



Forgan Arts Centre

Talking Forests

Questions & Answers

Updated: 26 August 2025

Below is a compilation of questions and answers which have been asked in relation to our open call for an Artist-in-Residence (Talking Forests). If there is anything else you'd like to ask which will support your application, please email Rowan Lear on curator@forganartscentre.co.uk with any further questions by Friday 29 August.

Access

Could you give more detail about access for mobility and access around the site and The Gardener's Cottage?

The Gardener's Cottage is on two levels, with the second floor accessed by a moderately steep stairwell. The second floor contains the two double bedrooms and the full shower room. Because of this, we do not recommend the accommodation for full-time wheelchair users.

Below is some information which may assist ambulatory wheelchair users to understand how the space can be accessed.

The path approaching The Gardener's Cottage is level concrete slabs, 60cm wide. The edges of the path are lined with gravel, 80cm wide.

The front door can be accessed via a single 15cm high step. A ramp could be installed for this.

On the ground floor: the front doorway is 80cm wide; the living room doorway is 78cm wide; the studio doorway is 70cm wide; the kitchen doorway is 75cm wide; and the downstairs toilet doorway is 60cm wide.

The main art centre building is accessed either through a set of seven steps or via a level access ramp. We have a disabled access toilet and a toilet with baby changing facilities. All toilets are gender neutral. The ground floor classrooms, pottery, toilets, office and sunroom are all on one level, with no steps.

The garden has a range of pathways and access routes, including a level 120cm wide concrete slab pathway which reaches the community garden, 120cm wide gravel pathways through the community garden, wide compacted earth paths both level and on a slight incline through the woodland, and a wide and level grass lawn.

Is there alternative accommodation if the upstairs rooms can't be accessed by the artist(s)?

We do not have alternative accommodation on site but there is some local accessible accommodation, for example, [The Rings](#) (a 26-minute drive from Forgan Arts Centre). This would need to be included in your access budget.

Can The Gardener's Cottage host dogs?

Assistance dogs are very welcome. Please let us know how we can best accommodate your assistance dog. The Gardener's Cottage is not set up to host other dogs at present. However, well-behaved and controlled dogs are welcomed in the gardens and grounds of Forgan Arts Centre.

Gardens and Grounds

What types of trees are in the garden, grounds and woodland at Forgan Arts Centre?

Tree species at Forgan Arts Centre include: Copper Beech, Beech woodland, Cedar, Damson, Ash, Elder, Hawthorn, Apple, Japanese maple, Yew, Holly, Laburnum, Sycamore, Silver Birch, western Hemlock, Lawson's Cypress.

You can view the locations of some of the bigger trees on this map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1QzGVlN2jkac8zE54symVytotXAETHa8&ll=56.43162820218693%2C-2.951217650000011&z=19>

What kinds of plants will be available for foraging in the period of residency?

Depending on the season, late autumn will have brambles, elderberries, early spring will have new nettle growth, bittercress, gallium. The veg plot will have some perennial plants which will be available for harvest, and overwintering plants.

Is there a good variety of plants in the garden that could be harvested and used for things like plant dyes, inks, papermaking, etc?

The garden has a wide range of plants, including specific dye plants like Woad, Dyer's Chamomile and Madder. Pay attention to seasonality. Over November to March, there will be less plant material to harvest, though we grow some perennial and overwintering veg in the community garden.

What kinds of reparative work is happening to trees on the estate?

Post storm surveys, removing hanging branches, lightening limbs etc to protect against further damage. Cuttings and dead wood left on site to be used as carbon store and habitat for creatures in the garden.

Does the centre own or have public access to the larger woodland behind?

We have right to roam access, rather than specific access rights, to the forest area behind. It is practically accessible, as there is little boundary between our woodland and the woodland beyond. We have good relationships with local landowners.

Are any of the trees in the garden and woodland climbable?

At least three of the trees in the forest and the copper beech in our lawn are sometimes climbed by children and adults when visiting. This isn't something we necessarily encourage outside of organised forest groups, for safety reasons! But there are some lower climbing and sitting branches. And a rope swing!

Are there existing surveys of biodiversity on the grounds?

Visit iNaturalist for some recorded sightings:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?nelat=56.43305794308892&nelng=->

[2.9460386608367872&subview=map&swlat=56.428288243363525&swlng=-2.958623585534663](https://www.google.com/maps/@56.4282882,43363525,2.9460386608367872&subview=map&swlat=56.428288243363525&swlng=-2.958623585534663)

What kinds of mammals, invertebrates and birds are found on site which make use of the trees?

Mammals include: humans, dogs, bank voles, roe deer, red squirrels, grey squirrels, rabbits, hedgehogs, rats, bats and roaming cows.

Insects include: many kinds of bees, butterflies, ants, dragonflies, earthworms, ruby-tailed wasp, moths, ticks, spiders, crane flies/leatherjackets and more.

Other animals: toads!

What water features or courses are on the site?

Forgan Arts Centre is halfway up a hill, with sloping ground, and generally water doesn't linger here. There's a small burn which runs through the woodland behind our garden, which dries up in the summer. There are plans for a bog garden on site at Forgan Arts Centre, but few naturally boggy patches. We collect rainwater from the eaves of the main building and there are three outdoor mains water access taps: at the allotments, by the community garden and by the kiln house.

Should the activity be focussed on the centre and grounds, or can it extend to nearby areas?

While we feel this residency is an opportunity for an artist or collective to really immerse themselves in our garden, we are of course interested in the relationships between our grounds and other areas nearby.

What's happening in the neighbourhood?

Here's a handful of some of what is happening local to Forgan Arts Centre:

An active local history group: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/>

Waterstone Crook Community Garden:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/155373788402747/>

Waterstone Crook Sports Centre: <https://www.fifeleisure.org.uk/locations/waterstone-crook/>

Wormit Boating Club and Watersports Hub: <https://wormitboatingclub.org.uk/>

Rio Community Centre & Charity Shop: <https://www.fife.gov.uk/facilities/community-centre/rio-community-centre>

Wormit Bay: <https://fifecoastandcountrysidetrust.co.uk/pins/wormit-bay/>

Tayport Community Garden & People Learning About Nature in Tayport (PLANT):

<https://tayportgarden.org/plant/>

Newport Primary School & Wormit Primary School – both are active in the community.

The Newport Club: [https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Newport-Club-](https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Newport-Club-100064103107048/)

[100064103107048/](https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Newport-Club-100064103107048/)

Local pubs/restaurants: Shoreline, Brig of Tay, The Newport Inn

Local cafes: Manna Cafe, Fig & Fromage, Kitschnbake

Newport Festivals – Christmas & Mid-Summer:

<https://www.facebook.com/NewportFestival/>

Newport & Wormit Tennis Clubs:

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/WormitNewportTennisClub>

Newport Bowling Club: [https://www.facebook.com/p/Newport-On-Tay-Bowling-Club-](https://www.facebook.com/p/Newport-On-Tay-Bowling-Club-61571703333002/)

[61571703333002/](https://www.facebook.com/p/Newport-On-Tay-Bowling-Club-61571703333002/)

Newport & Wormit in Bloom: <https://www.newportandwormitinbloom.org.uk/>

Are there invasive plants on site?

In short, very few. We are moving away from using the terms invasive and native/non-native species, and trialling words like audacious, adventive and naturalised. On our grounds we have not found any of the audacious and adventive species found in neighbouring regions, such as Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed, and Japanese Knotweed. We have a few Buddleia bushes. We don't experience much impact from the naturalised and audacious plants like bracken, couch grass or bindweed. We have some rhododendrons on site which are remnants of an earlier formal planting scheme, but these are not the typically audacious species of *Rhododendron ponticum*.

Does the woodland have any established paths?

There is a well-trodden path around our estate, in the woodland beyond, there are desire line paths. None are formally recognised.

You can view our local path network: [https://fifeonline-](https://fifeonline-maps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f6186ea47efc46cd911a4d5314823900)

[maps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f6186ea47efc46cd911a4d5314823900](https://fifeonline-maps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f6186ea47efc46cd911a4d5314823900)

Facilities and Equipment

What is the schedule for the building over the winter? Is there a closure period?

We continue to run our arts education classes until mid-December. There is a short closure over the public holidays at Christmas and New Year, and the art centre reopens

to the public on 5 January. The Gardener's Cottage will remain accessible over this period to an artist-in-residence.

What making facilities do you have on site?

Making facilities include pottery (including wheels, hand building, glazing, firing and raku), stained glass (lead & copper foil, tools & materials), upholstery, textiles, painting (easels, LED posable lighting), drawing, and printing.

We have three electric kilns on site, two front loading and one top loading. Our ceramics tutors regularly build outdoor firing kilns for raku firing and similar. We also have a 4D film camera available for artists to use, a [Sony HXR-NX100 Camcorder](#).

Facilities and access to our tools and materials is supported by a team of expert art and craft tutors and ceramics technician. In addition, there is a growing community of artists, makers, and craftspeople on site working on various projects, commissions, and residencies, all willing to connect.

What stained glass making facilities are there?

At Forgan Arts Centre, we specialise in traditional stained glass education involving lead or copper foil, cut glass and soldering. We have relevant equipment, and tutors who can offer expert training. Tutor time can be included in your budget if required.

What screening equipment do you have on site?

We have a small portable projector (https://www.epson.co.uk/en_GB/products/projector/portable/epson-eb-x24/p/12831) and small speakers - suitable for small scale community sharing, perhaps not a larger outdoor public screening.

Are there any large pots or cooking facilities on site for things like making dyes?

There is a simple kitchen with sinks and a microwave. We have additional hobs for cooking on. There are some pots, but large ones and additional equipment may need to be included in your budget. We have a mobile induction hob and pots which work on it.

Is there storage available between periods of residence?

Yes, if an artist planned to stay for a few weeks on and off, we would seek to find space within the arts centre for storing any equipment or materials.

Is there a firing pit on site, or can one be created for the residency?

Yes, artists have previously built firing pits for their project, and we regularly do raku firings, so outdoor firing is possible as long as managed safely.

Is there an existing map of the garden, showing routes and features?

No such map exists, though we are interested in creating one in the future!

Proposal and Budget

Are you looking for these projects to have a physical outcome? Such as a collaborative artwork or something to share with the wider community or something that can be implemented on the grounds?

While we anticipate the residency will be process-led, and not oriented towards any single outcome, we welcome proposals on how the residency project may leave tangible traces in The Gardener's Cottage and/or in the wider garden and grounds. This could be in the form of artworks, interventions, signs, plantings or nature-friendly sculptures – these are just ideas, not prescriptions. It is up to the artist to propose something that feels meaningful for their project, and will leave a legacy afterwards.

Can this be a project which is focussed on Forgan but forms part of a larger project?

Yes, while we expect this project to be devised and developed in intimate relation to Forgan Arts Centre and our communities, we recognise that artists often work on connected projects and themes, and that there can be indistinct boundaries between them. For the purposes of our funding however, the project needs to have reached a stage of completion by end of March 2025.

How specific do we need to be in explaining the project?

We recognise that residency projects will and should adapt and evolve in relation to the place. For this reason, we do not expect prescriptive amounts of detail. Instead, focus on outlining clearly the concepts, ideas, and materials involved, and the people you aim to work with, demonstrate experience in managing a project of this scale, and provide realistic figures and timeline (while acknowledging that details may shift or be subject to change).

Is this opportunity accessible to an artist who has not yet experienced a residency?

We're keen that this opportunity is available to artists who are seeking and would benefit from this form of development to their practice. We also recognise that residencies are often inaccessible to people (because of financial reasons, caring responsibilities and access needs, among other things). So, we do not expect all applicants to have previously experienced a residency, but it would be useful if you can demonstrate some relevant experiences, such as working on a place-based project or working in community settings.

Can I work with other collaborators and put their fees into the budget?

Yes, we actively encourage working with collaborators, whether these are new or existing relationship. Your collaborators can be other artists, as well as researchers, makers, scientists, experts and practitioners in their area.

Could a percentage of the project budget be assigned to providing camera recording devices for mounting close to or on to the trees, for workshops participants?

Yes

Could a percentage of the project budget be assigned to providing sound listening and recording devices for workshop participants?

Yes

If applying as a duo, we wondered how to budget for our artist fees and if this could come from the project budget?

It depends on your own collaborative arrangement, but it would make sense to break this down in terms of time / days of work for each collaborator. If this exceeds 40 days of work in total, then any excess should be budgeted into the project budget.

Community and Engagement

What support is available to the artist(s) to build community connections?

Artist(s) will be supported by members of staff, all of whom live locally and who have diverse connections to the wider community. Our staff members are also experienced in supporting artists to develop public engagement and community collaborations.

Would we match practitioners together to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations?

For this residency opportunity, we are expecting artists to name or apply together with intended collaborators, and do not intend to match artists together. However, we will of course be happy to make introductions to potential project collaborators once a residency artist(s) is appointed.

What preceded this residency in terms of community engagement and strategic development? Where does this residency come from?

We have been working with embedded artists in different ways for several years. You can view some of these projects on our website. With our receipt of Creative Scotland Multi-Year Funding from 2025-2028 we are delighted to be able to develop this into a three-year supported programme of socially engaged residencies. The Talking Forests residency is the first of several, all of which will help to embed our strategy of 'an art centre as a garden'.

Do projects need to take place indoors, or can they also be outdoors?

We encourage engagement with the outdoors – the gardens, grounds, forest, allotments, and other outdoor spaces at Forgan Arts Centre. Be aware of the season of the residency and changing weather – and the possibility of cold, wet and wintry outdoor conditions.

Artists and participants will have access to cosy, warm spaces indoors at The Gardener's Cottage and the art centre. Think about what will be feasible and what facilities might be needed to allow outdoor activity to happen or make it accessible.

Are there any existing community filmmaking groups or classes happening at Forgan Arts Centre?

There aren't any specific classes or community groups in terms of filmmaking at present, but that doesn't mean there isn't an appetite or an interest in it! A few of our studio holders use film and photography, and we sometimes work with school age young people and young carers on projects including filmmaking.

What proportion of the artist(s) time should be allocated to research, engagement or delivery?

We are happy to hear how an artist feels their project would best develop, which may require more or less time allocated to research, engagement or delivery activities. One thing you may want to do is allocate some time for immersion without set activities, and just 'being' on site, meeting staff, neighbours and community members who are visiting.

Is there an expectation of balance between how much work is done by the artist individually (or perhaps in collaboration with non-human collaborators) while in residence and how much of the work is done in collaboration with local community groups (human collaborators)?

The proportion of work you spend with human and more-than-human collaborators will really depend on what works best for the proposed residency project – let us know in your proposal.

Are there specific needs, access requirement or ages that we should plan for when proposing workshops with the local community?

We work with community members of all ages, and with a range of access needs. Depending on the intended audience for an event or project, we might recommend that artist(s) allocate budget to support participant access requirements, such as travel / public transport support, childcare or a playworker if younger children are invited, translation or signing if these are things you anticipate participants might need. We also recommend to always budget something for refreshments and food for events.

Is there a preferred split of the 40 days – for example, would it be possible to spend the time in blocks of a week or so at a time?

We invite you to propose to spend the time as makes best sense for the project, for community outreach and engagement and for the artists' schedule. This could be a full block of 40 days, several blocks of 10 days, or something else.

Recruitment process

Were the online Q&A sessions recorded?

No, the Q&A sessions were not recorded but all key questions that were asked in these sessions have been replicated and answered here.

Will interviews be online or in person?

We invite all shortlisted applicants to attend an interview in person to get a better feel for the site and the art centre. We will support reasonable travel costs to do so. However, where that is not possible, we are happy to interview artist(s) online.

Who will be on the interview panel?

The interview panel will comprise two members of the team at Forgan Arts Centre: Teri Laing, Director and Rowan Lear, Curator; and an external consultant, Naoko Mabon, freelance curator.