



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

THREE DESIGNERS SHORTLISTED TO CREATE JOHN MASEFIELD MEMORIAL IN LEDBURY

For immediate release

Ledbury, Herefordshire – September 2026

Following an open call for expressions of Interest, three designers have been shortlisted to develop proposals for a new memorial to Ledbury-born poet and writer **John Masefield**, as part of the Masefield Matters project funded by **The National Lottery Heritage Fund**.

The project received **18 submissions from designers and makers** interested in creating a literary or walking trail celebrating Masefield's life, work and connections to Ledbury.

Members of the **Masefield Matters Core Consultation Group**, made up of Ledbury residents and representatives from local organisations, met with independent consultants to review the expressions of interest against the project's agreed criteria. Following this process, three designers were shortlisted, with their selection subsequently approved by the **Masefield Matters Board and Ledbury Town Council**.

The three shortlisted designers are:

- **Joseph Hillier**
- **Kevin Killen**
- **Platform One - Creative agency**

The shortlisted designers will now be invited to develop their initial ideas further and produce detailed proposals for their vision for a Masefield memorial trail in Ledbury. The commission will have a total value of **£65,000 (excluding VAT)** and will include the design, materials, production, transport, installation and associated costs of the completed memorial.

The design should incorporate a donor recognition element that can be sponsored by the public in small units. This could be a 'friends of the trail' commemorative plaque/stone/brick.

The successful proposal will create a lasting memorial to John Masefield while introducing his work to new generations. The project is particularly focused on ensuring that local people are at the heart of the process and that the final trail reflects the things that mattered to Masefield — including **people and place, the countryside and the sea, and his experiences of seafaring life.**

The memorial is being developed in advance of the **150th anniversary of John Masefield's birth in Ledbury in 2028**. The anniversary provides an important opportunity to rediscover Masefield's extraordinary life and work and to celebrate his place in Ledbury's heritage.

The three shortlisted designers' proposals will be shared with the community as part of an exhibition at *The Long Trick* performances on 6th and 7th November 2026 at The Market Theatre, Ledbury.

This will give local people an opportunity to see the different approaches to the memorial and have their say before the final commission is awarded.

The project team is looking for a design that is **inclusive, accessible, environmentally responsible and sustainable**, while being sensitive to Ledbury's historic character and conservation area. The finished trail should encourage people to explore the town, discover Masefield's words and life, and spark conversations about his work for generations to come.

Quote – Justine Peberdy, Chair of Masefield Matters Board

"We are delighted to have reached this exciting stage of the Masefield Matters project. Receiving 18 expressions of interest demonstrates the level of creative interest in telling John Masefield's story in a new and engaging way. The Core Consultation Group played an important role in reviewing the submissions, ensuring that the voice of Ledbury's community was central to the shortlisting process. Platform One, Joseph Hillier and Kevin Killen each bring a distinctive approach and experience, and we are looking forward to seeing how they respond to the opportunity. This is not simply about creating a memorial to a famous local figure — it is about reconnecting Ledbury with one of its most significant sons and making his words and legacy accessible to people who may never have encountered his work before."

The final memorial is expected to be installed in Ledbury by **April 2028**, ahead of the formal opening planned for **3 June 2028**. "The opening will form part of the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of John Masefield's birth on 1 June 1878."

The Masefield Matters project is supported by National Lottery players and **The National Lottery Heritage Fund**.

ENDS

Notes to editors

About Masefield Matters

Masefield Matters is a community-led project celebrating the life and legacy of John Masefield, who was born in Ledbury in 1878 and went on to become one of Britain's best-known poets and writers, serving as Poet Laureate from 1930 until his death in 1967.

The project aims to reconnect the people of Ledbury with Masefield and his work through a programme of activities exploring the subjects and places that mattered to him. This engagement is informing the development of a permanent memorial in the form of a literary or walking trail through Ledbury.

The project is funded by **The National Lottery Heritage Fund**.

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About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

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