



LANCASHIRE

Library touring commission



Spot On Lancashire is a rural and library touring network, currently engaging with 30 libraries and 25 rural community venues across the county. We deliver two seasons of professional touring theatre, dance, music and family shows a year in partnership with libraries and rural volunteers.

Spot On is part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio through a consortium with Cheshire Rural Touring Arts. This commission is supported by Arts Council England's National Lotteries Grants Programme, and the Near Neighbours Fund and is in partnership with Super Slow Way (Creative People and Places. It is managed by Culturapedia who are the accountable body and deliver Spot On Lancashire.

We are seeking to commission a touring company or freelance ensemble/individual writer/performer to devise a touring production which can take place in any library and rural community setting but will be inspired by the town of Great Harwood. The finished work will be launched in Great Harwood library. You must demonstrate an understanding of the creative challenges involved in rural or library touring. You will work in partnership with our library and their audiences. You will develop an idea to scratch/public-sharing performance level which is suitable for presentation to every scale of library and rural touring venue we work with. It will be shown to an invited public audience. We then will support you to develop and tour the completed work through our library/rural touring networks from Autumn 2020 onwards. *We expect a tour-ready production but after the launch and initial tour, Spot On will support you in making further applications for wider touring of the show.*

More detailed and important information about this brief is attached at the end of this document. This is a **place-specific** commission leading to a finished piece of work which should resonate both with local audiences and with wider audiences across the county and beyond. Library touring across the UK is a growth market and the right commission could tour further than Lancashire.

Artforms: This is a performing arts commission, but we welcome combined arts proposals, particularly those that may include digital technology.

Audience: The library is an open community space. This is not a children's commission, but the final work must be suitable for all ages.

Outreach: Community engagement and research is an essential element of this commission. For example, engaging library writing groups, talking to local shopkeepers/businesses or hosting drop in activities in the library.



Priorities: We actively encourage applications from companies who reflect the diversity of our target audience. Due to the nature of this commission and its participants, priority will be given to female-led small-scale artists/companies for whom this opportunity will enable them to realise a clearly articulated goal or ambition to tour to

unusual/non-traditional venues and engage closely with audiences. The successful applicants will have a socially engaged performance practice: they will create work in response to contemporary issues of relevance to our communities and seek out ways to engage with actual and potential audiences.

Parameters of the commission: research, outreach, production, scratch presentation and launch event in Autumn 2020 in the final professional form. Spot On will also endeavor to find a further 2 dates for the show, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Marketing and technical issues: The finished piece will be self-sufficient. However Spot On can provide lights, PA and staging as part of this commission for use in Spot On venues. Marketing materials/tour pack and social media content sufficient for the launch tour should be provided by the company/artist.

Budget: £10,000 (plus VAT if relevant) inclusive of all costs (outreach, design, production, travel). Due to the limitations of the host venue, this is deliberately a micro-sized commission which should be easily tourable and affordable to similar micro venues.

Activity timescale: Between February 2020 and mid December 2020. To be agreed with partners but all activity must be completed by 31 March 2021 (including final reports) We would like some public activity to take place around National Libraries Week in Autumn 2020.

Additional budget for a further 2 shows in the touring season of Autumn 2020 will be offered by Spot On on top of performing in Great Harwood. This is subject to venue interest and take up and cannot be guaranteed.

Place of activity: Library venues in Lancashire for touring, but all outreach work and scratch/launch will be in Great Harwood. Access to a car would be beneficial as we expect the successful artist/company to spend time in the area both in the research and creation

process. This commission would be challenging using public transport. Some of our communities are in areas of low arts engagement/poor transport infrastructure.

Please email your CV/company profile, draft budget outlining how you would spend the fee and a maximum, two side, A4 letter outlining:

- Your idea including some thoughts on outreach activity
- How this commission would support your development
- Timeline
- What else you may need from us
- What else can you bring to the project (resources, expertise etc)
- Confirmation you can attend the pitching/interview day
- You may also include web-links and images/video
- Details of any access support you may require

We can provide advice, marketing support for events/workshops, outreach support within the town to promote the research. Access to and use of basic touring lights/sound/stage and black backdrops

Email proposal to: sue@spotonlancashire.co.uk

Deadline: 9am Friday 7th February 2020

Interviews: Wednesday 26th February 2020 in Great Harwood, daytime.

Additional date to note: On **5th February, 5.30pm** we will be running an arts event in the library about a local historical female author, Ethel Carnie Holdsworth who was from the town and surrounding area. She is regarded to be the first working class female British author. This event is part of the Pendle Radicals project by Mid Pennine Arts. You are welcome to attend, get a feel for the venue, meet an audience and find out more about some of the history of the town. It will not be a condition of the commission/application to show you have attended.

Notification: We will contact all applicants we would like to meet by 5pm on 14th February. If you have not heard from us by this time please assume we will not be asking you to attend an interview. We cannot promise to be able to contact unsuccessful applicants individually or provide feedback.

For an informal chat, or more information please call: Sue Robinson 01254 674777
email sue@spotonlancashire.co.uk www.spotonlancashire.co.uk



Background information and context: Place specific commission

This commission is for a professional performance/installation with the subject matter drawn from the community of Great Harwood. It will be launched at the library and then tour to other venues across the county. Tour to be organised by Spot On.

The commissioners wish the subject matter to be focussed around the stories and lives of female shopkeepers and female-led businesses in the town. If you take a walk into the library, local shops and cafes, it seems that it is women who are keeping the economy and community together. In the shops, businesses and community places lies diversity of age culture and language which may not be obvious when first wandering through the town

Due to the nature of this proposal and the target audience, *a female-led proposal or a female field worker/researcher* would be appropriate for this commission. It will require community conversations and outreach work to ensure all voices, loud and quiet have the chance to be heard and for trust to be built. Think Saturday jobs, shop or business owners/staff, volunteers running community activity.

Great Harwood library is a small branch library which offers a chance for an intimate, cosy art experience to its local community. The challenges to this commission are technical and organisational. The proposal must take in the limits of performance space, the opening hours, the ability of the small staff team to promote shows and host activity. If your piece works for this venue, it will go anywhere. A traditional show may not be appropriate. The library cannot open for long hours in the evening. Think episodic, stumbled upon, snippets or installations. Think day time as well as evening...use of digital technology is welcomed but must be tourable to a wide range of venues.

We want to put Great Harwood on the map. Some people could see it is as a small left behind town, others are equally proud of its heritage and its independence. Whilst the research and subject matter is place-specific, the final piece should speak to communities in places such as Fleetwood, Heysham or Garstang. Any one, from a similar small town anywhere, should find the show relatable. Anyone from a village, hamlet or any other community should walk away seeing small towns and the people who keep them going, in a different light.

Timescale and outputs:

We want the show to be tour ready and part of Spot On's Autumn 2020 tour

Research, outreach and the scratch presentation to happen during Spring and early Summer

Minimum three dates touring (including launch) to take place in Autumn 2020 with dates to be confirmed with the commissioners.

You will have a proven track record in producing/performing professional level work in the performing arts for small/mini scale community venues. You will be able to demonstrate

relevant experience in outreach research and community engagement. You/your team will be able to show an understanding of the issues, be good communicators, self-starters and be willing to get stuck in. You are probably based within reasonable travelling distance of the town, or be willing to spend time there within the cost of the budget.

Spot On will provide support in opening doors, promotion and outreach in the town, tour booking and marketing.

We have staging, lights and PA available to use, should the company require them but you will need a van.

If you want a chat, call Sue Robinson on 01254 674777 or email her sue@spotonlancashire.co.uk



Super Slow Way

NEAR NEIGHBOURS
BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND