

Clare Palmier  
The Art Station

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Our Ref:

Date: 30.07.21

Dear Clare

I am delighted to see The Art Station playing a key role in the regeneration and cultural development of Saxmundham.

The creation of studios, workspaces and a meeting point for the cultural, creative and tech community in rural East Suffolk, sits at the heart of both Suffolk County Council and New Anglia LEP's plans for inclusive and sustainable growth.

As you know we work closely with the Arts Council; we are pleased to recognise that Arts Council's Let's Create Strategy reflects our on-going interest and commitment to the development of cultural and creative communities. We know that cultural engagement builds resilience and well-being.

It is clear to me that The Art Station's current activity and ambitious plans, play a key role in ensuring that market towns in rural areas are central to cultural life and the development of a dispersed, national creative workforce.

I am confident that, with your team's commitment and drive, The Art Station is a major driver for positive, creative and inclusive change in the area.

Do please pass on this letter of support to your partners and potential funders.

With best wishes



Jayne Knight, Arts Development Manager





## Saxmundham Town Council

The Town House, Station Approach, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1BW,

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VAT Registration No: 571060663

### To whom it may concern

12 August 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to confirm that Saxmundham Town Council supports the Art Station and considers that it brings significant benefits to our community. I think I reflect the views of my councillor colleagues in saying how impressed we are with the Art Station's progress and its new creative space in the former Telephone Exchange building – including the project's achievement in raising funding and carrying out a substantial refurbishment notwithstanding the pandemic.

Our Council's support was evidenced in a £4,000 capital grant we made from our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) resources to help enable community arts services and classes to be delivered. Moreover, our Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, with the Town Council's backing, has made a priority of "Creative and cultural industries including those that combine modern technology and the arts" as an economic sector we particularly aim to encourage and promote over the coming years. I see the Art Station as an important catalyst towards achieving this aim, as well as promoting community cohesion, and focusing on activities that contribute to

- supporting and diversifying local economy, supporting micro businesses, and increasing the local 'spend' in the town
- developing a cultural and creative offer in the town centre that supports social connections and cohesion
- offering work experience and work placements for young people to provide access to employment and employability skills

We look forward to cooperating further with the Art Station as it develops and are keen to work with its partners and supporters to help deliver its potential over the next years. I should add that next year – 2022 – sees the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our town's first Market Charter, an anniversary that we propose to mark with a series of community events, in which we envisage the Art Station playing an important role.

Yours faithfully

Jeremy Smith

Chair, Saxmundham Town Council / Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



Clare Palmier  
Art Station  
Saxmundham

**Your ref:**  
**Our ref:** Art Station  
**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021  
**Please ask for:** Morag McInnes  
**Customer Services:** 03330 162 000  
**Direct dial:** 01394 444622  
**Email:** morag.mcinnnes@eastssuffolk.gov.uk

Dear Clare

### **Art Station – Saxmundham**

East Suffolk Council has been fully supportive of the Art Station project and we have been hugely impressed with the progress they have made in redeveloping the old Post Office in Saxmundham into artist studios and a creative and technological hub. It has rejuvenated an area of the town's High Street and revitalized and repurposed a large and previously empty space in the middle of town. The Art Station's offer of flexible, adaptable workshops has grown a cluster of creative businesses in Saxmundham. It has also enlivened the town centre and contributed to local 'pride of place'. The curated art events are of such a high calibre that they attract artists of national profile whilst supporting and celebrating local artists and creators. Art Station is seen as an essential and influential contributor to the growth and support of creative industries sector in the district.

In addition, the Art Station has provided access to employment and experience for young people. The Art Station also supports young people, demonstrated by the project supporting 3 Kickstart jobs and 2 work experience volunteer placements for young people in 2020/21, and we are pleased that they are continually wanting to grow this offer and support the aspirations of young people.

East Suffolk Council recognizes that projects such as Art Station are regenerating towns and rural communities through community development, arts and culture. We continually support the development of creative economies as we know that they can contribute significantly to the wider economic improvement as well as adding to 'place' and community cohesion. The East Suffolk district has a larger than national average number of micro businesses and self-employed workers, so it's essential that there is good provision of quality working spaces and small

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enterprise business support. In the East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan, we list the creative sector as a key growth sector but also more broadly the Council's Strategic plan which has enabling economic growth as a key priority, so we recognise how the Art Station aligns with these strategic principles. The project also aligns to the regional (LEP led) Culture Drives Growth strategy which recommends the need to 'back creative talent', to 'build inspiring places to live, work and visit' and to 'support existing cultural and creative businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk to generate more jobs in the regional economy'. In addition, East Suffolk Council has a number of pipeline projects such as our digital town and business support programme, as well as our newly launched City of Culture bid which will all synergise well with the Art Station's continued development.

The Art Station's continuing plans are suitably ambitious and deserve success. The building supplies not just workspace and creative profile, but also opportunity for collaboration with other sectors through shared working environments. The creative industries have natural synergy with other sectors such as technology and digital. The plans for an exhibition and public 'meet up' space in the building, and the continued programme development for young people and creative enterprise support will have huge value for Saxmundham.

As a result of all these positive benefits this project is bringing to East Suffolk we are very pleased to provide this letter of support and wish the Art Station continued success and progress.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Wood".

**Paul Wood | Head of Service, Economic Development**  
East Suffolk Council

Iain Dunnett  
Senior Growing Places Fund Coordinator  
New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

July 21st, 2021

Dear Clare

New Anglia LEP has provided direct financial support of £55k from the Growing Places Fund to the development of the Art Station in Saxmundham. This is on the basis that the project will have significant socio-economic benefits to this market town and its rural hinterland.

The development of the Art Station represents a considerable achievement, particularly considering that the refurbishment of the building has occurred throughout the period of the pandemic. The Art Station has established a new creative space, is growing a vital network for the creative industries and will create social impact locally.

The Art Station is a strategically significant development for the growth of the East Suffolk cultural/creative economy, and it has the potential to become a model for developing rural market towns in Suffolk and Norfolk, where culture and creativity can play a key role in those towns. The importance of cultural and creative projects will be further emphasised as town centres seek to enliven their high streets post pandemic.

The Art Station is supporting micro and small businesses within the creative sector - which creates opportunities for work experience, volunteering, and internships - enabling young people to gain useful experience and an understanding of how they might develop their own career journey. This contributes directly towards the LEPs objectives on skills, employability, job creation and retention.

The LEPs financial support is representative of the complete support from the LEP to the Art Station development, and we recommend the project to all prospective funders of the project.

Iain Dunnett

Senior Growing Places Fund Coordinator

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership