



LIVE LITERATURE IN PUBS AND COMMUNITY SPACES ACROSS THE UK

We're seeking to commission new Live Literature shows!

'INN CROWD is a brilliant project. It supports and enables performers to make work, helps us reach new audiences, and promotes live literature across the UK. Get involved!' Sophia Walker

Who we are?

Started in 2016 INN CROWD is a unique arts project, devised by partners Applause Rural Touring, Creative Arts East and National Centre for Writing with support from Pub is the Hub.

From 2016-19 INN CROWD supported rural pubs throughout the Southeast and East of England to host exciting and inspiring spoken word, poetry and storytelling performances in their pubs.

INN CROWD Pubs+ is the next phase of this project, touring live literature across England from 2019 – 2023. It helps reinforce pubs as central to rural community life by bringing exceptional cultural experiences to new audiences.

INN CROWD has worked with 301 pubs across England, supporting over 90 artists to reach an audience of over 58,000.

INN CROWD Pubs+ commissioned 12 shows between 2019-2020 and following the Covid-19 hiatus are now ready to commission some more. These new commissions would need to be ready to tour by **01/08/2022**

For more details about INN CROWD, visit www.inncrowd.org.uk

What do we offer?

We are looking to support the following:

New Commissions: ideas for new shows, sets or performances that can be developed with time and assistance from the INN CROWD consortium. The budget for these is up to £3000 plus optional rehearsal space at National Centre for Writing in Norwich.

For the new commissions we act as Executive Producers in the development of your work, helping you develop and shape it to suit the specifics of pub environments.

Ready-to-go Shows: Shows that already exist and would not require additional funding to render them suitable for Pub touring.

As rural touring specialists we are continuously developing new networks of performance spaces and working with voluntary promoters to pitch your shows to pubs. We also manage all the logistics of booking shows for you.

We offer a standard fee of £400 per performance (to include all VAT, travel costs, equipment hire, accommodation and other expenses). There is a £50 supplementary fee offered to all performances more than 150 miles from the performers house.

Artists or companies taking part in INN CROWD can expect to be booked for an average of ten performances. We would anticipate that roughly 60% of performances will take place in the following regions: Cambridgeshire East Sussex, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk, West Sussex; the other 40% may be spread around the rest of England.

(Please note that these figures are averages – each booking is made by the pub and INN CROWD cannot guarantee any bookings.)

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for live literature artists of all descriptions; poets, storytellers, spoken word artists and everything in between. However you describe your work, if live literature is at the core of your practice, then we want to hear from you!

We want people who are made for playing to a variety of non-traditional performance venues, all over the country, full of all different kinds of audiences. We seek artists who are excited by the challenge and the joy of bringing high-quality performances to those who may otherwise miss out.

INN CROWD is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

All qualified applicants will be selected on merit, regardless of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We actively encourage people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. We are particularly keen to hear from people of colour and candidates who self-identify as disabled.

What are we looking for?

We look for shows that:

- Tell a **compelling** narrative that is **engaging** and relatively **easy to follow**;
- Are well written and **literature focused**;
- Treat subjects lightly and with **humour**.

To help you consider whether your performance might be suitable for a rural pub tour, we have included some detailed information below. Please take the time to read this as it will support you in your application:

Suitability for rural pub audiences – content considerations

- Audiences come to pubs for a good night out. While we welcome proposals featuring any content, we encourage performers to break up serious subjects with humour. **The general ambiance that works best is one of light-hearted and engaging storytelling.**
- Rural pubs are open community spaces. Audiences may have booked a ticket for shows, but there will be people walking in without any knowledge of a show taking place. For this

reason **we do not accept shows which contain significant swearing, vulgarity, or adult content.**

- Background noise and **distractions are inevitable** in rural pub spaces. It can be difficult for audiences to immerse themselves in a quiet, attention-demanding show.
- Rural pubs tend to attract an older clientele, often less willing to engage with audience involvement/participation than younger, urban audiences. Shows that include audience participation can work, but we tend to find that **audiences will respond better to group engagement** (collective singing of a song, for instance) than being put on the spot and asked to do something individually.
- Audiences in rural pubs generally tend to be more socially conservative than audiences in urban areas. No subject is off-limits and we actively welcome socially diverse applications, but artists should be aware that their show will be more effective if the message is delivered lightly. **We are unlikely to commission issue-based work if it is overtly political.**
- Pubs are always keen to book shows that respond to topical themes that they already interact with as a part of their business/events calendar; you may choose to think about this when constructing your ideas. In 2022 and 2023 *some* of the themes that we think will be popular with pubs include the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Suitability of Performer – artist considerations

- **Rural pubs can be lively venues**, with food and drink service taking place, as well as talk from people who aren't engaging with the show. Artists need to be comfortable projecting their voice or speaking at a volume that can stand up to a live pub setting.
- Although rare, heckling or other unwanted interruptions are possible in pub spaces. **Artists need to be robust and confident** enough to cope with this atmosphere.

Suitability as Live Literature – artform considerations

INN CROWD is a project supporting live literature. This can include elements of theatre, poetry, spoken word, storytelling, or literary adaptation. The starting point for performances considered for INN CROWD must be a written or composed text. While there is cross-over between live literature and other live performance genres, we seek shows which fulfil at least two of the following criteria:

- **Do you define the show as live literature**, spoken word, performed poetry, or storytelling?
- Does the show feature **new writing**?
- Does your show **respond to an existing (non-play) text** in a way that increases engagement with or places focus on that original text?

Suitability for rural pub spaces – tech and performance considerations

- Rural pubs are often old buildings, full of nooks and crannies but without open performance spaces. Sight-lines can be obstructed by load-bearing pillars or the layout may mean some in the audience are able to hear but can't directly see a performer. Lack of a raised stage or tiered seating means audiences cannot always see a performer if they are not standing up. For these reasons **we do not accept shows which include significant physical theatre or projection.** The voice and the words spoken must be the core of any INN CROWD show we commission.
- Performance space can sometimes be little more than the corner of a bar. For this reason **shows have to be performable in as little as 1.5m x 1.5m**, though often there will be more space than that.
- We have found that **solo pieces that tell a story with a single voice/point of view often work best** for pub spaces as do performance poetry. Theatre, dialogue and multiple characters can be harder to convey in pub spaces.

- Our pubs like to make an evening of attending a show. They may like an interval for drinks or food. **Shows should thus be flexible enough to add an interval should the venue request one.**

What do we expect from selected shows?

All artists will:

- ensure robust and effective communication with INN CROWD to ensure a timely response to proposed bookings. We prefer direct communication with artists around the booking of shows, to ensure the right fit for each venue.
- give priority to INN CROWD bookings for an agreed period of 6 months.

Commissioned artists will:

- recognise that INN CROWD has both a funding and developmental role in your show, and work with us to ready your show for INN CROWD – this will include providing all show images and copy in a timely manner, acknowledging us publicly as developers of your show, and communicating effectively on your progress.
- work with us to develop appropriate publicity images. Please be sure to include spend on developing show publicity images in your budget. We can help you source a photographer if you would find this useful.
- credit INN CROWD and its partners on all relevant publicity materials (including print and online marketing and advertising), both for performances as part of INN CROWD and for any wider touring of the completed show.
- premiere your show with INN CROWD. We understand that other opportunities may arise and will not prevent you taking these, but will ask that they be billed as ‘previews’ or ‘scratch shows’.

What are you looking for in my application?

When reading applications, we are looking to be:

- Excited by an artistic proposal. We want to feel that you have a clear vision for your show, understand how to develop it from concept to tour-ready, and know what experience you want audiences to have. Make sure you have an engaging title, and a clear description of what the show will be like – content, atmosphere, style. (We understand this may evolve as the show is developed but sell us the vision as best you understand it now.)
- Convinced that your budget is appropriate. Areas you should consider for this budget include:
 - o Artist fees – we will not commission any artist who is not proposing to pay themselves and any other artists (producers, directors, photographers, etc) appropriately for their time. You can consult Society of Authors for recommended rates.
- Confident that performers understand the challenges of rural pub touring, are excited by the opportunities, and are happy to work in collaboration with the INN CROWD Consortium to bring the show to audiences across the UK.
- See evidence (ideally video) of your work and the entire show if you are applying for a Re-Shape.
- Publicity requirements – As part of your show development you need to provide a minimum of two high-quality publicity photos that meet our publicity criteria.

When should my show be ready for touring?

We would like your show to be ready for **preview in June 2022, and to begin touring in August 2022**. (We understand that many performers will not be available in August/September due to other commitments in Edinburgh – do not worry, we can take a break from booking your show for that month).

If you aren't able to manage these timelines, please continue to apply and contact inncrowd@applause.org.uk to discuss a timeline that works for you.

What is the application deadline?

Applications close 17:00 Monday 31st January 2022

How to Apply

Complete the application form here: <https://forms.gle/DLGh4mVrDvZ5HdJz9> and send a full budget (if applying for a commission) and any additional material to Samantha Steer at: inncrowd@applause.org.uk

Applicants should be free and expect to be invited to a selection day on the 24th or 25th of February in London. Travel will be reimbursed for artists and companies selected to attend this session.

We strongly encourage you to attend our online support session in January to help aid you in your application process. This session will take place on the following date:

- **Pub touring 101** – Monday 10th January at 19:00 – Location: Zoom

You can sign up to this supplementary session here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pub-touring-101-information-session-tickets-227882963077>

Timeline

Deadline for proposals – 17:00 Monday 31st January 2022

Selected applicants will be informed of invitation to selection day by: 10th February 2022.

Selection Day – 24th or 25th of February 2022

Commissioned artists will be notified by: 4th March 2022

What do I do if I have further questions or want to discuss my application further?

For an informal discussion about INN CROWD, please contact Samantha Steer, INN CROWD Project Manager: inncrowd@applause.org.uk.