Boots. The library building has been at the centre of community life in the area since a reading room and moving to a former Edwardian fire station vacated after WWII. Until 2015 Newport City Council ran the ground floor of the building as a library. Following local authority funding cuts and closure, the library has been reopened and run on a voluntary basis as both a library and community space since October 2015 and has been at the heart of the *Finding Maindee* project.

*Finding Maindee* moves beyond the received ideas of 'urban regeneration', which have largely focused on capital developments. It seeks to find new ways of working and connecting people through creativity and engagement with the arts and to draw on the experience, skills and ambitions of

volunteers and local individuals, groups and businesses to develop Maindee and its library as a space run by and for local people. Our project's blog articulates this approach – with the following article most relevant to what the library has become <http://www.maindee.org/blog/looking-forward-at-library> The project is led by **Maindee Unlimited** (<http://www.maindee.org/building-maindee>) a charity set up in 2014 with the aim of transforming Maindee into a sustainable community with a strong local identity, strong local economy and a reputation as an attractive, safe, culturally vibrant and cohesive place to live, work and relax. The organisation is built on an annual arts festival that started in 1997 and has undertaken a number of activities as part of the wider *Finding Maindee* project, two of which are particularly relevant to this commission, namely:

**1** - In October 2016 we worked with Mr and Mrs Clark (<http://www.mrandmrsclark.co.uk>) to *Invite the Neighbours around to Paint*. This week of activity took place on the land across the road from the library and started to explore the relationships between people, space and place that we would like to develop through the library. Reflections on this experience are detailed on our blog <http://www.maindee.org/blog/looking-back-at-inviting-the-neighbours-around-to-paint> and some of Gareth Clark's own reflections on the week can be found here: <https://niabroadcast.com/2016/10/29/regeneration-and-the-arts/>.

**2** - New Paths is a fund of up to £2,500 for creative projects. From this fund we have awarded approx. £19,000 across 17 different projects. Current projects include:

- Dilip Sinha – [Maindee Photographic Survey](#)
- Ismael Velasco – [Theatre for Change](#)
- Jo Haycock – [Finding a Home in Maindee](#)
- Rohan Bishop – [Sounds Alive](#)

Rather than simply awarding funds, we are moving towards a collaborative model based on a monthly gathering, where artists work with each other to develop their projects. This includes making links to other creative projects taking place in the locality, such as [Operasonic's community opera](#) currently in development and to be performed in July 2017. In May 2017 we will be working with Gwent Arts & Health on a poetry project with older people. More information: <http://www.maindee.org/new-paths>.

It is expected that the Creative Practitioner will consider, draw on and connect with the knowledge, networks and outcomes of the above activities and the consultation work undertaken by Maindee Unlimited to date.

## 2. The Building

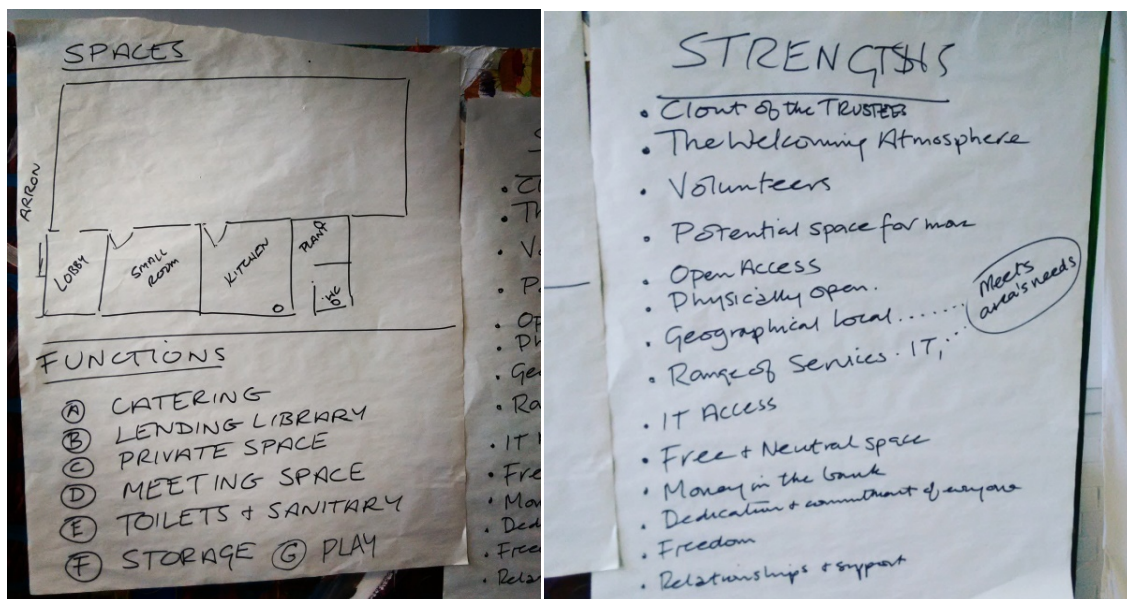
The library is the ground floor of 79 Chepstow Road. From the outside it shares an Edwardian façade with the Police Station next door and Gwent Police still occupy the first floor above the library. Approximately half of the library's floor space is within the Edwardian building [formerly a fire station served by horse-drawn fire wagon] with the remainder an extension built in the 1970s. The yard to the rear belongs to Gwent Police. There is a small space at the front of the building apart from the wider public realm.

The library has been operated under a licence from Newport City Council since October 2015. At the same time the trustees of Maindee Unlimited worked on a plan to secure a longer-term future for the building by applying to be part of the Big Lottery Fund's 'Community Asset Transfer' [CAT2] community building programme. Full story here <http://www.maindee.org/blog/re-making-maindee-library>

In January 16 we scoped out the idea of a Map Room for creative activities.

The pursuit of the community asset transfer led to plans being developed for a refurbished library and proposals for the triangular-shaped outdoor space on Livingstone Place. The local planning authority granted permission for change of use in May 2016 [reference in blog article] and then we waited for the funding decision from the Big Lottery Fund. Ultimately this application was only partly successful

with the funders wanting a clearer plan for how the library could make money and rejecting the ideas for the outside space. We were invited to re-apply but felt that the Big Lottery Fund's recommendations did not reflect the ambitions of the people who make the space work. And so we have decided to not reapply but to take a different approach with a much smaller budget but one that builds on the momentum of the people who inhabit the space.



### 3. The Commission

The appointed Creative Practitioner is invited to work with us to develop and implement creative/design proposals, which build upon the journey taken since October 2015 and the desire for the library to be a space for learning, reflection and creativity. We have an allocated budget for the project [see Section 8] and will have a lease from Newport Council from April 2017 ahead of completing the work by March 2018. We have the full support of the Arts Council of Wales and can draw upon their expertise.

We are interested in working with a Creative Practitioner that understands Maindee Library as a movement with a distributed governance model and the building as a multi-use space where people can borrow books, discuss ideas and where somebody can successfully operate a counselling business for the community. Please see this blog for more detail on our current thinking and aspirations for the space: <http://www.maindee.org/blog/looking-forward-at-library>

Through the *Ideas: People: Places* programme we are afforded rare and exciting opportunities for artists to explore relationships with place and space. In this case the project is about responding to the situation in Maindee to provide a relatively low-cost model for refurbishment based on the people who use the space rather than falling back on off-the-shelf architecture. We see this commission as a chance to explore:

1. The emerging functions and relationships within the library space [see blog post 5 Feb 2017];
2. Consider how a space can be both neutral and flexible;
3. How the space – and perhaps the exterior or welcome to the building – helps to promote and communicate the library as a volunteer-led space;
4. Marry the practical [e.g. revenue generating space and activities, such as for the regular baby drop-in sessions] with the creative (such as space for workshops, events and the free lending library) based on the Map Room.

We already have a series of proposals and cost estimates to RIBA Stage 3. The Creative Practitioner will be encouraged to identify alternative opportunities and/or design approaches. It is expected that a

number of possibilities will be explored and the most appropriate opportunities prioritised for implementation through a period of collaborative working with the Maindee Library Working Group [see governance]. In this way it is hoped that the appointed Creative Practitioner will act as a critical friend to the project, affording opportunities to test new ways of working that demonstrate:

- Distinctiveness – the creation of a unique identity for the library through work that is original, site specific, connecting and responding to local communities and cultures;
- Quality – the physical quality of an environment and the experience of those using it;
- Sense of place – a sense of place by drawing on key local references such as heritage [we have a good collection of historic and heritage material], topography, site uses and demography;
- Exemplary practice in terms of interdisciplinary working.

Businesses and not-for-profit ventures along Chepstow Road and its locale have a history and tradition of developing slowly and incrementally over time with community support. For example, since 2014 the Valentine’s Turkish Restaurant on 123-125 Chepstow Road has steadily built its business and has recently constructed an outdoor eating area for the summer. As such they have followed more established local businesses like Friends’ Hairdressers, which grew gradually, moving properties along Chepstow Road over time. The street features a menswear company, which has been independent for over 100 years and other long-established family businesses. Close by, following the demolition of the traditional chapel due to failing foundations, the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Eton Road occupies a new building and has evolved into an inter-faith community centre – “Community House” - based around, and run by, the local Presbyterian Church. The “House” consists of a coffee lounge, kitchen, small hall with raised platform, chapel and other rooms for meetings and activities.

We want the development of the library to connect with this ‘DIY approach’ and build on the story of being volunteer-run for the past 15 months and ([see our films here](#)), thus working in contrast to more typical approaches to urban regeneration and the ‘fast’ large-scale redevelopments happening in other parts of the city (such as [Newport’s new retail and leisure complex](#)).

#### **4. Project Governance and Consultation/Collaboration with Communities and Key Stakeholders**

The project commissioner is Maindee Unlimited (MU), with support from the Arts Council of Wales. A Maindee Library Working Group, comprising MU staff, library volunteers and artists using the space, has been setup as a means of developing and implementing this project. The MU team includes people who are experienced in built environment projects and managing complex initiatives, alongside those who use the space day-to-day. The blog article recalling the workshop on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February gives an idea of who may be involved in the project (<http://www.maindee.org/blog/looking-forward-at-library>).

The Creative Practitioner will need to consult with the Maindee Library Working Group at key stages in the development of the commission and participate in wider communications as appropriate. A member of the Maindee Library Working Group has been appointed as the designated project manager for the wider capital works. This project manager will act as the main point of contact for the Creative Practitioner and will support the work to oversee the delivery of the project in collaboration with the Maindee Library Working Group. A library volunteer may supervise some elements of the improvements to the building.

It is expected that the design phase will build on the existing work and relationships established through the *New Paths* projects. For example, [Stephanie Roberts’ Mosaic Maindee](#) helped to explore the urban built form of Chepstow Road; [Marion Cheung’s Maindee Stories](#) documented recent local history as a tapestry and [Dilip Sinha’s Maindee Photographic Survey](#) compares Maindee of today to the 1980s. The weekly [Sounds Alive sessions](#) have explored both the practicalities of music workshops in the space and the sonic capacity of the building.

## 5. Expectations of the Commission

This opportunity is open to UK and international artists/designers/architects. We also welcome applications from artist/design/architecture partnerships/groups/studio practices. Applicants must demonstrate:

- Creative originality, artistic quality and professionalism in their work;
- The ability and desire to work openly and collaboratively as part of their creative practice, in particular as part of an interdisciplinary team including some built environment specialists, but also many lay people;
- A self-motivated, energetic and pro-active work ethic;
- A willingness to immerse themselves in the life and culture of the area and to recognise that this space would no longer be open if it were not for the local volunteer support;
- A critical awareness of the roles that artists and cultural activity may/may not play in the regeneration of urban areas;
- An awareness of and willingness to abide by the laws for working with children and vulnerable adults, should they undertake such work as part of the project;
- Proven ability to deliver high quality built environment projects on time and within budget.

The appointed Creative Practitioner will form part of the Maindee Library Working Group and will contribute to the process of the design, production and installation of the commissioned artwork, by undertaking the following:

- Where appropriate, building on the existing research base for the library and its context within Chepstow Road, as well as forming a vision of how the library will evolve and its future importance;
- Producing a series of visual representations of their research and resulting design concepts, as well as visuals and fabrication drawings of the proposed works, for consultation and information purposes;
- Attending and making presentations of their work at project meetings;
- Attending liaison meetings with the approving authorities (Building Control as we already have consent for change of use) and make necessary alterations to their proposals to secure approval;
- Liaising with the contractors engaged on the project as and when necessary (for example heating and lighting or electrical);
- Providing detailed costings for their design/activity proposals and managing these in consultation with the project manager for the wider capital works;
- Providing information as required for communications purposes and agreeing for the work to be documented for promotional, evaluation and archival purposes;
- Engaging with the *New Paths Programme*, the *Maindee Festival* on Saturday 1 July and other relevant events and activities to deliver an agreed programme of public engagement activities towards the identification and development of creative/design solutions for the library building;
- Holding and providing evidence of £5m public and products liability insurance and £1m professional indemnity insurance, and take responsibility for any third party contractors engaged in the implementation of their proposals;
- Ensuring the production of the agreed works within the project timeframe and its delivery to site, in conjunction with the client;
- Taking responsibility for some installation procedures and costs to be determined;
- Observing CDM regulations where appropriate.

In collaboration with the Maindee Library Working Group, give detailed consideration to the following in the development of their designs:

- Issues of Health and Safety both in the design proposal and realization;
- Methodology;
- Material and structural integrity;
- Long-term upkeep and use.

- Providing maintenance instructions on completion of installation with clear guidelines as to the best method of maintaining artworks and any specialist treatment/knowledge that is necessary. The Creative Practitioner should also indicate the anticipated life span of the work and any decommissioning procedures that should be applied.

## 6. Constraints

The extent of the lease between Newport City Council and Maindee Limited is fixed. The property is constrained to the rear by land owned by Gwent Police e.g. fire escape only and no public access. Furthermore Gwent Police have possession of the upper floors of 79 Chepstow Road. We are in possession of a large amount of documentation relating to the library, including measurements, energy surveys and so forth. All the design work and supporting documents for the scheme granted planning permission in May 2016 can be seen by entering the reference '16/0235' or '79 Chepstow Road' on the [Newport Planning Portal](#).

The Creative Practitioner will need to address any constraints that arise during the design period in consultation with the Maindee Library Working Group (for example, that the proposals are eligible within the funding provided by the Arts Council of Wales and deliverable and sustainable in terms of revenue costs, risk, robustness and available timescales and budgets). Works must be constructed with due care to the Equalities Act (2010) and health and safety issues.

We must always have an eye towards the revenue-earning potential for the space. The current business model assumes a library completely managed by volunteers with no paid staff.



**Image:** Model of Maindee Library made by Huw Mereddyd Owen for CAT2 project submission

## 7. Project Schedule

This is a deliberately open brief within a two-stage commissioning process that will allow initial ideas to be tested and developed (Phase 1 – Design) prior to agreeing the proposed works for production and implementation (Phase 2 - Implementation) within the available timescale.

## Creative Practitioner Appointment

Midnight 23 April 2017 Deadline for applications

09 May 2017 Interviews

### Phase 1 – Design

May to July 2017 It is expected that a proportion of this time will be spent in Newport, attending Maindee Library Working Group meetings and undertaking research, community consultation and participation activities as specified in the brief.

### Phase 2 – Implementation

July – August 2017 Consultations and securing any necessary permissions for proposals.

Sept 2017 – Feb 2018 Implementation will start in autumn 2017.

Feb – Mar 2018 Contingency

End of March 2018 Work must be completed by 31 March 2018, in line with the *Finding Maindee* programme and funding streams.

## 8. Fees and budget

The total project budget for the renovation and improvement of the library building is £215,500, which is allocated as follows:

- £13,000 Creative Practitioner Design Fee (including all travel, presentation and reasonable disbursements), split as follows:
  - A fee of £7,000 for Phase 1 – Design – to work with the Library Working Group to identify, prioritise and develop creative/design solutions and oversee their implementation towards the renovation and improvement of the library building, as a flexible and creative space for community use. The appointed Creative Practitioner will be required to produce comprehensive design proposals and budget for approval by the client, prior to commencement of implementation of any proposed works.
  - A fee of £6,000 to act as contract administrator for the remainder of the commission – Phase 2 – Implementation
- £121,000 capital budget for works to the building [most of this budget is/will be allocated to essential works such as heating, etc. but the Creative Practitioner will work with the LWG to help prioritise spending against this budget and identify ways in which arts/creative approaches may enhance outcomes (e.g. design solutions to issues relating to the skylight at the back of the space)].
- £24,650 VAT to cover appropriate fees and capital works.
- £12,100 contingency based on 10% capital.
- £45,000 indicative budget to support arts/creative interventions associated with the refurbishment of the library. The appointed Creative Practitioner will work with the Library Working Group to identify and develop opportunities to be delivered with this budget, which may include activities that seek to encourage local participation in the library's development through dialogue and debate or may be used to support enhance the design/creativity of aspects of the capital works. This budget is not necessarily an implementation budget for the appointed Creative Practitioner

but may involve commissioning other artists/practitioners alongside the existing *New Paths* programme.

## 9. How to Apply:

The recruitment process is being managed by curatorial agency Addo ([www.addocreative.com](http://www.addocreative.com)). To apply, please submit the following information to [commissions@addocreative.com](mailto:commissions@addocreative.com)

- Up to 10 digital images and if desired, a 10-minute (max) show-reel. All work should be numbered and include, title, date, dimensions/scope, media, details of the project that they relate to and the relevance to your application;
- An up-to-date CV for all project team members;
- Day rates and estimated time allowance for each practitioner/team member to be allocated to the project;
- A brief letter of application that broadly outlines why you are interested in this opportunity and how it is relevant to your practice;
- Two referees that can testify to your suitability to undertake the commission.

We will select based on the quality and relevance of past work to the brief. **Please note:**

- that we do not require proposals at this stage because it is expected that the appointed artist will develop these through a period of research and interaction with the building and key stakeholders;
- when sending large files (over 4MB), please provide hyperlinks to online files or send via DropBox / WeTransfer. Any applications received by email containing files over 4MB will not be considered.

## 10. Selection Process

Addo and the Maindee Library Working Group will shortlist up to 5 candidates for interview from the applications received. Interviews will take place at Maindee Library, 79 Chepstow Rd, Newport NP19 8BY

Candidates must be available for interview on the date **Tuesday 09 May 2017**.

Invitations to interview will be sent out on **02 May 2017**. Those interviewed may reclaim all reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred by attending an interview.

At interview, interviewees will be expected to speak in more detail about their past work and working processes and the approach that they envisage taking towards the commission. They will be asked to present examples of their past work and will be assessed following the interview based on their past work and initial responses (**not** proposals) to the brief.

The interviews will involve a half-day commitment and will include a tour of the building, a 20-minute presentation by the artist, followed by 20 minutes of questions and discussion. The interview panel will consist of representatives of Maindee Unlimited, the library volunteers and Arts Council of Wales. The interview schedule and information of panel members will be distributed prior to interview.

Maindee Unlimited is committed to equal opportunities and all applications will be judged according to the criteria set out above, purely on merit and without prejudice.

If you have any queries regarding this opportunity, please email: [commissions@addocreative.com](mailto:commissions@addocreative.com)



## 11. Background information

The project to redevelop the library <http://www.maindee.org/blog/re-making-maindee-library>

Workshop 4th February 2017 <http://www.maindee.org/blog/looking-forward-at-library>

New Paths and latest projects <http://www.maindee.org/new-paths>

Stephanie Roberts Mosaic Maindee <http://www.stephanierobertsart.com/2016/09/05/Mosaic-Maindee>

Marion Cheung Maindee Stories <http://marioncheung-artist.com/maindee-stories>