



## LIVE LITERATURE IN PUBS AND COMMUNITY SPACES ACROSS THE UK

### We're seeking Live Literature shows!

*'The 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 South East 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.

Since 2016 INN CROWD has worked with 301 pubs across England, supporting over 90 artists to reach an audience of over 58,000.

For more details about INN CROWD, visit [www.inncrowd.org.uk](http://www.inncrowd.org.uk)

#### What do we offer?

We are looking to support 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 promoters to pitch your shows to pubs. We manage 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 100 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.)

## **What are we looking for?**

**We particularly welcome applications from diverse artists, particularly people of colour and those with a disability.**

To help you consider whether your performance might be suitable for a rural pub tour, some of the criteria we look for in a show are:

### **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, clowning, or any 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.

### **Suitability for rural pub audiences – content considerations**

- 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. We find that the shows that work best are up-beat and easy to engage with.
- 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 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. For this reason, we are unlikely to commission salacious cabaret or overtly

political work. 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.

- Pubs are always keen to book shows that respond to topical themes that they already interact with as a part of their business 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 stand-up comedy, shows will only be considered if they fulfil at least two of the following criteria for live literature.

- 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?

#### **In summary, 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.

### **What do we expect from selected shows?**

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.

### **What are you looking for in my application?**

When reading applications, we are looking to be:

- Excited by an artistic proposal.
- 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.

## **When should my show be ready for touring?**

We would like your show to be ready 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 TBC to discuss a timeline that works for you.

## **What is the application deadline?**

**By end of day Sunday 3rd July 2022**

## **How to Apply**

Complete the application form here:  
and send any additional material to Samantha Steer at: [inncrowd@applause.org.uk](mailto:inncrowd@applause.org.uk)

## **Timeline**

Deadline for proposals – By end of day **Sunday 3rd July 2022**

Selected artists will be notified by: 14th July 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 [inncrowd@applause.org.uk](mailto:inncrowd@applause.org.uk).