**Hints and tips to a successful Open Studios**

Congratulations; you have successfully joined Suffolk Open Studios. Below are some ways for you to have a successful event. The main thing to remember is to enjoy the event, it can be daunting if this is your first time joining Suffolk Open Studios as we are a large county it may be several miles in-between yourself and the neighbouring Artist. That is why we have trails and maps and encourage Artists to get to know each other in their location. We love to have Hubs of Artists, this means that Artists who have joined can get together with other Suffolk Open Studios Artists and create a Hub of Artists (i.e. you are all in the same location for the Open Studios event), but we would like you to keep in mind that the whole idea of Open Studios is for the visitor to view you in your work space, it is not just an exhibition opportunity.

Trails are a great way to encourage visitors. Below are some ways to get going and begin your journey to the Open Studio event. Trails can encourage visitors to go on to visit other artists so they help everyone.

1. You have signed up on the website and have a logon details, username and password. You have also created your online listing.
2. Make sure that you have openstudiossuffolk@gmail.com added as a safe sender (or ideally all messages from this address filtered into your inbox) so that you receive all of the messages from us and ones that are sent via the website (as these are sent automatically they can be sent to spam/junk).
3. Fine tune the section on the website called ‘Directory Description’. This should be up to 100 words and will be lifted for the Directory so make it something that will entice people to visit you!
4. Make sure you have good images of your work and give each piece a name (existing members should update their old images with a name). The main image will be used for the directory and the app.
5. In the Biography section add as much detail as you can. This text will appear on the website and may help people to find you online.
6. Make sure your contact details are correct as the website is available all year as a platform for exhibitions and visitors and other potential avenues for working Artists. The website also allows people to send you messages without actually displaying your email address. This is another reason why you should have our email address in your safe senders list or you may not receive these messages. (In the past artists have been contacted to request a commission).

## Prior to the Open Event

1. We will send you a list of artists in your area. Contact the artists around you if you want to have a trail or just link up for the event. Be proactive; don’t wait for someone to contact you.
2. Get involved in organising the Trail or Hub. Perhaps come up with some ‘gimmick’ that will encourage people to visit everyone in the trail, for example a freebie if they get a stamp/signature from every artist.
3. Link up with SOS on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkOpenStudios/> is the public facing page where we will share your posts (if you tag the SOS Facebook page from your art page then we will know who you are). There is a closed group for members where you can ask questions and get extra information here <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SuffolkOpenStudiosMembers/>
You can find us on Instagram here: <https://www.instagram.com/suffolkopenstudios/>
4. Advertise yourself on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter add in a link to Suffolk Open Studios Website/Facebook/Instagram. We have great social media secretary who promotes artists on Instagram and Facebook. Use the hashtag #SuffolkOpenStudios

## Getting Organised for the Open Studio Event

1. We cannot emphasise enough how important it is to get advertising early. You are provided with Posters and Directories; these are for you to distribute to anywhere that you think will get the visitors into your studio. You can also make your own signs – the more the better!
2. Add your trail leaflet inside your Directories before they are distributed.
3. Ideas of where to put the directories and posters; Local Post Office, shops, galleries, art shops, framing centres, pubs, cafes, notice boards, village hall, artists workshops, dentist surgeries, hotels, B&Bs, tourist attractions, garden centres, holiday letting agencies, estate agencies, tea shops, restaurants, hairdressers and give to your students to circulate. Also put some outside your own studio before the event.
4. In addition to the physical poster you will receive an electronic copy of the poster. Email it to all your friends/mailing lists put it on your website/Facebook/Instagram/Twitter. Circulate to other Art groups.
5. Don’t forget to share again after a week has passed. It reminds people!
6. Talk about it to everyone.
7. Send out invitations via mailing lists, by post, by talking to people. Be welcoming.
8. Make sure you have business cards/flyers to give out.
9. Don’t forget to make work to sell!

## The Event

1. Be ready,
2. Put up sign posts, direct people to your studio, Suffolk is a vast area and visitors may need some help in the country lanes. Sign post them to you. Sign posts may also help you to catch passing visitors who have not heard of the event.
3. Have a big sign outside your studio, inviting visitors in, this is very important as visitors feel they are walking into someone’s home, make it welcoming. Put signs up to show the way into your studio. ‘Please come in to the studio, through the gate’ ‘Please enter through the side door’ be specific.
4. Greet your visitors with a welcome, thank them for coming and be proud of your Art/skill.
5. Offer some refreshments, fresh cake/biscuits with a cup of tea/cold drink.
6. Talk about your work and what you love about it, enthusiasm is infectious!
7. Be working on a project so your visitors can see you working.
8. Organise timed demonstrations.
9. Have an extra person around if possible to deal with the sales and tea.
10. Let visitors know about other artists that may be nearby or show them the trail map for your area.

Enjoy a fantastic Open Studio Event.