

Shetland Arts Commissioning Fund Round 2

Guidance
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Shetlandarts

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What is the Shetland Arts Commissioning Fund

- Following feedback from previous applicants, we have broken down our Commissions into 6 categories.
- Shetland Arts Commissioning Fund can support a wide range of work and opportunities including, but not limited to:
 - Creative projects
 - Performances
 - Exhibitions
 - Participatory projects and workshops
 - Training
 - Development
 - Research
- Applicants must either live in or be able to demonstrate a strong connection to Shetland
- Applicants can apply for up to the amount stated in each commissioning type.
- The deadline for applications for Soar, Participate and Generator is 1st December 2025. The deadline for applications for Catalyst, Boost and Playwriters is 1st May 2026.
- All activity must be completed within a year of receiving the fund, in-keeping with the timeline outlined in your proposal.
- All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application within 1 month of the closing date of applications.

Demands on this fund

We expect these funds to be oversubscribed. This means that even applications that meet the criteria for support may not receive investment.

Alternative Format and Access Support

Shetland Arts is committed to offering clear and accessible application processes that are open to everyone. We have several ways of supporting you to make your application.

If you require additional support or an alternative application process, please contact Shetland Arts by emailing commissioning@shetlandarts.org with the subject line additional support and details of your request.

Who can apply?

Freelance and self-employed artists and creative practitioners who are at least 18 years old either living in, or able to demonstrate a strong connection to, Shetland.

You must have a UK bank account in your legal name or business name, which must be the same name you apply under. Please ensure the name on your funding application matches the name on your bank account, as we cannot pay into an account with a different name.

We are keen to get a wide range of applications from emerging and established artists. We will provide information sessions around each closing date where you can ask questions and meet others interested in applying for the commissions. These will be led by Creative Project Manager Kathryn Gordon.

We recommend attending one of these, if possible, as hearing answers to others' questions can help inform you, give you ideas and shape your application. However, if you're not available for either of these slots, individual support is available. If you have access requirements, would like to book onto the information session or would like to request an individual meeting, please email Kathryn.Gordon@shetlandarts.org.

What can these funds be used for?

The development of artists and creation of work, both participatory and professional, with strong connection to Shetland. Please look at the criteria of each commissioning type to ensure that you are applying for the one that best suits your project idea and experience.

What the funds cannot be used for

This fund does not support the following:

- Non-Arts Activities: Activities unrelated to the arts or creative industries.
- Non-Shetland based or connected applicants.
- Student Projects: Projects led by or involving full-time students, funding for tuition fees, or projects which are part of an accredited course or core curriculum activity. This includes individuals enrolled as full-time students but who are taking a leave of absence or other break from study.
- Schools Activities: General arts or creative activities in schools. Artist-led activity which is in addition to core curriculum delivery and demonstrates clear partnership working can be supported provided the application comes from an individual with an established creative practice and adds value to the learning experience.
- Building Projects: Building work or feasibility studies for building projects
- Business Costs: Business start-up or ongoing running costs.
- Equipment-only Funding: Funding solely for equipment.
- Self-Publishing: Self-publishing projects, except those related to Visual Arts, Crafts and Design. Visual, Arts, Crafts and Design books can be supported if:
 - their purpose does not align with standard trade publishing or sit within that market (which may mean they do not have ISBNs or are not sold through the recognised book trade);
 - they are craft pieces in their physical form; or they are interventions, catalogues, or writing used to specifically support a visual art practice rather than literary form.
- Fundraising Programmes: Funding for fundraising activities.

- Organisational Activity: Activities better suited for an existing organisation where the applicant holds a key role, or where the primary beneficiaries are a constituted organisation.

What we will provide

- An information session around each closing date, where you can ask questions and meet others interested in applying for the commissions. These will be led by Creative Project Manager Kathryn Gordon and will take place at Mareel or online through a Teams link.
- Venue, box office, technical and marketing support for your project (please clearly outline in your application what support you will require to deliver your projects)
- An offer of mentoring with a member of Shetland Arts staff team, if applicable for your project
- Artist Meet-Ups. There will be facilitated meet ups for commissioned creatives to get together receive support and share their processes. Please include £100 (£50 for each attendance) in your budget.

Reaching People

Shetland Arts is keen to ensure that our funding benefits as wide a range of people as possible. We expect you to promote Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in your activity and to tell us specifically how you will do that.

Projects and activities that include public engagement or participatory work must demonstrate that they have appropriate plans in place for safeguarding young peoples and vulnerable adults. [LINK](#)

How to apply

Applications are made using the application form which is downloadable from the Shetland Arts website that is available here [Shetland Arts Commissioning Fund 25/26 | Shetland Arts](#)

Completed applications must be emailed to commissions@shetlandarts.org and received by midday on 1st December for Soar, Participate and Generator, and 1st May for Catalyst, Boost and Playwriters. Late applications will not be accepted.

Criteria and decision-making process

Applications are scored and discussed by a panel of four. Two Shetland Arts staff and two independent practitioners.

Applications are scored out of 5 against the following criteria:

- Overall clarity of proposal, including expected outcome
- Demonstrated funding will have a positive impact on long-term development, which would be difficult to achieve without financial support.

- Deliverability of proposal including timeframe and relevant experience
- Demonstrates a clear plan of proposed activity that shows how funds might be used

Shetland Arts designs some of its program to deliver against three themes relevant to our location and context. Though not required, alignment with one of these themes will be considered if the fund is over subscribed.

- Technology: How does technology influence the way we live? Key areas: artificial intelligence, social media, creative software and globalised distribution, the space industry.
- Environment: How do environmental issues affect us? Key areas: the industrialisation of the landscape, the extraction economy, climate change.
- Place: How does our sense of place shape our culture? Key areas: isolated yet central and connected, collectives within communities, our self-perceptions.

Detailed Description of project including outcomes and how it will develop you as a creative?

This section forms the main body of your application. You should consider the following questions when completing this section:

- What do you want to do?
- Why do you want to do it?
- Why do you want to do it now?
- Why is the project important?
- How does the project relate to your work?
- When will your project take place?
- Which art forms will be involved?
- What impact will the project have on you and/or others?
- Explain how you will minimise environmental impact of your project.

Who is the project for?

If relevant, we want to have an understanding who your project is for. Whether as audience members, participants or learners at a workshop, who are you targeting this project at and how will you ensure that you reach them.

How will you ensure that this activity is open and accessible to all?

If relevant to your proposal please describe your considerations for Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in developing your project. If it is a performance is your venue accessible?

How will you minimise the environmental impact of your project?

Shetland Arts is committed to being a Net Zero organisation by 2030 and has halved its carbon footprint since 2015. If relevant to your proposal how will you ensure this project is delivered in the most environmentally friendly way possible?

Additional support from Shetland Arts

What additional in-kind support will you require from Shetland Arts? This is to help us understand any additional costs we might incur. In-kind support can include:

- Marketing
- Box Office
- Technical
- Venue hire

Legacy

What will the legacy of this project be for you, and any participants or communities that you will be working with. We are keen to understand how this funding will develop your practice or give you other opportunities in the future. Beyond the actual project that is being funded, how will you exploit this opportunity?

Project monitoring

If your application is successful In and end of project monitoring, Key Performance Indicators and narrative reporting requirements, including feedback from participants and / or audience members and any photography or videography will be agreed with you prior to contracting.

Your project's alignment with Shetland Arts' Social Outcomes will also be discussed with you. The Social Outcomes are:

- Improved quality of life through greater access to creative and social experiences
- Improved opportunities through the development of new skills
- Improved confidence to contribute positively through greater opportunities for self-expression and community involvement
- Improved feeling of inclusion and equality through an appreciation of a diversity of cultures and lifestyles
- Improved mental and physical health through more active involvement in creative and social experiences
- Improved community resilience through a more diverse creative economy

Your timely response to requests for discussion are required to ensure that we can complete the contracting process effectively.

Budget

To enable us to assess your proposal we will need a budget and a breakdown of costs and income. Please use the budget spreadsheet that can be downloaded from this [LINK](#).

There is no need to budget for any in-kind support requested from Shetland Arts. Any in-kind support from other organisations please show as income and expenditure.

Please only use full £ amounts in your budget

What your budget can include:

- Venue hire, if out with a Shetland Arts venue
- Paid planning time
- Paid delivery time
- Collaborators fees
- Materials / equipment required for the delivery of your project
- Marketing costs

- £100 artist meet up attendance fees (£50 per meet up)

Are there any costs which we can't include?

There are some types of activity that this fund does not support. You can't include the following costs in your project budget:

- repayment of loans, endowments or interest
- money which has already been spent
- paying someone else to write your application for you
- costs for political or religious activities
- money for profit-making or wider fundraising purposes
- if you are VAT registered, VAT you can reclaim
- costs for projects which are replacing statutory activities.

Please state any other income you are expecting, this can be from ticket income, or other funding. If you have applied for other funding, please state whether it is confirmed, or you are still waiting for the outcome.

If you are including ticket income, please consider how you will ensure your pricing is accessible and include your pricing model in the notes section of the appropriate budget line. If your project is funded there may be further discussions about your pricing model.

Any projects over £500 are expected to include a contingency in their budgets. For most projects this is likely to be set at around 5%, but a contingency of up to 10% may be appropriate for activity with more variable costs or risk, such as outdoor work. If your contingency is higher than 5%, please justify your level of contingency in the budget.

Fair Pay

Shetland Arts is committed, through any activities we support, to ensuring that artists and professionals working in the creative community are paid fairly and appropriately for their time and effort.

Applicants to this fund are expected to pay themselves and others involved with their project fairly. All applicants should clearly outline payment costs in their budgets. We expect payment of at least the Real Living Wage to all people being employed to undertake work.

Artist's CV

If you are applying for more than £500 we request that you supply an artist's CV.

An artist's CV helps to show your previous experience and commitment to your practice. Put the newest things first and take out any non-art related activities. This guide on Artquest's website will help. [LINK](#)

Data Protection

Shetland Arts requires some personal information about you to consider your application for funding. Without this information we will be unable to process your application.

If you would like to see a breakdown of the personal information we require, why it is required, what we do with that information and how long we keep it, please refer to our Privacy Policy and GDPR statement on our website.

You have some rights in relation to the personal information that Shetland Arts holds about you under data protection law. Our Privacy Notice and GDPR Statement contains information on how to exercise these rights.

Unsuccessful Applicants

As an organisation, we will always listen to and respond to any concerns that you may have. If you would like to make a complaint about either the service you have received from Shetland Arts or the way we have handled your application, please email info@shetlandarts.org.

Please note that Shetland Arts does not have an appeals process for this fund and for this reason, we are unable to accept complaints that relate solely to the decision we have made rather than how we have made it.