

Filling Bath with fibre-glass pigs may sound like a mad idea...

Piggies in the middle... of Bath

SOME of the biggest names in Bath business have gone potty over a new public art project. Plans are afoot that could see around 100 glass-fibre pigs trotting onto the city's streets this summer with the help of finance from local firms.

The idea was inspired by the 3,000-year-old legend of King Bladud, who is said to have discovered the healing powers of hot spring waters while out walking with a herd of pigs.

Gitte Dawson, a former Liberal Democrat councillor for Freshford, was inspired to launch the project in Bath after seeing similar projects across Europe, including a scheme to place 260 sparrows in the German city of Ulm.

The organisers of King Bladud's Pigs were awaiting confirmation of planning permission as *The Business* went to press, but eight businesses have already penned their approval for a pig of their own.

Utility giant Wessex Water, global business advisor Deloitte, specialist food and drink consultancy Zenith International and niche radiator manufacturer Bisque are some of the first names to be linked with the project.

The animal magnetism has also spread to glass specialist Bath Aqua Glass, picture framer The Framing Workshop, Scandinavian furniture supplier Shannon and handmade knitwear specialist Walcot Woolies.

Each pig will be around 5ft long and £1,000 to sponsor.

The project will also promote the work of local artists and everyone involved will have the chance to personalise their pig with the help of an artist of their choice.

After six months, the pigs will be auctioned off with a reserve price of £1,250. Sponsors will get £750 back and every artist involved will receive 25 per cent of the sale price.

The project has also been designed to raise money for the Two Tunnels scheme which recently secured £1.1 million of lottery cash to open up a cycle path to the south of Bath.

Deloitte has teamed up with Bath Spa University's art department to invite students to put forward design ideas for the decoration of its pig.

Colin Clarkson-Short, associate partner at Deloitte said: "We are delighted to be part of the KBPB project which celebrates the city's great history and gives an opportunity for artists to promote their work in a major tourist destination.

"The winning design, we hope, will grab the attention of the general public while emphasising the firm's key messages and values."

Bath Spa University's head of employability, Adam Powell, said:

"It is excellent to be working with Deloitte.

"As a national centre for excellence in teaching and learning in the creative industries, we welcome all opportunities for our students to engage with business and develop their creative portfolios."

Mrs Dawson said: "It is fantastic to see so many big names signing up to sponsor a pig.

"Bath is badly in need of something that inspires the imagination. It is very gratifying to see the response we are getting.

"I think in many ways it is a chance for the businesses to connect with the local community."

Although the organisers have applied for only temporary planning permission, Mrs Dawson said she was confident some of the pigs would remain for years.



IN BLADUD'S MEMORY: Bath Spa University's Adam Powell, Colin Clarkson-Short and Vicki Cheadle of Deloitte and ceramics student Michelle Cox with Gitte Dawson who dreamt up the scheme

She said: "If this project turns out to be the success we think it will be, we might end up having a permanent city sculpture of King Bladud in Parade Gardens.

"I am hoping the pigs will put Bath on the sculptural map and having a temporary proposal might help us gain support for planning permission.

"Businesses in Bath cannot afford not to get involved with this project because it is fun for the residents and visitors to Bath."

All sculptures will be collected at the end of September and stored ready for the auction, which is provisionally planned for Sunday, October 11.

The brains behind King Bladud's Pigs are already planning the possibility of a book detailing the history and highlights of the project as well as posters and merchandise to commemorate the pigs in Bath.

More information on sponsorship is available at www.kingbladudspigs.org or email info@kingbladudspigs.org or phone 07976 168652.

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