



DRAFT Art Proposal August 2024

Tettenhall Community Forum

The Aethelflaed Public Arts Trail

from Wednesfield to Wolverhampton

Key Contact: Arts Project Lead

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Context and background

The residents of Wolverhampton live in one of the most historically important neighbourhoods in England. The 12 Villages of Tettenhall, which are of particular focus to this project, are living in an area which encompasses a rich tapestry of both historically significant events and heroic figures in history.

Some of these significant events are lesser known to many Wolverhampton citizens and in fact many UK residents, yet, in recent times the amazing history of our borough and city has come further to light thanks to local historians, archaeologists, local citizens and the work of local artists and writers. These individual groups and individuals are helping to raise awareness to a major

historical event in England's and indeed Wolverhampton's past. This event happened in our very own city but at present there is little to celebrate or mark this history.

The educational context of this project is twofold therefore, to inform the wider community, educate, respect and celebrate this history as follows:

- **'The Battle of Tettenhall/Wednesfield, 910 AD'**
- **To celebrate - Aethelflaed, Lady of Mercia 'The Warrior Queen'**
To highlight a major female figure 'The Warrior Queen' Aethelflaed, Lady of Mercia, a hugely strong and powerful female warrior

The Battle

Historical research and historical documentation evidence a huge battle that took place spanning the boroughs of Tettenhall/Wednesfield. Sometimes called the 'Battle of Tettenhall' sometimes 'The Battle of Wednesfield' as it spanned so far afield, this battle was a moment in history that shaped the course of millions of lives throughout England as we know it today.

In brief, the battle of Tettenhall in 910 AD, marked a decisive moment in the struggle for control of England between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings (specifically between The Mercians in the North and the Vikings). This battle was hugely significant for Britain leading to the defeat of 1000's of Vikings and the fall of three Viking kings.

Some historians liken the battle to being on the same scale as 'The Battle of Hastings' (1066 fame). 'The Battle of Tettenhall', has even been featured as part of the now world-renowned, Netflix Series, 'The Last Kingdom' bringing history to the masses with international appeal, yet we have little to celebrate this event and its figures, localities that changed the course of history here in our own city and within the boroughs of Tettenhall and Wednesfield.

Like the City of York and areas of Northumberland that evidence Viking and Anglo-Saxon history, battles and historic places. They have a wealth of museums and a rich tourism industry centred around this period of history,

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including all the branding and merchandise. Wolverhampton hasn't anything to educate or inform about the above battle or above heroin in history?

Special localities would be identified to map an educational / art trail focused along a historic natural walking route 'Smestow Valley' and beyond.

Celebrating Aethelflaed, Lady of Mercia 'The Warrior Queen'

Athelflead, 'a woman in a man's world', in 910 AD, gathered and led 1000's of Anglo-Saxons to battle along the Smestow Valley from Wednesfield to Tettenhall, she created the opportunity for her Nephew Aethelstan to unite the disparate Saxon Kingdoms and in 925 AD form a united England. She was a notable strong and a decisive woman of her time and can still stand as an inspiration today to all of us. Here is an excellent article about her featured on BBC News.

[Aethelflaed: The warrior queen who broke the glass ceiling - BBC News](#)

PROJECT SCOPE

Aims and Objectives

The Tettenhall Community Forum together with the wider community is passionate to celebrate and develop an educational trail surrounding this local historical event and rich history of The Battle of 910AD spanning Wednesfield to Tettenhall. The proposal below, is based upon initial informed discussions with the Tettenhall Community Forum, wider community participants, Rachel Arnold (local Artist), Rebecca Cresswell (project Arts Lead and owner of local arts consultancy, Cresswell Creations Art Ltd).

However, it is intended we now create an informed Stakeholder map of all contributors and stakeholders we wish to collaborate alongside to further and enrich the project.

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The project aims to bring communities together, explore and celebrate these historical localities where the battle spanned and promote education through art and community engagement.

There will be a dedicated venue to exhibit and display artwork, pick up resources and view historical information and artifacts as well as acting as a community creative space to focus on the development of workshops and the permanent artworks that we hope to commission.

Stakeholder and community engagement

Local and national stakeholder engagement will be imperative to the success of this project

Work so far

Local artist Rachel Arnold, has already held a series of creative workshops based at Wolverhampton Art Gallery working with 'Creative Blackcountry' and has conducted some passionate research surrounding Lady Aethelflaed and the Battle, inviting local communities and a wide range of workshop participants to attend, including local historians and writers about the subject. Rachel also organised a walk along the proposed trail to gather interest and raise awareness to local members of the community with a great turnout of the local community interested in this project already.

The event encouraged and stimulated creative ideas / debate and learning surrounding this historical event, also helping to inform what permanent artworks could be installed.

Our project proposal intends to define further community workshops and presentations to stakeholders including engagement activities to inform about this project and its context over the coming year/s.

Presentations and community activity ideas include:

Community workshops TBC

Presentations and educational events with local schools/colleges/university

Presentations to council members, trusts and charitable sponsors

Local interest groups

Corporate partners

Summer open days and creative activities for families

Public events

Example list of stakeholder engagements and collaborative working:

Local community groups/public

Local press/Express and Star

West Midlands Life magazine

Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) inclusive of following:

- Arts and Culture
- Development
- Education
- Environment/Planning departments

Archaeological societies

Canal and Rive side Trust

National Trust

Historic England

Natural England

English Heritage

NHS - Social Prescribing (Local GP Surgeries)

Local charities – Local Charities for disabled people

Palliative Care – Compton Care

Sports and social clubs events



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Local schools/Universities/ Colleges
Corporate businesses
Heritage Lottery
Care Homes
Local Archelogy Groups
Local Artists and Writers Groups
Creative Blackcountry

Temporary/Permanent Exhibition/Museum/Education centre

It is proposed there will be a dedicated space for the community and tourists to visit, view and learn about The Battle of Tettenhall and the key players of this historical event. The venue will provide an opportunity to engage with learning about this history, learning about our local landscape/nature/conservation and history via, play, creativity and an intended schedule of guest talks, community workshops and performance artists. Schedule to be prepared together with Arts Lead.

The information regarding the history of the battle, artwork and artwork designs would be curated and displayed at this venue.

Initially it is proposed that the space will be a rented, accessible venue close to the borough of Tettenhall, the space would be used as a workshop space also, for guest speakers, reenactors, schools parties and visitor groups etc. Suitable premises to be sought, requires all licences and third-party liability insurances for groups.

This will need to be kitted with suitable desks/chairs and developed for exhibition use, including display boards, cases for possible 'artefacts', costumes, books and documentation for people to engage with

The Project Lead would support in collaboration with the community trust and creative leads to curate such an exhibition

5- 10 year plan for a permanent build 'Tettenhall Education Hub and Museum)

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Looking to the future regarding facilities a permanent build to house a learning/education centre and museum is something that would be a major objective. Together with possible facilities café and shop. Locality to yet be defined with further detailed proposal to follow.

Commissioned pieces of Art, Writing and Poetry, Curation and Guest Speakers (exhibition)

Roles required

Arts Facilitation and Coordination of Exhibition

Project Arts Lead

Dedicated arts lead to develop scheme, prepare exhibition, prepare signage, budget handling, coordination and collaborate with stakeholders and promote events. Develop a programme of events/guest speakers and book visitor groups. Funded for 1 year initially on a part time basis

Lead Artist and

Commissioned artists

Briefs to be written by Arts Project Lead with this advertised locally, selected by Project Lead, Arts Director and Tettenhall Community Forum

Community workshops x 3 (different disciplines sort)

Funding of 6 x sessions each artist (estimated) suitable local artists with experience of working with public realising a final piece of artwork

Workshops for 1 year period during exhibition.

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Estimate of 8 – 10 final commissioned art works (for exhibition) to celebrate and interpret this period in history (brief to be written by Art Lead)

Example ideas: Stained glass panel design (view to being installed in permanent Learning Centre/Museum)

Ceramic /Textile artist piece

Painting /s depictions

Illustrated boards/comic books/Manuscripts

Commissioned Model (for exhibition)

An artist's impression of a detailed model landscape (Diorama) of the battlefield as a view point of Smestow Valley to compliment educational resources and a visual interpretation

Drone Video - To be on view in the exhibition

Drone footage and fly over video of Smestow Valley/Tettenhall commissioned by a professional drone/video creator, to show the area with narrative and subtitles for inclusion. Licences would be involved with this to gain permission to fly over certain parts.

A large flat screen TV will be required also to permanent have this rolling

Commissioned Educational resources:

Illustrated map/fliers, children friendly literature/display boards

Guest Speakers ideas: Local Historians, Archaeologists, Smestow Valley Rangers, Nature conservationists?

National Trust

Historic England

Local writers/artists

Reenactors

Communication and Marketing

A dedicated webpage will be launched to provide updates and encourage ideas and feedback from the community and wider stakeholders. This will be launched initially on the Tettenhall Community Forum website. It is aimed that a range of communications including surveys and links to information on promotional and community events regarding this project and its progress will be regularly updated so that the community always feel part of this project and can participate. The website will be administrated by the forum and launched Sept 24.

A dedicated Facebook Page/Twitter page could be another source of information platform for community access, and will include tasters of the project, updates, pictures and uploads on creative workshops and encouraging feedback.

This administration of both platforms will eventually need funding as the project grows and requires more dedicated comms and updates.

The Art Project Lead (Rebecca Cresswell) is currently taking responsibility to create and update such pages/platforms

Naming of project and or a 'national walking trail'

It may be very informative and lucrative for the community and Wolverhampton to gain approval for the trail to be officially named, literally placing the new walking trail on the map! Dedicated walking trails must be approved by various organisations and a business case would need to be planned with historical evidence accompanying for such a venture.

Examples of such national walking trials can be found throughout the country they can be navigated and found in tourist guides and walking literature, examples locally include:

‘The Mercian Way’

‘Coronation Way’

‘The Shropshire Way’

‘Offa’s Dyke Path’

All national walking routes are signposted and have an associated logo badge for way finding.

Commission of the Arts Trial

Sculptures and informative signage from Wednesfield to Smestow Valley

The installation and bespoke creation of a series of permanent artworks and bespoke signage is intended to be commissioned, designed and fabricated by local artists together with an illustrated map of the trail for people to pick up or download. The map will form part of tourist initiative for the area and would be available in local shops, tourist information and places such as local the Art Gallery

One commission for large outdoor sculpture design (ultimate show piece)

Commission of smaller sculptural pieces x 8

Illustrated boards (Illustrator required) potentially 8 illustrations for each sign accompanying sculpture

Illustrated /designed map

Print and marketing materials

Sculptures have to be graffiti/vandal proof/ H&S approval/planning permissions from council /discussions to be held

Locality of artworks and trail

Varying significant localities for the artwork would be identified and permanently installed after significant collaboration with stakeholders and the local council.

The art and historical symbolism of this artwork is proposed to be installed along Smestow Valley and stretching as far as Wednesfield on the trail. The art and sculptures would aim to further enrich this absolute 'green space gem' nestled between suburbs. The art would be researched, appropriate and sustainable for longevity and H&S requirements. Selected artists and fabricators would be selected to follow a brief written and presented by the Arts Lead and Tettenhall Community Forum.

The Smestow Valley includes the Staffordshire and Worcester canal, scrubland and meadow land. In historical research it is widely perceived that the Smestow Valley was the area where the battle took place.

As well as smaller sculptures along this trail, a key large scale visual piece placed as an over arching celebration of 'The Warrior Queen' is also envisaged to be designed/commissioned, this could be on a roundabout or significant locality for the community to stimulate awareness. Localities to be confirmed together with collaborative discussions with WCC.

Benefit of visual arts trail

- **Fantastic visual steer the senses, good marketing/photo opportunities, bring a smile and educate.**
- **Good for way marking**
- Encourage tourists and more tourism - increase footfall learn about this event in history /local area how it changed/how landscape looked (local

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shops/hospitality/hotels/cafes benefit from additional foot fall and custom

- Helping to support nature conservation of the Smestow Valley and surrounds
- Encourage wider sponsors and collaborations

Wolverhampton City Council –

Arts and Culture

Development

Education

Environment/Planning departments

Canal and Rive side Trust

National Trust

Historic England

Natural England

English Heritage

NHS - Social Prescribing (Local GP Surgeries)

Local charities – Local Charities for disabled people

Palliative Care – Compton Care

Sports and social clubs' events

Local schools'/Universities/ Colleges

Corporate businesses

Heritage Lottery

Care Homes

Local Archelogy Groups

Local Artists and Writers Groups

- Signage can include further information about nature/QR codes to tap into further links and educational learning resources. Learning about nature then and now? Commission of illustrated boards

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- Encourage inclusivity and diversity learning materials new resources,
- New ways of expressing and depicting history in the form of artwork
- Walking/Cycling getting out into green spaces for health, accessible walks
- Other spin off community events community group/schools visits, archeologic groups
- Sparks and encourages interest in local history and formidable figures in history

Benefit to health and well being

- investments centred around walking and way finding/promoting health living/social prescribing/walking for health and mental health (local GP and hospitals)
- Local charities/disability groups, themed walks and events
- Re-enactments
- Install and encourage debate/conversation for visitors/schools/educators learning aids

Be a permanent point of historical reflection/opportunity to photograph, highlight an interesting fact about that location history (what it would have been like

There are a range of fantastic localities underpinning the areas where the battle took place that can be ear marked for educational visits/walking and way finding markers

One commission for large outdoor sculpture design (ultimate show piece)

Commission of smaller sculptural pieces x 8

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Illustrated boards (Illustrator required) potentially 8 illustrations for each sign accompanying sculpture

Illustrated /designed map

Print and marketing materials

Sculptures must be graffiti/vandal proof/ H&S approval/planning permissions from council /discussions to be held

Benefits for the community and beyond

Educational awareness, embed this history into local schools /colleges Universities

Estimate Timeline

Phase 1

Forum and Arts Project Lead appointed (voluntary currently)- June 24

Project proposal and plan created – August 24

Sign off final proposal – Sept 24

Finding streams and collaborative meeting with WCC (Wolverhampton CITY Council) commence,

Funding application submissions

Art Lead to source other funding applications for exhibition and community engagement venue, Sept – Feb 24

Communication/meeting with National Trust/Historic England **Sept – Dec 24**

Further speculative communication to gather interest with stakeholders

Secure funding for Arts Lead/marketing/Creative workshops Dec 24



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Aim -Secure funding for exhibition space by Feb 25

Secure funding for art trail – June 25

Appointment short term and longer-term roles and responsibilities

Project Art Lead -

– organisation and mentoring of artists

Creative Director

Local artists and commissioned pieces of art