



# Co-created Theatre Commission

## Briefing Document

### Seventeen Nineteen

**Is a secret best kept hidden?**

Seventeen Nineteen is seeking to commission an experienced theatre organisation to work with Sunderland communities to co-create a piece of participatory theatre which explores and creatively interprets the hidden stories of Seventeen Nineteen. This is a National Lottery Heritage Funded project.

**Full commission fee: £18,000**

This is a paid opportunity for an organisation with a strong track record and proven experience of community theatre to work with Seventeen Nineteen and local Sunderland communities to co-create a new piece of performance that engages and inspires audiences.

Due to the scale of this project, this opportunity is designed for registered organisations, but we are open to receiving applications from cross-sector partnerships made up of experienced theatre-makers and engagement specialists.

Proposed projects should result in at least one live performance at Seventeen Nineteen, and should also consider how the work created might exist beyond the scope of the project. This project must be completed by mid-October 2024.

Applicants should have experience of gathering evaluation data and feedback. Proposed projects should factor in how the project will be evaluated throughout the course of the project.

#### **Project aims:**

- People will engage with contemporary and classical arts cultures;
- Participants will gain skills in a variety of different arts mediums;
- People will learn about the hidden stories of Seventeen Nineteen and the East End of Sunderland ([please follow this link](#) to read about our three core themes that we explore in all of our work, Becoming Sunderland, Becoming the East End, and Dignity of People and Place);
- Seventeen Nineteen's hidden stories will be told in innovative and exciting ways.

#### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- Theatre companies or partnerships must be based in Sunderland, or have a connection to Sunderland;
- Applicants must be in possession of Public Liability Insurance up to £5,000,000;
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate significant experience (5 years+) of community theatre or co-created theatre.





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## **Application process and key dates:**

Stage 1: Submit expression of interest (please see notes below) by 5pm, Tuesday 23 April 2024.

Stage 2: Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by Friday 26 April 2024.

Stage 3: Successful first stage applicants will receive £200 (paid on receipt of invoice within 30 days) to work up their full proposal which will be presented to a panel during an in-person interview on Thursday 2 May 2024.

Stage 4: Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by Tuesday 7 May 2024.

## **Timescale:**

This project should end no later than mid-October 2024.

## **Expression of Interest:**

Please submit your expression of interest to Posy Jowett by email ([pjowett@theccct.org.uk](mailto:pjowett@theccct.org.uk)) using the subject line 'Co-created Theatre Commission', including:

- Information about your organisation or members of your partnership (or a link to a website that contains this information);
- Examples of previous community theatre projects (or a link to a website that contains this information);
- A short initial proposal responding to the provocation, "Is a secret best kept hidden?", taking into account the project aims;
- How your idea explores one or more of our three key themes;
- Your ideas for recruiting participants to your proposed project;
- Your ideas for evaluating the project;
- Your proposed budget;
- Your proposed schedule of work;
- Your connection to Sunderland;
- Evidence of your Public Liability Insurance.

## **Guidance notes:**

We do not expect to see a full budget breakdown at this stage. Please think about how you would allocate your budget to broad areas like fees, travel, props, costume, and materials.

Seventeen Nineteen is not a theatre! We have staging and some great gear, as well as a wealth of knowledge and experience in how to make the most of our space. Successful applicants will take into account the idiosyncrasies of this unusual (and brilliant) space in their proposals.

Seventeen Nineteen will provide in-kind support for this project. This includes providing a sound technician for performances, use of our gear (see our Production Bible for our tech spec), access to our spaces for meeting, planning and rehearsing, and marketing support.





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#### **Supporting Creatives:**

Seventeen Nineteen is committed to providing opportunities to creatives that are accessible and inclusive. If required, Seventeen Nineteen will make reasonable adjustments to support creatives to take part in this opportunity. Please feel free to let us know in your application if reasonable adjustments may be required for you to take part in this opportunity, and our staff will happily discuss this with you.

#### **Feedback and Questions:**

Seventeen Nineteen is open to feedback from our local creative community. If you have any questions about this commission, please contact Posy by email on [pjowett@theccct.org.uk](mailto:pjowett@theccct.org.uk)

#### **About Seventeen Nineteen**

This stunning, Grade I listed building has been renovated and restored in collaboration with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to preserve the shared heritage of our local community, and to play a part in Sunderland's current cultural network. Seventeen Nineteen operates as a heritage tourism destination, bringing the diaspora of the East End back to the memories they have of weddings, christenings, and church services past.

Seventeen Nineteen is also a place of marvel and wonder for those that come to admire our award-winning architecture and historic features. Seventeen Nineteen is a hub for local creative practitioners to deliver workshops that bring heritage crafts to new audiences, keeping our traditions alive. By night, the space is transformed into a 160-capacity performance venue for folk, jazz, theatre and classical music.

<https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/1719/>

Follow us on social media @17nineteen

#### **About the Churches Conservation Trust**

The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) is the national charity protecting churches at risk. We care for the churches vested in us by the Church Commissioners of the Church of England, repairing the damage from sometimes years of neglect, and work with local communities to bring them alive again.

The CCT have saved over 350 buildings which attract almost 2 million visitors a year. Our unique collection of English churches includes irreplaceable examples of architecture, archaeology and art from 1,000 years of history. With our help and with your support they are kept open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities.

We operate the third largest heritage estate in charitable ownership in the UK. All of the churches in our collection are listed, mostly Grade I and II, and some are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

<https://www.visitchurches.org.uk>





# Seventeen Nineteen: One iconic venue. Hundreds of stories to tell.

**The story so far...**

Since we opened our doors, Seventeen Nineteen has been working with partners and collaborators to deliver innovative creative projects which actively centre communities. As a result, we have a wealth of knowledge, research, and ideas that have been generated over the years, and this new commission will sit proudly alongside those that have come before, and those that are still to come.

## Hidden Stories

In 2022, Seventeen Nineteen collaborated with Sunderland Music Hub and MishMash productions on Hidden Stories, a creative arts and music project funded by Arts Council England. Hidden Stories was designed to explore, uncover, and share stories of Seventeen Nineteen and Old Sunderland alongside local communities. 172 participants across 9 community groups worked alongside musicians, writers and craftspeople to design an immersive exhibition of new creative responses which were shown alongside historic artefacts found during the redevelopment of the building. Participants were particularly keen that future projects work to connect the past, present and future in authentic and relatable ways.

[Follow this link](#) to a short video produced as R&D for Hidden Stories.

## Songs of the Streets

For the launch of Seventeen Nineteen in Spring 2022, we partnered with We Make Culture to create 10 community songs, released under the title Songs of the Streets. Musicians Paige Temperley and Holly Rees collected stories from current East Enders, and worked with volunteers to research stories that were hidden in archives to generate these original tracks. Read more about the project and listen to the tracks [here](#).

## Dear Friend

During the redevelopment of Holy Trinity Church, a handwritten letter from 1897 was found inside a wooden pew by the heritage joinery team. The letter was penned by an almost-14 year old choir boy, William Elliott, who lived at the Orphanage over the road, revealing his worries about the future and hoping to one day be remembered. The story of the letter trapped in time inspired a team of volunteers to undertake a search through archives and social media to find out what happened to William. Letters sharing William's story were mailed out to anyone who requested one, and [many people wrote back](#), sharing their experiences of being lonely and uncertain or with memories of Sunderland and Holy Trinity church.

More recently, William's story has been told through a brand new [docu-drama broadcast on BBC Radio 4](#).

[Click here for Podcasts, Soundscapes, Trails and more...](#)





# Seventeen Nineteen: One iconic venue. Hundreds of stories to tell. The next chapter...

Seventeen Nineteen has recently made some major commissions. It's really important to us to support our local creative sector, and these current projects will offer great opportunities for cross pollination of ideas and research!

## Artist-in-Residence

King Ink CIC have recently been awarded the position of Artist-in-Residence at Seventeen Nineteen. A home for Sunderland's hidden poets, King Ink's monthly poetry and spoken word nights at Pop Recs are a welcoming and inclusive space for local people to share their writing with a live audience. Over the coming months, King Ink CIC will be working alongside Seventeen Nineteen communities to write poetry, flash memoir and verbatim writing, reinterpreting old stories and telling brand new ones.

## Emerging Community Artist

Seventeen Nineteen is committed to supporting young and emerging artists who want to develop their socially engaged practice. Through the emerging community artist scheme, Seventeen Nineteen will be supporting an artist over the coming months to deepen their practice and develop their portfolio of work. Keep an eye on our social media over the coming days to find out who we'll be working with!

## Primary and Secondary Schools Facilitator

We have recently recruited a facilitator to support our developing schools programme. This will mean renewed relationships with local primary and secondary schools, who will be exploring the history of the East End of Sunderland and Seventeen Nineteen through creative and playful workshops, as well as new research and outreach resources designed for children and young people.

This new co-created theatre commission will form part of a wider network of creatives working with Seventeen Nineteen, who will each be working to engage new and diverse audiences to share stories of Old Sunderland.

