Magic of the Tawd – Commission Brief: Sound Engineers

Commission Value: £9,000–£11,000
Deadline for Expressions of Interest (EOI): *September 21st*
Delivery Period: *May 2027 – May 2028 (Please note: this commission is subject to achieving grant funding.)*

Project Background

Magic of the Tawd is a major creative placemaking programme led by Positive Placemakers CIC, designed to animate Tawd Valley Park through storytelling, sound, digital innovation, and deep community co-creation. The programme celebrates the park's ecology, folklore, and industrial heritage, bringing together local schools, West Lancashire College, community organisations, and professional artists.

The programme blends:

- Creative co-production with young people
- Local heritage research and memory gathering
- Digital innovation, including augmented reality (AR)
- Outdoor arts and placemaking

Magic of the Tawd includes two core sound-based strands:

1. Creature Sound Worlds (6 total)

Five creatures are being designed by local primary school pupils, inspired by the annual Tawd Valley bio-blasts. The sixth creature is a Boggart, inspired by northern folklore and historically rumoured to have lived in a farm cottage once located along the Tawd Valley Heritage Trail.

Each creature will have a bespoke soundscape shaped through co-creation with children and West Lancashire College students.

2. Heritage AR Soundscapes (6 locations)

Six heritage-based sound experiences will be developed through community consultation and memory gathering (organised outside this commission). These will be embedded along the Tawd Valley Heritage Trail using AR.

Examples include:

- A train running along the mineral line, reflecting Skelmersdale's industrial past
- The sound of men walking to their factory cottages, echoing working-class heritage and daily life

These AR soundscapes will deepen public engagement with local history and create a multi-layered digital heritage trail.

Co-Creation & Education Partnership

A core part of this commission is working with West Lancashire College, where students will gain industry-level experience in:

- Field recording
- Sound design
- Editing and production
- Outdoor arts and digital integration

Sound engineers will mentor students and support professional workflows. School and community engagement is organised separately and is **not** part of this commission.

Scope of Work

Creature Sound Worlds

- Develop six high-quality soundscapes (five school-designed creatures + one folklore Boggart)
- Support field recording sessions in Tawd Valley Park
- Facilitate collaborative workshops with West Lancashire College students
- Mentor students through professional workflows (recording, editing, mixing, mastering)
- Prepare audio for outdoor installation and digital use

Heritage AR Soundscapes

- Create six heritage-based soundscapes for AR integration
- Conduct field recordings and/or studio-based sound design
- Collaborate with digital partners to ensure technical compatibility
- Prepare final audio assets for AR deployment

General Responsibilities

- Attend planning meetings and co-creation sessions
- Ensure consistency, accessibility, and narrative cohesion across all sound assets
- Deliver final files in agreed formats and specifications

Timeline

- **Creature Sound Worlds:** September 2027 – January 2028
- **Heritage AR Soundscapes:** May 2027 – July 2027

Budget Structure (Indicative)

Commission Value: £9,000–£11,000

1. **Professional Sound Engineer Fees**
    - Lead Sound Engineer
    - Assistant / Second Engineer
    - Specialist AR Audio Consultant
2. **Field Recording & Production Costs**
    - Field Recording Days
    - Equipment Hire (mics, recorders, windshields, stands)
    - Studio Time (mixing & mastering)
    - Software / Plugins / AR Integration Tools
3. **AR Development & Integration**
    - AR Technical Integration
    - Testing & On-Site Calibration

EOI Requirements – What Applicants Must Provide

To be shortlisted, applicants must clearly evidence their professional capability, approach, and suitability for this commission. EOIs should be concise (max 4 pages or equivalent) and include the following:

1. Professional Experience & Technical Expertise

- A short biography or organisational profile
- Evidence of professional sound design, field recording, and audio production
- Examples of past work **relevant to outdoor sound installation, digital sound design, AR audio, or heritage/creative placemaking contexts**
- Links to portfolio, website, or audio samples (SoundCloud, Vimeo, YouTube, etc.)

2. Experience Working Collaboratively

- Evidence of working with young people, students, or community groups
- Examples of mentoring, facilitation, or co-creation
- Demonstration of ability to communicate technical processes in accessible ways

3. Proposed Creative Approach

- A short outline of how you would approach:
    - Creature Sound Worlds

    - Heritage AR Soundscapes
- Initial thoughts on narrative cohesion, accessibility, and outdoor listening experience
- Any relevant methodologies or artistic frameworks

4. Technical Understanding & Delivery Capability

- Evidence of experience delivering high-quality audio assets for digital or AR platforms
- Understanding of field recording challenges in outdoor environments
- Confirmation of access to appropriate equipment and software

5. Project Management & Feasibility

- A clear outline of availability across the project timeline
- Evidence of delivering complex sound projects on time and within budget
- Identification of any anticipated risks and how you would mitigate them

6. Budget Breakdown

- A draft budget showing how the commission value (£9,000–£11,000) would be allocated
- Day rates and any additional costs (equipment hire, studio time, etc.)

7. Practical Requirements

- Public liability insurance
- Enhanced DBS (or willingness to obtain one before delivery)
- Confirmation of ability to work on-site in Skelmersdale

Submission

EOIs should be submitted to **Positive Placemakers CIC** via email to **helen.juste@positiveplacemakers.org.uk)** by **September 21st**.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an informal conversation with the project team and West Lancashire College.