

# OPEN CALL

# Words in Public Spaces



*Positive Notes, 2025. Image credit: Anthony Ashley*

Metal



PETERBOROUGH  
CULTURAL  
ALLIANCE



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Words in Public Spaces Artist Commission

**Opening Date:** Thursday 2 April

**Online information session + Q&A:** Tuesday 14 April, 6pm

**Closing Date:** Thursday 23 April, 5pm

**Decision Made:** We aim to make a decision w/c 27 April

**Commission Dates:** Work to be carried out between May and September 2026

**Commission Live Dates:** Early – mid September 2026

**Location:** Peterborough, public spaces

**Commission Fee:** £10,000 (£300 per day)

**Materials and production budget:** £20,000 (managed by Metal)

**Working with:** Metal Peterborough Team

# Overview

Metal is seeking an artist for an exciting commission that will be open to the public in early - mid **September 2026** in Peterborough's **public spaces** as part of Peterborough Culture Alliance's Place Partnership Programme.

The loose theme for this open commission is **the power of words**: how they **bring us together, create confusion, shift perspectives**, and **shape human connection**. From the butterflies in your stomach when you feel love or overwhelming joy to having difficult conversations. The theme is rooted in the different stories, experiences, languages and ways of storytelling in our unique city. It builds on Peterborough's strong and rich poetry scene – Poet Laureate, Young Poet Laureate, Syntax Poetry– and Peterborough residents like John Clare. We welcome work that surprises, balancing playfulness with emotional depth.

We would like an element that **has a legacy beyond the project**. By legacy we mean work that can live beyond the project in a meaningful way, whether through physical, digital or social impact. What that looks like is up to you.

Central to the commission will be involving public invitation, community collaboration and co-creation.

**Existing works that you would like to re-stage or bring to Peterborough are eligible for this commission.**

*We will support access needs from planning to evaluation.*



# The Commission

## What we need from you:

- To spend time settling into the city by researching its communities, legends, current stories, and meeting people. There is a chance to test ideas and have conversations at Peterborough celebrates on 16–17 May;
- Approach to public invitation, community collaboration and co-creation;
- Planning, community collaboration and delivery to create accessible artworks that will be displayed in the city to this brief, timescale and within budget;
- Attend and support the launch in September 2026;
- To support with marketing and press by sharing the fantastic work you get up to as part of the project.

We're looking for proposals that are fun, engaging, and respond to life in Peterborough.

*Hello 2021, Katrina Palmer. Image credit: Mark Massey*



# The Commission

## How we will support you:

- Providing project assistance and support during the commission.
- Brokering and maintaining relationships with partner organisations.
- Support the implementation and installation of the artworks.
- Participation in wider Metal programmes where appropriate.
- Support your research during the project.
- Support in acting as a local producer connecting you with local partners, individuals, artists and organisations across the city.

*FOUR WORDS, Liverpool Provocations, artist Alan Dunn*



# About Metal

**Metal** champions the right for artists and other curious people to explore dreams, follow hunches and inspire positive change. The way we work deeply within communities and on a national and international scale makes us unusual. We currently have sites in Liverpool (since 2004), Peterborough (since 2012) and Southend-on-Sea (since 2007). In the last ten years, we've supported over 11,000 artists, hosted over 110,000 participants and welcomed over 8 million audience members.

Our work is led-by and in response to our local and national contexts.

*As We Gather, 2025. Image credit: Jack Flynn*



# About Peterborough Cultural Alliance

**Peterborough Cultural Alliance** supports the growth of creative culture by investing in people and places – working to enable diverse voices to be heard and supporting everyone to have the chance to take part in meaningful arts and heritage opportunities. As an alliance, we lead and support the delivery of Peterborough’s cultural strategy. We work closely with partners to make sure fairness, inclusion and local relevance are at the heart of the city’s cultural future – so that each person and community, can see themselves in the story we are creating, together. The PCA is Place Partnership programme supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

Partners: Anglia Ruskin University, The Cresset, Eastern Angles, Flag Fen, Jumped-Up Theatre, Gateway Film Festival, Landmark Theatres, Inspire Education Group, Metal, National Literacy Trust, Nene Park Trust, Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Peterborough Cathedral, Peterborough City Council, Peterborough Library Services, Peterborough Museum, Peterborough Music Hub, Peterborough Presents, University Centre Peterborough

# Who is the call out for?

This opportunity is open to socially engaged artists.

We are open to a range of imaginative approaches for the commission, but the final outcome must be an engaging, highly visible work that people in Peterborough can access and interact with.

This opportunity is open to artists across the UK. We particularly encourage applications from people who have a connection to Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, and the surrounding villages.

We're keen for the selected artist/s to represent some of the lived experiences of the groups we're engaging across our wider programmes. Particularly from global majority\*, LGBTQIA+, disabled and/or working-class people.

You are welcome to apply as an individual or collective, if applying as a collective the total fee will be split between you.

*\*What do we mean by Global Majority? By Global Majority, we mean people with African, Caribbean, Latin American or Asian heritage including mixed heritage.*

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Metal is committed to equal opportunities. We value different perspectives and experiences and welcome diversity in all its forms. We particularly encourage applications from global majority, LGBTQIA+, disabled and/or working class people who are underrepresented at Metal – though each of these groups are represented in Metal’s leadership – and in our sector.



Image credit: Laura Kate Chapman's visual minutes of Future Station (2022)

# Access

The Metal team will work with you on an access document before the commission begins to try to remove any barriers to fully participating in the programme. Please get in touch if you have any questions.

*What's Possible When Things Go Wrong, 2024. Image credit: Metal Peterborough*



# How do I apply?

You can apply by filling in the call out form by **Thursday 23 April 2026 at 5pm.**

You access the form by [clicking here](#).

Alternatively, you can submit an audio or video application, answering the below questions. Please email these files to [chauffeurscottage@metalculture.com](mailto:chauffeurscottage@metalculture.com) with the subject heading 'Words in Public Spaces Application' before the closing date.

In the application are 5 sections:

- Tell us about you and your artistic practice (Please include your artist bio, let us know where we can see your work/projects and give a brief summary of anything that might be relevant to this commission including any connection to Peterborough you already have) – 200-400 words maximum or 5 minutes maximum.
- Tell us about your idea (include what audiences will encounter, kinds of locations you want to use, topline budget and what the legacy is) – 200-400 words maximum or 5 minutes maximum.
- Who will you work with and how? (communities, partners, collaborators) – 200 words maximum or 2 minutes maximum.
- Please share examples of your previous work (maximum 5 examples)

# How do I apply?

**You do not have to meet the maximum word count. It is designed to give you the space you need to share information.**

While there's a production budget, please feel free to dream and imagine at this stage.

Please also upload a completed [equal opportunities monitoring form](#). If you would like to apply in a different format that meets your access requirements better, please contact us.

*Peterborough Pride, 2021. Image credit: Jess Lund*



# Contact us

Curious to know more about the call out? We'll be hosting an online information session soon. Stay tuned across our socials and website for exact details.

If you have any queries or would like a chat with us before applying, please contact us using the details below:

Phone: 01733 893077

Email: [Chauffeurscottage@metalculture.com](mailto:Chauffeurscottage@metalculture.com)

# Application Feedback

Metal has a small team, but we appreciate that making an application takes work, time and energy so we always try to give short feedback where it is wanted.

*Dreamspace, 2025. Image credit: Metal Peterborough*

