

22 December 2016

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Writers' Centre Norwich gets green light to develop the city's historic Dragon Hall into the National Centre for Writing

It has just been announced that Norwich's medieval Dragon Hall, parts of which date to circa 1430, will be developed into the National Centre for Writing, following Arts Council England's decision to award £789,434 from National Lottery sources to support the project's capital costs.

Opening its doors in April 2018, the centre will comprise educational and community spaces, enhanced office space and technical facilities, a refurbished public performance arena seating up to 120 people, and even residential space for visiting writers, in England's first UNESCO City of Literature.

Chris Gribble, Chief Executive of Writers' Centre Norwich, said:

"We are delighted to have received this news. It is a ringing endorsement of our vision to create a centre of national and international literary exchange in this city with its unparalleled literary heritage. The next chapter of Dragon Hall's history as The National Centre for Writing looks set to be an exciting one and we're looking forward to working with our funders, partners, neighbours and the wider world of literature to create something quite unique. In 2017, we will reveal ways in which individuals and companies can get involved in supporting the project, and receive lasting recognition for that support within the very fabric of the new building."

Hedley Swain, Area Director, South East, Arts Council England, said:

"We're really pleased to be able to support Writers' Centre Norwich in its ambitious plans for Dragon Hall, which is such an iconic building. The developments will ensure that Chris and his team can build on their great work to date, cementing Writers' Centre Norwich's reputation for literature excellence on a regional, national and international stage."

Prof Yvonne Tasker, Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, at the University of East Anglia said:

“I am absolutely delighted with the success of the Arts Council bid for capital funding so that the magnificent medieval Dragon Hall can be developed into a National Centre for Writing. The collaboration between the Writers’ Centre Norwich and the University of East Anglia continues to grow with a number of exciting projects involving creative writers and literary translators.”

Cllr Alan Waters, Leader of Norwich City Council said:

“It is only fitting that England’s first UNESCO City of Literature should be home to the new National Centre for Writing. Norwich City Council is very proud to have worked with Writers’ Centre Norwich on this ambitious project and delighted that the new centre will be housed in one of our most iconic buildings.”

Cllr Margaret Dewsbury, Chair of the Communities Committee, Norfolk County Council, added:

“Norfolk County Council is delighted that Writers’ Centre Norwich, one of Norfolk’s key cultural organisations, has been awarded this major capital investment by Arts Council England to transform the historic Dragon Hall into the National Centre for Writing. The centre will provide flagship new cultural facilities and a wealth of opportunities for Norfolk as well as further strengthening its reputation as a vibrant and rich cultural destination.”

For updates about Writers’ Centre Norwich and its plan to transform Dragon Hall into the National Centre for Writing, please visit www.writerscentrenorwich.org.uk

ENDS

Notes to Editors on next page...

Notes to Editors

1. Press enquiries to: Andrew Burton, Director of Communications, Writers' Centre Norwich at andrew.burton@writerscentrenorwich.org.uk or 01603 877177
2. Writers' Centre Norwich's mission is to put literature at the heart of contemporary culture. Through pioneering and collaborative projects it explores the artistic and social power of creative writing and literary translation.
3. Writers' Centre Norwich's key stakeholder funders are Arts Council England, the University of East Anglia, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council.