

Northern Roots Creative Writing Competition

Northern Roots is teaming up with **Oldham Libraries** to launch the first ever Northern Roots Creative Writing Competition – a chance for you to get creative and celebrate the wild beauty and magic of the Northern Roots site.

The judging panel features Oldham-based writer **Jacqueline Ward**, who grew up a stone's throw from the Northern Roots site, **Nawhal Sarwar**, a writer and student at Oldham College, and TV and radio presenter **Lindsey Chapman**.

Northern Roots is creating the UK's largest urban farm and eco-park on 160-acres of stunning green space in the heart of Oldham. Alongside market gardening, mountain-biking, sports and educational facilities, Northern Roots will develop a vibrant arts and culture offer. And it starts with you.

What is the creative brief?

We are inviting entries of **original creative writing of up to 500 words**, inspired by the landscape, natural beauty and heritage of the Northern Roots site and the future ambitions of the Northern Roots project. Beyond that, you can interpret the brief as you wish!

From wonderful wildlife and urban biodiversity to the Beautiful Oldham Society events that took place on the Northern Roots site, there's so much to inspire your imagination. Perhaps you'll be inspired by the future aims of the Northern Roots project or want to write about the way urban green spaces make us feel? Or perhaps you'll create an imaginary creature or character that lives on the Northern Roots site and goes on a big adventure.....

Who can enter?

The Northern Roots writing competition is open to anyone living, studying or working in Oldham, is free to enter, and has three categories:

Children (5-12)

Young People (13-17)

Adults (18 and above)

We welcome entries from **EVERYONE**, no matter what your background or experience. You don't have to be a 'writer' or have written anything before! The idea is to have fun, and to explore both the beautiful Northern Roots site, the project and your own creativity.

If you can't get to the Northern Roots site, we encourage you to join in and 'exercise your imagination'! During the competition we'll be sharing photographs, film clips and information about Northern Roots on our **Twitter (@NorthernRootsOL)**, **Instagram (@northernrootsoldham)** and **Facebook (@NorthernRootsCoop)** platforms, as well as advice and inspiration from our fabulous judging panel.

[What format do we require?](#)

You can submit one piece of original creative writing up to 500 words maximum. Your piece can be 50 words or the full 500 words – whatever works for you.

Your piece can be poetry, fiction or anything in between – whatever you feel inspired to create.

Details of how to send us your submission can be found in **Competition Rules**.

<https://northern-roots.uk/get-involved/northern-roots-creative-writing-competition/>

[Winners and prizes!](#)

The winners in each category will see **an excerpt from their winning piece incorporated into the future Northern Roots site**. For example, a line from a piece of writing could be carved into a bench or piece of stone installed on site.

We're thrilled to have the support of local businesses, who have generously donated prizes to each category.

Children (5-12) category: The winner will receive a **Kindle Fire HD8 Plus** from local business Remedian.

Young People (13-17): TBC

Adults (18 and above): The winner will receive a 6-month Premium membership from Oldham Community Leisure.

Winners in each category will also be offered a **30-minute one to one Zoom call** with author and judge Jacqueline Ward to discuss how to develop your writing and get it published.

Winners and shortlisted submissions will be celebrated on Northern Roots social media and web platforms and form part of an **exhibition at Oldham Libraries** in 2021.

[What is the deadline?](#)

The competition launches on the 12th October 2020 and is open for four weeks. Your piece must be submitted by **Monday 9th November 2020**. Winners will be announced in January 2021.

[How do I enter the competition?](#)

To enter the competition, you will need to submit your piece using the application form and email it to northern.roots@oldham.gov.uk

Hard copies can be accepted at Oldham Library during opening hours, but you will still need to fill in a short form with basic contact details when you arrive.

Full details about how to submit your piece can be found in **Competition Rules**. Please read before entering – we've kept it as short and sweet as we can!

Our **Privacy Notice** – our commitment to handling your data in a safe and responsible manner – can also be found online at <https://northern-roots.uk/get-involved/northern-roots-creative-writing-competition/>

Good luck! We can't wait to read your creative writing!

[Northern Roots Creative Writing Competition – our judges](#)

We are delighted to welcome Oldham-based author **Jacqueline Ward** on to our judging panel. Jacqueline grew up a stone's throw from the Northern Roots site and believes that anyone can tell stories – it's what we do every day.

Joining her is **Nawhal Sarwar**, a writer and student at Oldham College, who wants to encourage children to discover the joy of reading!

Our panel is completed by TV and radio presenter – and proud Northerner - **Lindsey Chapman**. Presenting on everything from climate change to the power of poetry, Lindsey grew up in Yorkshire and is passionate about the arts and the natural world.

The panel is supported by **Samuel Thornley**, Library Development Officer (Books & Reading) at Oldham Libraries and the Northern Roots team.



Jacqueline Ward is a writer from Oldham. She is a Chartered Psychologist and Scientist and her debut psychological thriller, *PERFECT TEN*, was published by Corvus Atlantic Books in 2019. *HOW TO PLAY DEAD* was published in November 2019. Jacqueline is the author of the DS Jan Pearce crime fiction series and enjoys writing short stories and screenplays. She holds a PhD in narrative and storytelling and received an MBE for services to vulnerable people in 2013.

'We often think of stories as something grand, written by professional authors or experienced writers, but anyone can tell stories. We tell each other stories in everyday life – stories about what we do, who we know and where we go. For the Northern Roots Creative Writing competition, we want you to write that story down or send us footage of you telling your story'.



Nawhal Sarwar is studying Business Enterprise at Oldham College and working on a business idea for the future, which is to convince children to read books so they can experience how much fun it is!

'I love reading books and I love writing. I entered a '500-word' competition and won - now my story is in a book called 'The Twist of the Tale'. I also write my own books in an app called 'Wattpad' which allows you to read/write books and show it to millions of people. Becoming a judge at the Northern Roots Creative Writing Competition is a great opportunity for me to read the different kinds of story that people will write – it's so exciting!'



Lindsey Chapman is a TV and radio presenter on BBC One, BBC Two, Channel 5 and Radio 4. Passionate about people, arts and the natural world, she's tackled complex subjects from climate change to the power of poetry. Brought up in rural East Yorkshire, Lindsey grew up with a deep appreciation of nature and green space.

'There are so many crossovers between art and the natural world. Wildlife and wild places are a constant source of inspiration and art allows us to connect with nature in unexpected ways. The Northern Roots Creative Writing competition is a brilliant opportunity to express your creativity. I can't wait to see what different ideas are submitted.'