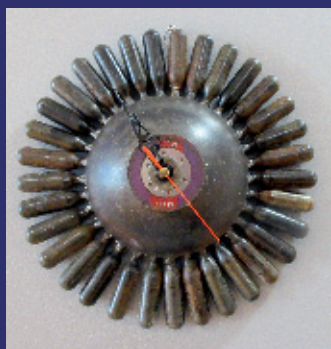


Artlandish



Report on Hereford Community Land Trust's Empty Shops Project,
Renamed Artlandish January - March 2025



Sample of comments from the Visitors’ Books

‘Fabulous – I came back with family.’

‘Great to have access to this in Hereford to see something different & bring some use to empty shops.’

‘Great to see empty spaces used like this’

‘Since Artlandish has opened two gallery spaces (a) I have visited most of the exhibitions
(b) I encourage my family and friends to visit. They have, and have also enjoyed.
Hereford will prosper in its identity because of art ‘galleries’ such as these.’

‘This is brilliant; just what Hereford needs.’

‘I would love to come every week.’

‘We came to Hereford to specifically see this.’

“This is a vital resource for the cultural capital of Hereford.’

‘The main reason I came to Hereford is to see art/craft exhibitions.’

‘I’ve visited Hereford City Centre way more than usual over the past few weeks just to see the exhibitions.’

‘The exhibition drew me to Hereford – something I rarely do.
All the work has provoked thought as well as admiration.’

‘This is long overdue in Hereford and long may it continue.
I came especially from Malvern for this as there’s nowhere else nearby like it.’

‘Hereford needs more of this please.’

‘Wonderful idea to lift the spirit of Hereford.’

‘Hereford has been crying out for this.’

‘Brilliant energy.’

‘Looking forward to seeing a permanent space like this in Hereford.’

‘Hereford needed to be refreshed and this is what Artlandish has done. I hope it continues.’

‘More please.’

‘Please can you get more art for people?’ (8-year old)

‘It will inspire my work, be a good place to go with friends; just nice to see.’

‘Creativity should be embraced and shared, particularly with those without access to art.’

‘Convenient location – free – not intimidating.’

‘Without a permanent art space the town is rather sad.’

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Background to Artlandish

During 2020 Hereford Community Land Trust (HCLT) undertook a survey of open spaces (often small car parks) and buildings that appeared under-used within the historic core of Hereford City, to see whether any might lend themselves to adaptation to provide affordable housing. The survey include visual recording of the external condition of buildings along with desktop research into ownership and whether a building was Listed. One idea emanating from this was for an Artists and Makers Quarter in the Aubrey / Berrington Street area of the city that would also provide the opportunity for affordable housing.

HCLT carried out a survey in December 2020 and respondents showed considerable interest in this idea. HCLT then investigated two options for permanent artists and makers premises (workspaces, communal equipment and exhibition space) in the Berrington / Aubrey Street area, but neither came to fruition, though one potential scheme remains in limbo.

HCLT then decided to investigate a project that utilised empty shops, and so Artlandish was born, its name chosen by those who got involved early on in what was initially called The Empty Shops Project.

Its aim was to assist in updating the survey we had carried out in 2020 and assess the current demand for artists and makers workspaces along with shared facilities and exhibition space in central Hereford; to assess whether using empty shops to create this would increase footfall in central Hereford; to gauge public reaction to having such facilities on a long term basis and how people might choose to use them; and to gather how artists and makers would respond to having such facilities available.

The project was made possible through funding from the UK Government's Herefordshire UKSPF Cultural Development Grant Scheme, Hereford City Council, The Elmley Foundation, The Mumford Memorial Trust and Herefordshire Community Foundation.



Establishing the Project

The project was instigated by Hereford Community Land Trust, Andy Johnson being the Board Member who took on responsibility for establishing and co-ordinating the overall project.

The Trust worked with Herefordshire Council as to the possibility of using an empty shop in the council's ownership in the Maylords area of the city. This enabled the Trust to work with a local property owner who was keen to see their shops occupied and gave us the necessary stability to make applications for the required funds and await responses, as there were a number of empty shops in a single ownership, meaning that it was likely that one would always be available.

We had also found a key player for the project in Chris Plant. Chris is an artist who works in light (see: www.colour-burst.com) and he volunteered his time for three days a week in the shop, acting as a base around which exhibitions, other events and use of workspaces by artists could take place. He brought with him the experience of working in an empty shops project in Durham, as well as experience from Manchester and Birmingham.

Core funds was acquired initially from Hereford City Council, which covered anticipated volunteer expenses, equipment to mount exhibitions and publicity materials. This gave us the opportunity to match funds and so we were also able to obtain grants from The Elmley Foundation, Mumford Memorial Trust and Herefordshire Community Foundation to cover other costs, critically service and insurance charges for the shop. This would have allowed for an 8-week project in one shop, whilst still leaving the question as to whether we would need to pay rates unanswered and any cost uncovered by grants.

We were now juggling with timing: dates by when grant funding needed to have been spent, and when Chris could commit to 8 solid weeks of volunteering. Meanwhile we started to build up a pool of volunteers who would be happy to 'staff' exhibitions in the shop. With only 8 weeks in which to run the project and to gather sufficient information to gauge the result, we decided to have a rapid turnover of exhibitions – one each week – so as to build momentum and involve as many artists and makers as possible.

At the same time another round of bidding for UKSPF monies was announced, so we applied for funds which would allow the project to be expanded by 3 further weeks, to ensure we could cover the cost of rates and also allow us to use the exhibition space at Bloom.Space's Eign Gate frontage. The latter, we felt, would allow a much greater 'street' presence for the project, so giving it greater reach and contact with the public as well as allowing for some larger exhibitions as well as a greater variety. It was understood that if we were successful in the bid (as we were), all those exhibiting at Bloom.Space would have to 'staff' their exhibitions as the project didn't have any surplus volunteers.

By this time it was becoming clear that we would have to run the project as from mid January, as that time suited Chris Plant and more of the volunteers would be available following on from their commitments in the run up to Christmas. This meant that the project might be subject to the vicissitudes of the weather as well as missing an optimal time (Christmas) when artists and makers might sell some of their work. We did not consider January and February optimal months, but if we could make the project work then

Getting Going

With some 3 weeks to go before we were due to take occupation of 1 Gomond Street, the shop we had agreed with Herefordshire Council’s property department would be the empty shop most suitable for us based on size and cost, we were told that it was no longer available. The slightly smaller 7 Gomond Street was our next choice: we couldn’t afford to go for a larger property. This meant Chris had to change some of his ideas, for he had contemplated using the large open space on the first floor at no.1 for some events and talks as well as workspaces, but the smaller and subdivided space upstairs at no.7 restricted these options. Set against this, there was more natural light upstairs at no.7 which was preferable for some artists carrying out work.

We agreed that Chris would concentrate on managing exhibitions and affairs at 7 Gomond Street, and Andy on co-ordinating those at Bloom.Space.



We took possession of no.7 on 13th January and worked with a group of volunteers to get the shop ready: touching up walls, screwing down loose flooring, fixing secure bolts to the delivery doors and repairing those to the front door as well as generally cleaning and tidying both upstairs and downstairs. We also fixed the Artlandish sign board to the front of the shop.

Chris set up an exhibition of his own Light work as the first show at no.7. Meanwhile, our pool of shop ‘staff’ volunteers had reduced somewhat due to a range of family commitments that had arisen, so we agreed to open each exhibition for just a 4-day period between Wednesday and Saturday, from 10am to 5pm. That would also allow three days for dismantling one exhibition and mounting the next.

Chris was joined by Libby Vale, who had taught at Hereford College of Arts. With their wide contacts they were soon able to pull together a number of artists to devise exhibitions on a range of themes. That following Chris’s ‘The Medium in the Moment’ (his light-based show) was on Folk Art and attracted so much interest it was decided to keep it on for 2 weeks (of 4 days each). Thereafter it was back to 4-day shows.

Andy, meanwhile, had been keeping staff at Hereford College of Arts (HCA) up to date with developments, and soon some times were booked by them for exhibitions at both Gomond Street and Bloom.Space. He had also been in touch with the Herefordshire Visual Artists’ Network, coordinated by Gemma Moore, and they opted for an exhibition at Bloom.Space. Richard Gilbert, who has coordinated shows of art based around the theme ‘In Search of the Perfect Hill’, also became interested in curating a show. He also suggested contacting Hereford Cathedral School to see if they might wish to mount an exhibition, and under the leadership of Frances Greenough they did.

With the exhibition area at Bloom.Space soon becoming perceived as the best exhibition place in Hereford due to its size, lighting, display boards, huge window area and easy access for people with a physical disability combined with the welcoming atmosphere created by its owner Jack Wratten and staff member Kim Thomas, we were soon able to fill some of the small gaps between the other exhibitions with shows by solo artists. At Bloom.Space it was up to the artists to arrange their own ‘staffing’ and decide which days and between what hours to open to the public.

Within a couple of weeks the desire for people to be part of an exhibition, and the numbers involved, meant that we had no time to focus on other things we had wanted to try, such as taster sessions, talks and business training for artists. (Mind you, with no heating to speak of at 7 Gomond Street, sitting around for any length of time in January and February especially was uncomfortable!)

Collecting Information

Those ‘staffing’ or invigilating the exhibitions were equipped with ‘clickers’ so as to count numbers of visitors. The numbers for each day were then recorded in Visitors’ Books kept at each location. (One of the HCA exhibitions only recorded the total for the 3 days of the exhibition.) It is from these figures that Table 1 on page 9 has been created, showing how many of the 3,823 visitors came to each exhibition on each day.

The Visitors’ Books were divided into a series of columns with the following headings:

Name	Home town or village & county	Would you wish to have your own workspace in a project such as Artlandish? (If YES, please take a leaflet and complete our survey)	If Artlandish was present throughout the year with a changing exhibition every week or two along with other events, would it make you more likely to visit Hereford City Centre?	How might you like to make use of Artlandish over and above visiting exhibitions?	Use this column for any other comments or thoughts
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It is from the second heading that Table 2 on pages 10-11 has been created, showing the home locations of the 793 visitors who completed this section of the Visitors’ Book. (For reasons as to why visitors may not have completed the Visitors’ Books, please see the note under Table 2 on page 11.)



A total of 193 visitors said they would like to have their ‘own workspace in a project such as Artlandish’ (126 of those visiting 7 Gomond Street and 67 of those visiting Bloom.Space; it looks like few if any wrote ‘yes’ in both venues). A further 25 said ‘maybe’ or ‘possibly’ (24 of those visiting 7 Gomond Street and 12 visiting Bloom.Space). Unfortunately, with so many different people invigilating exhibitions and, at times, the sheer numbers of visitors, fewer of these visitors than should have been were handed the leaflet which gave them the details of how to complete the online survey where they could express their needs in detail. (The leaflet is shown alongside.) For this reason we are keeping the online survey active for a few more weeks whilst we continue to publicise the survey. These results will be added to the report in due course.

The Visitors’ Books recorded a number of comments in answer to the question ‘If Artlandish was present throughout the year with a changing exhibition every week or two along with other events, would it make you more likely to visit Hereford City Centre?’ A list of most of these (some are not included as they are near duplicates of similar responses) are included on pages 12-13.

In answer to the question ‘How might you like to make use of Artlandish over and above visiting exhibitions?’, please see Table 3 on page 14.

List of Exhibitions

7 Gomond Street

22-25th January: ‘The Medium in the Moment’ by Chris Plant
29th January to 1st February & 5th to 8th February: ‘Folk Art’, with 18 artists
14th to 16th February: ‘Unscripted’; Hereford College of Arts show of recent work by 5 Fine Art Graduates
19th to 22nd February: ‘The Natural World’, with 12 artists
26th February to 1st March: ‘Are Friends Electric?’ with 11 artists
5th March to 8th March: ‘Diversity: What’s the Difference?’ with 14 artists
12th March to 15th March: ‘Sustainability’ with 13 artists
19th to 22nd March: Exhibition by Imposure group of 7 artists
24th to 29th March: Final exhibition with 13 artists (including work by Julia Goldsmith)

Bloom.Space

25th, and 29th January to 1st February: ‘The Return of the Sun’, a solo exhibition by Sarah Jones. (This included, on Saturday 1st, a celebration of Imbolc with Sun Cake, refreshments and artist’s talk.)
7th and 8th February: An exhibition of work by Hereford Cathedral School pupils curated by Year 12 Art and Design students
14th to 16th February: ‘Emergence’, an HCA exhibition of work in progress by 8 artists
21st to 23rd February: ‘In Space; Escaping Two-Dimensionality in Photography’ by HCA students
24th to 27th February: Tree Stories, a solo exhibition by Elizabeth Terzza
1st to 12th March: ‘Unseen’, an exhibition of work by 26 members of Herefordshire Visual Artists’ Network
15th to 29th March: ‘In Search of the Perfect Hill’, with 30 artists

Key to Table opposite

* Figure for those attending a Private View on that day
** Figure includes those attending a Private View on that day
*** Figure includes those attending a celebration of Inbolc held that day as part of the exhibition
+ Figure for those who dropped in to the exhibition on the day it was being erected and technically not open
++ The figures are rounded to the nearest whole number and do not include the 5 visitors noted under + above, nor the 91 who visited the HCA Pop Up in 7 Gomond Street as it is not known how many visited on each individual day.

TABLE 1: Numbers of Visitors

7 Gomond Street	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
The Medium in the Moment			22 Jan	23 Jan	24 Jan	25 Jan		
			12	12	26	25		75
Folk Art			29 Jan	30 Jan	31 Jan	1 Feb		
			47	44	51 + 101*	81		324
			5 Feb	6 Feb	7 Feb	8 Feb		
			27	31	39	115		212
Unscripted (HCA)					14 Feb	15 Feb	16 Feb	
								91 (only total recorded)
The Natural World			19 Feb	20 Feb	21 Feb	22 Feb		
			45	30	51**	58		184
Are Friends Electric?			26 Feb	27 Feb	28 Feb	1 Mar		
			26	28	50**	43		147
Diversity: What’s the Difference?			5 Mar	6 Mar	7 Mar	8 Mar		
			42	27	34 + 69*	49		221
Sustainability			12 Mar	13 Mar	14 Mar	15 Mar		
			14	22	103**	43		182
Imposure		18 Mar ⁺	19 Mar	20 Mar	21 Mar	22 Mar		
		5	17	26	37 + 48*	60		193
Final exhibition			26 Mar	27 Mar	28 Mar	29 Mar		
			26	24	42**	38		130
Bloom.Space	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	
The Return of the Sun						25 Jan		
						33		33
			29 Jan	30 Jan	31 Jan	1 Feb		
			30	15	22	47***		114
Hereford Cathedral School					7 Feb	8 Feb		
					83	126		209
Emergence (HCA)					14 Feb	15 Feb	16 Feb	
					57	52	10	119
In Space (HCA)					21 Feb	22 Feb	23 Feb	
					21	28	30	79
Tree Stories	24 Feb	25 Feb	26 Feb	27 Feb				
	19	15	32	15				81
Unseen					28 Feb	1 Mar	2 Mar	
					73*	57	27	157
	3 Mar	4 Mar	5 Mar	6 Mar	7 Mar	8 Mar	9 Mar	
	19	25	27	14	30	32	22	169
	10 Mar	11 Mar	12 Mar					
	17	7	29					53
In Search of the Perfect Hill						15 Mar	16 Mar	
						124**	46	170
	17 Mar	18 Mar	19 Mar	20 Mar	21 Mar	22 Mar	23 Mar	
	42	38	36	49	58	142	52	417
	24 Mar	25 Mar	26 Mar	27 Mar	28 Mar	29 Mar		
	60	59	55	43	90	156**		463
TOTAL	157	144	465	380	1,085	1,309	187	3,823
Rounded average per day ⁺⁺	31	29	31	27	64	69	31	

TABLE 2: Home Area of Visitors who completed the Visitors’ Books

Home Area	Exhibition Site visited		TOTAL
	7 Gomond Street	Bloom Space	
Hereford	177	177	354
Leominster	14	6	20
Ross-on-Wye	11	7	18
Kington	5	9	14
Bromyard	4	4	8
Ledbury	3	4	7
Elsewhere in Herefordshire	71	86	157
Malvern	12	15	27
Hay on Wye	11	7	18
Worcester	8	8	16
London	4	8	12
Ludlow	7	3	10
Cheltenham/ Gloucester/Glos	5	4	9
Monmouth	2	6	8
Abergavenny	1	6	7
Knighton & Knucklas		7	7
Tenbury Wells	4	2	6
Rural Shropshire	2	4	6
Bristol	4	2	6
Presteigne	3	2	5
Rural Wales	4	1	5
Birmingham	2	3	5
Caerphilly	2	2	4
Cardiff	2	2	4
Shrewsbury		4	4
Cambridgeshire	1	2	3
Church Stretton		3	3
Ireland	3		3
Ukraine	2	1	3
Brecon	1	1	2
Chepstow	1	1	2
Devon	1	1	2
France	1	1	2
New Zealand		2	2
Norfolk	1	1	2
Oxfordshire	2		2
Pembrokeshire		2	2
Sandhurst		2	2
Warwickshire	1	1	2
Aldershot		1	1
Caerleon		1	1
Cheshire		1	1
Cwmbran		1	1
Derbyshire	1		1
Flintshire		1	1
Forest of Dean	1		1

Lincolnshire		1	1
Llandrindod Wells		1	1
Malmesbury	1		1
Manchester	1		1
Milton Keynes		1	1
Port Talbot	1		1
Raglan		1	1
Swindon	1		1
Wiltshire	1		1
Windsor		1	1
Wolverhampton	1		1
Worcestershire	1		1
Yorkshire	1		1
Total:			793

Notes to Table 2:

- 1. The area shaded yellow covers Herefordshire.
- 2. Total responses in visitors’ books of ‘Home Area’ at 793 represents 20.7% of visitors.
- 3) Numbers of people didn’t complete a Visitors’ Book for a variety of reasons:
 - a) Some invigilators of exhibitions were better at encouraging visitors to complete the books than others
 - b) Some visitors were couples but only recorded one name/home area
 - c) Some visited two or more exhibitions and felt that one entry was sufficient
 - d) At times exhibitions were so busy it was difficult for invigilators to chat to all visitors and encourage them to record their comments.
 - e) Some visitors simply didn’t want to.

Visitors from areas outside Herefordshire are not always the same people visiting two exhibitions on the same day, or even making return visits. Thus the 9 visitors from Gloucester/Cheltenham/Glos are 9 different individuals visiting on different days; likewise those from Norfolk and Warwickshire.

In answering the question (included in the Visitors' Books):

'If Artlandish was present throughout the year with a changing exhibition every week or two along with other events, would it make you more likely to visit Hereford City Centre?'

Only 5 people said 'no' (one of whom added 'I come into town often anyway' and another 'but only because I come all the time'), two of the others qualifying it by saying that they lived far away. One said 'maybe not' and a handful wrote 'n/a' (possibly because of where they lived).

The vast majority (some circa 780 of those who answered the question) said 'Yes', several 'Yes!' as well as many saying 'Absolutely' and 'Definitely'. Some gave more than one word answers as listed below (with the person's home town often noted alongside):

'Of course – it's brilliant to have 'shops' open – I love a vibrant city space.' (Hereford)

'Yes – it did today.'

'Yes I would visit so much more.' (Hay)

Yes – putting art and creativity in central and accessible places supports the well-being of the city and its visitors.' (Cardiff)

'Yes, definitely – I love it.' (Sutton St Nicholas)

'Yes! It would be a fantastic place to bring my visitors.' (Hereford)

Yes, very much so. The quality and variety and themes explored in the Artlandish exhibitions are so interesting and inspiring.' (Ledbury)

Yes! Came just for this.' (Worcester)

Yes, only came for this.' (Malvern)

'100%' (Birmingham)

'10000%' (Hereford)

'Yes, I would love to attend more exhibitions – it is always great to see artists in Hereford.'

'Yes, it makes the town centre much more appealing.' (Hereford)

'Yes, for each exhibition.' (Hereford)

'Another world in Hereford, Thank You.' (Herefordshire)

'Absolutely. It would be a great asset.' (Hope-under-Dinmore)

'Oh 100%. Hereford needs all the creative spaces it can get.' (Hereford)

'Yes, I would come to visit.' (Weobley)

'It will arouse interest.'

'Yes – definitely – it's a highlight.'

'I would visit much more often.'

'It would be a fantastic place to bring visitors.'

'Back again! Excited for future shops and projects.'

'Second visit as exhibitions change.'

'Will be back.'

'Fabulous – I came back with family.'

'Definitely – it's wonderful to see art so often.'

'I would love to come every week.' (Llangrove)

'As much, but with more reason other than mundane.'

'Definitely, it's wonderful to see art so often.' (Pencombe)

'Absolutely. Since Artlandish/Bloom have opened two gallery spaces (a) I have visited most of the exhibitions (b) I encourage my family and friends to visit. They have, and have also enjoyed. Hereford will prosper in its identity because of art 'galleries' such as these.' (Ledbury)

'Yes. Changing monthly fine too! Easier for you + actually for the public to keep up.'

'Absolutely. My friend and I came here today specifically because of the exhibition 'In Search of the Perfect Hill.' (Shrewsbury)

'Yes – we came to Hereford to specifically see this.' (Church Stretton)

'Yes; love its concept.'

'Definitely – it would help make Hereford a major arts hub.'

'Yes, that's why I'm here today.' (Ireland)

'Yes, it would give another reason to come in and spend time to explore.' (Hereford)

'Very likely. It opens questions and creates conversation.'

'Yes – it's the only reason I came to Hereford.' (Malvern)

'Absolutely, in fact I've done that three times.' (Hereford)

'Yes!! This is a vital resource for the cultural capital of Hereford' (Hereford)

'Yes definitely – the main reason I came to Hereford is to see art/craft exhibitions (and to eat in Bill's Kitchen!)' (Tenbury Wells)

'Yes of course. We came expressly to see the exhibition. We've spent about £30 in the city as well. We would come for more!' (Worcester)

'Yes and it would mean people I know would visit too.' (Hereford)

'Definitely – I've visited Hereford City Centre way more than usual over the past few weeks just to see the exhibitions.' (Hereford)

'Certainly, the initiative is, and could in the long term, act as an inspiration.'

'The exhibition drew me to Hereford – something I rarely do. All the work has provoked thought as well as admiration.' (Bromyard)

'This is long overdue in Hereford and long may it continue. I came especially from Malvern for this as there's nowhere else nearby like it.' (Malvern)

'I absolutely love coming in here and looking at the different displays each week, and would continue to do so.' (Hereford)

'A brilliant event for Hereford.'

'Lovely to see so much art in the city.'

**TABLE 3: Answers to the question in the Visitors’ Books:
‘How might you like to make use of Artlandish over and above
visiting exhibitions?’**

The following suggestions were made:

Attending or giving workshops/interactive events	61
Being able to meet other artists/collaborate with others/network	44
Being able to exhibit	37
Attend talks by artists	12
Have an opportunity to purchase art	8
Encourage clubs/activities for children	5
Attend performance art	4
Attend or give poetry readings	4
Attend music events	3
Attend debates	1
See School Exhibitions	1
Have an Art & Wine evening class	1
Attend film/photography presentations	1
Have a ceramic exhibition	1
See some woodworking	1
Story telling	1
Craft market	1
See something immersive	1

**Other thoughts and comments about Artlandish
made in the Visitors’ Books include:**

‘Great idea, hope it’s popular.’
‘Great to have art around the place.’
‘Inspirational; engaging.’
‘Wonderful work and brilliant project.’
‘Incredible.’
‘Wonderful – just what Hereford needs.’
‘Love the whole idea.’
‘Amazing.’
‘Fabulous.’
‘Encouraging more contemporary art spaces in Hereford.’
‘Brilliant idea – please continue bringing cultural excellence to Herefordshire.’
‘Exciting project – good luck.’
‘Really inspiring art. Thank you.’
‘Hereford needs this place and it’s fantastic someone has taken such an initiative.’
‘A great idea. Anything which keeps art accessible to all.’
‘Excellent concept.’
‘A terrific start.’
‘Lovely place, wonderful, friendly & knowledgeable staff.’
‘The possibility to see some art would be amazing.’
‘I want to return to absorb the text on the walls to then use my imagination to go into the exhibits from my experience to life.’
‘It’s great to watch the artwork of local young artists. More please!’

‘Share with friends & family.’
‘Art has always dwelt in the fabric of this lovely city.’
‘This is great, much needed in Hereford.’
‘Bringing people to share awesome art.’
‘Connections: Bringing all types of people together.’
‘Excellent way to discover new artists.’
‘It’s great to see an artistic community developing in Hereford with a range of activities offered.’
‘It is so refreshing to see this imaginative and original art work. This is what Hereford needs. Such a good idea to use empty shops. Looking forward to the next exhibition.’
‘Great to be able to visit multiple art exhibitions in a single visit to Hereford, and to have an hour or two’s art tour’
‘Hereford needed to be refreshed and this is what Artlandish has done. I hope it continues.’
‘Seeing new unexpected work is good for my head, meeting artists and contributing [to] my own art practice if I can.’
‘We need Artlandish to appreciate nature and folklore.’
‘Hereford needs more of this please.’
‘Inspires artists and non artists to be creative and share in creativity.’
‘An experience we don’t currently have in Hereford.’
‘Great for Hereford.’
‘Such a good idea, much needed in Hereford.’
‘Game changer.’
‘Wonderful idea to lift the spirit of Hereford.’
‘Would love to see more exhibitions.’
‘A communal environment where people can get together.’
‘Hereford has been crying out for this.’
‘Brilliant energy.’
‘I would love the opportunity to buy and support artists’ work.’
‘Looking forward to seeing a permanent space like this in Hereford.’
‘I would like to purchase art.’
‘Good use of empty spaces.’
‘It makes the town much more appealing.’
‘More please – this was wonderful quality.’
‘Please can you get more art for people?’ (8-year old)
‘Wonderful to see art alive and well.’
‘Hereford needs all the creative spaces it can get.’
‘Lovely to see so many different types of work.’
‘Great to have access to this in Hereford to see something different and bring some life to empty shops.’
‘It would be a great asset.’
‘Keep it up.’
‘This exhibition space is one of the best art shows I’ve seen in my 25 years.’
‘More art in Hereford.’
‘More please.’
‘Love it! More of this please.’
‘Changes an almost ghost town.’
‘Needs to be continued.’
‘A highlight of Hereford.’
‘Very high standard of presentation.’
‘Larger expos.’
‘Brilliant.’
‘Fantastic to see this kind of space in Hereford – may you have great success.’
‘Fantastic to see vibrant and new events in what would be an empty commercial property.’
‘Beautiful art – reminds me of Australia! Serious lack of art in Hereford.’
‘Lovely to come in and be able to see colourful art.’
‘I love being able to see creativity when I have a day off & take myself off on an artist’s date.’
‘Embrace your weird Hereford.’
‘Good to see [an] artistic community developing in Hereford.’
‘Creativity should be embraced and shared, particularly with those without access to art.’

‘Great focal point to visit.’
 ‘Convenient location – free – not intimidating.’
 ‘Great to see empty spaces being used like this.’
 ‘Changing exhibitions often.’
 ‘Lovely to see so much art in Hereford.’
 ‘Always good to see interesting work in Hereford.’
 ‘More is More.’
 ‘We need more of this.’
 ‘Without a permanent art space the town is rather sad.’
 ‘Great use of empty/redundant space.’
 ‘Good to see a changing space and chat with the artists.’
 ‘I would love to come every week.’
 ‘Every empty shop given to artists for a great time.’
 ‘Places lose their soul without things like this.’
 ‘Thank you for slowing down my day.’
 ‘Being part of this exhibition has truly sparked my creativity.’
 ‘Hereford needs a place like Artlandish.’
 ‘Fabulous ideas, needs to keep going.’
 ‘Hereford needs more of this type of space.’
 ‘Fantastic idea & exhibitions inspiring.’
 ‘Lovely to have this in town; can feel the enthusiasm and energy.’
 I am so happy to see art being celebrated in Hereford.’
 ‘Outstanding gallery.’
 ‘Lovely to see these empty spaces being used for these art events.’
 ‘Great to see young artists in a central location.’
 ‘Wonderful to see art in Hereford.’
 ‘Lovely find.’
 ‘Figurehead for a permanent creative space in Hereford for young and old.’
 ‘Fab to have in Hereford.’
 ‘Great project – always interesting.’
 ‘Really good to nurture a burgeoning arts community in the shire.’
 ‘Amazing place – please keep it going.’
 ‘Love ya Artlandish.’
 ‘So much fun.’
 ‘Best exhibition I’ve been in.’
 ‘Inspirational. Such an important facility – well done, keep it going!’
 ‘Needs to be continued.’
 ‘Hereford needs more of this type of space – Artlandish.’
 ‘Lovely to have this in town; can feel the enthusiasm and energy.’
 ‘How refreshing to fill spaces with joy.’
 ‘Amazing space much needed to fuel the creative community of Hereford.’
 ‘I love the community & inclusive aspect.’
 ‘Having an exhibition to look at each week in an empty shop in a street not on my usual destination has encouraged me to change my habits.’
 ‘A space for the more fragile in our society.’
 ‘We’ve really enjoyed the chance to meet the artists, talk about work in progress and absorb good vibes.’
 ‘This is such a great opportunity to discover new artists. Hereford is a city of culture and art. And this space adds to its artistic reputation. We need more spaces like this one.’
 ‘Absolutely essential for Hereford cultural life.’
 ‘To visit for quiet reflection and inspiration – so good for the mood.’
 ‘There is a brilliant art community in this county. There is also an important art college in the region and the students and artists need space to exhibit. And while I’ve been writing this, groups of young people have visited. These spaces are an important cultural place to discover art.’
 ‘If Artlandish existed throughout the year maybe the exhibitions could be on for longer.’
 ‘Improved my visit to the city centre one hundred fold.’

Lessons learnt from the Project

Length of exhibitions

Having such a rapid turnover of exhibitions does not allow for word of mouth about those exhibitions to spread and was exhausting for all the volunteers. It was done for a reason, as stated earlier, so as to give a short-lived project traction and allow for as many people as possible to be involved. Initial thoughts if Artlandish became permanent are that the majority of exhibitions should be on for two weeks.

Best days and times for opening exhibitions

Table 1 on page 9 suggests that Fridays and Saturdays were the most popular days for people to visit, but the figures are skewed by the fact that Private Views largely occurred on these days when many of those who might hope to visit an exhibition because they knew one of the artists involved would be more likely to attend.

In reality, each day of the week probably attracted an equivalent number of casual visitors, with a slightly larger footfall on Saturday.

Wednesday was anticipated to be a good day due to the presence of the market in High Town, but as both Gomond Street and Eign Gate have lower footfalls than Commercial Street and Widemarsh Street, the market was not a clear guarantor of additional footfall. No doubt if the knowledge of Artlandish continued to permeate the general public’s conscience, this would have eventually proved to be the case.

Very few visitors came to the exhibitions in Gomond Street between 10 and 11am. Visitor numbers often declined again between 4 and 5pm at this venue, with several of the nearby shops closing at 4pm. Most exhibitions at Bloom.Space started at 11am and ended at either 4, 4.30 or 5pm. Probably the optimum hours to be open would be 11am to 5pm.

Time required: permanent staff and volunteer helpers

As the project continued, volunteers who had committed to staff 7 Gomond Street kept on having to rearrange their times due to a variety of circumstances. This took considerable time to reorganise and occasionally keys were mislaid or messages became mixed, increasing exhaustion amongst those most closely involved. Added to the sheer time to coordinate, mount and advertise exhibitions, it is felt that a permanent project would need some paid staff time.

Co-ordination of publicity

With a website, several instagram accounts and a facebook page, coordination of publicity fell apart. If the project had continued we would have had to revamp how we handled this and kept it more coordinated.

Requests for Workspaces

The number of people requesting workspaces (193; see page 7) shows there is a demand. From conversations with artists and makers, they liked the idea of having a space where they could come and go as time suited with an ability to interact with others. Though Abigail Appleton has invested in workspaces for Hereford College of Arts (HCA) students on the campus, which she says are not fully used, we gained the impression that many students liked the ability to use a slightly more ‘anarchic’ space and also the ability to try inexpensive older equipment (for example slide projectors) which could provide them with more options.

Payment of rates; the advantage of being a charity

Herefordshire Council’s rating department could not give us a decision as to what level of rates we would be charged until we occupied a shop, set up a rates account and had submitted a utility bill (the latter a fraud prevention measure). This meant we did not know how much we would need to pay for rates until we had been in occupation for some time. As this was Hereford Community Land Trust’s only property, we were given the small business rates relief. We are still to hear about our application for discretionary rates relief. Clearly being a charity would be an advantage as far as payment of rates is concerned. (See also ‘A new organisation for a permanent Artlandish? on page 20.)

Artists combining for exhibitions

It became clear that the variety and number of exhibitions encouraged a number of high-quality artists and makers who had not exhibited before and didn't know how to go about getting involved in an exhibition at little cost to come forward and gain confidence from having their work exhibited.

Full-time artists (i.e. those who make a living solely from their art) also expressed appreciation in being involved in exhibitions with a range of other artists (let's call them 'less-professional') as they valued the different atmosphere of such an exhibition to those in which they usually featured, and also felt they gave other artists a helping hand.

Heating!

7 Gomond Street was cold! There was no heating apart from electric heaters that we managed to scrounge. If Artlandish was to start again, we would need to ensure we could provide effective and affordable heating arrangements to allow for use of workspaces and events.

Demand

As knowledge of the project grew we reached a point where we had to turn potential exhibitors away. We had wanted to host Cup Ceramics' pot-throwing days in 7 Gomond Street, but we did not have the space to do this alongside exhibitions. The Herefordshire Art and Craft Society wanted to host an exhibition, but by the time we were in mutual contact there were only options for a couple of days in one or other venue which did not make it worth their while. The dates that Artlandish operated did not suit any participating by the Sixth Form College, and nor did we have the chance to invite schools other than the Cathedral School to become involved.

This shows the potential that Artlandish could unleash if established on a permanent basis.

Stated Benefits of the Project (see also opposite)

A space for artists and makers to meet, share ideas and develop joint projects

The following comment from one of the volunteers about volunteering in 7 Gomond Street: 'I'm loving it! After working on my own for so long it's fab to be with other artists,' is typical of the many comments made by artists both helping and exhibiting.

Providing a space for those creating large pieces of work

Several artists mentioned that they needed/enjoyed having a large space in which to experiment or make art, often being confined to cramped spaces much of the time.

Creating an Art Tour around Hereford

Several visitors, in conversations with them, said that they had either come on their own, brought visitors who were staying with them or rendezvoused with friends to make an art tour though the city based around the Artlandish venues. Other destinations on their tour included The Courtyard Gallery, Mayor's Parlour, Cathedral and the recently commissioned street and underpass murals. Such comments give scope for creating such an art tour to attract more visitors to the city.

Arguments in support of a permanent Artlandish

From Hereford BID

Artlandish has helped reinvigorate the High Street by bringing life back to shops that can often be empty for years. Artlandish offers shoppers an experience in browsing and discovering art. This is very much at the forefront of what today's consumers are looking for in a city centre: variety, art, entertainment and a unique experience you cannot get at home shopping online.

This experience helps other shops in bringing in footfall so it is somewhat self-sustaining.

Mike Truelove, **Hereford Bid**

From Hereford College of Arts

The Artlandish project has been hugely exciting, not only for providing clear evidence of an audience for diverse contemporary art in the city centre, but for its role as creative catalyst and as a city centre place for meeting and creative exchange. It has been inspiring to see the energy and engagement of participants and to hearing reports of how artists who have not met each other before are now considering ways in which they might collaborate on future projects.

Responding to the project's success, Hereford College of Arts would support a long term Artlandish presence in Hereford city centre from three perspectives:

- It would facilitate the arrangement of more student exhibitions in the city centre, enhancing student professional skills development and work experience, and helping raise the local profile of the city's historic and nationally recognised arts school.
- It could help support artists' early career development, providing a base and peer support for recent graduates developing their professional practice and businesses in the region, giving some access to work-spaces on a temporary basis at not for profit rates.
- It would contribute to the collective impact of other creative developments in the city, including the refurbishment of the museum and art gallery and several Stronger Hereford Towns Fund projects, which are together helping make the city more attractive to live, work, visit, study and invest in.

We at Hereford College of Arts are passionate about the role creative industries and the arts have to play in supporting economic and societal development, wellbeing and environmental sustainability, in our region and across the world. This is a time of opportunity for Hereford, to reflect and build on our city and county's heritage of craft and creativity, with pride and confidence, and establish a modern identity as a city and county of arts, education and enterprise, craft and innovation.

Abigail Appleton, **Hereford College of Arts**

The Fine Art department at HCA arranged 2 exhibitions as part of the Artlandish project: a pop-up show of current MA Fine Art student work at Bloom.Space, and a show of selected recent graduate work at 7 Gomond Street. These were both fantastic opportunities for the students to gain experience of working together to put on event, and to curate the works together in a different context, and benefit from public feedback. Both venues were ideal for this purpose, being accessible, central, and also benefitting from a real buzz around the Artlandish programme. The fast-paced turnover of exhibitions and events, combined with the talent of student, graduate, and professional creatives in the region, gave the project a sense of momentum and excitement that highlights the ongoing need and demand for such platforms for supporting art in the city.

Daniel Pryde-Jarman, **Head of School, Hereford College of Arts**

A permanent Artlandish?

Revitalising Hereford City Centre

3,823 visits across 16 exhibitions over 10 weeks, the range of comments by visitors and artists (see pages 12-16), the energy and enthusiasm expressed by many of those involved and experienced by visitors, the draw of the project that extended beyond the boundaries of the county (with people commenting they had come from Malvern, Worcester, Church Stretton, Shrewsbury and Birmingham specifically to see exhibitions with one couple expressing [verbally] that they had then stayed the night in a hotel in Hereford), would appear to show a high demand for a permanent Artlandish.

These figures and thoughts are backed up by the arguments made by Mike Truelove on behalf of Hereford BID and Abigail Appleton on behalf of Hereford College of Arts (HCA) expressed on the previous page.

It was notable how those involved in the HCA exhibitions said they received many more visitors as part of the Artlandish project then when they had participated in a one-off HCA exhibition. This was because we had a few weeks where interest continued to build: some Instagram accounts went from around 50 followers to over 500 over the period.

Artlandish to promote Hereford as a place to visit and explore art?

An idea that grew over the time that the project ran, was that a permanent Artlandish could, as part of its role, act as the focal point for disseminating information on a Hereford Art Tour. Its website could have a dedicated page which would list current and future exhibitions with links to further details, provide maps, suggest where to park and even have links to places to eat or stay.

Would Artlandish run into conflict with the new Museum and Art Gallery?

The space set aside for community exhibition and engagement in the museum appears limited and being on the top floor adjacent/shared with the restaurant, have limited access. Might the museum also be charging entry fees? Artlandish operates differently, directly with artists and potentially for 7 days a week. Unlike a curated museum programme it presents a shop window for creativity in Herefordshire. A dedicated space for delivering workshops and family events, in addition to what it provided as a pilot, would also be a big gain for the city. In short, it could complement the Museum and Art Gallery.

Hereford Cultural Sector review

It is worth quoting from a review of Herefordshire’s cultural sector commissioned by Herefordshire Council in Spring 2024 and produced by www.thefifthsector.co.uk. This identified key areas for growth and development:
‘Resilience of Herefordshire’s creative business base is underlined by continuous growth of registered enterprises, from 645 in 2020 to 695 in 2023, despite the disruptive impact of Covid.
GVA [Gross Value Added] of Herefordshire’s cultural and creative sectors grew by 38% 2020 to 2022, from £83.2m to £114.7m, a faster growth rate than the county as a whole.
Research indicated a creative workforce of 4,100 (including freelance and self-employed workers).
The wider creative workforce is estimated to increase the sector’s economic output to £229.7m in GVA – 5% of Herefordshire’s total.
Retaining and attracting talent to Herefordshire and neighbouring counties remains a high priority.’

A new organisation for a permanent Artlandish?

Artlandish was established by Hereford Community Land Trust (HCLT). It would make sense for an organisation, probably called Artlandish as the name has already gained local traction, to be established separately that could, crucially, be established as a charity. This would save expense on local council rates, reducing cost, but also allow applications to funds for which only charities can apply.
A group of those who were either involved in establishing Artlandish or who then joined to help run it are actively discussing such an option. At some point it will be useful to have discussions with Herefordshire Council to see what support the Council could give and how the two could work most profitably together.

Approximate Annual Costs of a permanent Artlandish

1.5 members of staff on a job share at £30,000 each ¹	£45,000
Employer’s National Insurance @15% above £5,000)	£5,250
Annual Service Charges on a Maylords shop £301pw ² (Costs for Unit 7, 3 Trinity Square, ex-Hawkins Bazaar) (includes property insurance)	£15,652
Public Liability Insurance @ £30 per month	£360
Electricity £300 per month x 12 (based on usage at 7 Gomond Street of c.£200 per month Jan- March)	£3,600
Volunteer expenses:	£400
Items for mounting exhibitions etc:	£2,000
Website domain name, maintenance, internet, phone:	£600
Publicity per annum ³	£2,000
Exhibition text panels/printing	£300
Miscellaneous:	£300
TOTAL:	£75,462

This assumes no rate charges for a charity

Initial capital for tables, chairs etc (donations in addition)	£2,000
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Potential Income

Membership @£100p.a, for 50 people ⁴	£5,000
Commission on sales @ 15% of £10,000 ⁵	£1,500

1. £30,000 would seem to be the benchmark figure in this region for managing something like Artlandish. This could be based on a job share, or with one ‘Director’ and an assistant. More than 1 staff member would be needed to cover holidays, sickness etc. Those exhibiting would be asked to ‘staff’ or invigilate their exhibitions, with a pool of volunteers to help when necessary/on occasion.
2. 7 Gomond Street was smaller than ideal. The old Hawkins Bazaar is much larger at 134m² per floor (versus 58m² on the ground and 71m² on the upper floor at 7 Gomond Street. It would be hoped that Herefordshire Council could be induced to reduce this cost as their contribution to the activity that Artlandish brings to the city centre.
3. It is anticipated that much publicity would be carried out through the website and social media. However, some adverts in Broadsheep, posters and flyers would be needed, perhaps with contributions from some of those exhibiting (they certainly needing to cover costs of any private views). ‘In Search of the Perfect Hill’ asked their artists to contribute £20 towards such costs and they spent c.£600 on flyers and postage.
4. Rather than charging for workspaces and the administration that this would cause, one thought is to charge a membership fee which would give access to work spaces, certain equipment etc. Members could then be given a card to access the building at times of their choice. No testing has been done to see what level this fee should be set at and precisely what it would include.
5. The feeling is that we should not charge for people to exhibit, but rather take a % on sales and commissions.

This shows that the costs which are likely to be required to be covered from grants are staff costs and any service charges/rental for the use of the building. Clearly, as Artlandish gained traction it might be possible to raise more money from events and other activities.

Appendix 1: List of Volunteers

The list includes those who helped set up the project, maintained the website, prepared 7 Gomond Street for use and cleaned it at the end of the project and those who helped curate exhibitions and staff 7 Gomond Street.

It will almost certainly have omitted someone who should be included. It also does not include all those who have helped mount and display individual exhibitions, for then the list would be enormous.

The names are placed in alphabetical order so as not to imply any scale in the amount of help given.

- Ant Barraclough
- Vivian Barraclough
- Mark Bennett
- Jenny Ellerton
- Tracy Elson
- Rebecca Farkas
- John Feeney
- Sophie Ferrier
- Richard Gilbert
- Julia Goldsmith
- Stephen Handsaker
- Alex Hudson
- Andy Johnson
- Tracy Lock
- Mary Locock
- Gemma Moore
- Lily Morris
- Johanna Okon-Williams
- Chris Plant
- Louahanna-Rane
- Zoë Springer-Graham
- John Symonds
- Jane Tudge
- Libby Vale

Appendix 2: List of Artists who Exhibited

7 Gomond Street

The Medium in the Moment
Chris Plant

Folk Art
Libbertine Vale
Neil Spragg
Lily Morris
Aoife O'Higgins
David Pitman
Alula Down (Live music)
Alex Criver & Maddie McVeigh
Valerie Strangewood
Rebecca Baddeley
Sue Normal
Cheryl Hewitt
Joe Hemming
Lousie May
Ian Berrill
Lily Enis
Sarah Pilkington
Imogen Clark

Unscripted
Gemma Moore
Tamsin Bridge
Andrea Davis
George
Aoife Mooney

The Natural World
Kim Piffy/Pseudonym
Claire Perkins
Epha Roe
Heather Mason
Lillian Sutton
Amber Song
Jane Tudge
Libbertine Vale
Liz Huppert
Barbie Wyard
Lily Morris
John Symonds

Are Friends Electric?
Isabella Brown
Jaime Jackson
Hanah Lou Jones
Maddie McVeigh
Jack Hodges
Omar Majeed
Kim Piffy/Pseudonym
Rebecca Farkas
Chris Plant
Brian Duffy /Laurence Hunt /
Modified Toy Orchestra

7 Gomond Street

Diversity: What's the Difference?
AJ Jones
Libbertine Vale
Georgia Grace
Omar Majeed
Claire Perkins
Annie Higgs
Kim Piffy/Pseudonym
Rebecca Baddeley
Rosie With Words
Bertram That Geezerbird
Elly Westbrook
Jane O'Conner
Steven Handsaker
Felix Sadler

Sustainability
Helen Munday
Esk Woodcraft
Sophie L Ferrier
Sorell Matei
Julia Goldsmith
William Sullivan
Lily Morris
Little Wren House Factory
Loz Samuels
Tinkan Designs
Freya Bain
Owen Thomas
Rebecca Baddeley

Imposure
Catherine Wynne-Paton
Liz Morison
Rebecca Farkas
Tracy Lock
Vivian Barraclough
Viv Sole
Wendy Healey

Final week
Stu Moore
Johanna Okon-Watkins
Tracey Caldah
Rosie With Words
Charles Gundy
Kate Gathercole
Louahanna-Rane Hopkins
Sarohildi Hrabnaz
George Downes
Alba Florian Darke
Mairead McVeigh
Zoë Springer-Graham
Julia Goldsmith

Bloom.Space

The Return of the Sun
Sarah Jones

An exhibition of work by Hereford Cathedral School Students
The exhibition included the work of students from Year 7, 8, 9, GCSE and A Level, around 100 students. Their names can't be given due to the school's data protection rules.

Emergence
Sophie Wagstaff
Kate Slater
Leva Luca
Charlie Gundy
Pete Bryden
Liam Lacey
Muriel Potart
Nik Pope

'In Space': Escaping Two-Dimensionality in Photography
All HCA Photography students took part in the project, including BA and MA level students.

Tree Stories
Elizabeth Terzza

Unseen
Alex Albion
Amanda Attfield
Vivian Barraclough
Kirsty Beresford
Brenda Boyle
Tamsin Bridge
Gareth Evans
Rebecca Farkas
Richard Gilbert
Andy Johnson
Conrad Judge
Omar Majeed
Janine Martin
Vinnie Martin
Sorell Matei
Jeanette McCulloch
Mairead McVeigh
Lois Meiklejohn
Gemma Moore
Liz Morison
Johanna Okon-Watkins
Ian Pennell
Claire Perkins
Rebecca Reynolds
Suzanna Reynolds
T.B.O.B.H.

Bloom.Space

In Search of the Perfect Hill
Jonathan Adams
Caroline Allen
Helen Arthur
Peter Bishop
Bryony Burn
Steve Cass
Adrienne Craddock
Tim Craven
Celia de Serra
Bill Evans
Brian Griffiths
Richard Gilbert
Veronica Guest
Sarah Harding
Lois Hopwood
Andy Johnson
Pip Jones
Ciara Lewis
Paul Ligas
Charles MacCarthy
Andrea McLean
Fiona McIntyre
Kathryn Moore
Ronald Moore
Fiona Potter
Rebecca Reynolds
Stuart Roper
Charles Sainsbury-Plaice
Susan Smith
Miranda Whitten-Walker
Matt Williams
Matthew Wood



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