



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Exhibition showcasing the creative work of St Mary's homeless opens

On Saturday 18 March the first of four exhibitions of work created as part of *Hidden Voices*, an initiative aimed to unlock the voices and creative talents of the 60 homeless people living rough on the streets of Hull who are fed twice a week by St Mary's Church in Lowgate, will open.

*Hidden Voices* is one of 60 new projects to receive funding through the Hull 2017 Creative Communities Programme, which is being delivered in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund.

This first exhibition, *Made in Hull: Made from Hull*, will document and explore the terminology of 'Rootlessness' and 'Homelessness', exploring the problems of engagement and interaction from both sides: how those who exist within the apparently normal frameworks of society engage with those who are considered outsiders, and vice versa, as well as considering the fundamentals of these frameworks.

Two local artists, Louie Dorton and St Mary's resident artist Marcel Craven, who has himself experienced homelessness, have been unlocking these hidden voices and creative talent through weekly artistic sessions open to the homeless people who receive food from St Mary's, exploring life stories and creativity using items discarded by others.

Rev Paul Burkitt from St Mary's Church, said: "There is a gaping void for those who are rough sleepers, sofa hoppers, hostel dwellers, foreign strangers and people who pilgrimage through the darkness of actual and borderline mental illnesses. We see them all and it is desperately clear that the void is not being enabled or that they are even allowed to tell their stories and find their own sense of creativity. Feeding and housing the body is one thing and an essential start in the therapeutic process, but as a church, as a community, as a city, we can progress to provide some kind of nourishment for the soul, a sense of personal identity and dignity."

Martin Green, CEO and Creative Director at Hull 2017, said: "Hidden Voices is far more than a creative initiative. Most of the people who are homeless have a unique view on life and culture, and a creative core that has few avenues of expression. This project will be profoundly life-expanding for those involved."

The work created by the project will evolve over the year and will be displayed in four exhibitions themed around Hull 2017's seasons. The first exhibition will be held at St Mary the Virgin Church, Lowgate, Hull on the following dates:

Saturday 18 March, 4-6pm  
Tuesday 21 March, 11am-3pm  
Thursday 23 March, 11am-3pm  
Friday 24 March, 6-8pm  
Tuesday 28 March, 11am-3pm

Thursday 30 March, 11am-3pm  
Friday 31 March, 6-8pm

The first exhibition will feature: 'The Begging Door', an architectural feature of St. Mary's, which will be used for the basis of an installation work that encourages interactive consideration of the terminology of begging through viewing and game playing; a 'Psych Geographic Map' will highlight placement and positioning and cause and effect within and outside of the framework; a soundscape will give visitors the opportunity to consider role and positioning; and there will also be visual stimuli by those who attend the work groups.

## ENDS

For more information, please contact:  
Cathy Westby on [inbox.search@gmail.com](mailto:inbox.search@gmail.com) or 07854 339743

## NOTES TO EDITORS

*Hidden Voices* is one of 60 new projects to receive funding through the Hull 2017 Creative Communities Programme, which is being delivered in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund, a Principal Partner of Hull 2017.

A total of £750,000 is being invested in the programme, which was set up to celebrate, nurture and support local talent and develop opportunities for emerging artists.

In addition to cash from Hull 2017 and the Big Lottery Fund, the projects will receive staff support to build capacity in the arts sector, helping to create a legacy. The Creative Communities Programme is also being supported by Hull and East Riding Charitable Trust.

The projects - which range from photography exhibitions to music and food festivals and choral and orchestral concerts to audio-visual installations - will see local artists, community groups, cultural and other organisations in the city working with local people of all ages to create new artistic work, events, installations and other activity throughout 2017.

For a full list of projects visit: <https://www.hull2017.co.uk/discover/article/sixty-community-projects-inspire-creativity-across-hull-2/>

### **About Hull UK City of Culture**

Hull UK City of Culture 2017 is a 365 day programme of cultural events and creativity inspired by the city and told to the world. Hull secured the title of UK City of Culture 2017 in November 2013. It is only the second city to hold the title and the first in England.

Divided into four seasons, this nationally significant event draws on the distinctive spirit of the city and the artists, writers, directors, musicians, revolutionaries and thinkers that have made such a significant contribution to the development of art and ideas.

For information go to [www.hull2017.co.uk](http://www.hull2017.co.uk)

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### **About Big Lottery Fund**

- The Big Lottery Fund is the largest funder of community activity in the UK. It puts people in the lead to improve their lives and communities, often through small, local projects.
- It is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by National Lottery players for good causes. Every year it invests over £650 million and awards around 12,000 grants across the UK for health, education, environment and charitable purposes.

- Since June 2004 it has awarded over £8 billion to projects that change the lives of millions of people. Since the National Lottery began in 1994, £34 billion has been raised and more than 450,000 grants awarded.

### **About Hull & East Riding Charitable Trust**

The Hollingbery Family founded the business in 1933 with the first Comet superstore opened in Hull in 1968. The business was subsequently sold to Kingfisher and in 1985 the charity was established with the defined purpose of donating funds to help and support charities, both national and local, and other deserving causes, provided that direct benefit was forthcoming for people who live in Hull or the East Riding of Yorkshire.

For more information, including on how to apply for funds, see <http://hullandeastridingtrust.org.uk/>