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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**National Centre for Writing awarded lottery funding to reveal Dragon Hall’s hidden stories**

The National Centre for Writing (NCW), England’s first Literature House and the home of Norwich UNESCO City of Literature, has been awarded a £68,516 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to uncover new stories from Dragon Hall and King Street, bringing the medieval venue’s rich history to life.

Building on the creative work of their flagship heritage project ‘[Step into Dragon Hall](https://nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/writing-hub/announcing-the-next-chapter-stepping-into-dragon-hall/)’ (2023–24), the new initiative will focus on local voices, creativity, and hands-on participation. Over the next fifteen months (August 2025–October 2026), NCW will create opportunities for local people and visitors to explore, shape, and celebrate the stories of Dragon Hall and the surrounding area.

A key strand of the project is the [Story Makers](https://nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/atapestryoftales/) heritage research group, where local people with an interest in history can collaborate to uncover hidden stories of those who lived on the Dragon Hall site over centuries. Their discoveries will be developed into a new public exhibition. Anyone interested in joining the group can contact info@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk.

The project will also launch a school’s programme designed to connect young people aged 8–13 with local history through creative writing. Schools are invited to take part in visits to Dragon Hall, inspiring the next generation to discover the city’s heritage in imaginative ways. Schools interested in participating should contact [learning@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk](mailto:learning@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk).

Additional activities include:

* Free drop-in visitor days at Dragon Hall, three day per week.
* Family friendly activities and early years storytelling.
* Training and support for NCW volunteers, supporting a welcoming visitor experience.
* A new Conservation Management Plan to safeguard the Grade I-listed building’s future.

Peggy Hughes, CEO of National Centre for Writing, said:

‘Thanks to the support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund and players, this project will bring new voices and perspectives into the heart of our building, visitor experience and participatory activities. It’s a step forward for how we define and share the heritage of this extraordinary place – connecting past and present communities who’ve inhabited King Street and the surrounding area, as well as understanding the future needs of our site through new interrogations of its structure.’

NCW will continue their partnership with the Norfolk Record Office and local heritage organisations, including Norfolk Museum Service, Norfolk Heritage Centre, and Norwich City of Sanctuary. Together, they will explore themes of migration, community, and change, bringing archival research to life for everyone.

This project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players.

**/ENDS**

**Notes to Editors:**

For comment and photos contact Steph McKenna, Senior Communications & Marketing Manager at [steph@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk](mailto:steph@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk) / 01603 877177

1. **National Centre for Writing** (NCW) is a National Portfolio Organisation for Arts Council England and the literature development agency for the East of England based in Norwich, England’s first UNESCO City of Literature. NCW promotes, commissions, and supports new writing, writers, and underrepresented voices; inspires communities through the power of writing, reading and literary translation; nurtures literary talent and has a year-round creative writing learning programme of courses, workshops, and resources.

NCW’s Literature House opened in 2018 after the £2.2m capital renovation of Dragon Hall, a 15th century Grade 1-listed trading hall and now a cultural centre for Norwich and the region. The organisation is also the office for Norwich UNESCO City of Literature, part of the wider Creative Cities Network which was launched in 2004 and is currently made up of 295 UNESCO Creative Cities globally.

NCW’s patrons include Margaret Atwood, JM Coetzee, Kei Miller, Sarah Perry and Elif Shafak. Key funders are Arts Council England, Norwich City Council and the University of East Anglia. [nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk](https://ncwnorwich.sharepoint.com/sites/Comms/Shared%20Documents/Press/Press%20Releases/2024/nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk)

1. In 2012, **Norwich** became the UK’s first UNESCO City of Literature, following a collaborative bid led by the National Centre for Writing (NCW) — England’s first Literature House — alongside Norwich City Council and the University of East Anglia (UEA). With a rich history spanning over 900 years, Norwich has long been a beacon of creativity and innovation. It boasts remarkable literary firsts, including the earliest English-language book published by a woman, the first provincial library, and UEA’s pioneering creative writing MA.

Today, Norwich remains a vibrant hub for poets, novelists, biographers, playwrights, translators, literary critics, historians, environmentalists, and philosophers. It is a thriving centre for publishing in the East of England, known for its independent bookshops, dynamic libraries, and literary festivals such as UEA Live and the Norwich Book Festival. The city is also celebrated as the UK’s first City of Refuge for threatened writers, reinforcing its role as a haven for free expression and creative thought.

National Centre for Writing is the focal office for Norwich City of Literature. Find out more at nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/norwich-unesco-city-of-literature.

1. As the largest dedicated funder of the UK’s heritage, **The National Lottery Heritage Fund**’s vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033.

Over the next ten years, the Heritage Fund aims to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment.

The Heritage Fund helps protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

The Heritage Fund is passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people’s lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.