

Visit  
**Herefordshire**  
*Awards for Excellence 2017*  
**Winner**

Winner Best Community Festival

RECEIVED  
21 JAN 2020



The Master's House  
Ledbury, HR8 1EA  
01531 634156

Mayor Phillip Howell  
Ledbury Town Council  
Church Street  
Ledbury HR8 1DH

20<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Dear Phillip

I am writing to the Town Council on behalf of the Ledbury Poetry Festival with a request that we hope you might consider. The Festival is now well established nationally and internationally and is arguably the biggest of its type in the country, and we hope you would agree that the Festival last year was vibrant, engaging and accessible as ever.

Audiences were able to uncover genuine surprises as well as to experience well-established poets and writers. We are particularly proud of our growing international links, our closer cooperation with small publishers and our developing and potential working partnerships in the county and beyond.

High profile events included two exclusive appearances from Canadian novelist and poet, Margaret Atwood and her visit to John Masefield High School where she read some of her poems and answered 30 students' questions on her writing, including *The Handmaid's Tale*. Afterwards she stayed for a further hour signing books and having selfies taken with students. This visit was covered by BBC Hereford and Worcester and the Ledbury Reporter.

The year-round Community Programme is a thriving and vibrant part of the Festival's work and is touching many hundreds of lives, and the Schools' Programme reaches over 2,500 students; 28 schools participated in at least one activity and many schools participated in more than 2 different activities.

All the above is well and good, however, despite our best efforts, visitors often remark that our visual presence is limited and fails to get across the communal energy and commitment that lies behind our project. In the past this was not a problem as we could rig a banner across the High Street before stricter guidelines came in. I have approached you before about the possibility of using the brackets on the High Street for our banner but was told that this was not possible for insurance reasons.

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Would you consider an alternative? For example, the windows on the south side of the Market House could offer a safe anchor for a banner without any damage to the structure. I realize this would set a precedent for an iconic building, but the Town Council could agree to specifically allow only 2 or 3 of the larger community groups access to this each year (eg the Carnival) on the understanding that the banner only goes up one week before the event and must be removed the day after. I would be happy to meet and show you exactly what we propose.

Thank you for your time, and your support.

Yours

Peter Arscott  
Trustee LPF



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