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STATEMENT – Monday 2 July, 2018

The Reader recently announced that work had begun on the refurbishment of Grade II-listed Calderstones Mansion House to create *The International Centre for Shared Reading*. The project will secure the future of the Neolithic Calder Stones, while providing sustainable, community-focused solutions that improve mental well-being, reduce social isolation and develop jobs, opportunity and social enterprise in one of Liverpool's best-loved parks. This project will see The Reader provide opportunities for 100+ volunteers each year for people from a cross-section of society, depending on their needs and capacities, and scope for thousands of people to engage in meaningful activities including *Shared Reading*, heritage, art and well-being activities such as walking or gardening.

The Reader will continue to work with the local community to formulate our ideas and wider vision for the Calderstones site. We want to see Calderstones Park, and indeed all the City's parks and spaces, be successful and well used.

We are committed to maintaining good relationships with the local community at Calderstones – as with all our *Shared Reading* communities nationally – but we are not a lobbying charity. It is not our purpose to campaign on political issues as such we will remain impartial on the proposed housing development at Calderstones and any similar issues that may arise in future.

In 2014, The Reader secured Calderstones Mansion House on long-term lease from Liverpool City Council, a partner in the refurbishment project. The Reader has no involvement or influence in any decision by the Local Authority relating to the proposed Housing development. We have a duty to the Mansion House, the Calder Stones and our beneficiaries and are working hard to make sure that we create something very special here so that as many people as possible, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have the opportunity to experience the life changing benefits of reading together.

As a charity, The Reader seeks funding for its work from a variety of Trusts and Foundations and in 2017, the Steve Morgan Foundation recognised the value of our work with children and young people and generously agreed to support it. Previously, The Reader had received recognition at the Morgan Foundation Entrepreneur Awards in 2011 which recognised and highly commended our work.

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