

MEDIA RELEASE/Interview and photo opportunity

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WORD! over the Moon with second festival



A unique, award-nominated Leicester poetry and spoken word night will launch its annual festival with a celebration of spoken word, poetry, ecology, wellbeing and, this year, the Moon.

WORD!, one of the UK's longest running poetry and spoken word nights, uniquely supported by the NHS, hosts the second *WORD! in the Garden* at Attenborough Arts Centre on Thursday 25 July.

The all-day celebration is designed to get people thinking about health, history, the environment and ecology. It will feature artistic collaborations like the centre's relaunched garden amphitheatre, a new garden mural by award-winning local artist Scott Bridgwood and an exhibition of artworks by members of the Artspace Collective. It will also celebrate the Apollo 11 Moon landing's 50th anniversary with a Moonshine Word! Jam lunar-inspired music and lyrics workshop.

WORD! in the Garden will artistically unveil a host of UK native species plants and wildflowers alongside a new 20ft high mural, artworks, music and poetry - all lunar lit in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first Moon landing.

The event, which also promises garden tours and butterfly cakes as standard, is free from noon to 7:30pm, when there will be a charge of £7/£4 for the final WORD!

Attenborough Art Centre's courtyard garden was created by 'The Green Room Gardeners', led by the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)-backed Brightsparks arts in mental health group with the help of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

Lydia Towsey, arts in mental health co-ordinator at LPT said: "The Green Room is a fantastic example of 'cutting edge' co-production and LPT is delighted to work hand in garden-glove with Attenborough Arts Centre, Brightsparks, WORD! and a range of others to transform and launch a previously disused space - into a haven of health and artistic activity.

"Over the last year and a half, Green Room Gardeners have been improving Attenborough Arts Centre's courtyard space for the enjoyment of all, while demonstrating the therapeutic power of gardening, from watching something grow to connecting with others and nature.

"We hope to inspire audiences to get involved and grow their own - health, wellbeing, creativity and more."

The courtyard garden was funded and supported by Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew and the University of Leicester's Well Being Matters (via the Edith Murphy Foundation). WORD! In the Garden - has been funded by Arts Council England and curated and produced by WORD!

Caption: Lydia Towsey (third from the left) with the Green Gardeners in the courtyard garden they helped to create.

You're invited to send a photographer/reporter along on the day. Lydia Towsey is available for interview

Programme of events:

Noon: The public are invited to the grand unveiling of a 20ft mural by local artist, Scott Bridgwood interpreting the exhibition. In the courtyard, there will also be an open mic head-lined by LPT's multi-lingual Look-a-Lady Ukulele group and Mellow Baku. Attendees can book in advance or simply turn up to share poems, lyrics, words or music.

1.30-3.30pm: In celebration of this year's 50th anniversary of the Apollo Moon Landing, the festival will see WORD! collaborate with Moonshine Word! Jam, its irregular sister night inspired by the moon and designed to create more platforms for female and other underrepresented artists. Join Moonshine Word! Jam's Mellow Baku and Lydia Towsey for a free music, moon and lyrics inspired workshop

3.30pm: The WORD! event lunar launches with a free cuppa and cake upstairs in Attenborough Arts Centre's Studio 3 and the preview of 'Art in the Garden' - a new art exhibition from LPT's Artspace Collective.

Budding talents can receive a handy one to one session with experienced writers, facilitators and WORD! team members Pam Thompson and Richard Byrt to help improve their skills and then embark on a workshop with award winning artist and seasoned facilitator, Peter Bearder.

6-7pm: Leicester launch of author Peter Bearder's 'Stage Invasion'. A performance from the author will be followed by an interactive panel discussion, exploring the history of spoken word and its role in creating healthy communities.

7:30pm, Mellow Baku and Lydia Towsey present the final al fresco summer's night event, with live music throughout from Moonshine Word Jam's, Bootleg Trio (comprised of Fran Bass, Sophie Fishwick and Deb Mawby), free refreshments, an open mic, nocturnal flowers, wildlife, The Bradgate Writers and back in Leicester by popular demand, poet and performer, Keith Jarrett - "lyrically rich poems, charged with emotion, passion and lots of humour" - *Sabotage Reviews*.

The full event leaflet can be found at <http://ekit2.org.uk/up/word/WITG2019.pdf>

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)** provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk

2. **Raising Health** is our registered charity (number 1057361) which raises funds to support LPT's excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision, to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. www.raisinghealth.org.uk

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