

Portland Inn Press Release



The Portland Inn Project, Portland Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5HZ

Dates: Monday, 8th August - Saturday, 3rd September 2016.

The Portland Inn Project is a creative arts project in partnership with The Portland Street Community Group, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Appetite, AirSpace Gallery and The British Ceramics Biennial for a community in Stoke-on-Trent, where derelict properties were sold for £1 with the view of changing the fortunes of the area. The council have recently offered a disused pub to the community, to be used as a community centre. Drawing on examples of successful, creative, community led development projects from across the UK, our approach is to involve the area's existing and new community to design and deliver the future of this community asset, through an engaging month long public art programme.

The project proposes the Portland Inn as an art work, and future creative community space and involves developing a useable, temporary space within the currently boarded up pub in order to deliver a 4 week arts and cultural programme, lead by artists Anna Francis and Rebecca Davies piloting a range of activity which brings people into the building and into the conversation about the future of the site. By the end of the four week project we will have:

- engaged local people in creative decision making about their area, and about the future of the pub, via creative participatory methods.
- delivered a strong programme of artistic and cultural activity which activates the empty building, evidencing what it could be.
- engaged local stakeholders, and key potential investors/supporters of the project in shaping the future of the pub.
- located potential small businesses to make them aware of the pub building as a potential venue for their business.
- piloted creative activity within the pub building to see what works for the area.
- bring evidence together for the writing of a fully costed, sustainable business plan (and locate the support to help with the legal, business side of the project).

Each week has a particular focus, and events/activity will be planned with the partners to ensure that, while the activity itself is interesting and engaging for participants, providing the community with high quality artistic experiences, important information is also gathered via the sessions. Over

the four weeks we will be engaging and involving people, and will see the ground floor of the pub evolve and transform via a series of workshops and activities, inviting the public to work with artists and the community group to take part in the transformation. Over the 4 week project we will be setting priorities; making plans, assigning roles and tasks, then Testing and Cross checking and finally, finalising and feeding back to the community on the discovery.

Within the programme there will be clay workshops, including creating a bespoke tile frontage for the pub, sign-writing and printing workshops, dance and tae-kwondo classes, business development sessions, cookery and much, much more; all organised and delivered by a committed group of artists, organisations and local residents.

The project is funded by Arts Council England, The Appetite and City Council Community Events Fund and The Portland Street Community Group.

Visit our project blog at: theportlandinnproject.tumblr.com

For more information please contact Anna Francis on 07891620638 or email amf@airspacegallery.org

