

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL BIDS TO BECOME UK TOWN OF CULTURE

Godalming Town Council has launched a bid to become a UK Town of Culture—celebrating the town's rich heritage while shaping a vibrant, inclusive cultural future.

Godalming's story is one of historic streets, creative communities and a strong sense of identity. From its distinctive built heritage to its thriving choirs, theatre groups and festivals, culture has long been at the heart of the town. This bid aims to build on that legacy, recognising both the people and places that have shaped Godalming and its contribution to the wider national story as a dynamic and creative market town.

The proposed programme will bring this story to life through a mix of festivals, artistic commissions, community projects and digital innovation. Themes will include heritage and place, community creativity, and future-facing innovation—blending tradition with new ideas such as digital art, augmented-reality trails and youth-led projects. Public spaces and underused venues will be transformed into lively cultural hubs, with activities designed for all ages and backgrounds.

Importantly, the programme is about more than celebration—it's about raising the profile of Godalming, strengthening community connections and creating new opportunities. By supporting local organisations, developing creative skills, and investing in cultural infrastructure, the bid will help ensure culture continues to thrive across the town. It will also boost visibility beyond the area, attracting visitors and showcasing Godalming as a place where heritage and innovation go hand in hand. Councillor Tom Kiehl, Chair of the Council's Planning & Environment Committee said "Godalming's contribution to culture is immense. It enlivens the community and makes the town such an attractive place to work, rest and play. This is recognised by Godalming Town Council, and I am delighted that we have taken the opportunity to participate in this exciting new initiative. To be awarded as a Town of Culture 2028 will be a huge boost to all those that love Godalming and provide a strong legacy for generations to come."

At the heart of the bid is a commitment to inclusivity and community involvement. Residents, local groups and businesses will play a key role in shaping and delivering the programme, ensuring it reflects the town's diverse voices and shared ambitions.

Further details on how to get involved and support the bid will be shared soon.

Ends

Notes to Editors: Three finalists - one small, one medium, one large town - will be chosen. The winner will be crowned UK Town of Culture 2028 and receive a £3 million prize. £250,000 to deliver elements of their bid, from refreshed community infrastructure to electric music festivals.

The deadline for Expressions of Interest for UK Town of Culture 2028 is 31 March 2026, with the shortlist of towns expected to be announced this Spring.

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