

National Year of Reading - Creative Commissions 2026

At a glance - we're looking for:

- **A Writer / Poet in Residence** to celebrate the National Year of Reading
- An artist/s to submit an idea for a Creative Micro Commission at **Cudworth Library**
- An artist/s to submit an idea for a **Green Libraries Commission** at any one of the branch libraries

Application deadline: **Monday 13 April 2026**

Barnsley Libraries are looking for writers / poets / artists with a connection to Barnsley or the surrounding area to submit an idea for a series of creative commissions to be held across Barnsley Libraries, celebrating the National Year of Reading.

We are interested in hearing from people who are open to their projects bring shaped through engagement with library staff, library customers and communities.

The Commissions are an opportunity to celebrate Barnsley and its communities and showcase your creative practice. You could be an early career artist looking for that first platform or maybe you're someone who is already established, we'd love to hear from everyone.





What you'll do

- Submit a proposal for a creative project, exhibition, series of workshops or other idea celebrating the National Year of Reading.
- Engage with the community in some way, the audience and area of the borough can be explained in your proposal or decided upon together with the libraries team.
- Deliver and complete activity to a timeline agreed with Barnsley Libraries, with the Green Libraries commission holding a celebration during Green Libraries Week (early November).
- Collaborate with the Barnsley Libraries team to devise a suitable method of evaluation for the project, this will include a meeting at the end of the project which can be held virtually.
- Complete an artist evaluation survey at the end of the project to let us know how we can improve our commission process for artists.

What we'll do

- Meet regularly to check in and support you with your project.
- Support the project with room bookings, logistics and marketing.
- Support you in contacting existing groups if needed for your project.
- Collaborate in the evaluation process (we already have some methods of evaluation, but we are interested to hear any creative evaluation method you may have).

Commission budgets:

Writer / Poet in Residence - £6,000

Green Libraries Commission - £3,000

Cudworth Library Micro Commission - £2,000

Commissions are inclusive of planning, materials, workshops, expenses, evaluation and exclusive of VAT.

How to apply

To apply please send a project proposal to barnsleylibrariesnpo@barnsley.gov.uk by **Monday 13 April at 9am.**

Project proposals can be sent in any format, such as a 2-minute video or a side of A4.

Proposals should contain the following:

- An overview of your idea including:
 - Which Commission you are applying for - In Residence / Cudworth or Green Libraries
 - What form your project will take and what outcomes you would like to achieve
 - How long you'll be working in Barnsley and how the project will engage and excite the community or library customers
 - How your proposal will celebrate the National Year of Reading, and what an end of project celebration could look like
 - How your project is accessible and inclusive
 - For the Green Libraries commission specifically - how will your project engage the community to think and act positively for the climate
 - How you will work with us to evaluate the project
- A simple budget breakdown, including a day rate and amount of days delivery
- A short CV with a link to your website or images of your work
- Confirmation you hold public liability insurance with a minimum level of cover of £5m
- An example of previous work in a similar context, if applicable

Accessibility is important to us. If we can help you to apply, please get in touch.

If you have any questions or would like an informal chat before submitting your application, please contact barnsleylibrariesnpo@barnsley.gov.uk



Details and Next Steps

The team will score your commission with a selection of community representatives, based on the content of your proposal against the points we have asked you to include above.

We will also be guided by the Arts Council England's investment principles:

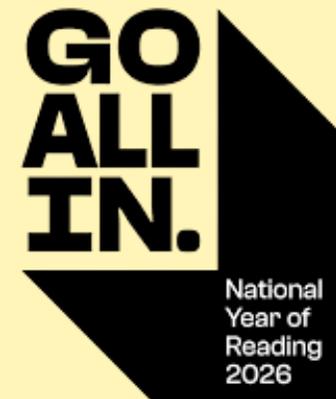
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy____-2020-2030/investment-principles

You can apply for more than one of these commissions, but please send in separate applications.

If you have been successful in the past with a funding application to Barnsley Libraries NPO, you may still apply, but your application should demonstrate a clear development or new direction in your work.

We aim to respond to all applications by **Friday 30 April 2026**.

We look forward to hearing from you!



Lets Create: www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create

Barnsley Libraries became an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation in 2023, with funding secured to bring a whole range of exciting arts and cultural activities to Libraries across the borough.



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