



## **Threshold/ Swirl and Labyrinth**

**Kings Heath  
Village Square**

All Saints Church,  
Vicarage Road,  
Kings Heath,  
Birmingham B14  
7RA

All Saints Community Development Company [ASCDC] has existed for the past 15 years to create and realise ideas for the development of All Saints Church and its campus. The company's overriding ethos is to create:

'A Centre for Health Living and Spiritual Welfare in the Heart of Kings Heath'.

To date, a Medical Centre and Welcome building have been erected, which together house a GP practice, podiatrist, dentist, South Birmingham NHS, Pharmacy, Dens of Equality and an Elderly Day Care centre. There are also Youth groups and other activity groups on site, and an active Anglican congregation with a strong 'outreach' agenda.

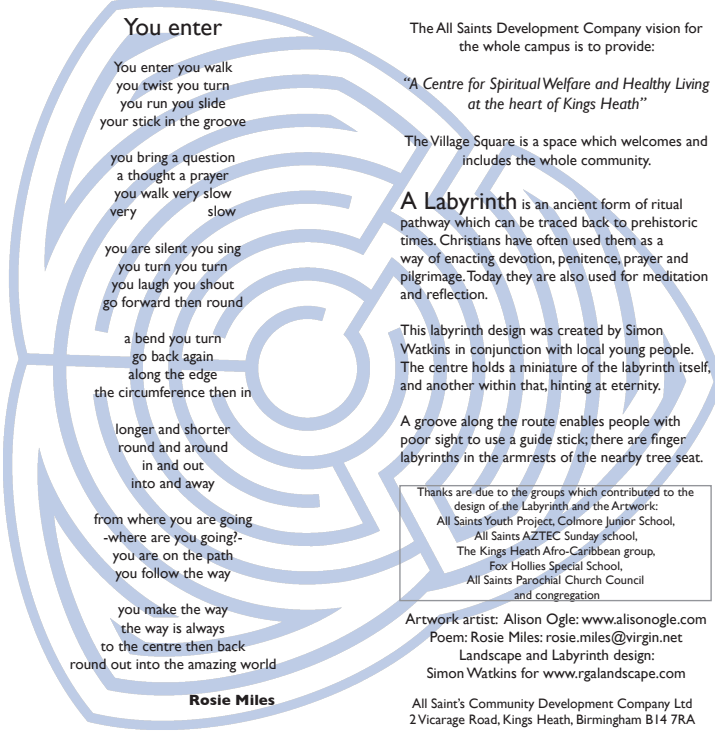
The creation of an integrated public Village Square from 3 distinct areas of adjoining land - the churchyard, current path and driveway, and Highway land - was opened in 2009 by the Bishop of Birmingham and the Lord Mayor. The central feature of this beautiful Award Winning space is a Labyrinth. ASCA [All Saints Community Arts], a sub-group of ASCDC commissioned an Artist to create Works of Art to be integrated into the Labyrinth, Threshold and Swirl features to ensure continuity of theme, materials and colours to all these areas, providing consistency of narrative and visual impact.

The Art Works are integrated into these constructions are suitably positioned to convey the narrative of the words and designs. This welcomes people into the square [Threshold], entices and encourages them to move further into the square [Swirl], and provides punctuation of the journey [Labyrinth]; it also serves to assist the focus of the participant with tools for further meditation. The art work for both areas takes the form of :

- Pictorial, representational and abstract designs, constructed from mosaics, relief, engraved and inlay materials and techniques.
- Text, relating to commissioned poetry, religious verses, and comments from the Artist's research with partners and user groups from the wider community, incorporated into the pavers.
- The materials used in both features include aggregate, stone paving and engineering bricks. The materials and colour palette used by the Artist are subtle and link in aesthetically with these architectural considerations, and with the surrounding buildings.

The Landscape Designer, Simon Watkins, worked with the Yourh Project to tease out ideas of the labyrinth and the pattern of the pathways. The Community Artist, Alison Ogle, facilitated and directed the creation of artworks from various selected local stakeholder groups which celebrate, reflect and communicate the ethos of the ASCDC mission for the whole campus. The leaflet included here conveys the essence and details of these workshops, which involved members of the wider local community in the construction of the public space of the Village Square. This engenders a sense of pride in the locality and demonstrates the uniqueness of the project on a regional and national scale.

The Labyrinth Interpretation Panel which you will find close to the Labyrinth at the junction of the path to the War Memorial explains briefly : the history of Labyrinths; the creation of the Kings Heath Village Square version, and simple directions as to how to use and 'walk' a labyrinth. It is replicated below, along with the leaflet which contains information about the Artworks. The latter can be obtained from the Welcome Desk in the All Saints Centre building.



**You enter**

You enter you walk  
you twist you turn  
you run you slide  
your stick in the groove

you bring a question  
a thought a prayer  
you walk very slow  
very slow

you are silent you sing  
you turn you turn  
you laugh you shout  
go forward then round

a bend you turn  
go back again  
along the edge  
the circumference then in

longer and shorter  
round and around  
in and out  
into and away

from where you are going  
-where are you going!-  
you are on the path  
you follow the way

you make the way  
the way is always  
to the centre then back  
round out into the amazing world

**Rosie Miles**

The All Saints Development Company vision for the whole campus is to provide:

*"A Centre for Spiritual Welfare and Healthy Living at the heart of Kings Heath"*

The Village Square is a space which welcomes and includes the whole community.

**A Labyrinth** is an ancient form of ritual pathway which can be traced back to prehistoric times. Christians have often used them as a way of enacting devotion, penitence, prayer and pilgrimage. Today they are also used for meditation and reflection.

This labyrinth design was created by Simon Watkins in conjunction with local young people. The centre holds a miniature of the labyrinth itself, and another within that, hinting at eternity.

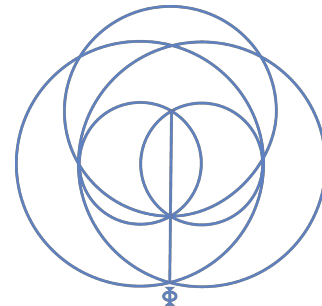
A groove along the route enables people with poor sight to use a guide stick; there are finger labyrinths in the armrests of the nearby tree seat.

Thanks are due to the groups which contributed to the design of the Labyrinth and the Artwork:  
All Saints Youth Project, Colmore Junior School,  
All Saints AZTEC Sunday school,  
The Kings Heath Afro-Caribbean group,  
Fox Hollies Special School,  
All Saints Parochial Church Council and congregation

Artwork artist: Alison Ogle: [www.alisonogle.com](http://www.alisonogle.com)  
Poem: Rosie Miles: [rosie.miles@virgin.net](mailto:rosie.miles@virgin.net)  
Landscape and Labyrinth design:  
Simon Watkins for [www.rgalandscape.com](http://www.rgalandscape.com)

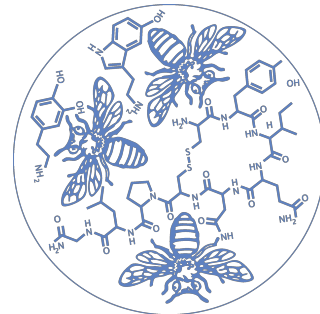
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2 Vicarage Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7RA

Image credits: Labyrinth - RGA Landscape. All others - Alison Ogle.



## The Artworks

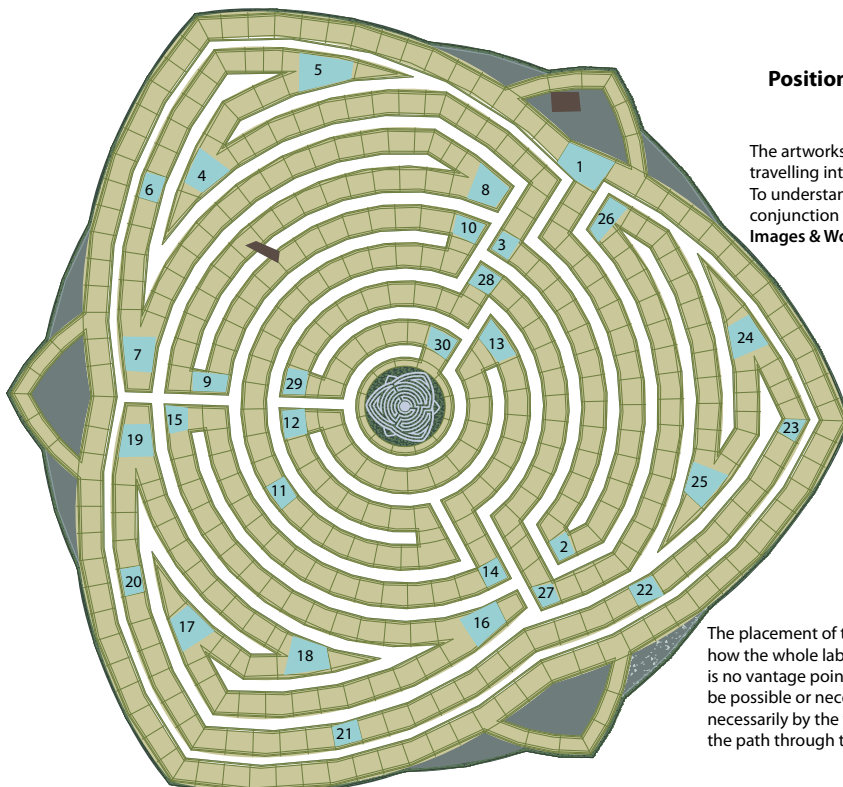
### Kings Heath Village Square



Alison Ogle

### Positioning of Artworks within the Labyrinth.

The artworks will be experienced sequentially travelling into the centre and back out again. To understand the narrative, read this plan in conjunction with the Document **Order of Images & Words for the Labyrinth v03**.



The placement of the artwork is not decided on how the whole labyrinth looks from above. There is no vantage point on the site from which this will be possible or necessary. Rather it is dictated necessarily by the way a person will move along the path through the labyrinth.

## How to walk a labyrinth

Walking a labyrinth can help us slow down, reflect, and to listen to our deeper selves. The twisting, winding route echoes our thoughts, and walking slowly enables us to calm down and explore the wonder of our being. There's no right or wrong way to walk – be open to whatever happens. Take as much or as little time as you decide.

Walk slowly; breathe gently and freely; focus on the rhythmic movements of the body as you follow the path carefully.

breathing -



The in

**What am I bringing with me?** If you meet someone on the way, just step around each other, and continue on. If you lose the path, keep walking ahead to see where it leads.

The inner journey can bring surprising thoughts. Acknowledge these and be still.

observe whatever occurs to you.

very slow, very

need to let go of?

you walk very slow, very slow

you twist you turn, you turn you turn

you enter you walk, you walk you walk

you stick in the groove, you bring a question, a thought a prayer



wind.

the centre  
el miniature.

The labyrinth is made of flecked granite. The theme for the 30 inlaid engraved quotations and coloured mosaics along the path is 'cherish your life and community'. The labyrinth is also used for worship – children

What will I take away with me?

An alternative to walking the path is to trace the shape of the finger labyrinths in the armrests of the tree seat – it can have the same calming, reflective effect. The groove along the edge of the path can be traced with a stick by those with reduced sight. A leaflet explaining the artworks and the poem is available from the church. Where you have enjoyed your journey today, more information is available at: [asc.org.uk](http://asc.org.uk), [veriditas.org](http://veriditas.org) or [labyrinthociety.org](http://labyrinthociety.org)

follow...

The Labyrinth pattern is found in almost every human civilisation from prehistoric times to the present day; they have been used as a tool for meditation and healing, in liturgy; and for ancient rituals. A labyrinth consists of a single 'unicursal' path that twists and turns, arriving at a central point. From here the path is followed back again to the entrance. It is not a maze; there are no 'dead-ends' and it is impossible to 'get lost'.

with 7 or 11 circuits. The best example is in Chartres Cathedral, France.

④ Contemporary: Variations on the historic styles, such as the Kings Heath Village Square Labyrinth - see the centre of this panel.

