



For Immediate Release

Issued By: Visitbath & Bath International Comedy Festival Partnership

## **ARTS COUNCIL GRANT TO PUT BATH COMEDY FESTIVAL ON THE MAP**

A partnership formed by Bath Comedy Festival and VisitBath has been given £15,000 by the Arts Council England Grants for the Arts scheme to help create a sustainable marketing strategy that will enable the Comedy Festival to considerably increase its profile, reach much wider audiences and thus become a major annual fixture on the city's cultural calendar.

Bath International Comedy Festival, now approaching its 9<sup>th</sup> year, has entered a creative partnership with VisitBath in order to build the festival into a major annual feature on the city's cultural calendar, appealing to residents and visitors alike.

VisitBath is the official tourism body in the city of Bath and the surrounding areas. Bath Comedy Festival will be working alongside VisitBath to promote the festival both locally and nationally across all channels.

Banners and street decorations will create a festival atmosphere, further enhanced by an on-street ticket booth in a key location.

The festival's programme will be redesigned, the website updated and the possibility of a festival app will all ensure everybody knows the festival is taking place.

The grant will also secure the future of the Kids' Comedy Festival, an ever-growing part of the programme which has hitherto been run on an ad hoc volunteer basis.

Bath Comedy Festival takes place in April and also promotes comedy events year-round in Bath and outlying areas such as Bradford on Avon and Frome.

The festival's ethos is to present up and coming acts and new young talent alongside household names. It has a national reputation for high quality and imaginative programming set against the heritage backdrop that the city offers.

Highlights from the first eight years have included performance from the likes of Aisling Bea, Arthur Smith, Barry Cryer, Bec Hill, Count Arthur Strong, Doug Stanhope, Fred MacAulay, Gary Delaney, Greg Davies, Hardeep Singh Kohli, Henning Wehn, Jeremy Hardy, Jo Caulfield, John Moloney, Jon Richardson, Kerry Godliman, Lee Hurst, Lloyd Langford, Lorraine Chase, Lucy Porter, Mark Thomas, Mervyn Stutter, Miles Jupp, Mitch Benn, Patrick Monahan, Paul Merton, Pete Firman, Richard Herring, Robin Ince, Simon Evans, Simon Munnery, Stuart Goldsmith, Zoe Lyons and many more.

## QUOTES:

Leslie Redwood, Head of Business Development at VisitBath said:

*Bath Comedy Festival is a gem. It is one of the most amazingly successful and well-curated UK events. It brings people together, increases footfall and dwell time and adds vibrancy to the city. VisitBath has formed a genuine partnership with Bath Comedy Festival and wholeheartedly supports this effort to develop the festival to its full potential for the benefit of the city, region and the millions of visitors.*

Nick Steel, Director, Bath Comedy Festival said:

*Together, this grant and our newly formed partnership with VisitBath will ensure a vibrant future for the festival, declared by comic Arthur Smith to be 'The best comedy festival in England'. We aim to make it a festival for everyone and are thrilled to be working alongside VisitBath to achieve this goal. The grant is likely unlock further funding and the enhanced profile will create exciting opportunities for business sponsorship.*

Ralph Oswick, Associate Director, Special Events said:

*The Comedy Festival upholds a long tradition of Bath humour, from 18<sup>th</sup> century satirical cartoons, through writers like Jane Austen, the subversive 70's Bath Arts Workshop to today's renowned Natural Theatre. Set against the best prop in the world, our beautiful city and its heritage offerings, it provides an ever growing and fresh approach to Bath as a Festival City. With VisitBath on board, the possibilities are endless!*

**Photo attached – L-R Ginny Adams (Rare Species), Nick Steel (Director, Bath Comedy Festival), Leslie Redwood (Head of Business Development, VisitBath), Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE (Patron, Bath Comedy Festival), Ralph Oswick (Associate Director, Special Events, Bath Comedy Festival). Photo Credit: Philip Field**

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## Notes for Editors

**Bath Comedy Festival runs Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Web site: [www.bathcomedy.com](http://www.bathcomedy.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BathComedyFest>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BathComedyFest>

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## VisitBath

Web site: [www.visitbath.co.uk](http://www.visitbath.co.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitBath>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VisitBath>

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## BATH COMEDY FESTIVAL PATRONS

Angela Vick, Arthur Smith, Barry Cryer OBE, Helen Lederer, Lorain Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE, Sir Peter Hendy CBE, Ralph Oswick, Robert Brinkworth, Terry Jones

## F Rating information

Bath Comedy Festival become the first 'F' rated United Kingdom comedy festival, and is continuing to fight against the traditional perception that comedy is dominated by male performers, by including female acts every day throughout the festival plus female contestants, comperes and judges in the New Act Competition.