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Lanark Community Development Trust unveils William Wallace inspired artwork to brighten up town centre close

The 'Wallace Close' project has been co-ordinated by the Lanark Community Development Trust as part of The Lanark Vision strategy to improve the aesthetic appeal of the town centre for locals, and to bring in more tourists by capitalising on Lanark's links with historic Scottish icon William Wallace.

The artwork of the Wallace Close is based on an ancient illustrative style, similar to that of The Bayeux Tapestry, with each of the panels in the close depicting an aspect of William Wallace's life in Lanark – from marrying Marion Braidfute at St Kentigern's Church, to slaying Sherriff Heselrig before fleeing into the Clyde woodlands.

The Development Trust brought in Ali Smith, Director of Art Pistol Projects, to take on the artistic leadership of the project and undertake the spray paint artwork in the close. Mural artwork by Art Pistol Projects can be seen around Glasgow, with works including large-scale portraits of comedian Billy Connolly and the recent tribute to Charles Rennie Mackintosh celebrating the 150th anniversary of the famous architect, designer and artist.

As part of the project, Art Pistol Projects facilitated two creative workshops at Lanark Grammar School with a group of Higher & National 5 Art and Design students. In the workshops, the students researched William Wallace and developed visual ideas and graphics for the close artwork. They were also shown a range of techniques used in spray paint art including the intricacies of cutting templates and using layers in a design. Three of the students who took part in the workshops also spent time during their Summer Holidays assisting with the actual artwork in the close.

Funders of the project include the Border Biscuits Community Support Fund, Greggs the Bakers through their Local Community Projects Fund and Western Recreation Trust.

Sylvia Russell, Chairman of Lanark Community Development Trust, commented: *"We're delighted with the results of the 'Wallace Close' in the High Street and hope that locals and visitors will enjoy the fantastic designs. It's been great working on such a creative project, and seeing the involvement and enthusiasm of the young Lanark Grammar students. The long-term plan for us, and an aim of the Discover Lanark Business Improvement District (BID), is to transform more closes in the High Street based on other aspects of Lanark's history – drawing in tourists and making them more pleasant spaces for locals to use regularly. Watch this space!"*

Ali Smith, Director of Art Pistol Projects, commented: *"What a story Wallace's time in Lanark is. We took some great ideas from the workshops with the young local artists, and tried to tell the story how it would have been told back then... if they had some cans of spray paint! The girls that painted did a superb job on a very rough wall and showed some great skills. It's been a real pleasure to be involved in this project."*

Liz Meechan, Acting Principal Teacher of Creative and Aesthetic Studies at Lanark Grammar School, commented:
“Both the school and the Art and Design department were delighted to have the chance to work in partnership with Lanark Community Development Trust and Art Pistol Projects. Our pupils have been given an excellent opportunity to not only improve their skill set for learning, life and work but to contribute in a ‘hands on’ way to the wider community.”

The Development Trust has already undertaken a range of projects to promote Wallace’s links with Lanark, including the development of ‘The Wallace Trail’ leaflet route and the creation of ‘The Wallace Rose Garden’, complete with carved William Wallace statue in Castlebank Park. The Development Trust has also recently commissioned a feasibility study to assess the development opportunities of St Kentigerns church as a local tourism asset.

Further information about Lanark Community Development Trust’s projects is available at www.lanarktrust.co.uk

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Notes to editor

Images available via <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/h3quwa50q9tpvon/AAC7jtSkWvD-4j7QbT4xXBLya?dl=0>

- For more information please contact Melissa Reilly, Development Manager of Lanark Community Development Trust – melissa@lanark.co.uk / 07958 387 378
- Lanark Community Development Trust is a Registered Scottish Charity SCO40584
- Lanark Community Development Trust is a charitable, non-profit body which carries out projects for the common good. It is an independent, volunteer-led organisation which is part of a growing network of Development Trusts which exist across Scotland and the UK. Here in Lanark, we aspire to develop and deliver priority community projects which have a social, environmental and economic impact. We do not and will not deliver on the responsibilities of statutory authorities, but rather seek to add value to existing activity.
- www.lanarktrust.co.uk | www.facebook.com/LanarkCDT | www.twitter.com/LanarkTrust
- ArtPistol - <https://www.artpistol.co.uk/>
- Lanark Grammar School - <http://www.lanark.s-lanark.sch.uk/>