



A summer of 'In'magination – taking StoryParks to the people

This week sees the return of a popular 2019 parks project, albeit in a slightly different guise as StoryParks goes digital!

Nominated for an APSE innovation award, StoryParks delivered 5-weeks of free interactive story dens using nature and the environment to encourage reading and numeracy throughout the summer last year. Based across seven of the city's Green Flag parks, the story dens could be visited by families and included structured sessions with local storytellers, artists and entertainers. Almost 7,000 children and 2,000 adults attended sessions supported by 202 hours from volunteers provided by StoryParks' key partner, Nottingham Building Society. In addition to this, support from the libraries team and Nottingham Together ensured families had summer activities covered.

Thanks to the success of last year, the project was due to take place again this summer in parks across the city but the current situation with Covid-19 has meant a different approach is required for 2020. Supporting the project once again, Nottingham Building Society provided further funding to develop online activities and resources to bring stories and activities to people's homes in a bid to capture the imagination of children and families during the current lockdown and beyond.

The StoryParks website storyparksnottingham.com will be uploading new content every week covering activities from storytelling and music to financial literacy and wellbeing content. The content will include videos and podcasts hosted by a range of local entertainers including Curious Nottingham, Rainbow Stripes, Louise Chambers Yoga, Beatfeet, and storyteller Nicky Rafferty. Children will love searching their surroundings for mini beasts with Ranger Matt, hearing stories read by firefighters from Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue and answering Gary Moran from Nottingham Panthers as he asks - who's your hero?

Local author Johnathan Emmett has been commissioned to write a StoryParks book based on the story of Nottingham Building Society founder, Samuel Fox. Born in the city in the 1700s, Fox was an abolition Quaker, keen philanthropist and supporter of literacy and education for all. He started the first 'Adult School' in 1798 to enable factory workers to practice reading and writing.

StoryParks online will form part of Nottingham City Council's Staying Home campaign which offers a range of activities and fun things for the family to do from home during the current social restrictions. Find out more at www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/stayinghome

The team are also poised to bring StoryParks world of imagination alive in real life should Covid-19 restrictions be relaxed and people are able to enjoy Nottingham's parks and open spaces once again.

Cllr Dave Trimble, portfolio holder for leisure and culture said: "We are very grateful to Nottingham Building Society for helping us build on the successful StoryParks project in this way; to be able to

commission local artists to create content and help us adapt to current circumstances so quickly has been awe-inspiring. We hope children and families enjoy the resources and we look forward to seeing what their 'in'agination comes up. We are planning some great new things in readiness for everybody getting out and enjoying the parks in person once restrictions are lifted when the project can get outdoors again."

David Marlow, Chief Executive Officer at The Nottingham said: "After the success of last year's events, we were really excited to once again support StoryParks. Whilst, as we launch StoryParks it's not possible for people come to the parks, the steps that have been put in place to allow the parks to be brought to the people is fantastic. The online content that has been created is engaging and educational and we are pleased that the story of our founder, Samuel Fox, has once again been incorporated so people can learn more about how he helped the city through many hard times in his day. In same way, we are glad to support a project that seeks to help people through this hard time and beyond when the parks and open spaces will no doubt be visited with renewed appreciation."

ENDS

Notes to editors

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