

Community spirit is making pig art project the pork of the town

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A public art scheme that will see 100 life-size pig sculptures dotted around Bath is receiving support from all corners of the city.

Groups of traders are uniting to sponsor the King Bladud's Pigs in Bath art initiative.

The scheme, to be launched formally on May 19 at the Roman Baths, has also secured the formal backing of Bath and North East Somerset Council.

David Lawrence, the council's assistant director for tourism, leisure and culture, said: "We are delighted to be associated with a scheme which brings art to Bath's public spaces and seems to have caught the imagination of the whole community from large organisations to local schools and traders."

At the weekend, young choristers at Bath Abbey swapped their cassocks for overalls as they painted a sculpture of a pig.

The children from Bath Abbey joined local artist Annette Smith to decorate their pretty porker in St Alphege's Chapel.

The artist opted to design the abbey's pig so it resembled stained glass and the youngsters were asked to add their own motifs on the theme of water.

Elsewhere, two blank pigs have been allocated to youth groups to decorate and a third will take pride of place in the Roman Baths. The council is also working with organisers to produce a Pig Trail map for residents and visitors to follow.

Traders in Walcot Street, Widcombe Parade, Margaret's Buildings, Abbey Green and Moorland Road are already painting their own pigs. Pig-loving groups in John Street, Bartlett Street, North Parade Passage, the Guildhall Market and Larkhall are also being formed.

Organiser Justin Braithwaite said: "Despite the difficult trading conditions, these businesses have recog-



A REAL CRACKLER: hoping to join the ranks of the great artists such as Pig-asso and Pig-alle, members of Bath Abbey's choirs get to work on their swine. Pictured from left are abbey artist Annette Smith, Rosemary Chamberlain and Beth Garner

nised the contribution public art can make through increased footfall.

"They will no doubt inspire others and it is good to see their entrepreneurial spirit at work well ahead of many of the bigger stores who are only just waking up to the potential of this event."

Residents and traders in the Julian Road area have gone one step further by sponsoring two community pigs

and arranging a Pig Party, which will be open to the public, on Sunday from 5pm-8pm at the Marlborough Tavern.

The pigs Barking Mad and Velocity Pig, created by Mark Lovegrove, of Evolution-Creative, and Andrew Legg of Bodywork Ltd respectively, will make their first public appearance.

Other attractions will include a

pork barbecue and a children's pig decorating competition.

Artist Al Greenall will be across the road at the King Bladud's Pigs in Bath workshop working on his designs for the Margaret's Buildings sculpture.

A 3,000-year-old legend tells how King Bladud founded the city after discovering the healing powers of its hot spring waters while walking with his swine.