


Sculpture to replace Giant's Chair abandoned due to Brexit

There was an outcry when the much loved Giant's Chair was pulled down and burned in the Forest of Dean

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15:49, 05 Feb 2021 | Updated 16:30, 05 Feb 2021



 Giant's Chair on the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail (Image:)

A massive sculpture commissioned to replace the much loved Giant's Chair in the Forest of Dean has been abandoned because of Brexit.

Trustees say they were relying on an EU grant to finish 30ft high Cusp by internationally acclaimed artist **Elpida Hadzi Vasileva** which was originally due to be installed in spring 2018.

But despite claims it was 90 per cent complete the sculpture never materialised at the spot once occupied by Place, known as the Giant's Chair, a much loved landmark in the Forest.

Trustees and Forestry England repeatedly kept putting back the dates and the artist told Gloucestershire Live that the installation was being held up by "budget issues".

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Now Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust have confirmed that Cusp, thought to be in pieces all over the Forest waiting to be assembled on site, has been cancelled.


And Nick Bury, chair of the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust Trustees, says Brexit is partly to blame.

He said: "The decision to cancel Cusp was not taken lightly.

"Despite some success raising government funding for our many projects, we could not secure enough to complete the intricate carpentry, engineering, rising installation and future management costs of this artwork.

"Financial challenges are compounded by time pressure to complete the project before the deadline of an EU grant that was essential for the installation of Cusp.



 Sculptor Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva in fabrication for her new piece for Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail (Image:)

"We explored countless options to refinance the project, but, in the current climate we had no option but to cancel the commission.

"We thank Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva for her vision, and the hard-working team of craftspeople and volunteers who contributed to the project."

There was an outcry when the Trust said it had to remove the Giant's Chair, because it had come to the end of its natural life and replace it with a new work of art.

But Cusp was vaunted as the ideal alternative to be placed on the hilltop site towering over one of Gloucestershire's busiest visitor attractions at Beechenhurst.

Trustees have never discussed the funding for the project which is supported by numerous paid and unpaid architects, carpenters, designers, engineers, fabricators, project managers, and volunteers who worked for more than two years to bring the concept to reality.

After several delays it was about to be installed to mark the Forestry Commission's 50th birthday and preparations are underway for the installation which will require various stages of checks and approvals.

But the artist told Gloucestershire Live: "The work is not yet completed and there is currently no firm timetable for it to be installed. November 2019.

"It has been a challenging work to fabricate and there have been budget issues which I hope can be resolved."

The Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development through the Forest and Tewkesbury LEADER scheme, Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant, Garfield Weston Foundation and Watts Group Lydney and a number of other local donors.