

NORWICH

UK CITY OF CULTURE 2013

Press release Thursday 15th July 2010

Norwich to host its own 2013 celebrations!

Norwich is already a city of culture and the city council and leading arts and cultural organisations are heralding a new era of collaborative working thanks to the bid.

And the city can announce that some of the creative ideas that were included in the bid and helped get us into the 'fantastic four' cultural cities will still happen in the run-up to and during 2013.

- To mark the start of the year of the UK City of Culture we will release 2,103 paper lanterns into the skies each containing the hopes and wishes of a Norwich resident – a Norfolk & Norwich Festival event.
- We will work with the Britten Sinfonia and Norwich Theatre Royal on a 'Festival of Britten' to celebrate Benjamin Britten's centenary in 2013.
- Hundreds of young people will take part in a volunteer-led mass literacy project based on creative writing, led by the Writers' Centre Norwich.
- A 1,000-strong choir will perform at Norwich City's Carrow Road stadium in a mass community event.
- We hope to get a youth orchestra from Venezuela to Norwich as part of the El Sistema/In Harmony Project.
- A new consortium that will bring together community-focused organisations such as The Garage, Future Projects and Norfolk & Norwich Community Arts (NORCA) to develop the arts by bidding for funding.
- We will also be looking to work with the other three cities and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to see how we bring even more resources for culture into Norwich.

From 29 candidate places, Norwich was one of four finalists – along with Birmingham, Sheffield and Derry-Londonderry – and a result it has increased

its national profile, showcased its outstanding artistic talent and brought arts and cultural groups even closer together.

Despite the disappointment of not being named UK City of Culture 2013, the national competition has delivered huge benefits and will be used to market the city as an attractive place to live, set up businesses and visit.

Tourism will be more important than ever in an increasingly difficult economic climate and efforts will be stepped up to proactively promote the city as a place to take a culture-filled break.

The positive experience of the competition will also be used to help shape how the city develops cultural activities over the next 10 years.

Councillor Steve Morphew, leader of the city council, said: "Norwich is already a fine city of culture and people should feel immensely proud of how it is perceived. We always said this was a 'win-win' for Norwich and we are already seeing more visitors coming to the city, something we need to capitalise on in the current financial climate.

"I would like to thank everyone in the city who supported us and got behind our bid and urge them to keep promoting Norwich as a wonderful cultural city."

Jonathan Holloway, director of the Norfolk & Norwich Festival, said: "Armed with a set of extraordinary ideas, partnerships, collective vision, public energy and political will, we have everything but the name, UK City of Culture 2013.

"Of course, it's sad that we didn't win the title, but since it wouldn't have come with funding attached, we can celebrate what the bidding process has already delivered: a newly unlocked appetite for year-round culture, proof of the value of cultural activity to the local economy and a new collective energy, passion and confidence in our unique identity and potential that has permeated right across the city.

"Our job now is to mobilise the thousands of cultural institutions, businesses and people from across the world who believe that Norwich is already a city of culture and do it anyway!"

Peter Wilson, chief executive of Theatre Royal Norwich, said: "I congratulate those who constructed the bid and hope they'll take heart from this close call. Let's find a new way to tell Norwich's story."

Ian Johnson principal of Access to Music Norwich said: "We always saw this as a win for Norwich whatever the outcome. Let's have our own culture year to celebrate Norwich and its communities."

For more information, contact Richard Balls in Norwich on Thursday on 07920 450864 or Nikki Rotsos in Liverpool on Thursday and Friday on 07778 474857.

