



BLUNDEN PRIZE 2025



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Image of Station Island scheme in Northamptonshire

Introduction

In 2021, leading housing provider Stonewater launched the Blunden Prize, named in honour of its founding Chairman, George Blunden. The prize was established to champion high-quality public art and to place creativity at the heart of placemaking - supporting artists to help shape neighbourhoods where people feel connected, represented and proud to live.

Now in its fourth year, the Blunden Prize has become a respected national programme, awarding significant prize funding and delivering a growing portfolio of meaningful commissions for winners and runners-up. It attracts artists from across disciplines and career stages, reflecting Stonewater's commitment to inclusive opportunity and thoughtful, design-led placemaking.

For 2025, artists were invited to submit original proposals for the Station Island scheme in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, with the opportunity to secure a £20,000 prize and deliver a permanent piece of public artwork that responds directly to local character, history and context.

Public art plays an important role in how we approach placemaking. It helps define a distinct sense of place, celebrates local stories and identity, and creates spaces that invite interaction, encouraging people to visit, spend time, meet and connect. Through the Blunden Prize, we use creativity as a practical and powerful tool to shape communities for both new and existing residents.

Vision

To evoke a sense of pride and inclusion within the communities our customers live in.

Mission

Supply fascinating and original public art across our schemes that transmit a sense of pride and place that encourages building relationships within communities, for new and existing residents.



Previous winners

2021

Coda Workshop is an architecture, sculpture and design studio specialising in an exploratory and experimental approach to delivering creative, high quality and low-energy projects.

Both qualified architects, directors Bryn and Mark pride themselves on the studio's focus on sustainability, collaboration and a sensitive approach to heritage.

They work together with clients to create meaningful interventions within public spaces, combining architecture and sculpture while focusing on people and the environment.



2022/23

Pat specialises in creating stone sculptures and public art installations that explore the relationship between people and places.

Using local sandstone and project-specific stone, his artwork is intimately connected to its surroundings and often includes benches, entrance sculptures and visual markers, which form a trail across spaces.

Community interaction is central to Pat's work, involving consultation, workshops and ongoing engagement.



Previous winners

2024

Yorkshire-based mechanical sculptor, Jim Bond was awarded the Blunden Prize in 2024 with his impressive design, 'Helix', which celebrates the industrial history of Coventry, where the work will ultimately be installed.

The eight-metre-long sculpture will form a focal point of the 148-home scheme, Elm Fields Farm, with seating space incorporated for customers to meet and relax.

Jim explained that his great-grandfather worked for Coventry bike manufacturer, Starley, providing a special family connection to the creation of the modern-day bicycle industry and the inspiration for his winning design.



Blunden Prize 2025

Launch

May 2025

This year's Blunden Prize was launched in May 2025 and invited artists from across the UK of all disciplines to submit their original and innovative ideas for the chance to win £20,000 and secure three commissions across Stonewater developments.

Entries close

July 2025

Entries closed in July 2025 with more than 50 design ideas for the Station Island scheme. The submissions took the historic railway heritage of Station Island in to account, coupled with this year's theme of sustainability.

Judging - Round 1

August 2025

The first round of judging took place at Warwick House – a Stonewater independent retirement living scheme in Bedford, where a group of residents, scheme managers and Stonewater colleagues reviewed each and every entry to shortlist submissions down to a group of six.

Judging - Round 2

September 2025

These six artists were then invited to present their ideas to our judging panel - Laurence Sillars, Head of Henry Moore Institute; Chris Montague, Stonewater Director of Development (East & North); Arthur Gott, Stonewater Senior Development Manager (inc Station Island); Nicola Hiller, Stonewater Head of Development (East); and Evans McBruce, Stonewater Development Manager (East). Following the presentations, the judges selected three finalists.

Final

September 2025

Our three finalists were invited to attend the winner's announcement event, which took place at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds on 25 September. In attendance were our finalists, along with Laurence Sillars, Head of Henry Moore Institute, Jonathan Layzell, Chief Executive of Stonewater, and representatives from the wider Stonewater development team.



Judging session with Stonewater customers at Warwick House in Bedford



About Station Island

This year's winner has received a commission to deliver a piece of public art at Station Island, Northamptonshire. The new development will provide 128 much-needed affordable homes on the outskirts of the popular market town of Wellingborough, surrounded by beautiful open countryside.

Station Island is built on a former brownfield site, transforming previously underused land into a vibrant new neighbourhood. Its mix of maisonettes, flats and up to four-bedroom homes offer the opportunity for a thriving, sustainable and inclusive community.





Concepts from the shortlisted artists



Finalists

Alec Saunders



'Seeds of Connection' is a circular bench crafted from locally sourced Northamptonshire oak, designed to invite rest, reflection and community gathering. Integrated planting brings life and seasonal change to the structure, while a vibrant mosaic, created from repurposed tiles, forms a central visual feature.

Amy Jackson



Amy's design 'Circular' will create a sculptural amphitheatre, inspired by the area's railway turntable heritage. Benches cast from railway steel will radiate from a central circle set into the grass, above which two arches will be covered in natural materials. The local community will contribute to the finished piece through creative workshops.

Rekha Barry-Houston



Rekha's concept mirrors the arches on the existing railway warehouse near to Station Island. Two arches will be placed as a portal either side of the allocated space for the artwork. They will be crafted from leftover material from the local steelworks and reinforced with pigmented concrete, which will be polished to high shine, making humble materials look much more luxurious.

Henry Moore Institute



Henry Moore Institute renewed its partnership with Stonewater, to support the Blunden Prize for the second consecutive year.

Representatives from Henry Moore took part in the judging of the prize and hosted the final judging session at Henry Moore Studios & Gardens in Hertfordshire, with the final event and winner's announcement being hosted at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds.

The partnership between the two organisations showcases Stonewater's commitment to producing public art and how it prioritises providing artists with the chance to showcase their skills and artforms.

Winner 2025



Amy Jackson

London-based artist and sustainability specialist, Amy Jackson won the Blunden Prize 2025 with her design 'Circular', a sculptural amphitheatre for customers at Station Island in Wellingborough, inspired by the area's railway turntable heritage.

The new installation will offer a place to wait, watch and walk, with those living at Stonewater's Station Island scheme and the local community contributing to the finished piece through creative workshops.

Amy is a first-class Fine Art graduate of Oxford's Ruskin School with further study in Sustainability. In her practice, she integrates sound, augmented reality and participatory storytelling to expose the interwoven crises of climate change, conflict, consumerism and mental health.





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