

**Downs Committee Proposal**  
**Bristol 2015, Neighbourhood Arts Programme, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

**Report by:**

Emma Williams, Neighbourhood Arts Programme Manager  
Bristol 2015 Ltd

**Project title:**

A Bristol Murmuration

**Timescales:**

Maximum two weeks in October  
(Up to 3 days installation; 9 days artwork exhibition; 2 days take-down)

**Lead artist name:**

Zoë Cameron

**Report presented by:**

Emma Williams

**Contact number:**

0117 379 0115

**Recommendation:**

Bristol 2015 would like the committee to:

- 1) Approve the installation of a temporary public artwork for The Downs, led by local artist Zoë Cameron as part of the Bristol 2015 Neighbourhood Arts Programme.
- 2) Agree the desired location for the artwork as set out in this document for installation in October 2015 so we can gain approval from Bristol City Council's Site Permissions team.
- 3) Agree the desired dates for the installation to take place (14<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> October including installation and take down time)

**Background:**

During 2015, 14 unique, community led projects have been commissioned for each of the Neighbourhood Partnership areas of Bristol. Arts projects are happening all over, from Avonmouth to Dundry View, to inspire Bristol to become a happier, healthier city. The project selected with residents from Henleaze, Stoke Bishop & Westbury-on-Trym will have involved up to 1000 residents across the area through participatory workshops, and highlighted the decline in the local starling population, a once common garden bird.

**Project summary:**

A flock of 1000 ceramic birds will be installed on the Durdham Downs mid-October in a spectacular 'Bristol Murmuration' art installation as part of Bristol European Green Capital. Over the summer and early autumn members of the public from Henleaze, Stoke Bishop & Westbury-on-Trym will be working with artist Zoë Cameron to create their own bird sculpture to add to the flock. In position on the Downs the birds will look like a 'murmuration'. After the event the birds will disband and return to their creators.

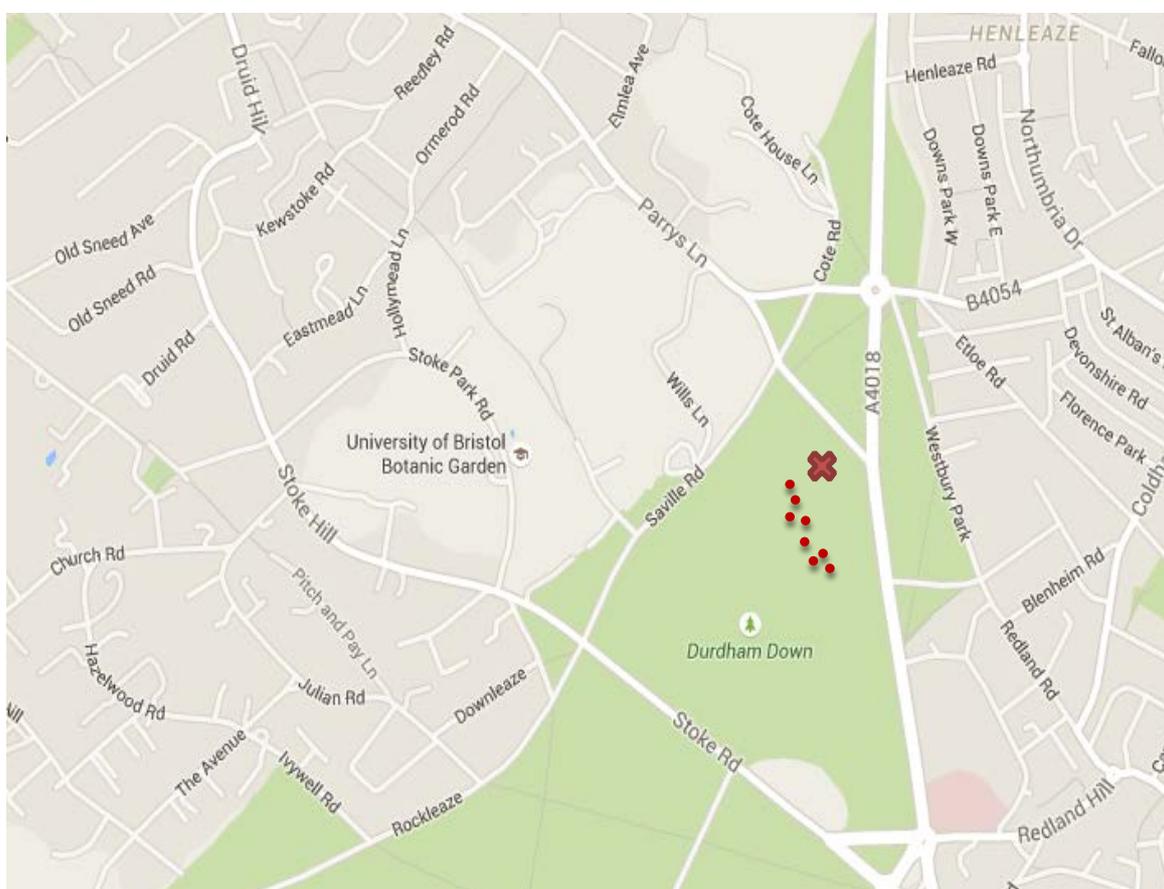
*"It's been a while since Bristol witnessed a starling murmuration due to habitat loss, and I hope this will bring people together creatively to celebrate their green spaces, and get people talking."*  
Artist, Zoë Cameron.

**Project aim:**

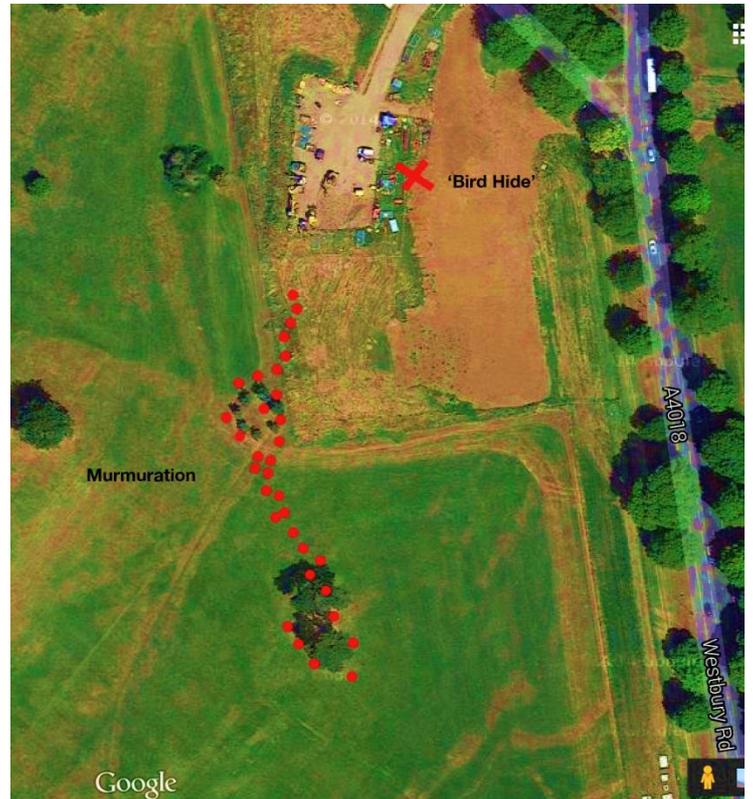
To find common ground between different communities, celebrate green spaces, love of birdlife, encourage creativity in an accessible and dramatic project where people will be able to take home their bird as a souvenir for potential future regrouping. The Murmuration will occur mid-October, the traditional start of the starling spectacle, and draw attention to their diminishing numbers due to habitat loss.

**Location & additional project information:**

Durdham Down presents the perfect location for this installation because, as a natural focal point for all three wards, it symbolises a common ground for all the participating communities. Also the openness of the space means that the exhibition will be visible from the adjacent roads during daylight hours, inviting walkers and passersby to walk over and engage with the installation. The artist has selected an area, indicated below, between Saville Road, Parrys Lane and Westbury Road.



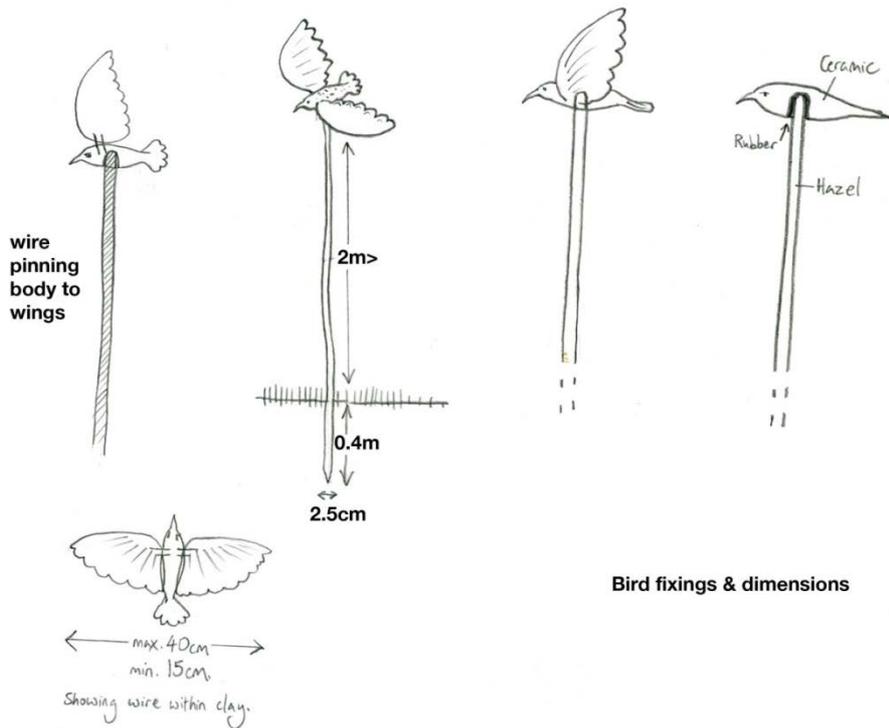
-  Bird Hide
-  Murmuration



A formation of birds will be installed from the direction of the NE corner of Durham Down, approx. 90m long, descending upon the first young circle of evergreen trees and then continuing at different heights and densities towards the 3 large old Scots Pines and bench situated on the raised ground. These are sited just east of the football pitches. The birds would be circling and thinning out as they get to the trees, with some birds roosting near the bench. The Murmuration formation would also allow walkways through the birds.

Members of the public would be encouraged to sit on the bench or within the circle of trees and appreciate the view; a good photo opportunity. There will also be a chance for members of the public to join free guided walks that will pass through the installation. Walks will be coordinated and led by Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge and the Your Downs team. They will provide participants with a deeper insight and understanding of local birdlife and their habitats.

Birds will be made of ceramic and mounted at varying heights atop hazel poles (from 1.3m to a maximum of 2m tall from ground level) which will be planted securely in the ground at a minimum distance of 27cm apart. There will be up to 1000 ceramic birds. Each bird will be different but decorated with black, silver speckles, flashes of yellow, iridescent blue, red & green.



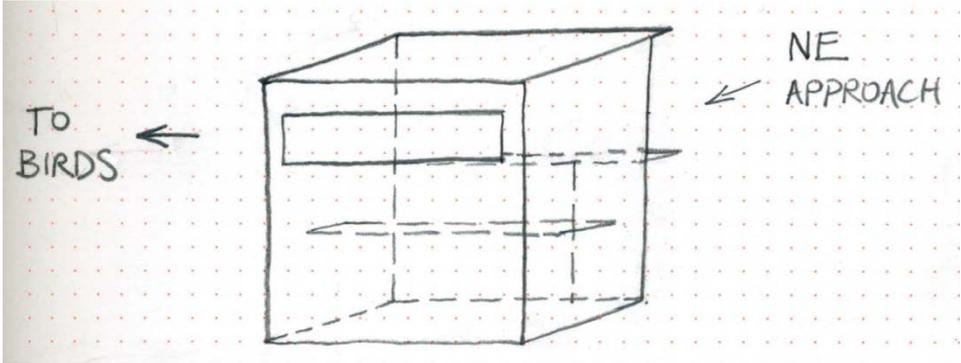
Bird fixings & dimensions

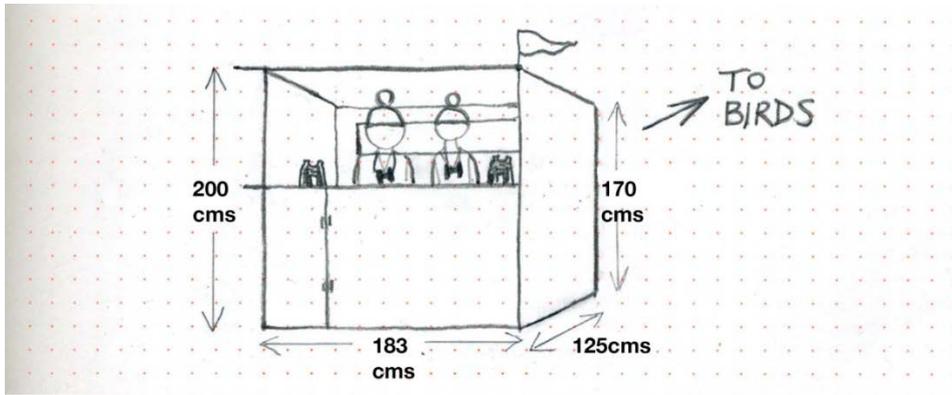
To encourage interaction, a sense of occasion and deter damage to the installation, at least 2 volunteer stewards (see Appendix B for further information) will be dressed appropriately as high visibility birdwatchers, and be available to give information out about the installation and local wildlife to members of the public. They will also be able to lend out a limited number of binoculars to members of the public to help them spot different birds and explore local wildlife. Project participants will be able to use binoculars to identify their numbered bird made during a public workshop.

**Bird Hide**

Subject to relevant licensing and permissions, it is hoped that the volunteers will be based in a small, temporary, wooden 'bird hide', which would form part of the installation at the NE approach to the murmuration. As well as providing the volunteers with some shelter, this hide would also act as an information point, supporting relevant signage and leaflets about the installation and local wildlife.

The hide will be constructed from reclaimed, weather-resistant timber with a natural wood finish, and be sealable and lockable during the night with padlocks and a removable panel. It will be secured into the ground with 4cm x 5cm wide posts within the structure at the four corners. The hide will be for staff members and volunteers only, and at no time will the general public have access to it.





**Visualisation:**







### **Publicity:**

Due to the participatory nature of this project, there is already some local awareness about the installation. It has been publicised already through posters, the Bristol 2015 website and newsletter, social media and local publications, including Henleaze Newsletter, Henleaze and Westbury Voice, and BS9 and BS6 magazines. The marketing copy advertises that the installation will be held at a 'secret location'; the installation site will not be revealed until permission is granted.

Once permission for the installation has been obtained, the Bristol 2015 digital and marketing teams will raise the profile of the project with a call to action campaign publicising the exhibition, the decline in the starling population, and suggesting some simple actions people can take to support local bird-life. Where possible, press channels such as Bristol Post and Bristol 247 will be used to spread the message across the city. Organisations such as BNHC, BRERC and Avon Wildlife Trust have been approached to ask if they would like to support or partner up for the campaign. The artist is also in discussion with Bristol Ensemble to explore how *Tree Song*, another Bristol 2015 funded arts project, could be publicised with *A Bristol Murmuration* through a shared flyer distributed across Bristol.

### **Timescales:**

**Current:** Health and Safety testing of birds - wind factor, materials, durability, connection to pole & spacing apart.

**August - September:** Making birds, firing and assembling

**14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October:** Installation of exhibition

**17<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October:** Exhibition open to the public

**26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> October:** Take down of exhibition

## Policy:

This project is compliant with Bristol City Council policies:

- 'Bristol City Council Public Art Policy'
- 'Bristol City Council Public Art Strategy'

## Consultation:

- Andrew Gordon, Heritage Planning & Partnership Officer, Bristol City Council
- Ben Skuse, Area Supervisor: Downs, Blaise, Kingsweston Estates, Bristol City Council - advised on practical issues relating to the installation of the artwork.
- Aldo Rinaldi, Public Art Officer, Bristol City Council
- Becky Belfin, Nature Conservation Officer, Bristol City Council
- Victoria Holden, Site Permissions Officer, Bristol City Council
- Arts Advisory Group for Bristol 2015 Neighbourhood Arts project – made up of local residents from the 3 wards
- Mandy Leivers, Biodiversity Education Officer, Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project

## Considerations:

- **Insurance:** Public liability is in excess of £10million.
- **Risk assessments:** Bristol 2015 and the artist will conduct a full risk assessment of the artwork exhibition and installation (please see Appendix A).
- **Wind & rain:** Throughout the testing period, there will be a trial of a few birds made to judge optimum distancing and durability in the proposed site to ensure that they don't clash with each other and that there is a safe height/width of poles. The ceramic birds will be weather-proof. The poles will be flexible so won't snap but rigid enough not knock other birds or cause injury to the public. Above the ground the poles will be between 1.3m and 2m tall and below ground they will be planted 40cm deep. They will be spaced at least 27cm apart, and the thickness of each pole will be 2.5cm in diameter.
- **Artwork safety:** The poles will be securely planted in the ground and birds firmly attached. Birds will be twisted onto poles via rubber-lined holes in their body, to provide strong adhesion. Glue will also be used to guarantee birds are secure. As advised, holes for the poles will be created by using a pointed iron rod to ensure depth. Birds will be at different heights to avoid wings clashing and aid visual interest.
- **First Aid:** a first aid kit will be available on site at all times during the installation, take down and open exhibition hours. There will also be a first-aid qualified Bristol 2015 staff member or volunteer on site, to assist should any occasion require it.
- **Football/ ball games:** Proximity of pitch means there is a risk of straying balls hitting the birds but this was considered unlikely and volunteers will mean that any damage can be reported or rectified. Workshop participants will be informed that their work may be damaged due to the public nature of the site. No birds will be sited on pitches.
- **Vandalism & theft:** Members of the public will be discouraged from touching or damaging the work through the visibility of the volunteer stewards, a few low key signs at the early approach, and the presence of other members of the public. However, this is a public space and whilst every care will be taken to discourage attempts at vandalism, participants will be notified that there may be a risk involved in the installation. Concerns are not high due to the very temporary nature of the artwork.

- **Depth of soil:** Bristol City Council have advised that in the selected area there is sufficient depth for poles in the soil before they hit bedrock and that they pose no risk or damage to the ground post exhibition.
- **Environmental impact:** Becky Belfin from Bristol City Council has confirmed that there would be no environmental or ecological impact on the site where the installation is planned. The grassland approaching the young circle of evergreens, where many of the poles would be planted, is new, degraded grassland previously excavated for the water tower and, until a few years ago, was a car park. The poles will be different heights and densities which means they will still let plenty of light through, and the main visual focus will be the ceramic birds.
- **Access:** Paths will be left through the birds so that the installation does not become an obstacle to walkers. Paths will also enable access to the installation, allowing people to explore it more thoroughly.

Artist Zoë Cameron and Bristol 2015 have an obligation to residents who have participated in the project by making ceramic birds, to make sure that the exhibition goes ahead. If the Committee decides not to accept this proposal, a backup location has been selected at Canford Park. However, this would be to the detriment of the artwork as the space isn't nearly as level and open, and enjoys a fraction of the footfall. We therefore hope that the Committee will approve these recommendations and allow the installation to go ahead.

**Further information:**

Bristol 2015's Neighbourhood Arts Programme

Artist Zoë Cameron - [www.zoecameron.com](http://www.zoecameron.com) - 07957 489510

## A Bristol Murmuration: Risk Assessment

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015

<b>Assessors Name</b>	<b>Persons Affected By This Risk Assessment</b>
Zoë Cameron <a href="mailto:zoe@zoecameron.com">zoe@zoecameron.com</a> ; 07957 489510	Members of the public Installation Artists

Hazard / Consequences	Control Procedures	Likelihood (a)	Severity (b)	Risk Ranking (= a x b)
Installing art exhibition in a public space: components could cause tripping hazards to public.	The shape of the murmuration will first be marked out by the installation team and cornered off with visible hazard tape so that members of the public do not trip over semi-installed birds. Artists will work within the confines of taped off areas.	1	1	1
Installing art exhibition in a public space: injury to artists from unsecured clay birds.	Clay birds will be mounted onto poles by artists before the poles are secured in the ground. A first aid box will be kept on site at all times.	1	1	1
Exhibiting in a public space: may obstruct members of the public passing through	The installation will be split into groups with clear access paths between groups. There will be an access path at least every 5m <sup>2</sup> group of birds so that people can move through the installation. Bird poles will be highest at these points to avoid any potential contact with birds at head height.	3	1	3
Exhibiting in an outdoor space: potential hazard if wooden poles dislodged by severe wind.	Thorough research is still underway to ensure that poles remain secure. Poles to be a maximum of 2m high from ground level and planted 40cm deep to ensure that they are securely held by the ground. Wooden poles to be made from hazel with enough rigidity to stay firm, but flexibility to allow a little give in strong winds. Birds will be waterproof.	1	1	1
Risk of exhibition becoming hazardous or being damaged by members of the public during the day.	Volunteer Stewards will supervise the installation during daylight hours to prevent general public from tampering with it, and to provide extra information about the installation and local wildlife to those who are interested.	2	1	2
Risk of exhibition becoming hazardous or being damaged by members of the public/students during the night.	At night, the installation will be taped off and marked by small solar power lights to make taping visible. Pathways for passing through the installation will be preserved so that it doesn't become an increased obstacle in the dark.	3	1	3
Risk of bird hide being broken into or damaged during the night.	The hide will be securely locked up at the end of each day. No valuable items will be kept in the hide overnight.	2	1	2

Risk of exhibition being damaged by, or causing harm to, loose dogs.	Birds will be above dog height so no possibility of collision. Due to the grouping, they will be visible enough to avoid contact.	1	1	1
Risk of injury from clay birds being used as projectiles.	Birds will be fixed onto poles using a strong adhesive (Grip Fill) to ensure that members of the public cannot remove them.	1	1	1
Damaged birds: broken ceramics could become hazardous.	The installation will be checked twice a day by the Artist, or Bristol 2015 Neighbourhood Arts Team. Damaged birds will be either repaired within two days, or, if they are beyond repair, removed immediately and their makers notified.	2	1	2

	Likelihood		Severity		Priority
1	Highly Unlikely	1	Trivial	1	Urgent action – (Risk no 15 – 25)
2	Unlikely	2	Minor Injury	2	High Priority – (Risk no 10 – 12)
3	Possible	3	Over 3 day Injury	3	Medium Priority – (Risk no 5 – 9)
4	Probable	4	Major Injury	4	Low Priority – Risk no (2 – 4)
5	Certain	5	Incapacity or Death	5	Very Low Priority– No Action required (Risk no 1)

## Artist Installation Team: Information Sheet

A *Bristol Murmuration* is to be installed only by the lead artists, Zoë Cameron, and a small team of other artists that Zoë has worked with before. The following method statement has been developed to provide a safe system of working and will be adhered to at all times. Significant deviation from this system must first be authorised by Zoë.

<b>Project</b>	A Bristol Murmuration
<b>Project Lead Artist</b>	Zoë Cameron; <a href="mailto:zoe@zoecameron.com">zoe@zoecameron.com</a> ; 07957 489510
<b>Site Address</b>	NE corner of Durdham Down
<b>Project Installation Dates</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
<b>Project Take Down Dates</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> October

### Main hazards to health and safety:

1. Injury from incorrect manual handling.
2. Injury from slips trips and falls.
3. Injury to members of the public from objects being left unsupervised.

### Preventative measures that must be taken:

1. Installers must be 'competent' to carry out the task.
2. Installers must NOT carry out this task alone.
3. Installers must work within the taped off sections which segregate working area from the rest of the Downs.
4. All tools and installation components must be kept within taped of areas and supervised at all times.
5. Installers must not lift beyond their capabilities, and should ask for help from another member of the team if necessary.

**Personal protective equipment:**

1. High visibility jackets.
2. Protective gloves.

**Environmental protection measures:**

1. All waste products must be removed from the site and disposed of appropriately.

**Preparation and induction:**

All artist installers must be inducted by the lead Artist, Zoë Cameron, in matters of health, safety and welfare in advance of proceedings.

**Welfare and First Aid:**

The nearest toilet facilities are the public toilets by the water tower. A First Aid box will be kept on site at all times under Zoë's supervision.

### **Step by Step Procedure: Installation**

1. Measure out area for Bristol Murmuration installation, including access paths.
2. Tape off marked areas using clearly viable hazard tape.
3. Insert solar lights into ground at 4m intervals around entire taped off area.
4. Once the lights and tape barriers are securely in place then work can commence.
5. Deliver boxes of ceramic birds and hazel poles to the site, in two or three loads as necessary.
6. Measure and mark up prepared hazel poles
7. In batches, attach ceramic birds to hazel by twisting poles through rubber and adhesive lined holes.
8. While adhesive is drying, begin next batch of attaching birds to poles.
9. Once a sufficient quantity of birds have been attached and the adhesive has dried, mark out where poles will be inserted into turf (minimum of 27cm apart).
10. Use pointed iron rod to create holes in ground for poles. Iron rod should be inserted until 40cm marker is level with turf.
11. Once all bird mounted poles are installed, Zoë Cameron will do the final on site risk assessment.
12. After all possible hazards have been addressed, the tape may be removed.

### **Step by Step Procedure: Take Down**

1. Tape off exhibition areas, allowing space for paths.
2. Tap the hazel poles at the base using a wooden mallet to loosen/dislodge.
3. Wearing protective gloves, twist and remove the hazel poles from the ground.
4. Once poles are removed, cut poles to a manageable length, (approx. 1m tall) using wood cutters.
5. Wrap birds, still attached onto shortened poles, and load them securely into vehicle for transportation to collection point where they will be available for owners to collect them and install in their own gardens.

6. Remove all solar lights from the taped off areas.
7. Remove hazard tape and support poles from the area.
8. Zoë Cameron to check the empty site for litter or damage.
9. Zoë to consult with Becky Belfin to ascertain whether further work is needed to restore ground (we have been advised that restoration will not be necessary, this is just a precautionary measure).

## A Bristol Murmuration: Volunteer Stewards

To ensure that the exhibition is looked after for the 9 days it is open to the public, a pool of up to 90 volunteers will be recruited to supervise the installation during daylight hours. A minimum of 2 volunteer stewards will supervise the installation per shift, so that there is always someone present. Volunteers will work either a 2 or 2.5 hour shift between 7.30am and 6.30pm.

### Management

- Volunteers will be coordinated and managed by the Artist Zoë Cameron with support from Marietta Kirkbride and Emma Williams from the Bristol 2015 Neighbourhood Arts Team.
- One of these Volunteer Managers will be present for the first and last half hour of each day to assess any damage and take action as necessary. They will also be responsible for opening and closing the installation each day.
- All incidences and problems will be reported by volunteers to one of the Volunteer Managers who, although perhaps not present on site, will be on call to take action as necessary.
- All volunteers will be inducted and briefed in advance of their first shift by the Artist.

### Safety:

- On site during all daylight hours there will be a box containing:
  - A first aid kit
  - Protective gloves – should a broken ceramic bird need to be removed
  - Dustpan and brush
  - Contact information for Volunteer Managers and Emergency Services
  - Safety information document
  - Map of surrounding area
  - 2 x spare waterproofs and umbrellas; 6 x binoculars for lending to the public
- Volunteers will be instructed to contact a Volunteer Manager in the event of any incident or problem. They will not be expected to deal with issues independently.
- In advance of their shift, volunteers will be provided with a list of items to bring with them, which will include warm clothes, a hat, waterproofs and a bottle of water.
- Volunteers will also be issued with information about the installation, including a FAQ fact sheet to help them respond to questions from the general public.
- A public toilet is available on the downs by the water tower for volunteers to use.

### Recruitment:

- Volunteers will be recruited through the Bristol 2015 Volunteers Programme and via contacts made through bird-making workshops.
- In addition to this, new volunteers will be captured via an online form: <https://goo.gl/1xjspp>
- The volunteering opportunity will also be advertised through the Bristol University Students union to encourage students to participate, and through Voscars.
- Arts networks such as Theatre Bristol and Creative Bristol will also be used to gather volunteers.

### Aesthetic:

- Volunteers will take on the role of 'bird watchers', and will wear hats and binoculars as well as a customised, high visibility garment to make them distinct from the general public.
- Volunteers will roam around the installation as necessary, but one will always be based at an 'information point' at the North East approach to the installation. This will be marked by a small flag, wind break and a couple of stools to suggest a look-out or 'hide', and will be disassembled and removed at the end of each day.