

Dorset Art Weeks 2026

Headline Commission Award



in partnership with the Countryside Regeneration Trust
supported by Hall & Woodhouse

**£1,000 headline commission award + support + venue entry in
Dorset Art Weeks 2026.**

Deadline for applications: Friday 30th January 2026

Theme: FLOW

Dorset Visual Arts (DVA) are offering a headline commission to celebrate the launch of Dorset Art Weeks 2026. Open to emerging or established artists to produce a singular piece or body of work for installation and display in the Threshing Barn at Bere Marsh Farm, Shillingstone, North Dorset from Saturday 23 May - Sunday 7 June 2026.

This commission is open to all artists/makers who live and/or work in Dorset including all Members of Dorset Visual Arts.

The commission will consider various notions around the importance of river systems and hydro-ecology but can also include historical/human influence such as folklore, defence, and rivers as ancient routes or channels. Contemporary concerns might focus on climate change, resource management, population pressure and how rivers are now being re-engineered for rewilding initiatives.

Bere Marsh is situated in the shadow of Hambledon Hill on the floodplain between the meandering River Stour and the former Somerset & Dorset railway route, close to the village of Shillingstone in the Blackmore Vale area of North Dorset. The Countryside Regeneration Trust bought the 92-acre farm in 2020 from the family of local farmer and conservationist, the late Angela Hughes.

Bere Marsh Farm is committed to using their spaces to show environment-themed works, events and community projects. Supported by **Dorset Art Week's** headline

sponsor Hall & Woodhouse, there will also be the opportunity to visit their brewery in Blandford Forum, also along the Stour, and to look at sustainable initiatives within the brewing process, which form part of Hall & Woodhouse's generation-to-generation outlook.

At 61 miles long, the Stour is Dorset's largest river, rising at Six Wells Valley at Stourhead in Wiltshire, flowing through the Blackmore Vale, then cutting through the chalk ridge of the Dorset Downs at Blandford Forum before eventually reaching Christchurch Harbour and the English Channel.

Why are we doing this?

The commission is part of an ongoing initiative for Dorset Art Weeks, supported by Hall & Woodhouse, which provides selected artists additional support to develop their practice, aligned with DVA's own charitable objectives.

Partnership working for rural arts is more important than ever, supporting the provision of meaningful development opportunities for artists to develop and showcase new work. It also aligns with the County Cultural Strategy to produce more ambitious cultural experiences for audiences and other means for audiences to engage with contemporary issues and themes through the visual arts.

As part of DVA's commitment to Culture Declares, we also want to acknowledge the Climate Emergency by creating a platform for exploration, discussion and highlighting positive solutions to these challenges, therefore empowering others to take action.

This is primarily an opportunity to produce a new body of work or singular piece to be shown at a new venue within Dorset Art Weeks, with support and guidance from DVA.

The commission includes:

- £1,000 awarded (includes artist fee, all materials and travel).
- Support from Dorset Visual Arts for site visits and liaising with CRT conservation experts and Hall & Woodhouse brewers.
- Curatorial and technical support for installation.

- Inclusion in Dorset Art Weeks with Bere Marsh Farm CRT exhibiting your commissioned work and hosting the launch of DAW 2026.
- One year DVA membership.

[See our previous Dorset Art Weeks headline commissions on the DAW website](#)

How to apply

Please make sure that your application includes the following:

- A brief CV/bio (no more than 100 words)
- A summary description of your work to date (no more than 100 words)
- An outline of what you propose from the brief (no more than 250 words)

Please include within this:

- How your work will respond to your chosen elements from the brief and theme.
- How site visits could help the development of the work.
- A particular area of interest or focus that you would like to explore and develop.
- Images (5 max) or one web link illustrating appropriate previous work.

Your application and images must be sent as ONE pdf document, please label the document with your name. If you have access requirements and would like to submit your application in an alternative format please get in touch.

Deadline for applications: Friday 30th January 2026

Installation of commissioned work - 18th - 22nd May 2026

Send your completed application to: Izzie Jobbins - news@dorsetvisualarts.org

The final selection will be made by Dorset Visual Arts and Bere Marsh Farm CRT with Hall & Woodhouse.

Applicants will be notified by **5pm Friday 6th February 2026.**

Dorset Visual Arts

Dorset Visual Arts (DVA) is a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity (1113249), established in 2006.

We recognise that artists and makers have different interests and needs in developing their work and careers, particularly in a mainly rural county. We are here to support visual artists, designers and makers at all stages of their career, through a variety of activities.

Our Aims:

DVA champions the advancement and appreciation of arts, design, and craft for public benefit by empowering Dorset's artists and makers to fully realise the potential of their creative practices

This is achieved through:

- Creative Development: Supporting the growth and quality of visual arts through bursaries, commissions, and other opportunities for Dorset's creative community.
- Public Programming: Producing Art Weeks events and other curated public programmes that educate in, and promote awareness of, the visual arts, crafts, and making.
- Community Building: Providing opportunities for members of Dorset's creative community to connect, share knowledge and experience, showcase their work, and to develop their creative practice and promotional skills.

The Countryside Regeneration Trust

The CRT promotes nature-friendly farming to help reverse the biodiversity decline and combat climate change. We believe nature is integral to good farming and we protect, promote and regenerate our land and all life on it. We put our philosophy into practice on over 2,000 acres of working farms, small-holdings and woodland across England. We work in collaboration with tenant farmers to enable them to use nature-friendly farming methods on our land. Our staff support them with guidance and resources and CRT volunteers help to improve wildlife habitats by carrying out conservation projects.

We monitor the wildlife on our properties to help us understand how our work is impacting key species and the wider environment.

We also educate people about nature-friendly farming and how healthy ecosystems support food production and our health and wellbeing.

[About Dorset Visual Arts](#)

[About The Countryside Regeneration Trust](#)

[About Bere Marsh Farm](#)

[About Hall & Woodhouse](#)

Notes:

The launch event, open to the public, will be held from 11am - 3pm on the first Saturday of DAW (23 May 2026), with invited guests from DVA, H+W and CRT at midday. The selected artist will be expected to attend and make a short, informal speech about their work.

