



## Work begins to transform Calderstones Mansion into *The International Centre for Shared Reading*

*The Props Assist the House*, Emily Dickinson

Until the House is built  
And then the Props withdraw  
And adequate, erect,  
The House supports itself...

The Reader, today announced that work to refurbish and transform Liverpool's Calderstones Mansion into *The International Centre for Shared Reading* is underway. The charity, which aims to get great literature into the hands of people who need it most, has been based in the Grade II-listed building in the heart of the city's Calderstones Park since September 2014 and has already invested in Calderstones, creating jobs, volunteer roles and training opportunities.

Phase One of the ambitious project has seen The Reader Café, based in The Mansion House go from strength to strength, while the barn and stables have been brought back to life with the dilapidated buildings being fully refurbished. Regular visitors to the park will know that the old barn is now home to The Storybarn, a much-loved children's literature centre while the stables now house The Reader Ice Cream Parlour, a new social enterprise.

Running until Spring 2018, Phase Two of the project - supported by National Lottery players through a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of just under £2million - will see The Mansion House close to allow much-needed repairs to be completed; while The Calder Stones, the internationally important Neolithic monuments which give the park its name, will be temporarily taken off-site for extensive conservation. The design team appointed to complete the works include Liverpool-based architects Austin-Smith:Lord who have previously worked on projects at The Bluecoat and Kew Gardens; Todd & Ledson, project management and cost consultants, whose heritage experience includes the transformation of Liverpool's Grade II-listed Royal Insurance Building; engineers Charles Andrews who have previously worked on Manchester's Exchange Quay and structural engineers and award-winning built environment specialist Curtins Consultancy.

The first major public events of the transformative project are set to take place this summer when the Neolithic Calder Stones, currently standing in a glasshouse in the park will be removed and transported off-site to undergo a full restoration process. When they return to the site they are set to take pride of place at the centre of a new heritage offer at *The International Centre for Shared Reading*. The Reader hopes to keep disruption for the local community to a minimum, provision will be made so that all services including *Shared Reading* groups can continue.

Dr Jane Davis, Founder and Director of The Reader said: "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create something truly special at Calderstones. *The International Centre for Shared Reading* will benefit communities across the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

"Since 2014 we've welcomed visitors from all over the world including South Korea, Australia, Germany and Scandinavia to discuss the benefits of Shared Reading. We've created The Storybarn to kick-start a life-long love of reading for pleasure for children across the North West and our outreach projects continue to grow, bringing together all kinds of people to build stronger communities.

"We're delighted with the support we have received from Liverpool City Council, Heritage Lottery Fund and our other funding partners."

In December 2015, The Reader secured a grant of £1.9million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), in March 2016 Liverpool City Council agreed to match the funding with a repayable grant of up to £2.1million. Fundraising for the refurbishment continues, if you are able to support this ambitious project get in touch and be part of the story, find out more at <http://calderstones.thereader.org.uk>.

Mayor of Liverpool, Joe Anderson said: *“The Reader’s vision for Calderstones is extremely exciting and it is fantastic to see work to sympathetically restore the Mansion getting underway.*

*“The Reader do the most incredible educational work and The International Centre for Shared Reading will be a major attraction at the heart of one of our most beautiful parks. We are absolutely delighted to be supporting them with the project.”*

## **ENDS**

## **NOTES TO EDITOR**

For further information, please contact: Emma Walsh,  
Communications Assistant, [emmawalsh@thereader.org.uk](mailto:emmawalsh@thereader.org.uk) 07565 816 022

SOCIAL - [@calderstones](https://twitter.com/calderstones) #Calderstones [@thereaderorg](https://twitter.com/thereaderorg) #SharedReading

About The Reader [www.thereader.org.uk](http://www.thereader.org.uk)

The Reader is an award-winning, charitable social enterprise which brings people together, changes lives and builds communities through sharing great literature. Our unique *Shared Reading* model brings small groups together each week to read aloud a story and poem with group discussion led by a trained Reader Leader.

For over a decade The Reader has been working in partnership with CCGs, Public Health Bodies and NHS Trusts across the UK to support thousands of people with a wide range of health and social issues including, mental health conditions, dementia, chronic pain, isolation and recovery from substance misuse.

Whether delivered by volunteers or Reader staff, *Shared Reading* offers people a practical way to improve well-being, build confidence and connect with others.

## **About *The International Centre for Shared Reading***

Bringing The Mansion House back to life is Phase Two of The Reader’s Calderstones plans.

**PHASE ONE** - In 2015, The Reader completed its first capital project with the refurbishment of an old barn and stable block at Calderstones. Two new enterprises were launched to occupy these spaces and operate as The Storybarn, a children’s interactive literature centre and The Reader Ice Cream Parlour - both now open to the public. These two Grade II-listed buildings form part of the Calderstones site and are an important part of the overall project.

**PHASE TWO** - Sympathetically restore Calderstones Mansion House, relocate and rehouse The Calder Stones: A total of 2,190 m<sup>2</sup> internal capacity across four floors which has been currently earmarked for retail, office, hospitality, events and community activity. Planned refurbishment will include a book shop, community events space, a theatre room, a large modern café, reading rooms, heritage rooms as well as office space.

**PHASE THREE** - Coach House, A future opportunity to transform original Coach House linked to *The International Centre for Shared Reading* activities. The Coach House consists of 712 m<sup>2</sup> over two floors and currently contains The Reader’s offices.

## **About the Heritage Lottery Fund**

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk). Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/HLFsupported), [Facebook](https://facebook.com/HLFsupported) and [Instagram](https://instagram.com/HLFsupported) and use #HLFsupported.