



Improving the healthcare environment and experience

Spring Newsletter – May 2026

We hope everyone is enjoying the beginning of Spring and looking forward to warmer days with Summer around the corner.

Since our last newsletter, shared last Autumn, we have continued to work with colleagues and partners to develop and deliver a range of exciting environmental projects alongside our on-going participatory and exhibition programmes; working to improve the environment and experience of our healthcare settings for our patients, visitors, and staff. Here is a snapshot of what we have been working on

Environmental projects

Eye Clinic, Outpatients at Musgrove Park Hospital

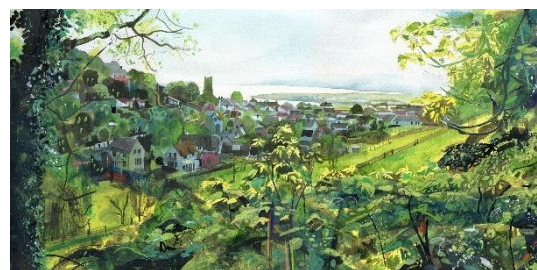


Hannah Broadway's design for Waiting Area 2 has been installed and provides a welcome addition to the colourful seating selected by the Eye Clinic Team. The roundabout section of this work features a child with an eye patch so this section has also been installed directly outside the clinic room where children have eye patches fitted.

Design by Hannah Broadway Photo: Art for Life

Theatre 5 (Phase 1) at Yeovil District Hospital

We have worked with the user group on this project at Yeovil, to select artwork by artist Leo Davey, ensuring that artwork is integrated into the new modular theatre.



Minehead by Leo Davey

Pyrland Ward at Wellsprings



Design by Alison Milner Photo: Art for Life



Two new artworks by Alison Milner have been installed in the Dining Room on Pyrland 2. Throughout the project the brief has been to give the rooms identity and work with the purpose of the room. Alison also worked her magic on the existing bluebell wood design in the Ladies Lounge to produce a bluebell pond image for the End of Life room on the ward.

Organ Donation Memorial Artwork at Musgrove Park Hospital

Working with the Organ Donation Committee and Hospital Art Studio, Art for Life managed the commission of a new artwork adjacent to the entrance to the new Surgical Centre. The artwork commemorates organ donors and celebrates the gift they have given, whilst raising awareness and promoting organ donation. This project was funded by the Organ Donation Committee.

Design by Hospital Art Studio
Photo: Art for Life



St Andrews, Wells Priory

Working with the CAMHS and Children and Young People's Therapy Service teams, artist Hannah Broadway has created lively and colourful designs for the newly refurbished St Andrews building on the Priory Health Park site in Wells.

Hannah's project has, from the beginning, involved engagement with the teams and service users, and as part of this process we held a workshop for all those stakeholders involved in the project.



Design by Hannah Broadway

Design work

Art for Life has been busy on projects that are currently in their design phase. These projects include those that have already, or will be signed off shortly, and installed in the next few months and others that are longer term projects.

SDEC at Yeovil District Hospital

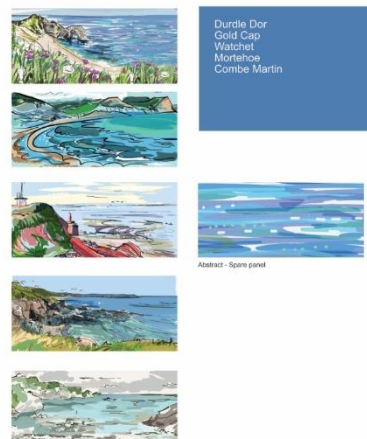
Having successfully raised money from Yeovil's League of Friends, we have started to work on a project with the artist Lara Harwood to improve the environment of the Same Day Emergency Care department (SDEC) at Yeovil District Hospital.

Day Surgery Unit at Yeovil District Hospital

Working with the team on Day Surgery at Yeovil District Hospital, artist Alison Jacobs has created designs to improve the Unit for patients and staff. Alison ran a creative workshop that all staff attended, giving them an opportunity to feed into the final designs.



Concept designs by Alison Jacobs



Beacon Day Room and Conservatory at Musgrove Park Hospital

We are currently putting together a proposal to work with artist Kate Bond to produce new artworks and reviewing the furniture and colours to improve the environment for both patients and colleagues.

Reception and Foyer space at Bridgwater Hospital

Artist, Lucy Hobbs, has been appointed to produce a vinyl artwork to cover the Reception desk in the Foyer. An engagement session is planned for Wednesday 20th May where colleagues and the community will be asked to share images of the things that matter to them in Bridgwater for possible use in the artwork. This is part of a larger review of the Foyer space and the welcome it provides to Bridgwater Hospital.

King's Building at Musgrove Park Hospital

We have continued to work on the new surgical centre supporting the project's Lead Artist, Esther Rolinson. Esther has been developing designs that will be integrated into internal and external areas of the new Surgical Centre. Source, will be a family of artworks that include designs for the building façade, interior artworks and the courtyard which is supported by money raised by the Trust's Charity. Work on creating the courtyard will begin at the end of May.

Esther's interior artworks are being completed ready for installation in July. Alongside her works, photographs by two nationally acclaimed photographers Jason Ingram and the late, Neville Stanikk, will be hung in the three floors of the new building. The photographs have all been selected by the staff teams in all three areas.



Photograph by Neville Stanikk

Concourse, Old Building Corridor at Musgrove Park Hospital

Artist Jon England's Trace is a project responding to the new Surgical Centre at Musgrove Park Hospital, that draws upon the often unconscious traces of use, age and wear accumulated throughout Musgrove's daily operation. Jon's work will be installed in July. He says of the work *"in combining these traces with individual, engaging, and little-known stories from the hospital's formative period, they seek to create a cumulative 'portrait', encapsulating its history and placing its emblematic origins into the context of the whole. By combining archive imagery and historic narrative, drawing attention to generally unnoticed details, and utilising unexpected materials and processes to link both history and context, the works aspire to be engaging to staff, patients and visitors alike, whether one-time visitors, or those passing through the space multiple times a day."*

Coming Up

There are a number of projects across our acute, community and mental health sites that are being developed which include.....

Labour and Freya wards at Yeovil District Hospital.

With the reopening of the inpatient maternity services and special care baby unit in the Women's Hospital we have started discussions with the maternity teams and Somerset Maternity Voices to explore opportunities for commissioned artwork to enhance the environments for our service users and colleagues.

Phoenix at Wells Priory Health Park

With the project for St Andrews completed we will now start to work with the teams in Phoenix at the Priory Health Park to purchase artworks for the offices and staff areas.

Boiler House at Yeovil District Hospital

We have been asked by the Estates and Facilities Management team to support them with an arts project for their newly refurbished offices.

At very early stages are the following projects: UTC, Exmoor and ED at MPH, Maternity and Stroke at MPH, Modular ward at YDH.

More news on all of these and other projects in our next newsletter.....

Participatory programme

Music

We are delighted, and extremely grateful, that our Somerset NHS Charity continues to support the music programme. Our programme for this year has kicked off on our acute sites and this summer we will be exploring a further bid to the Trust's charitable funds for our music programme in our community hospitals. A film, created by The Local Film Company, commissioned at the end of last year – <https://youtu.be/-DV1t4L0qtg> – captures the essence of our music programme and the impact it has on our patients and colleagues, supporting social interaction, offering valuable distraction and enjoyment whilst having a positive impact on staff morale.

In partnership with The Octagon and Westlands Entertainment, together with colleagues in our Dementia Team, we have supported the establishment of a weekly memory choir that is thriving.

Dance Programmes

Our partnership with The Octagon and Westlands Entertainment continues to develop for now, oversubscribed community-based dance sessions for our patients with Cancer or Parkinson's disease.

Touring Craft Cases

Working with Somerset Art Works and their emerging maker programme we have been showcasing basket maker Jo Entwistle's work in our craft cases at Frome Community Hospital as part of our touring craft exhibitions. The cases will soon be moved to Bridgwater Community Hospital for our next exhibition.

Staff workshops

Our programme of staff workshops is being planned for this year with the first one kicking off in September.

Wells Community Mental Health Project

Art Therapist Rosie Pickett started the Wells project in January with an initial 12-week programme of creative sessions led by a community-based artist working in partnership with Wells Cathedral. This was a pilot project to explore how local heritage, creativity and group work can support people experiencing long term mental health challenges.

Children's Department

At the beginning of the year Zoe Snape completed a new artist residency across both acute paediatric departments. The residency, working with children and families, was funded by South West Heritage Trust. Inspired by the Hope Bourne exhibition at Somerset Museum of Rural Life in Glastonbury, children created their own sketch books, exploring themes of nature, the environment and imaginative worlds.

Virtual Reality

Teams from YDH's ICU and Children's Departments have been exploring how we can incorporate film to support rehabilitation and distraction using VR headsets. For ICU, the project focuses on using footage of local or favourite sites/walks/runs to encourage and motivate patients to find connection and physical movement. In the Children's Dept playleader Holly Wilson is looking at how the use of VR can reduce the need for general anaesthetic where anxiety is a barrier to treatment.

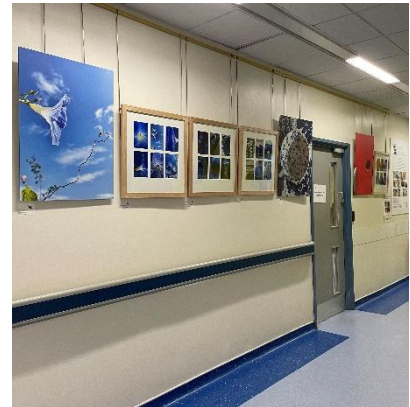
Exhibitions



Planting Trees by David Brooke

Biophilia is a large exhibition featuring 60 artworks that cover both The Wall and The Musgrove Gallery at Musgrove Park Hospital. The display includes drawings, paintings and prints with a particular focus on trees, woodland, hedgerows and commons. A partnership between The Arborealists, Dorset Visual Arts and Art for Life, it displays art with ecological concerns and notions of wellbeing, accompanied by QR codes that link to statements explaining the significance that nature and wellbeing have to each artist in their practice. This exhibition has travelled from Dorset County Hospital and Bath Royal United Hospital. Exhibition ends 16th May 2026. Prices from £100.

Noticing The Now is the current exhibition at Yeovil Outpatient's Gallery. It is part of a photographic collaboration which explores the beauty of the everyday. It is an evolving project that has helped its members to support their own growth and wellbeing creatively through times of stress and illness. Over the last three years the group have invited professional and amateur artists and photographers to respond to a word or title chosen for their inspiration. Over six weeks each contributor has produced a series of six smart phone images to print and share. The artworks on display have been selected from a previous exhibition at The Musgrove Gallery and showcase two of the submissions that respond to the words 'blue' and 'dots'. Exhibition ends 11th May 2026. Prices from £275.



New Pop-Up Exhibitions



Sculptures by Melanie Deegan

The three wall cabinets in The Musgrove Gallery will now feature Pop-Up exhibitions to facilitate interdepartmental collaborations and showcase smaller exhibitions. They can include artforms such as small 3D works, sketchbooks, journals and papercraft together with literature and contact information. The first Pop-Up Exhibition showcases artist Melanie Deegan who experiments with wire and steel to create dynamic sculptures of people and animals in movement. Exhibition ends 16th May 2026. Prices from £30.

Feedback

It is very important that we get feedback on our work. Gathering people's thoughts allows us to reflect on projects and make sure that we learn what works well, and less well, so please do get in touch and let us know what you think about any of our projects.

Wishing you all a wonderful Summer ahead. Our next newsletter will be shared in Autumn 2026.

The Art for Life team at Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Lisa Harty, Art and Design Manager

Emma Quick, Art and Design Project Officer

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For more information on the work of Art for Life or any projects please contact artforlife@somersetft.nhs.uk