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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Artful Scribe

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## **Introducing NEWRITE: A Creative Writing and Literature Development Programme for people living in and visiting the New Forest.**

NEWRITE is a two-year creative writing and literature development programme, set within the bounds of the New Forest. Aiming to cultivate a thriving literary community, this initiative encourages local talent through workshops, readings, residencies, and training opportunities, while fostering a sense of place and creative expression. Supported by a biennial festival, digital outreach, and on-going creative writing outreach activities, NEWRITE is set to champion literary excellence in the region.

‘The NEWRITE project, delivered by ArtfulScribe, is an exciting initiative that will give many local communities the opportunity to engage with creative writing across the district. With the need for increased investment in Arts and Culture in our area, this funding from Arts Council England will help us to offer our New Forest community more accessible ways to develop their creative skills and discover the many benefits this can bring.’ **Kealy Whenray – Creative and Cultural Development Manager, New Forest District Council.**

Building on groundwork laid in New Milton by the Play on Words festival, this new venture aspires to establish a robust infrastructure that nurtures the art of storytelling and the written word. By creating supportive spaces for individuals to explore their creativity, NEWRITE will weave together communities of writers through captivating story trails, village writing projects and regular writing groups. These groups, focused on wellbeing, village stories, and open access workshops, will provide people with an enriching platform for self-expression and personal growth. Age-specific sessions for children and younger people (ages 7-10 and 11-14) will foster a love for literature and empower a new generation to find their voices.

Embracing the diversity and power of spoken word, NEWRITE will host a schools’ poetry slam, infusing the programme with performance and celebrating a vibrancy of voices. Writer residencies will bring literary talent to the New Forest, offering inspiration and guidance to aspiring writers, while forging connections between established and emerging voices.

A cornerstone of NEWRITE’s activities is a regular open mic at Forest Arts Centre, operated by Hampshire Cultural Trust, where both seasoned writers and newcomers can share work and celebrate the art of poetry and storytelling in an inclusive and supportive environment.

**Phil Gibby, Area Director, Arts Council England, South West, adds:**

'We're pleased to be supporting this exciting new programme set within the New Forest. Thanks to Lottery players, projects like this can be realised for young creatives and writers. At the Arts Council, we are committed to ensuring everyone can take part in creative and cultural experiences, and the New Forest is a place where we want to see this prosper. The project shines a spotlight on, and embraces, the diversity of literary talent in the area; no matter what age or background, through the delivery of a fantastic range of opportunities especially for children and young people to engage with storytelling. We can't wait to see the impact of this project, and to witness the voices of young talent thrive – continuing the important work that ArtfulScribe do across Hampshire.'

The culmination of this first phase of project delivery will be a literature festival in 2024. Showcasing creative outputs and achievements of the writing groups, the festival will be a vibrant celebration of literature. Attendees can expect a curated line-up of workshops and guest speakers from the New Forest and beyond, offering unique perspectives and inspiring conversations. In recognition of the importance of accessibility, the festival will also provide digital avenues for wider dissemination, allowing literary enthusiasts from across the globe to listen to New Forest voices and stories. A smaller festival to officially launch the project will take place from 24th Oct-5th Nov 2023.

NEWRITE recognizes the value of community engagement and volunteers' invaluable contributions. Through comprehensive training and empowerment initiatives, dedicated volunteers will be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to produce future festivals, ensuring the programme's sustainability and continued success.

'We're grateful to Arts Council England and National Lottery players for enabling this exciting opportunity to engage and inspire people across the New Forest with creative writing, reading and spoken word. We aim to build lasting partnerships that will lead to better well-being, person to person learning and fun with words for people of all ages.'

**Stephen Boyce, Chair of ArtfulScribe's Advisory Board.**

**For media inquiries, please contact: [antosh@artfulscribe.co.uk](mailto:antosh@artfulscribe.co.uk)**

NEWRITE is a two-year place-based creative writing and literature development programme situated in the New Forest. The project is led by ArtfulScribe and a consortium of partners including: New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority, Hampshire Cultural Trust, Forest Arts, Hampshire Library Service, St Barbe Museum and Gallery, Culture in Common, Solent Mind, Artsworld, MAST Mayflower Studios, and SPUD. NEWRITE is supported by generous funding from Arts Council England. To learn more about NEWRITE and its upcoming events, please join the ArtfulScribe mailing list at [www.artfulscribe.co.uk](http://www.artfulscribe.co.uk)

