

Winners of the Young Norfolk Writing Competition announced from hundreds of entries

Immediate release

The winners of the Young Norfolk Writing Competition have been announced at a special awards ceremony at the National Centre for Writing (NCW), Dragon Hall. Now in their fourth year the awards attracted hundreds of entries from young people aged 11 – 18 from all over the county.

The award categories were poetry, song lyrics, fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels and scriptwriting and the competition was open to 11 - 18 year olds living or studying in Norfolk.

Hannah Garrard, Learning and Participation Programme Manager, NCW said:

‘Young people in Norfolk are thinking deeply and critically about their place in the world. The standard of writing was exceptional and the diversity across form and genre made reading the pieces hugely enjoyable.’

Lucy Farrant, Director of the Young Norfolk Arts Foundation, which partners on the awards said:

‘The depth and breadth of writing talent was very striking as was the thoughtfulness of the subjects chosen’.

The competition is supported by Norfolk County Council (NCC) and focuses on engaging young people to become more involved with the arts while celebrating the writing talent in the region.

Robert Rickard, 14 – 19 Advisor for NCC, said: ‘The competition is a great collaborative initiative that we are delighted to support each year. Across the UK, writing talent remains hidden among many thousands of young people: we are proud to help many of our young writers express and develop their ability.’

The 2019 Young Norfolk Writing Competition winners are:

Otis Headon (11)

Will Forder (16)

Colette Maxwell-Preston (12)

Deborah McKeown (16)

Taryn Everdeen (17)

Ruben Pope (18)

Mia Sharrock (15)

An additional 13 young writers received commendation and four more were noted as ‘emerging talent winners’. The writers were presented with their prizes and certificates by poet and NHS nurse Piers Harrison-Reid. They also received a mentoring session with Piers earlier in the day to help them get ready for their reading performance. They each received a goody bag of books, notebooks and pens.

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Notes to Editors:

1. For comment and photos contact Alice Kent, Communications Director at alice.kent@writerscentrenorwich.org.uk / 01603 877177

2. The **National Centre for Writing** (NCW) is a place of discovery, exchange, ideas and learning for writers, literary translators and readers. Based in the restored and extended 15th century Dragon Hall in the heart of England's first UNESCO City of Literature, it explores how writing can inspire and change the world we live in. Its year round programme of events, festivals and courses reaches over 14,000 people a year with an additional 110,000 engaged online. Through its learning and participation programme it supports 20,000 young people a year and has a commitment to working with those in the most disadvantaged areas. NCW's patrons include Margaret Atwood, JM Coetzee, Kei Miller and Elif Shafak.
3. Young Norfolk Arts Trust celebrate and support the creativity of all young people in Norfolk, throughout the year, and during the Young Norfolk Arts Festival www.ynaf.org.uk

Excerpt from Baba Black Sheep: Do You Have Any Wool?

Otis Headon, age 11

Dear Baa Baa,

Help! I'm desperate for more wool! Bo Peep has lost her sheep and doesn't know where to find them. She's not even looking for them – REALLY... I can't quite believe she thinks they'll just come home wagging their tails behind them! In the meantime I'm left high and dry with not an ounce of wool! I've got a massive order for jumpers, vests, pants and socks from the old gal that lives in the shoe. If you can't help me goodness knows what I'll do!

From

The Farmer (In the Dell)

Dear Farmer,

No mate, none at all! I was shorn last week when it was chilly, and now I'm looking pretty silly! My skin is hardly covered. You could say I'm bare like Mother Hubbard's cupboard.

My toasty warm wool is now six new mittens. I hope they don't lose them, those forgetful kittens.

Little Miss Muffet made a woolly cushion for her tuffet. Her bot is now comfy, or so I've been told, so at least someone's happy even if I'm freezing cold.

Wee Willie Winkie, the crazy young man, has a new knitted hat from his loving old Gran. So, his noggin should be warm as he dashes about town – upstairs and downstairs in that unseemly nightgown!

Miss Polly made a blanket for her dolly and put her straight to bed – if you ask me the doctor needs glasses if he thinks she's really ill. Perhaps he's the one that needs a pill!

The last of my wool was used to line the boat for the Owl and the Pussy cat as away they float. I pray they don't end their days sinking beneath those briny waves - but if they do, they'll go in style; lying on my woolly pile.

Bluebelt

Will Forder, 16

A dozen blackbirds in the rapids of westerly winds

A robin blowing east towards a blinding sight

Both know where they are going

Neither know quite why

A man walks on a gravel road

Fresh tar seeping into the cracks of his boots

They won't last the winter
Or the day
Or the hour

A little girl draws a bluebell
in the backseat of a car:
accelerating rapidly
across a newly paved ground

The driver looks up at the lonely robin
and the man watches the blackbirds fly by
A paper-thin flower falls
And lands
In amongst a thousand more