

Countdown to Devon Artist Network Open Studios

DEVON
Artist
Network

Open Studios

1. Behind the scenes.

Publicity for you and the event is a top priority for the committee and organisers. We are working hard to engage the national and regional media and to create a 'buzz'.

36,000 of the Event Guides will be published in late July. Centrally we will distribute copies to Devon Tourist Information Centres, libraries, local council offices, advertisers and major arts venues.

Artists will need to collect their allocation from regional drop off points, to distribute via their own client lists and to local contacts and venues e.g. hotels, shops, community centres etc.

2. What can you do to make your event a success?

Many of you are already actively involved and experienced in self-promotion. For those with less experience in this field, there are some helpful tips on this information sheet.

3. It's up to you!

Past evidence shows that if you do not do enough to promote yourself and your open studio, space or event, you can expect far fewer visitors.

Surveys carried out during previous open studios events in Devon clearly show that those artists who worked hard on publicity and promotion achieved higher visitor numbers and higher sales or commissions for work and projects. It makes sense – so what can you do?

4. Press and Media

With an event that lasts for this length of time, it important to keep information flowing to the press and DAN will be doing this centrally as well. However, the press are interested in individual stories, especially

about someone who lives in their target area. Consider contacting your local paper – telling them how you are preparing for the event; then during DOS - how many visitors you had on the first weekend, sales made, commissions agreed, what visitors can expect to see and the warm welcome they'll receive. Give them some enthusiastic quotes from your first visitors. Send them a digital photo if you can – perhaps of yourself putting the final touches to your exhibition/installation, or of the first groups of visitors looking round your venue.

Our Media Officer, *Natacha Du Pont de Bie* can help you

with writing a press release or to tease out stories – contact her on ndupontdebie@gmail.com 07973 48 1944 or 01837 840 011. Her role is part time, but she will get back to you as soon as she can.

Always follow up a press release with a phone call: Are they using it? Do they need anything else?

5. Devon Open Studios Guides

Keep an eye on Tourist Information Centres, cafés, shops, hotels, bed and breakfasts,

cafés and other venues in your immediate locality to ensure they are displaying the Guides. If a venue runs out of Guides restock them or if you don't have the supplies left, let *Claire Binden* know and she will organise more supplies to your area.

Use the A4 posters (available on the DAN website) with space to write details/directions for your own studio or adapt the model poster from the website with your own details and image. These are particularly useful for displaying in your own local café or shop, to tell customers that your open studio is just round the corner.

“...those artists who worked hard on publicity and promotion achieved higher visitor numbers and higher sales”

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6. Promoting your venue

Make sure your site is easy to find! Download and print direction arrows from www.devonartistnetwork.co.uk. It is advisable to have a good quantity of arrows (signposting at each junction), since these are the most helpful way of finding a venue for solo visitors who aren't able to read directions or a map whilst they are driving.

Please read the Signage Regulations for Devon Open Studios and the accompanying Devon County Council Guidelines carefully. There are restrictions you must follow.

When you've read the regulations, plan carefully where you are going to place your signs, bearing in mind that Devon County Council has asked us to keep signage to a minimum. Work with other venues in your area if necessary to ensure that junctions don't become overloaded with signs! Also bear in mind that our signs are not waterproof, so laminate or put them in a plastic sleeve. There is nothing more frustrating to the lost visitor than a limp, wet sign not doing its job!

Get someone else to check the main routes to your venue. A less familiar eye will see where people are most likely to get lost.

Place your signs accordingly. Ask your visitors whether they found you OK.

Remove your signs overnight if you possibly can.

Make sure you have directions available for your visitors to direct them to the other open studios immediately around you – and make sure the studios near you have directions available to yours. Supplying nearby studios with a map to your studio they can hand to visitors can be particularly useful.

7. Word of Mouth is a powerful marketing tool!

People are bombarded with advertising these days. They may not believe it or they may simply ignore it! However, people do trust other people. Talk to as many people as you can about your open studio.

Talk to your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and the parents of your children's school friends.

Talk to people who are well respected and trusted in the local community, and who have good networks.

Distribute information in person to your local cafés, pubs, hotels, post offices, shops, etc, and invite them to your preview.

8. Previews and Private Views

Previews and Private Views are an excellent way to get your event off to a flying start. Invite all your previous customers and clients and your friends who are already big fans of your work – and invite them to bring their friends too, introducing a new audience to your work. Make sure your invitation clearly gives the time, date, location and what to expect when people get there e.g. a talk or refreshments.

9. Business Cards and Postcards

Your business cards and postcards are easy for visitors to pick up – so make sure you have plenty available.

Even if visitors can't buy artwork at the time of their visit, we know that many contact artists long after the event to buy or commission something – don't let them leave empty-handed.

10. Use your mailing list – and if you don't have one, start one during Devon Open Studios.

It's extremely important to create and use a good mailing list of your customers and clients. If you already have a list, send a Guide/or invitation to come along to everyone on it, telling them when you're open.

Devon Artist Network Open Studios will supply some visitor forms for you to use to collect the names and addresses of all your visitors for future contact. This is for

your use, for you to keep, and can be used for your own mailing list - Devon Open Studios only needs to know how many visitors came to your studio, not who they are.

The Data Protection Act means that you have to let people know what you will be using their information for – so include a notice near your visitor sheets that does this. An

explanation of what visitors' details will be used for is on the form we have provided. There is a tick box on the visitor sheets for visitors to tick to show they agree to you using their information in this way. Make sure you only use the information for the purposes your visitors have agreed to, don't, for example, pass the details on to another artist to use.

11. Selling your work

Enlist the help of a friend if you feel uncomfortable selling your work or services. It's often easier for others to sell your work than it is for you to do it yourself. Set a

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fair price for your work, reflecting how much it cost to make both in materials and your own time. Don't offer discounts too easily – remember this is your livelihood! If you are prepared to offer discounts, decide in advance what the maximum discount you will be prepared to

offer (taking into account your costs) – and stick to it!

Prepare in advance by printing a list of the works you are offering for sale - with prices.

Also include the media used, the year the work was made and the dimensions (in case potential purchasers need to measure up their available wall space!).

Place a label next to each piece of work with the name and number of the piece, the price and the media.

Make sure you are clear about what forms of payment you will accept – display these on a notice.

Consider hiring a chip and pin machine or investigate web based card payment services if buying your work would require a large outlay.

Keep some cash handy for change. Ensure you have a receipt book available. Keep your packing materials and red 'sold' stickers ready.

If you do not have objects to sell – if you are an installation artist, for example – make sure you have plenty of portfolio information available for potential project partners, funders or commissioners to look through – together with your contact details and some other information they can take away with them.

12. During the event

Make sure you are ready to chat to your visitors if they want to know more about your work, your methods, your inspirations, etc. For many visitors this is the attraction of open studios and talking to those who want to talk will always elicit a more positive response to your work.

Be sensitive to visitors who would prefer to look around quietly. You will probably be able to tell instinctively which visitors just need a friendly smile and greeting to put them at their ease.

You can always offer refreshments to keep visitors at

your venue longer. Remember if you are preparing food you need the relevant health and hygiene certificate – simply buying some biscuits or sweets and being ready to put the kettle on or offer a glass of fruit juice may be more appropriate.

“Set a fair price for your work, reflecting how much it cost to make both in materials and your own time. Don't offer discounts too easily; remember this is your livelihood!”

Consider having something to keep children occupied while parents browse.

Offer some written and visual information about yourself for visitors to look through. Give them some background on your work, previous exhibitions, commissions, experiences – it may help start up a conversation. Include photographs of other work, portfolio pieces, press cuttings,

reviews and visitor/client comments.

13. After the event

Make sure that you follow up any leads as a result of your exhibition. Many people will have expressed an interest in your work and, if they have given permission, may appreciate further communication. A simple card or email is a good idea – 'glad you came to my studio yesterday, it was good to meet you. If you would like any more details of my work or future projects, please let me know'.

14. Artists' Feedback

We will be asking you to provide information on how many people came to your studio, what they bought or commissioned and what they thought of Devon Open Studios in general. This information helps show that Devon Open Studios has an economic impact on the region.

15. Visitors' Survey

The Visitors' Survey can be found on the DAN website; visitor feedback is extremely helpful to us. Do point it out to your visitors. There is a generous prize that can be won for completing it.



“An Artist's working life is marked by intensive application and intense discipline.”

J.F.Kennedy

Basic Safety and Security Measures

1. Look at your venue with a fresh pair of eyes. Check all obvious tripping points and obstacles. Remove those obstacles you can and highlight those you can't with signs and bright colours (or striped 'hazard' tape). Don't forget awkward tables, shelves or steps.
2. Check your premises and working methods during the event, check for unnecessarily hazardous things and take action to minimise the likelihood of accidental injury or damage.
3. If your studio is at home, block off areas that are not to be entered by your guests. Use 'private' signs on doors not to be opened, ropes across stairs and directional arrows.
4. Clear up clutter. It will help your venue look more spacious and inviting as well as getting possibly dangerous substances, tools and equipment out of the way.
5. Don't leave fragile objects where people can easily handle (or mishandle) them.
6. If you have indicated that visitors may bring dogs, plan ahead as to how you intend to deal with both the dogs and their owners.
7. Plan methods to keep your own children or pets safe and supervised.
8. You can insist that breakages must be paid for, but make sure that you don't leave things in places where they could be easily knocked over.
9. Protect yourself – it's extremely unlikely that there will be any problems, but it's always wise to have more than one way out of your studio in case of emergency.
10. If you can persuade a friend to help mind your studio with you, it's not only safer but more fun!

Insurance

Remember we strongly advise you to ensure you have adequate PLI insurance for your premises and it is essential for anyone putting up the yellow direction arrows. A good starting place for artists' insurance is <https://www.a-n.co.uk/about/insurance>

Devon Open Studios Signage Guidelines

Important : This document must be read in conjunction with Devon County Council's flyposting guidelines, next page. You are personally responsible for ensuring that any signs you display adhere to DCC guidelines. You can be charged and fined for causing a hazard. **Please take care.**

This year DCC have requested that artists mount the signs on board and laminate or put them in a plastic folder to make them more robust.

1. You must not put signs up on the M5 nor on trunk roads such as the A38 or A30.
2. Signage must be kept to a minimum and restricted as far as possible to the last junction prior to your venue.
3. For those artists who have venues from the minor (non-trunk) roads We have approval from Devon County Council for Devon Open Studios signs to be attached securely to street furniture such as: Lamp columns and poles Fencing (where it does not obstruct the view of motorists or pedestrians) Pedestrian barriers Direction sign assemblies
4. You must NOT attach signage to: Traffic signals of any type Speed limit signs Regulatory signs Warning signs Bus stops or shelters If you do so, IT WILL BE REMOVED, and you could be charged and fined for causing a hazard to motorists. See the Devon County Guidelines for more details.
5. Any sign erected where pedestrians walk under or close to the sign, such as a sign fixed to a lamp column on a footway, must be mounted with a minimum height of 2.1m to the underside.
6. Please use the signs you have been given or which are downloadable from the website (we have permission for these signs only).
7. Please put your signs up on the opening day (as far as possible) and remove them on the closing day promptly. Signs must not be erected more than 48 hours before the event.
8. Subject to the above requirement for locations where there is pedestrian traffic, put them at normal sign height i.e. easy for a driver to see.
9. Always keep sensible road safety in mind. Give plenty of warning of upcoming turns and reminder signs for long stretches of road.
10. Check your signage daily or at the very least ask every visitor if they found you easily and found the signs clear.

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11. Ensure that your signs are not causing a hazard to motorists or pedestrians. For example, signage must not force pedestrians into the road, or interfere with the visibility of motorists.

12. Signage must not impede the minimum width of passage of 1.5 metres.

13. Signage must not extend more than 450mm from the shop/venue frontage (where applicable)

14. Get permission from anyone affected by the location of your sign i.e. shopkeepers. Tell them what you are doing, give them a Devon Open Studios Guide. Let them know the sign is only up until the event's closing day and invite them to your launch.

15. Do not use garden stakes as they are a potential hazard to the public.

16. Always fasten signs securely so that they don't become detached or fall.

Finally, please do remember to take your signs down after the event. Fading, decaying signs left on roadsides for months after the event reflect badly on Devon Open Studios and your venue.

Flyposting or unauthorised signs What action will be taken to remove signs?



Unauthorised Signs, Posters, Graffiti, Displayed Goods and Other Items on or Adjacent to the Highway

In general the Council has a policy to remove unauthorised signs, posters and graffiti from the highway in accordance with Section 132 of the Highways Act. However, it is recognised that some discretion is needed in town and village centres with regard to goods and displays outside local shops.

Discretion may also be exercised with regard to signs for local fetes and small charitable events provided that they:

1. do not cause a hazard;
2. are not offensive or unsightly
3. are erected not more than 48 hours before the event and removed immediately after.

Fly-posters and graffiti should be removed from highway structures and street furniture belonging to the County Council within 28 days as required by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

An unauthorised sign will still be removed although it may have consent under The Town and Country planning (Control of Advertising) Regulations.

No action will be taken unless it is certain that the signs, posters, goods or other items are situated within the limits of the public highway (i.e. on highway land).

(a) Unauthorised Business Signs, Displayed Goods And Other Items Outside Business Premises:

Any interference with public passage is technically an illegal obstruction of the highway. Action will be taken to remove unauthorised signs, displayed goods and other items when a footway or pedestrian area is obstructed to the extent that: there is no longer a minimum width of passage of 1.5 metres; or, they extend more than 450mm from the shop frontage; or, they interfere with the visibility of motorists; or, pedestrians are forced into the road, either directly or because of the number of pedestrians; or, there is a significant hazard to pedestrians;

Where a shop is a genuine 'corner' shop with two clear frontages e.g. windows and or doors on both elevations it is interpreted that goods can be displayed up to 450mm from both 'frontages' subject to compliance with the other conditions/sections of the policy. Where there is simply a blank wall to the side of a shop this does not constitute a shop

frontage and therefore all obstructions have to be removed on this side, including those within 450mm. Complaints will be investigated and be taken into account in deciding whether action is taken:

When unauthorised signs, goods or other items are placed on the highway outside premises which are open, the person in charge of the establishment will be contacted and given notice that unless the removal of the offending objects is commenced within 10 minutes, action will be taken by the County Council to remove the obstruction and/or initiate legal proceedings. No further notice will be given for similar repeated transgressions;

Unauthorised signs, goods or other items placed on the highway outside premises which are closed will be removed if they are considered to be an obstruction or a safety hazard. The owner will subsequently be informed of the action taken.

Signs, goods or other items removed from outside premises will be taken to a convenient Council depot to await collection. A charge will be made for the recovery of each sign or each group of goods;

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The Police will be informed if dangerous situations arise when signs, goods or items are removed.

If appropriate the County Council will initiate legal proceedings and seek recovery of all costs.

(b) Other Unauthorised Signs, Fly-posters and Graffiti;

All other unauthorised signs, posters (inc business signs and posters displayed away from business premises), fly-posters or graffiti situated within the highway [including on road signs; structures, e.g. subways; DCC equipment cabinets etc] will be removed within 28 days

The District Council can issue a notice or take proceedings under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 for the owner of a surface to remove fly-posting or graffiti or to do it itself and recharge the County. This includes the County Council as owner of, for

example, a subway, a bridge or an equipment cabinet, or against, for example BT or cable companies etc for their equipment boxes.

On the first occasion of an offence and if the owner of unauthorised signs or posters is contactable he/she will be asked to remove them forthwith. When the owner is unavailable or repeats the offence, the signs or posters will be removed by the County Council and on the first occasion only, every endeavour will be made to inform the owner of the action taken.

Signs will be taken to a suitable depot to await collection by the owner except those necessarily destroyed in the course of removal. A charge will be made for the recovery of each sign. Where appropriate the County Council will initiate legal proceedings and seek recovery of all costs. In the case of signs, posters or fly-posting for businesses or events,

these should be brought to the attention of the District Council who should be asked to take action under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 against the beneficiary.

In the case of graffiti where the perpetrators are identifiable this should be brought to the attention of the District Council who should be asked to take action against the perpetrators under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

The attention of the appropriate District Council as Planning Authority will be drawn to advertising signs on land adjacent to the highway which are considered to be unacceptable on traffic or road safety grounds for them to consider taking action under Section 224 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. If the Planning Authority indicates that it is unwilling to take action, the matter will be reported to the appropriate County Committee.

ARTIST PRE-EVENT CHECKLIST

Studio De-clutter

Make the studio an interesting and welcoming place. Remove valuable or precious objects.

Consider displaying information outside to entice passers-by to enter. Have something to keep children occupied while parents browse.

Press, publicity, invitations

Follow up press releases you have sent – are they using it? Do they need anything else?

Launch invitations and reminders – compile invitation lists and send out.

Consider creating a flyer/ business card/ postcard with your contact details for people to take away or pass on.

Work

Compile inventory. Create your price labels or price list.

Start hanging early – it always takes longer than you expect!

Consider hiring a chip and pin machine if purchasing your work would require a large outlay.

Directions

Check where you can and can't put your directional signs – see our guidelines to ensure you comply with Devon County Council's specifications.

Prepare directions from your studio to the other studios nearest to you – and ensure they are doing the same.

Sales

Get your receipt book ready.

Ensure you have a cash float.

Stock up on wrapping materials.

Stock up on red 'Sold' stickers.

Enlist a friend as 'Sales Assistant' – sometimes it's easier for other people to sell your work.

Visitors' Info

Devon Artist Network supplies you with visitors' information sheets for you to capture details of your visitors for your own mailing list.

Put them in a prominent place, with pens!