



June 2015

## The Basingstoke Festival celebrates and surprises.. *Friday 19 June - Sunday 12 July*

- Find out if you can survive the apocalypse, meet the human slinky, carve the perfect vegetable, visit the world in a day and enjoy all kinds of music, dance, theatre, comedy, circus and craft!

It's Carnival time! And the town and open spaces of Basingstoke and its surrounding villages are hosting nearly a month of activities and entertainment as part of its vibrant arts and cultural programme. Described as '*world class but with strong local roots and connections*' the Basingstoke Festival is now into its 4<sup>th</sup> year and warmly welcomes everyone – visitors and local residents alike – to join in its celebration of the very best in arts, entertainment – and food!.

Starting with a colourful and spectacular **Carnival Parade**, the Festival continues with music, outdoor performances and street theatre, a **World Party**, **Family Sunday** and finishes with the ever-popular live music event **Basingstoke Live!** In between there are **workshops** and **taster sessions** teaching new skills (ever wanted to play the ukulele like a pro, properly learn to tell a joke or even to carve fruit and vegetables?), festivals-within-a festival celebrating **cheese and chilli**, **scarecrows and live music** and special days and weekends devoted to **World arts, craft and food**, the finest **street artists and buskers (Top Hat Sunday)** and even **Sylvanian Families!**

There are **exhibitions** and **installations**, **Bollywood dance**, a **Market in the Park**, colourful **Art Trail**, lots of **comedy**, **circus** and much, much more. Many events are free. And as if that's not enough there are big names, like Russell Watson and Elvis Costello, Suzanne Vega and stand-up comedian Katherine Ryan.

Contrary to what you might think, Basingstoke's year-round quality arts scene is one to be proud of, and it's growing all the time. During Festival time, the town's streets, squares and gardens, outlying rural villages, arts venues and community centres host a range of fabulous events and activities. In recognition of how far this up-and-coming Festival's come in just a few years the council is delighted this year to receive Arts Council funding.

Cllr Cathy Osselton, the Cabinet Member responsible for the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council-run festival said: *'The Basingstoke Festival demonstrates the council's commitment to creating an area that is an attractive place to live, work and visit. It also brings people together in celebration and showcases the year-round work of the area's vast and diverse pool of creative talent. The Festival is an opportunity to experience not only local but national and international arts of all kinds and it highlights the area's rich history, top-quality facilities, outstanding green spaces and beautiful rural surrounds.'*

Kick-starting the Festival is a glorious new – and free - carnival parade from 5pm on 19 June with music, dancing and colourful costumes created with the expertise of the internationally acclaimed outdoor arts company Emergency Exit Arts. For information on the full programme visit **[www.basingstokefestival.co.uk](http://www.basingstokefestival.co.uk)** or follow the festival on Twitter **@BstokeFestival**, Facebook **Basingstokefestival** and on Instagram **#Bstokefestival**

#### ***Ends***

***For further information, interviews and photographs contact Rachel Shimell on 023 80 732981, or email: [rachel.shimell@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.shimell@gmail.com) or the communications team at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on 01256 845220.***

#### **Notes to Editors:**

**Basingstoke Festival** is a mixed-arts festival, run over the summer months of June and July in the Basingstoke and Deane borough of Hampshire, England. Established in 2012 the festival forms part of the council's strategy to promote the borough by showcasing its arts and cultural organisations alongside the wealth of community groups engaged in a broad range of cultural pursuits. The festival also highlights some of the unique borough locations highlighting its history, cultural facilities and its outstanding green spaces. Since the festival commenced it has included around 100 events in over 30 venues with over 40 organisations involved, reaching an audience of over 160,000 people. The festival has included: theatre, orchestras, choirs, dance, multicultural parades, rock festivals, film exhibitions, book readings, art installations and more.



*Basingstoke  
and Deane*



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