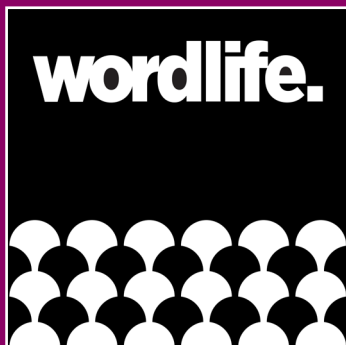




Old Roots & New Shoots

A Literature Outreach
Programme for the
City of Hull



PROPOSAL

IN BRIEF

A Firm of Poets and **Word Life** run a literature engagement project in Hull celebrating past poets and the existing literary scene, as well as delivering an outreach project which encourages new writers to create new work and perform across the city.

The project includes the creation of a new bespoke website for Hull, www.writinghull.com, which is based on a customised Google map and enables us to chart the literary infrastructure of Hull in 2017.

The project also involves workshops and events across Hull, targeting areas of low engagement to encourage new writers to come to the fore and provide opportunities for them to workshop and perform their work. Material from these workshops and events will then be placed onto the Writing Hull map, ensuring a strong legacy for the project.



DIGITAL LITERATURE MAP

RUN BY WORD LIFE

£6,000-9,000

Word Life has been exploring and experimenting with mapping techniques as a delivery format for poems, performances and information, detailing opportunities and resources for poetry and literature in different locations. We have already created a resource for Sheffield with this functionality in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, which can be viewed at www.writingsheffield.com.

We will use the Google Maps engine to create a customised map of Hull with the working title of 'Writing Hull'. Map markers are assigned to specific locations which

can hold text, images, videos and audio. These maps can be used to represent various types of information.

The information on the map would include:

Venues

We place customised markers on the map for venues across Hull that programme literature related events, e.g. Hull Library, Kardomah, Union Mash Up, Fruit Space, etc.

Historical Literary Landmarks

We place markers on the map outlining how locations relate to past poems and poets from Hull. Material for this could be sourced from a book we've found entitled, *The Quarrelsome Quill: Hull's Radical Press*, published in 1984. We could also include references to Philip Larkin and Andrew Marvell poems set in Hull, alongside other material.

Performances

We find pre-existing videos of Hull poets performing their work to camera and use a postcode to place this video on a map of Hull. We also include a commissioning budget to fund the filming of new performances or readings to camera. This could include performances from local poets such as Mike Watts, Jim Higo, Joe Hakim, Vicky Foster and Ian Winter, as well as short videos of other local organisations and performances from writers and theatre companies.

Poems

We advertise an open call for submissions for poems about Hull. This work could then be placed on the map as text, audio or both, supplied by the poets themselves.

The digital literature map format is ideal for:

- **Showcasing ongoing and archival projects** through a novel display mechanism that allows users to explore Hull as a literary city.
- **A public engagement project** utilising new digital technology.
- **Building a piece of online content that stands alone** as its own product, as opposed to just a marketing strategy.
- **A partnership project** working with local stakeholders in the region.
- **Creating opportunities** to work with volunteers, interns and local poets in both research and writing content.





OUTREACH PROJECT

RUN BY A FIRM OF POETS

£7,000-12,000

A Firm Of Poets will run a range of events and workshops in locations of low engagement across the city. These workshops include both creative writing and performance-based activities, potentially taking participants from having never written a poem to performing it confidently on stage.



Operating almost as a 'mobile library', A Firm Of Poets will use a 'Network Neighbourhood' framework to reach grassroots venues outside of the city centre, from social clubs through to BSF schools. This is very much poetry for people 'who like poetry, without realising that they do'.

The aim will be to run at least ten creative writing events around the city from January until September, each involving ten participants. Of the 100 writers, we aim to engage at least 30 in performance-based workshops. This would be split into 5 events. We would then showcase the very best performers at a BBC Introducing style event as part of the main spoken word festival in October.



As well as funnelling certain poets through the process and onto the stage, we'd also showcase the creative writing output on an ongoing basis through a living online document. This could also be integrated into the Writing Hull digital literary map.



POETRY LIGHT NIGHT

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

£4,500-6,000

Poetry Light Night is a project developed by Word Life combining elements of poetry, film and projection. It was first commissioned by Off The Shelf Festival of Words in 2015 to much success, creating an event in Sheffield that attracted an initial audience of 500 people and resulted in the creation of two original ‘film poems’ which were projected onto the frontage of the Upper Chapel building on Surrey Street in Sheffield. The work has reached further audiences online and at subsequent screenings, giving a current total audience of the project of 5,000.

Poetry Light Night is visually spectacular and explores how two different artforms can interact with each other. Its innovative delivery format has the ability to engage existing fans of poetry and film, as well as new audiences to both forms.

Word Life will commission two poets to undertake the creation of original work informed by a particular brief. We will create high-quality audio recordings of the poet performing their own work. These recordings will then be passed to a filmmaker, who will interpret the poems and create a set of moving images that stand alongside and complement the work. These newly created film poems will be projected onto a building in a central location with high public footfall to reach the largest possible audience.



In 2015, Word Life commissioned poets Tony Walsh and Rommi Smith to create original poems inspired by the work of famous writer and philanthropist John Ruskin. These poems were given to two local filmmakers, Annie Watson and Rob Speranza, to be turned into film poems which were projected onto the frontage of Upper Chapel. The films have also been screened at numerous other events and have featured on local television.

Poetry Light Night is ideal for:

- **Cross artform artistic commissions** that will appeal to both existing and new audiences to poetry.
- A **visually spectacular** public engagement project.
- **Developing work using new technology** with poetry and film.
- **Building a better digital and online presence.**
- **Working with specific themes** and areas of interest.

A video of the Poetry Light Night 2015 can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJz8OvBu5q8



“It was great to work with Word Life. Their artistic and aesthetic standards are high and the live event they organised worked really well. The two new poems and films projected onto a beautiful building were stunning. Wordlife researched the subject well. They understood the value of collaborating with Ruskin’s ideas and provided all the partners involved with an opportunity to work together in new ways.” **Ruth Nutter, Director, Ruskin in Sheffield**



“Off The Shelf Festival of Words have worked with Word Life for a number of years. Wordlife have organised events for the festival including open mics, closing and opening party style events with words and music. We have also collaborated on some major projects and commissions. The work produced has always been excellent and we continue to be impressed by the quality of their work and the artistic ideas they come up with.” **Off The Shelf Festival of Words**

WORD LIFE

ABOUT US

Formed in 2006, **Word Life** has evolved into one of the leading advocates for literature in the Yorkshire region. Word Life started as a response to the lack of live literature events in Sheffield and has since developed a programme across Yorkshire and beyond, including events, publications and bespoke projects designed to bring new audiences to literature. Word Life is part of a not-for-profit social enterprise called Opus Independents, which also publishes an arts and culture magazine called Now Then in Sheffield and Manchester, as well as running various music events and a promotional and print distribution service.



Word Life's regular event series is the most popular and diverse regular poetry event in Yorkshire. Word Life have run events in a range of locations, from pubs, theatres and nightclubs to museums, parks and everything in between. We've featured leading poets from the UK, such as Kate Tempest, Lemn Sissay and Joe Dunthorne, and the best-known poets from the US slam scene, such as Buddy Wakefield and Derrick Brown.

We've partnered with national organisations like Apples and Snakes, The British Council and The Arts Council, alongside long-standing relationships with local festivals such as Off The Shelf Festival of Words. Our events have been featured in The Independent, The Guardian and The Yorkshire Post. We've helped lead the development of the literature sector in Yorkshire by creating a community of writers, audiences and like-minded organisations.



Our bespoke project series has seen Word Life innovate with both digital and participatory projects. From **Poetry On The Trams**, putting an original poem inspired by movement on every tram in Sheffield as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, to **Digital Poetry Slams**, the first integrated online poetry slams of their kind, creating a literature map of individual cities, Word Life is committed to finding new ways of reaching out to audiences and developing poetry as an artform.

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A FIRM OF POETS

ABOUT US



A Firm of Poets is a spoken word organisation founded in 2013 by artists Ralph Dartford and Matt Abbott, formed as a response to the increasing popularity of accessible spoken word and poetic activity, both regionally and nationally, and with the ambition to engage audiences and new performers who ‘secretly love poetry, but just don’t know they do yet’.

Since 2013, the organisation has performed at over 250 events, employed over 40 different spoken word artists, engaged over 150 new performers at workshops and entertained thousands of new audience members at festivals, theatres and art centres.

In 2015, A Firm of Poets, in partnership with Ossett Observer Presents, published the highly acclaimed book, **Holding Your Hand Through Hard Times**, and the subsequent GFTA-funded national tour, **The People’s Republic of Poetry**.



The organisation then went on to launch a monthly event in Leeds called **Live at the Lux**. This ongoing project in partnership with We Do Creativity has featured such prominent poets as Helen Mort, John Hegley and Louise Fazackerley, but also launched the careers of exciting new artists, including Victoria Garbutt, Kirsty Taylor and Bry Outlaw.



In January 2015, A Firm of Poets published **Ha Ha and Boo Hoo**, a debut collection by Barry Fox, a 78-year-old poet who has been present at every event at the Lux since the outset.

From February 2016, A Firm of Poets embarks on a year-long GFTA-funded project in Wakefield called Unity Words, in partnership with Sheffield-based organisation Word Life.