



Southampton's Festival of Words 2017

SO: To speak burst onto the Southampton scene in October 2015 with 10 days of theatre, shows, poetry, book launches, workshops, competitions and much more. From Shakespeare in West Quay car park to 70 spoken word artists popping up all over the city centre, it showcased the best of Southampton's word-based culture, its history and its diversity.

The Festival returns in October 2017 with another full 10 day programme of events. Our ambition is for SO: To Speak to become an established high-quality regional event in the Southampton calendar and another jewel in the city's cultural crown.

The topline opportunity for your brand

As a supporter of SO: To Speak you can position your brand as part of the story of a culturally rich Southampton. With our Media support, and marketing and media strategy, this festival can reach the half million people in Southampton and the surrounding area.

As our partner, your brand will be an integral part of SO: To Speak's success and public engagement. The diversity of our audience and events present a wide-range of opportunities for your brand to make its mark and reach your demographic.

Let your current and future customers know your company and its brand contributes more to this city than your competitors.



SO: To Speak, Southampton's Festival of Words

The festival runs between 20th and 29th October, with over 50 events taking place in a variety of venues.

SO: To Speak is unashamedly a Southampton festival - about this place; showcasing its talent; involving its people; and reflecting its history, its diversity and its culture.

But as the festival grows in strength, we aim for it to grow in stature. We are extending our offer, and strengthening our regional and national appeal, building on the success of our opening in 2015, contributing to the city's cultural development, and fostering its growth as a cultural hub and destination.

In 2017, the SO: To Speak Festival will:

- Celebrate well-known local authors' new work.
- Reflect our history by showcasing new books about the sinking of the SS Mendi in 1917 off the Isle of Wight, and the city in the Second World War.
- Contribute to the Jane Austen bi-centenary celebration.
- Highlight the growing Spoken Word and comedy scene in Southampton.
- Publish an anthology of new writing, and commission new performance pieces.

- Include personal storytelling and public engagement in science, reflecting the growing public interest in both.
- Host live poetry and storytelling slam competitions, and even an Anti –slam for bad poetry, where Southampton currently boasts the national champion!
- Host a weekend of events run by small publishing houses which will bring the cream of British poets to the city.
- Run a programme of free events for children over half term.
- Promote the city's SOwrite project, whose writers in residence will offer a range of workshops and talk about their work.
- Run a number of open mic nights for poets and storytellers.
- Bring back Words in the City – a free multi-venue afternoon event that in 2015 attracted crowds with over 60 local performers taking part.

SO: To Speak brings the best of the city together: the Sowrite project, the Mayflower and Nuffield theatres, the Art House, the libraries and local venues; poets, authors and other artists.

The Opportunities for your business

As a partner, there are many ways that you can support and engage with SO: To Speak. We are interested in attracting partners for 2017, but are also looking to develop longer term relationships to maximise the benefits to both your brand as well as SO: To Speak.

There are major opportunities, such as title sponsor of the whole event, but there are smaller opportunities to support one or more of the events or threads in the programme. Our ticket events will provide direct access to festival audiences, and others will collectively give you direct exposure to thousands more.

Our PR strategy will be driven through our Media Partners, social media, and unique viral campaign pieces. Our activity is planned from August and you can join the plans for this activity now. We can grow this together by working alongside each other to increase awareness.

SO: To Speak offers a wide variety of sponsor benefit packages relating to the Festival as a whole, and to individual events that can be tailored to meet our sponsor's requirements.

1. Top Level Opportunity: Lead festival sponsor naming rights

This is a unique and valuable opportunity to support SO: To Speak and lead on all marketing and publicity material, giving wide-ranging exposure and gaining you invaluable brand advocacy. The price of the opportunity reflects its value and can be discussed.

2. Tier Two opportunities: Event sponsorship rights

Add your name to specific events of your choice, and receive the benefits below for your specifically chosen event. The price of the opportunity will reflect the cost of putting the event on, and the value to your brand, offering great value.

3. In-Kind support

We welcome 'in-kind' partnerships where your technology or support could help the events so if this is something you could offer, we want to hear from you, and talk about the benefits we can offer.

4. Donations

Don't have a brand but want to support as an individual benefactor? Get in touch about how you could donate to the event and be an individual SO: To Speak supporter.

Marketing and Promotional Rights

You will benefit from a fully integrated, phased package of rights and SO: To Speak multi channel support when you choose to support the festival:

Pre event

- An invitation to a launch event for key VIPs in your organization; and meet other influential partners in the city
- Inclusion in pre-event publicity in the Daily Echo.
- Inclusion in our event publication.
- Work alongside us to plan a programme of engagement for advocacy that maximises your activation of the sponsorship and builds a lasting relationship with our audience.
- Develop content that creates advocacy for your brand pre, during and post-show.
- Logo inclusions across SO: To Speak marketing channels.
- Logo inclusion on SO: To Speak website and official social networking sites.
- Partnership fully promoted to SO: To Speak database and website - links to social media sites.
- Right to use SO: To Speak logo in press, marketing and social media for the brand.
- Right to run competitions and include updates on partner websites and in press, marketing and social media.

- A link on the SO: To Speak website driving traffic to partner websites.

At the Events

- Allowance of event passes for guest, press and trade.
- Meet and greet opportunities for your invited VIPs.
- Photo-opportunities for you and your guests.
- Allowance of working staff passes for your activation of sponsorship.
- Where appropriate for your brand, the right to sample a product across the event.
- Embedded advocacy for your brand pre- during and post-show.

Post Event

- Right to use event images / footage on the partners website and social channels.
- Brand images/footage on SO: To Speak website including branding.
- Right to create and amplify content from the event association.
- Continue to create advocacy post-show using content created at the show – building upon our relationship.

Our story and numbers

In 2015, SO: To Speak delivered over 50 events in 10 days across a number of venues.

The feedback we received at the events and on social media, as well as a small sample of interviews was overwhelmingly positive.

The festival in general generated good awareness and very positive feedback from agencies, groups and individuals, happy to see a Festival of Words happening in Southampton.

Audiences at SO: To Speak were varied in composition because of the breadth of content - from those interested in literature or Spoken Word to those with special interests, for example in local history, or art. The public events reached large numbers of people as the Festival had a presence in the Guildhall Square.

As well as a funded advertising online and through social media which reached over a million people, our Media Partnership with the Daily Echo reached a print audience of 55,000, while SO: To Speak's own print media reached 15,000. Other partners' promotion helped the Festival reach a further estimated 70,000 people. Three YouTube videos we made to promote the Festival have been watched by 15,000 people, reached nearly double that number with social media promotion.

Since 2015, and partly as a result of the Festival, the number of people engaged in Creative Writing activities in the City has increased, mainly through the Sowrite Project, in which Southampton Festivals is an active partner.

Our Poetry Slam competition drew in poetry groups from across the region, and over the last two years these relationships have been

strengthened through SO: To Speak's relationship with Artful Scribe and its work with Wessex Schools and the Sowrite project. Southampton has recently become a host city for the Hammer and Tongues national poetry Slam.

The number of live literature events has increased, and audiences are growing. There are now more venues offering live literature and open mic nights all year round, and more generic events in the city - such as City Live and the Umbrella Arts Festival are incorporating live literature into their event, and seeking advice from Southampton Festivals on doing so.

While audiences for the different strands of SO: To Speak's programme are growing, the festival market for this form of culture festival is growing rapidly as they play a larger part in place-making and tourist destinations. As it goes forward, SO: To Speak aims to provide a unique city experience for residents and visitors alike.

For more information:

www.literaryfestivals.co.uk/announcements/the-rise-and-rise-of-literary-festivals



Renowned local storyteller Mike O'Leary captivating his audience of 200 with the legend of local hero Bevis at SO: To Speak15

So let's speak...

We can't wait to work with you and build a great relationship that benefits you and helps us put on a great event. So to discuss the opportunities further, please drop us a line letting us know when you are free to talk or able to meet. We will get back to you at your convenience to discuss how you can support the festival and creative talent in Southampton.

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Southampton Festivals

Southampton Festivals is a 'for love not money' not-for-profit company set up by Charlie Hislop and Tony Gumm to bring the Festival spirit to Southampton.

Run by Charlie Hislop on a 'pro bono' basis, Southampton Festivals has organised and run SO: Fest, the Ejector Seat Festival in 2013, helped introduce the St George's Day festival, and created SO: To Speak in 2015.

We believe that Southampton has so much to offer, and are committed to helping it regenerate and develop through events, working collaboratively with organisations and like-minded people.

We provide opportunities for artists to showcase their talents and where we can, we provide real work for young creative people to help them get their careers off the ground, in what are challenging times.

