

**PRESS RELEASE**

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March

For immediate release

**PAUL BLEZARD LAUNCHES THE LOCKDOWN LITFEST**

**A new global online literature and culture festival**

Amid Covid-19, social distancing and self-isolation, many cultural events have had to cancel or postpone. Literary festivals, theatres, music gigs, book groups, school visits by authors and more are in disarray, leaving audiences disappointed and authors without incomes.

In response, literary commentator and former Oneword Radio presenter Paul Blezard announces **The Lockdown LitFest**, a new online literary festival initiative, to offer live author interviews and a wide selection of other cultural content to keep everyone reading, entertained and inspired by great authors, writers, poets, historians, academics, cartoonists, illustrators and more from the UK and abroad.

In the early days of development, the organisers have already received interest and goodwill from a range of publishers, writers and participants. They anticipate this will grow in the days and weeks to come, as they increase awareness and develop what an online festival can offer. They will launch with their first live webcast in the week commencing Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April.

Lockdown already have nearly 100 authors lined up to take part – many of them household names – including Ian Rankin, Joanna Harris, Philip Pullman, Professor Kate Williams, William Dalrymple, Carol Drinkwater, Dom Joly, S J Watson, Charles Spencer, Linda Grant, Piyush Jha, Kate Mosse, Curtis Jobling (of Bob the Builder fame), Levison Wood, and Paula Byrne.

Paul Blezard said: “We’ve pulled together a great team in just a few days and are working hard to build a top-notch platform. We’re keen to hear from publishers, authors, agents, performers – anyone who’d like to join us and offer content as we build our festival and audience. We aim for this to be a hub for all sorts of cultural and entertaining content. Imagine an entire festival, but in the arcades of the internet rather than Arcadian green fields. So many in the cultural community have lost bookings and income. We hope, in time, to be able to attract sponsorship and other financial support for our initiative so that we can provide a modest income to contributors to help us all through this.”

View and link to our launch video at [vimeo.com/lockdownlitfest](https://vimeo.com/lockdownlitfest)

Further details at [LockdownLitFest.com](https://LockdownLitFest.com) and lockdownlitfest on all social media channels.

**If you would like to be involved, can offer support – financial or otherwise - or have skills that the organisers can use, please contact [info@lockdownlitfest.com](mailto:info@lockdownlitfest.com) or call Alex Hippisley-Cox on 07921 127077.**