**Larkin Westminster Abbey Service and Reception 02/12/16**

Rosie Millard – Brief

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**Background**

Westminster Abbey is presenting a service inducting Philip Larkin into Poet’s Corner on the anniversary of his death this Friday 2nd December 2016.

The service will be followed by a reception hosted by the Chairperson of the Philip Larkin Society, Prof. Eddie Dawes.

The Philip Larkin Society has extended an invitation to Rosie Millard, as Chairperson of Hull 2017, to say a few words at the reception, preceded by Prof Eddie Dawes.

This is an opportunity for Hull 2017 to both mark a major moment in celebration of one of Hull’s most recognised artists and build awareness for the audience about our City of Culture plans in 2017.

Hull 2017 announced at its September launch it would be recognising the work and life of Philip Larkin in its 2017 programme. No further details were announced as the project was in development.

**Messaging**

Philip Larkin is one of Hull’s most recognised artists and we will celebrate that in our year as City of Culture in 2017.

Hull 2017 are planning a significant exhibition inspired by Larkin’s life and work.

The exhibition will take place next Summer at the Brynmore Jones Library in the University of Hull where Larkin spent most of his life at work.

The exhibition will take a unique approach to the large and extensive archive of Larkinalia – objects he owned, his book collection, the jazz records he listened to, his letters, note books and even the dry wit yet professional tone of some of his library committee meeting minutes held at the Hull History Centre.

It will be an opportunity for fans and new audiences alike to be intrigued by previously unseen aspects of this artist’s life and work.

Details of this exhibition will be announced in our next season guide, presently planned to launch towards the end of February.

**Off the record**

We are in the process of engaging a curator and announcements will be made in February.

We are aware there are various high profile figures and artists in the audience in Westminster and, through networking, we would be like to encourage their involvement in the exhibition. This could mean recording one of Larkin’s poems for us, visiting the exhibition and responding to it in some way or, where appropriate, maybe talk about Larkin’s work and its influence on them at an exhibition event etc.

We have been informed that figures such as Alan Bennett, Tom Courtenay, Maureen Lipman and others will attend. Grayson Perry will also attend and he is confirmed as being the Philip Larkin Society’s annual lecture on 5th July during the opening week of the exhibition. He had previousy been approached to curate the exhibition but was unable to commit. As was David Walliams and Lenny Henry. Of course, we remain keen on some less intensive involvement by any of these figures.