

Inspire Poetry Festival 2026

A week of wonderful words

Headline Event

Desert Island Poems: Paul Farley in Conversation with Clare Brown

- West Bridgford Library – Thursday 24 September, 6.30pm

Tickets £10. Booking advised.

For adults.

Enjoy an evening of poetry, as acclaimed poet Paul Farley shares his desert island poems in conversation with the Library Director of Bromley House Library Clare Brown, before reading from his own award-winning work.

Exhibition

Caribbean Pioneer Gardeners Exhibition

- Beeston Library: Friday 25 September – Wednesday 4 November

Free.

Discover the experiences of six Caribbean gardeners of the Windrush generation and their legacy at Hungerhill Gardens,

England's largest and oldest allotments. Featuring interviews, photographs and a new poem by Cara Thompson, inspired by their stories.

Performance

Sit Down with the Social Model Writers

- Beeston Library – Friday 25 September, 2pm

Free. Booking essential.

Social Model Writers are a collective of disabled writers who perform together. Come along, take part, listen to and share poetry led by them - all welcome!

This is a hybrid event, you can join either on Zoom or at Beeston Library.

Social Model Writers would love to hear your poems but ask that they are no longer than 4 minutes, so everyone has a chance to share. Please email reading@inspireculture.org.uk

Performance

The Paper Crane Poets Showcase

- Beeston Library – Friday 25 September, 7.30pm

Pay what you like. Booking advised.

For adults. Ages 16+. (Under 18s to be accompanied by an adult).

Join Beeston Library's resident poetry collective for another brilliant evening of original spoken word at Beeston Library.

Special Event

The Wonder of...

- Worksop Library – Saturday 26 September, drop in between 10am – 3pm

Free. Just drop by.

For families.

What makes you stop and wonder? Explore the magic of words and create your own poetry inspired by the world around you.

Children & Families Performance

- [The Great Big Bug Show! At West Bridgford Library – Saturday 26 September, 10.30am](#)
- [The Great Big Bug Show! At Beeston Library – Saturday 26 September, 2.30pm](#)

Tickets £3. Booking advised.

For children aged 4 – 11 and their grown-ups.

Join poet Simon Mole and musician Gecko for a family show full of poems, raps and songs all about your favourite bugs. A fun and interactive invitation to explore the secret world beneath our feet.

Workshop

Beyond the Spectrum: Poetry for Neurodivergent People

- Beeston Library – Saturday 26 September, 11am – 1pm

Free. Booking advised.

For adults.

Beyond the Spectrum is a writing project which celebrates autistic creativity and creates spaces for neurodivergent people to write together. In this one-off poetry workshop, with autistic professional writer Pippa Hennessy, you will write alongside like-minded people to respond to prompts and craft a poem reflecting your own experiences and creative process.

Poetry Showcase

Bad Ideas Club Showcase

- Mansfield Central Library – Saturday 26 September,
1.30pm

Free. Booking advised.

For adults.

Enjoy an afternoon of brilliant live poetry with independent publishers Bad Betty Press. Featuring performances from Casey Bailey, Leanne Moden and Chris Lanyon, the event is hosted by Bad Betty co-founder Jake Wild Hall.

This special event celebrates the work created at Bad Ideas Club – a workshop series conducted over nine weeks in three Nottinghamshire libraries.

For a chance to share your own poems, email reading@inspireculture.org.uk. Priority will be given to workshop participants.

Children and Families Relaxed Film Screenings

The Gruffalo (U)

- Mansfield Central Library – Sunday 27 September, 11.30am

Tickets £1. Booking advised.

A half-hour animated film based on the classic picture book written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler. A magical tale of a mouse who takes a stroll through the woods. Encountering three predators who all wish to eat him, the plucky mouse has to use his wits to survive.

The Gruffalo's Child (U)

- Mansfield Central Library – Sunday 27 September, 1.30pm

Tickets £1. Booking advised.

Based on the classic children's picture book written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler. It tells the delightful tale of a little Gruffalo who ignores her father's warnings and tiptoes out into the snow in search of the Big Bad Mouse.

Workshop

Ask a Publisher: On Creating Your First Poetry Pamphlet with Amy Acre of Bad Betty Press

- West Bridgford Library – Sunday 27 September, 12.30 – 2.30pm

Tickets £8. Booking advised.

For adults.

Join Bad Betty founding editor, Amy Acre, for a relaxed workshop on how to turn a stash of poems into a pamphlet manuscript ready to send to publishers.

Community Event

John Clare & Me, Two Lives in Poetry and Music

- Southwell Library – Sunday 27 September, 3.30pm

Tickets £7 (refreshments included!).

Booking advised.

For adults.

Not Scary Poetry Society presents an afternoon inspired by the life and work of John Clare, the 'Northamptonshire peasant poet', through poetry and music.

Performance

Leanne Moden at the Retford Library Poetry Café

- Retford Library – Monday 28 September, 2pm

Tickets £3 (refreshments included!).

Booking advised.

For adults. Ages 16+.

A welcoming afternoon in good company awaits at Retford Library's Poetry Café, where guest poet Leanne Moden will celebrate her new collection, *Ophelia of the Bathtub*, with readings inspired by nature, myth and folklore.

Performance

Five Leaves New Poetry: The First Three Years

- West Bridgford Library – Monday 28 September, 6.30pm

Tickets £4. Booking advised.

For adults. (Under 18s to be accompanied by an adult).

In this event we'll be hearing from most of the Five Leaves New Poets, with a combination of published and new material.

Workshop

Into the Everyday: A First-Draft Generating Bootcamp with Georgina Wilding

- Mansfield Central Library – Tuesday 29 September, 2 – 4pm

Tickets £5. Booking essential.

For adults.

Join Georgina for a first-draft generating bootcamp exploring poems of wonder and the everyday. Through playful prompts, shared reading, and guided writing exercises, you'll uncover new ideas and leave with the seeds of new poems beginning to take root.

Workshop

Reading Poems - The Time of Our Lives with Becky Cullen

- West Bridgford Library – Wednesday 30 September, 3pm

Tickets £5. Booking essential.

For adults.

Discover the pleasure of reading poetry together to celebrate the National Year of Reading 2026.

Becky Cullen leads this friendly group session about what makes a poem tick. We'll read the lines and between the lines to explore the point of poetry. No experience is necessary apart from the desire to discover - or rediscover - the pleasure of poems.

Baby-Friendly Reading

A Pause for Poetry with Liz Berry

- West Bridgford Library – Thursday 1 October, 10.30am

Tickets £5. Booking advised.

For parents and carers with their babies.

Bring your baby for a gentle hour of grown-up poetry especially for new parents and carers. Take a moment to slow down and settle in to hear award-winning poet Liz Berry read from her work in a baby-friendly space this National Poetry Day. This

relaxed, baby-friendly event is designed for new parents — with poems for them, rather than nursery rhymes for the little ones!

Film Screening and Talk

Romeo + Juliet (1996) (12) with an Introduction by Andrew Graves

- Southwell Library – Thursday 1 October, 2pm

Tickets £3. Booking advised.

For adults.

Join us on National Poetry Day as poet, film tutor and writer Andrew Graves introduces a special 30th anniversary screening of *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). As well as exploring the creation of Bas Lurhmann's classic adaptation, Andrew will also delve into how Shakespeare's poetry is intertwined into the action both on a thematic and visual level, and look at why this story is still celebrated today in film, theatre and text.

Festival Finale

Cara Thompson: an evening of poetry and heritage in celebration of Caribbean Pioneer Gardeners

- Beeston Library – Thursday 1 October, 7pm

Tickets £5. Booking advised.

For adults. (Under 18s to be accompanied by an adult).

Join us on National Poetry Day for a special festival finale!

Listen to live poetry, including a new poem presented for the first time, from Nottingham City of Literature's Nature Poet Laureate Cara Thompson and the remarkable stories of the green-fingered Windrush generation who helped shape the historic Hungerhill Gardens known today as St. Ann's Allotments.

Beyond the Festival

Event for schools

John Dougherty at Worksop Library – Thursday 8 October.
Fully Booked.

Heritage Talk

History Mystery, The Reason for the Rhyme

- Beeston Library – Wednesday 21 October, 2pm

Tickets £3.50. Booking essential.

For adults.

This talk by Sam Millard looks at the original meaning of rhymes and how they have been recorded over time.