

FLAX FORWARD: PHOTOGRAPHER BRIEF

Flax Forward: From land to linen and beyond – Telling the story of a plant, a town and a landscape.

Project Overview

Flax Forward is a community led project celebrating Bridport's flax growing heritage while exploring its potential for a sustainable future.

For over 1,000 years, the Bridport area has had strong cultural and economic links with flax and hemp, both grown and processed locally into rope, nets, and sailcloth.

While hemp growing and ropemaking are well documented and feature prominently in Bridport Museum, the history of flax is less well known. Once a defining part of the local landscape and economy, flax shaped the town's identity through generations of cultivation, processing, and making. The craft of flax processing has been identified as being at risk by the Heritage Craft Council.

The Flax Forward project will explore Flax heritage between May - October 2026 by:

- Gathering and connecting knowledge from collections, archives, and community sources, uncovering unrecorded infrastructure, information, memories, and oral histories.
- Working with local farmers growing, harvesting and processing Flax for a range of sustainable uses, from yarn for weaving to horticultural weed suppression and insulation materials.

Project Team

Flax Forward is a partnership project funded by the Heritage Lottery and Trellis Foundation.

- **Wessex Community Assets** leads on practical growing and processing activities and overall project management.
- **Bridport Museum** leads on heritage research and interpretation.
- **Bridport Arts Centre** leads on exhibition curation and creative commissions.

Commission Brief

The Flax Forward project seeks a freelance photographer to document the project to help tell the flax story. The photographer will follow the research and hands on activities documenting all aspects of the project and creating a photographic record for use in exhibitions, interpretation materials and for promotional purposes. Images, forming the commission output, will need to be presented to Bridport Museum in formats that can be archived. Details to be discussed and agreed.

Objectives and Messaging

- Raise awareness of flax as a plant and as a sustainable crop;
- Tell the story of flax growing, processing, and its significance in the local area both past and present;
- Bring Bridport's Flax heritage to life, deepening understanding of place and community

Activities will engage a wide range of ages, including local farming communities as well as resident and visiting cultural audiences.

Timeline

Community research will begin in May 2026, following the flax sowing, growing, harvesting, and processing season through to the manufacture of products using local yarn. Events and activities throughout 2026 will connect research with practical activity, culminating in an interim sharing exhibition in Oct/November 2026 and a multi venue exhibition in Spring 2027. The podcaster will need to attend key activities and events across the project to ensure the work reflects its full scope.

- **Practical growing and processing sessions:** May – October 2026
- **Heritage Research into local flax production:** June – October 2026
- **Interim Sharing exhibition** October 2026
- **Production of Flax Forward outputs including Podcast,** Oct 2026 – March 2027
- **Final exhibition (Bridport Arts Centre & Bridport Museum):** May 2027

Commission Management

The commission will be let and managed by Wessex Community Assets. The podcaster will work closely with the Project Manager and Project Curator, who will provide ongoing curatorial support.

- **Deadline for final work:** March 2027
- **Fee: £2800 (inclusive VAT and all materials)** based on 8 days @£350 per day
- **Expenses:** Travel

The 'Flax Forward' project is made possible with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We have been able to fund this role thanks to National Lottery players.



