

**PRESS RELEASE – FOR RELEASE 2/7/2020**

**CALL-OUT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 14 – 21 TO SHARE THEIR LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHTS FOR NEW PROJECT WITH CORN EXCHANGE NEWBURY AND FUNDING PARTNERS GREENHAM TRUST AND THE LILY AND MARCUS SIEFF CHARITABLE TRUST**

**Corn Exchange Newbury** is looking for young people from across the country to take part in *Unlocked and Unbolted* - a collaborative project supported by funding partners Greenham Trust and the Lily and Marcus Sieff Charitable Trust, which asks them to share their voices, experiences and thoughts of the past few months. Through online conversations, the Corn Exchange would like to hear how COVID-19, lockdown, isolation, social distancing and the realities of this pandemic have directly affected them and their thoughts for the future. These informal discussions will ask questions about how the world looks to them at this time, what should a return to a 'new normal' look like, have some things changed for the better or has visualising the future become increasingly difficult?

Young people aged 14 – 21 are invited to sign up for group Zoom conversations with the creative team, led by director **Bryn Holding**. These conversations will become the inspiration and the source material for a new piece of theatre which will form a socially distanced live performance presented by a group of young performers later in the year.

Those taking part in these conversation will shape the play and how that story is told as they listen to one another, discuss how they see the world and reimagine their futures together.

Zoom conversations will take place on **Thursday 9, Tuesday 14 and Thursday 16 July** and further information about the themes, age groups and times can be found on the Corn Exchange's website, [www.cornexchangenew.com/unlocked](http://www.cornexchangenew.com/unlocked).

Young people are welcome to attend more than one session if they wish. For those who are unable to attend or who wish to share their thoughts in a different way, questions are available on the website and young people can submit written ideas or videos responding to these.

Director Bryn Holding will create a 30 minute performance based on these thoughts and ideas. This will be a socially distanced performance which, depending on current government guidelines, will either be presented in front of a socially distanced audience or will be streamed to be watched from home in September.

The Corn Exchange is also keen to hear from West Berkshire-based young people aged 16 – 21 who would like to take part as a performer. Twelve young people will take part in a two-week rehearsal process from 19 August with both online and physically distanced rehearsals. Some previous performance experience is necessary and those interested should submit a video which includes them delivering a short poem (which can be found on the Corn Exchange website) plus a brief description of why they would like to take part in the project. These should be sent to [getinvolved@cornexchangenew.co.uk](mailto:getinvolved@cornexchangenew.co.uk) by 5pm on 24 July 2020. Successful applicants will be informed by 31 July 2020.

**Katy Griffiths, Director of the Corn Exchange Newbury**, said 'When it became clear that we weren't going to be able to present our usual youth theatre productions this year, we found ourselves wanting to find a different way to work with young people in our District to understand what this extraordinary situation has meant for them. Life has changed hugely in the last few months, and we

want to hear their voices and stories on our stage. We are hugely grateful to our funders Greenham Trust and the Lily and Marcus Sieff Charitable Trust for making this project possible.'

The Corn Exchange Newbury is delighted to be working with Berkshire Youth on this project which has been kindly supported by the Lily and Marcus Sieff Charitable Trust and Greenham Trust. Greenham Trust has partnered with Berkshire Youth to launch the West Berkshire Youth Hub, a virtual and telephone-based support hub that is assisting young people, families and agencies through the COVID-19 lockdown.

For more information about *Unlocked and Unbolted* please visit [www.cornexchangenew.com/unlocked](http://www.cornexchangenew.com/unlocked) or call the Box Office on 0845 5218 218 (calls cost 2p per minute plus your telephone company's access charge).

## **ENDS**

Notes to the Editor:

For interviews, further information or images please contact Selina Cross, Marketing & Press Co-ordinator, [selinac@cornexchangenew.co.uk](mailto:selinac@cornexchangenew.co.uk) – 01635 582666

- The Corn Exchange Newbury is a flagship arts centre based in West Berkshire comprising of three key spaces: the Corn Exchange, with a 400 seat auditorium and a 40 seat independent cinema; 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space for the development of large-scale outdoor performances and artist residencies; and the Learning Centre from which it runs a busy participation programme, enabling local people of all ages to engage with creative activities.
- To find out more about Berkshire Youth please visit: <https://www.berkshireyouth.co.uk/>
- More information about Greenham Trust can be found here: <https://greenhamtrust.com/>