Apply Now

Freelance Writer and Editor

BOOKMARKED: Thirsk 2026

Deadline: 5pm, Sunday 15th of November, 2026

Where: Hybrid working and at The Ritz Cinema in Thirsk

Total Fee: £3,000 Artist Fee and £1,000 for materials

Rural Arts

YORK & NORTH YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY | DAVID SKAITH MAYOR

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Opportunity: Freelance Writer and Editor
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Project Overview:
Bookmarked: Thirsk is a year-long programme of cultural events, creative workshops, performances and community-led experiences designed to animate Thirsk High Street, increase footfall, and strengthen connections between local people, businesses and cultural organisations. Building on the proven success of Thirsk Bookmarked 2025, this expanded programme embeds culture into the everyday life of the town throughout 2026 and aligns with the National Year of Reading 2026, positioning Thirsk as a welcoming, distinctive and vibrant market town.

The project will deliver a flagship launch festival followed by a sustained programme of visible, accessible cultural activity hosted directly within high-street businesses and community venues. Activities will include author talks, storytelling, expressive writing, visual art workshops, pop-up exhibitions and performances. All activity will be co-produced and programmed with residents, local businesses and community groups to ensure relevance, local ownership and direct economic benefit, supporting increased dwell time and repeat
visits to the town centre.

A central outcome of Bookmarked: Thirsk is the co-creation of an arts trail and community-designed town signage concept. Professional artists will work with diverse groups, including older residents, young people, carers, people living with dementia and those experiencing social isolation, to create artworks reflecting lived experience of the town.

These will form a temporary arts trail across the High Street, encouraging exploration of the town centre, supporting independent businesses and acting as a testbed for placemaking and wayfinding ideas. Learning from this pilot will inform the development of a permanent signage and identity scheme beyond the funding period.

Alongside creative delivery, the project will support High Street resilience through business and website accessibility audits, helping local businesses become more inclusive, improve visibility, and enhance the visitor experience. This practical support will help remove barriers to access, broaden customer bases and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the High Street.

Role Overview:

The Ritz Cinema is a real little survivor. Its story goes back to Victorian times, and it has been part of local life for more than a century. It is regarded as one of Britain's oldest continuously operating cinemas and today it is ran by a group of dedicated volunteers.

The Ritz Cinema are looking for a Writer / Editor to:

- Work closely with groups relating to the history and knowledge of cinema in Thirsk and at The Ritz. These may include: The volunteers past and present, The Archives in Northallerton and the National Archives, to write stories and exerts for a book based around 'The History of Cinema in Thirsk'.
- To add in photographs that will support stories and the history of The Ritz and Cinema in Thirsk.
- To give advice on topics and themes for the book
- To collaborate with the groups who know the cinema the most
- To create multiple soft copies of the finished book. Using 50% of the materials budget (£500) These books will then be available on the Art Trail for free or for a suggested donation to The Ritz. Any outstanding books will be given to The Ritz.
- The Artist will give The Ritz the finished assets of the book so it can be re-printed and sold in The Ritz for years to come.

The Artist must feel comfortable working digitally

Once this work is created we would like the Artist to:

- Collaborate with the other 4 Artists in Residences who will have worked at Rural Arts, Thirsk Community Library and the James Herriot Museum and White Rose Book Cafe, to create an Art Trail for the final event weekend of Bookmarked in April 2027, combining all learnings from the different residencies. This will take into account the thoughts and ideas from the various Groups that have accessed during these residencies, to then bring it to life to the rest of the Community at the Art Trail. The other 50% (£500) of the materials budget will be used for this artwork, which will permanently displayed in Thirsk.

Project Timeline

- To meet with the board at The Ritz to understand what exactly they want to achieve in the book and to visit The Ritz / area to get a feel for the community in November 2026.
- To organise the steering groups to be part of this book with the support of The Ritz and Rural Arts.
- To facilitate creative sessions around writing for the steering groups and to deliver these by the end of January 2027.
- To finalise the book by the end of March 2027
- To work with other assigned Artist in Residences during February and March to bring the work together for an Art Trail in April 2027, with support from Rural Arts.

Fee

- 15 freelance days @£200 per day
- 3 days of development and prep
- 6 days of delivery - onsite and hybrid
- 6 days of making

Total fee: £3,000

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Material Budget

- There will be an assigned budget of £1,000 but that is to cover the work with the specific partner (in this case - The Ritz) and for the Art Trail in April 2027

Location

Thirsk and Hybrid, dependent on the phase of delivery / making

Specific dates can be organised with The Ritz and the Artist, once appointed.

Who We're Looking For:

We'd love to hear from freelancers who:

- Have a strong, distinctive artistic voice and portfolio
- Is experienced in working with communities or in co-creative processes
- Can work sensitively with participant-led and community-generated content.
- Have excellent communication and organisational skills.
- Are enthusiastic about championing creative and community-focused projects.

How to Apply

Please send the following to recruitment@ruralarts.org **by 5pm on Sunday 15th of November 2026:**

- A short statement (maximum 400 words) outlining your approach to this brief and describing a similar project you have successfully delivered.
- Examples of previous work, including books / abstracts written. This can be:
  - Writing from some books that you have created or been part of
  - links to your portfolio,
  - your website,
  - and/or social media accounts showcasing your work.

Alternatively, you may submit a video application (maximum 5 minutes) covering the same information.

What's Next

Applicants will be notified by **Monday 16th of November.** Informal conversations will take place between **Tuesday 17th and Friday 20th of November,** with a final decision made by the end of the day on Friday.

We appreciate the short turnaround and are not expecting lengthy applications, we're looking for a clear sense of your experience, creativity and approach.

Please ensure you complete the Equal Opportunities form before submitting your application.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the opportunity, please contact the team via, recruitment@ruralarts.org.

Thank you.

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