**PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release

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**Local support gets Skipton communities buzzing with puppet magic**

Described by visitors as "the best thing that happens in Skipton" and the "highlight of the local event calendar", Skipton Puppet Festival returns this October with puppets galore. This year's programme celebrates the best of puppetry from the marvellous and the mystical to the ordinary and the overlooked. Hidden between chivalrous knights and fire breathing dragons, discover the secret dreams of a simple bag of rubbish or a rebellious lump of raw dough.

The festival draws in performers from across Europe, but it’s an event very firmly rooted in Skipton –with the support of the local community at the core of its success.

Skipton BID, whose invaluable support has kept the festival alive and kicking with the seed funding has given a substantial grant this year to strengthen the festival's offer to the town recognising the benefit of an estimated 15,000 visitors.

This year, the fundraising has been generously bolstered by support from local charities: Skipton Mechanics Institute has given generous support for the community participation activities, Skipton Craven Rotary Club is supporting a workshop weekend for 14 - 18 year olds, and thanks to the Craven Trust, the Festival is once again offering community puppetmaking bursaries to local groups, to create puppets to join in in the popular Puppet Parade on Sunday 6th October. There’s still chance to claim a bursary of up to £100 for your community group – visit the Festival website to find out more.

For individuals and families who fancy getting stuck in, there will be free parade puppetmaking workshops over the weekends of 21st and 28th September, run in partnership with Handmade Parade, and more drop-in puppetmaking opportunities at the festival itself.

Over sixty per cent of shows at Skipton Puppet Festival are free, which means that everyone can experience the puppetry magic regardless of income, enjoying performances from world-class established puppeteers to student and experimental work.

The team delivering the Festival rely on the strong support received from the people of Skipton and the surrounding area, and are looking forward to a strong turnout again this October. The programme is available on the Skipton Puppet Festival website, and the box office is now live. As most ticketed performances tend to sell out before the festival, the organisers advise to book early!

Anyone keen to get involved with the festival should contact the festival via its Facebook page or through the Festival website – there are loads of opportunities to get involved.

To find out more, visit the Community page on the Skipton Puppet Festival website: <http://skiptonpuppetfestival.co.uk/page4.html>

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**Notes:**

1. Skipton Puppet Festival is online at [www.skiptonpuppetfestival.co.uk](http://www.skiptonpuppetfestival.co.uk)

2. For images and more information contact Liz Lepmpen at admin@skiptonpuppetfestival.co.uk

 or on 01756 797149