



## **Open Call for Bloomsbury Festival 2026**

### ***2026 Theme: Create and Celebrate***

In 2026, Bloomsbury Festival is planning a month-long festival from 1-31 October, to celebrate the festival's 20th anniversary.

We invite you to submit plans for your own events, exhibitions and activities for 2026 to be considered for inclusion in the festival. We welcome **'Partner Event'** applications from current and new creative partners.

We aim to programme around 100 creative events and exhibitions of which the majority will be **'Partner Events'** - events you propose. These showcase the cultural offer of Bloomsbury from many disciplines and from all parts of our unique inner-city community, including from residents, creatives and institutions. Please note proposed festival events should have some connection with Bloomsbury or the surrounding area and we cannot offer funding. The support we give is in matching events with venues and with marketing, publicity and box office.

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## **The Offer**

You propose your own festival event or exhibition for 2026, for which you are responsible for all funding and production, responding to our theme **Create and Celebrate** via our [online application form](#).

**Please note: Open Call for proposals will be open from until Friday 20 March 2026 at 5pm.**

**The festival supports your event with marketing and ticketing** and If you do not have a venue we will aim to match you with a suitable space in Bloomsbury. You will be asked about this on the form. Please note we have no funds to commission or financially support Partner Events.

Following your submission a member of the Festival Team will be in touch to discuss your proposal further to assist in the final selection of the 2026 programme.

If the team believes that your proposal is appropriate and practical for the 2026 festival, we will confirm your proposal's selection and introduce you to your festival lead contact. If the festival team feels an event does not fit within the festival programme, we reserve the right to not proceed with your proposal. We cannot guarantee to take all proposed events into the programme.

**Please note: selection of the 2026 festival programme can take up to a month to confirm. We aim to notify all proposal applicants by the end of April.**

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## **Application Process - Details**

**Submit your proposal on this form: [online Proposal Form](#) by 5pm on Friday 20 March**

You can preview the questions the form asks on the [Questions](#) document but you cannot respond via the Questions document. (Please email [director@bloomsburyfestival.org.uk](mailto:director@bloomsburyfestival.org.uk) if you require support completing the form or require a word version of the proposal form).

### **Reflect the 2026 Theme *Create and Celebrate***

In 2026 we invite new and existing partners to *Create and Celebrate* with us to mark 20 years of Bloomsbury Festival.

We hope you will feel inspired by this theme and we welcome broad interpretations of *Create and Celebrate*. We invite you to propose an event to help mark this anniversary occasion.

We welcome partners old and new - You may be a new festival partner, or have previously been involved with Bloomsbury Festival during our 20 year history and wish to return.

### **Venue and Production Categories**

All Open Call Partner Events will fall under 1 of 4 categories.

- 1. Events with Own Venue & Technical Support, Individual Talks, Walks**
- 2. Events that require a Venue but no Technical Support**
- 3. Events that require a Venue and Festival/Venue Technical Support and Kit**
- 4. Festival Produced Discovery Hub**

For events requiring anything beyond basic technical support (either in equipment or staffing) a technical charge will be payable by Partners towards these production costs. This does not apply to individual speakers/talks/walks/acoustic performances (i.e. low-no tech events), but may be needed for theatre, music or other complex productions.

Technical charges can start from £250 and reflect actual costs of the technical support.

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**Please submit your [Proposal Form](#) by  
5pm on Friday 20 March 2026**

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## **Proposal Form Questions**

The Proposal Form will ask for the following information for all submitted proposals.

- Main contact details
- The Partner's connection to Bloomsbury or the surrounding area
- The Partner's category selection
- Event/exhibition details
  - Type of event (music, theatre, exhibition, talk, walk, etc.)
  - A working title
  - How the event/exhibition links to the 2026 theme of *Create and Celebrate*
  - Description of what would be involved in your event (please be clear about the format your event will take - e.g. a dance piece with poetry, a one-person theatre production, a talk with powerpoint, etc.)
  - Would you expect this event to be ticketed or free-turn up or undecided
  - Intended audience (e.g. adult theatre audience, local community, classical music etc) and how you plan to reach them with marketing
- Venue details (whether this is supplied by the Partner or the festival)

- Technical details - (what level of technical support the event/exhibition will require from the festival, including an outline of the equipment or technical kit if festival support is required)
- Any supporting documents, audio or video. Please note for theatre productions, we strongly advise sending video or audio of your production proposal or of previous work.

For a full list of the questions please see a copy of the Proposal Form questions [here](#).

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## **Further Details**

Please be aware that we are a local festival for the Bloomsbury area, we ask that everyone who puts forward a proposal has some connection to Bloomsbury or its immediate surrounding area. This can include; content themes, connections to the people, places or organisations, a personal connection/relationship to Bloomsbury, as well as having a past interaction with Bloomsbury Festival. All are acceptable!

### **What are Partner Events:**

- Events produced and presented by artists, theatre companies, performers, writers, institutions, scientists, walks leaders and organisations.
- The festival does not offer commissions or fees for Partner Events but we do offer a 50/50 net box-office share where applicable.
- We manage the box office and we steward events (apart from category 1 events where existing Bloomsbury venues stage their own partner events in their own venue with their own box office support).
- We match-make proposals with venues where necessary and liaise with the venues about technical support and basic technical requirements.
- Events are usually ticketed by the festival and can be free or paid-for tickets. We usually recommend free events are not ticketed but this can be discussed.
- Please note that we have a range of sponsors and may discuss attributing one of the festival's sponsors to particular festival events.

### **Why Partner with Bloomsbury Festival:**

- Share in the community spirit of the festival.
- Showcase creative and cultural work you are creating.
- Engage local residents and audiences.
- Be inspired by the theme and respond with events, walks, talks and tours.
- Offer opportunities to showcase work of emerging and established artists.

- Offer opportunities to performers and audiences from diverse backgrounds.
- Offer opportunities with physical, neurodiverse or other access needs, including sight and hearing loss.
- Reach wider audiences for creative, cultural and scientific work already planned.

**What the festival offers to Partner events:**

- Where the Partner organisation or individual does not already have a venue for their event we aim to match up the event with a suitable Bloomsbury venue (indoors or outdoors).
- We provide Marketing for all events - and Ticketing for the majority of events - including the distribution of a printed and online brochure, email newsletters, and web-based ticketing supported by ticket sales at events.
- Where events have paid tickets (i.e. not free to the public) we offer the Partner a Net 50:50 box office share. Before we split the profit we have to remove 20% VAT and any mandatory charges for box office systems. The 50:50 split includes events that wish to donate their share of the income to charity (noting that Bloomsbury Festival is also a charity)
- We provide general production advice.
- We have PR and marketing support for all events and the festival overall.
- We offer some basic technical support for talks, New Wave and Discovery Hub events, but we are unable to hire-in of technical kit or supply technician support without charge - this will particularly apply to theatre and amplified music events, but also to exhibitions.
- We steward events and manage the box office at the events where required.

**What we can supply at a cost to the Partner:**

- Additional technical support for productions such as sound, lighting, projection and video can be organised for events. The Partner will need to cover the costs of the provision of any technical equipment, operators, or a Venue's Technical Team, should this be required. This will likely apply to Open Call theatre productions, performances, some music events, and complex talks. If you are unsure whether this applies to your event, please contact the Festival Director at [director@bloomsburyfestival.org.uk](mailto:director@bloomsburyfestival.org.uk) to discuss.
- We can supply web-streaming crews for events. The Partner will need to pay for the crew but the festival technical team can make the arrangements.

## **Deadlines and Timelines**

**Friday 20 March 5pm Deadline-** Submission now open for Open Call proposals to be considered for the 2026 Bloomsbury Festival programme.

**April** - A member of the festival team will be in touch to discuss your proposal further and will update you about your proposal's status. Final programme decisions are made by the team and final decisions are shared with applicants.

**May** - If your proposal is selected for the 2026 programme Partners will be sent a Marketing Information form to gather marketing text and high quality publicity photos.

**June** - The festival team creates the printed brochure (which is also published online) and Partners will be sent a draft page of their event entry. It is extremely important that Partners approve their draft page(s) in the time given.

**Mid July** - Festival Programme Online Launch, announcing the 2026 programme and events go live on our website.

**July to October** - Working with the festival team to market events through the festival's channels as well as Partners' own marketing. Including; Local, institutional and PR contacts, newsletters, social media channels, etc.

**End August/First Week September** - Printed brochures available.

**Second Week September** - Partner Drop In Event: Programme Partners can drop in to discuss any questions they may have with the festival team.

**September to early October** - Partners finalise production of their events.

**During the Festival** - Partners present a full event as described in the brochure with performers, guides, exhibition, etc. as agreed.

**Post-festival (November)** - Festival finalises Box Office income and Partners invoice agreed share to festival. Festival photographs usually take a few weeks to process and become available mid-November, when available the festival will share with Partners any relevant images or video of your event.

## **FAQs**

**Can I apply?** If you are unsure, we encourage individuals and organisations who work, study, or live in Bloomsbury to contact us to discuss possible projects for inclusion on the festival programme. The festival includes arts, literature, science, walks, tours, academic public engagement projects, and other work that seeks an audience. If you would like advice before filling in the proposal form please email [director@bloombsburyfestival.org.uk](mailto:director@bloombsburyfestival.org.uk) and one of the team will respond.

**Are there any specific criteria?** Projects need to be of a high quality, engaging for general audiences, and to sit within the context of the festival theme. You must be able to fund any production you propose and provide all technical requirements.

**What sort of work are you interested in?** The festival aspires to be entertaining, stimulating, educative, interesting, and exploratory. Bloomsbury Festival is a platform for ideas and creativity, providing the opportunity to test out a radical idea or an unusual collaboration, alongside a polished performance.

**Where will my project be presented?** We have partner venues indoors and outdoors across Bloomsbury. We aim to find a suitable venue for events in the programme.

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## **SOME PRACTICALITIES**

### **Finances:**

- Where events have paid tickets we offer Partners a 50:50 Box Office NET split deal (the split is calculated after ticketing and any other box office fees e.g. box office system fee, izettle/Stripe and 20% VAT). Please note this split is required even if the Partner wishes to offer their share of proceeds to a charity (the festival is a charity itself).
- We do not commission events or pay fees to Partners.
- If an event requires technical production support from the festival, Partners will be asked to pay a production fee to the festival to cover any production costs related to the event (minimum £250 and further charges depending on requirements). A provisional quote can be provided on request - please contact the Festival Director at [director@bloombsburyfestival.org.uk](mailto:director@bloombsburyfestival.org.uk) to discuss further. The initial payment will be required prior to inclusion in the programme (ie in Spring/Early Summer 2026 once participation is confirmed with any additional costs payable by the time of the festival).

**Venue and Technical:**

- The festival works with various venues throughout Bloomsbury which offer a range of production opportunities and technical support. The Team will aim to match events to a suitable venue and can also source additional technical support following discussions and agreement on costs.
- We have some theatre and gallery spaces, but much of the programme is presented in non-traditional spaces in interesting Bloomsbury buildings.
- Additional technical support for productions can be arranged. If you are unsure whether this applies to your event, please contact the Festival Director at [director@bloombsburyfestival.org.uk](mailto:director@bloombsburyfestival.org.uk) to discuss.

**Marketing:**

- The festival team markets the festival as a whole online, in print, social media, and press.
- Partners are responsible for promoting their own event with support from the Festival Marketing Team.
- At the time of the festival in October photographs and videos will be taken by festival staff but we cannot guarantee to photograph all events. Partners agree that the festival may take photographs and film events for the purpose of future publicity, marketing and reporting.
- The festival team will share media (eg photos) with the Partner after the festival.

**Licensing, Health and Safety and Legal matters:**

- All events must have risk assessments and insurance and be prepared to report music details to the festival or venue for PRS. The festival covers a PRS licence for all events which are not covered by a regular venue licence. We can help in these matters and please discuss these at an early stage with the festival team.

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5pm on Friday 20 March**

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