Dear Lenny,

Hello from Hull - UK City of Culture 2017.

Hope this finds you very well and not too busy.  Ed, the girls and I are now moved from Otley to Hull for this cultural adventure.

We would love to explore a project with you for Hull 2017 and offer the following invitation for you as an opening to what we hope will be a creative conversation.  Please do let me know your thoughts on this proposition.   And do share what you are working on or planning to develop, which you may wish to explore and create in Hull.

As a lover of words and language in a range of forms:  we would like to invite you to be Curator for the Larkin Exhibition for the Hull 2017 programme.

**LARKIN EXHBITION AT HULL 2017**

**Curation**

The ambition is to engage with the curator to give their personal view and response to the poetry, the archives and the artefacts of Philip Larkin, giving new audiences access to the work and enabling a new understanding of the whole through a particular vision.   At one level, it might be a matter of his choosing a dozen artefacts from the Society’s collection of Larkinalia, crafting from the choice a particular vision of the man and his poetry. The experts in the Larkin Society and the Hull History Centre would help to select any archival material (letters, manuscripts, photographs, records) to support the vision.  But the engagement could go beyond that and a very individual take on what such an exhibition could look like would be welcomed.

**Larkin Exhibition Background**

This ‘most poetic city’ is imbued with poetry from Marvell to Stevie Smith;  and we are provoked by Larkin, *“These poems are not about Hull, yet it is unseen in all of them, the permission of a town that lets you write”.* The City's bid featured Larkin's long and intimate connection with a place that, over the space of 30 years, became 'his proper ground'.  The film created for the Hull 2017 bid, 'This City belongs to everyone', began and ended with Larkin's words.  As we create the year long programme, we are inspired by this changing city, fuelled by its history and cultural diversity, and among its many contemporary artists, we are proud of its growing cohort of poets.

The proposed exhibition will be a major event of the Hull 2017 programme, celebrating the life and works of one of the twentieth century's literary figures, the poet's presence in the city and the inspiration he drew from Hull. The exhibition itself would be both entertaining and serious, reflecting Larkin’s temperament.  Our ambition is to create an exhibition populist in appeal giving audiences insight into Larkin as a man, as a poet and as a librarian.  For audiences to be surprised and engaged in the specific work of Larkin and in poetry and creative writing in general.

At its heart will be the riches held in the Hull History Centre, the archives and artefacts of Larkin's life, brought together for the first time in a world-class curation. The unique Larkin archives held in the History Centre consist of his workbooks, his correspondence, his library, his record collection and hundreds of his own photographs.  The artefacts, which belong to the Philip Larkin Society, are wonderfully evocative of a complex personal and professional life.

With Hull 2017, The University of Hull, the Hull History Centre and the Philip Larkin Society have agreed a unique partnership, bringing together archives, artefacts and academic expertise to produce the first major Larkin exhibition curated and designed to the highest standard.

The plan is for the exhibition to run for possibly four/five months (May-September 2017) in the Exhibition Hall of the newly refurbished Brynmor Jones Library on the University campus. The exhibition will be stimulus and backdrop for a whole series of events focusing on poetry and the written word, encouraging creativity and participation by all ages.

The whole project is to be supported by a Project Director and an designer. Funding has been made available by the University of Hull/City of Culture partnership. An Arts Council England application is to be submitted in July. Currently the total budget (excluding important in-kind contributions) is about £100,000.

There are digitised photographs of nearly all the Larkinalia which could be made available, together with a Master Inventory.

**UK City of Culture Background**
Here is a short summary of the UK City of Culture background and of course our website is a wealth of information <https://www.hull2017.co.uk/whatson/>.

Hull 2017 will be a year of artistic adventures across the city of Hull, using the transformative power of cultural events and activities to deliver lasting social and economic change.

We will celebrate the unique character of the city; its people, stories and geography.

Over 365 days we will raise aspirations, change perceptions and inspire artists, people and communities.

After the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and Tour de France; UK City of Culture is the next national celebration.  It is awarded to a different city every four years; UK City of Culture has the potential to transform 10 cities in 40 years.

Following in the footsteps of European Cities of Culture Glasgow 1990 and Liverpool 2008; Derry~Londonderry was the first city to host the UK title.

Hull was announced UK City of Culture in November 2013 and has already secured in excess of £20m worth of media coverage.

The Culture Company is an independent organisation with charitable status, funded both publicly and privately.   It has an £18m funding target, with key contributions coming from:

Host City - Hull City Council

Principal Partners - Arts Council England, BBC, BP, East Riding of Yorkshire, Heritage Lottery Fund, KCOM, KWL, Spirit of 2012, Yorkshire Water, University of Hull

Major Partners – Arco, BP, British Council, MKM Building Supplies, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sewell Group, Smith & Nephew, Wykeland

Hull 2017’s International Partners are: Aarhus, Denmark, European Capital of Culture 2017; Reykjavik, Iceland; Rotterdam, The Netherlands; and Freetown, Sierra Leone (twinned with Hull).