

 **Date of Release:** 3 April 2024                                                      **Ref:** 4317

**Free programme of creative workshops launched to celebrate the beauty of Medmerry Nature Reserve**

Nature enthusiasts are being invited to help capture the stunning landscapes and diverse wildlife at the RSPB Medmerry Nature Reserve, as part of an exclusive series of creative workshops.

This programme of free events is open to all ages and abilities and is part of a Culture Spark community art exhibition at the reserve.

As part of the events programme, there will be a unique opportunity for experienced and budding photographers to explore the reserve during two free ‘naturewalk’ workshops. These photography sessions will be run by award-winning photographer Jakub Bors and will take place on **Saturday 13 April** between 10am and 1pm, and **Sunday 12 May** between 2pm-5pm. All types of equipment are welcome, including digital cameras and mobile phones.

People are also invited to attend a special sculpture workshop on **Saturday 27 April**, offering the opportunity for their sculptures to be part of a temporary installation at RSPB Medmerry. The workshop is open to everyone and will take place from 10am to 1pm at the RSPB Pagham visitor centre. Participants can opt to: create small individual swallow sculptures with willow; cover a pre-made willow sculpture with tissue paper and decorate it; or simply decorate a pre-made and prepared swallow sculpture. These creations can then either be part of the community installation or participants can take them home with them.

For more information and to book a free place on any of these workshops, email: **culturespark2022@gmail.com**

This series of events is being co-ordinated through the Culture Spark project, which has received a total of £75,000 funding from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and is administered by Chichester District Council. Following a bid to Government in 2022, Chichester District Council was allocated £1.7 million of UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to be used by 31 March 2025.

Councillor Jess Brown-Fuller, Cabinet Member for Culture and Events at Chichester District Council, says: “This packed programme of events is a fantastic way to celebrate one of the many special places that our district has to offer. Events like this provide a wonderful opportunity to bring communities together and encourage others to visit and explore the rich and diverse range of natural, cultural and heritage experiences that we’re so lucky to have on our doorstep.

“The free workshops, which are open to everyone, are all part of a wider project that we are delivering at the RSPB Medmerry reserve to celebrate the beauty of this incredible site. Earlier this year, we invited local artists to get in touch with ideas for three unique commissions, using different art forms and styles, which would look to explore the relationship between the reserve and the community. Since then, we have selected the successful applicants and we will be looking forward to unveiling the three art pieces at the reserve on the 31 May 2024.”

At the Earnley Viewpoint, Two Circles Design will be creating a sculpture that reflects the surrounding environment. Easton Viewpoint will showcase a soundscape created by Splodge Design, which will capture the sounds and stories about the reserve. Finally, at the Breach Viewpoint, Jakub Bors has designed a structure that will also act as a place for residents and visitors to rest their mobile phones while they capture photos of The Breach.

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact Jack Innes, Assistant Communications Officer on 01243 521298 or by emailing** **jinnes@chichester.gov.uk**

**Notes to editors:**

RSPB Medmerry Nature Reserve is one of Europe’s largest coastal realignment schemes. Its creation involved constructing a new 7km flood embankment on higher ground further inland, and transformed 183 hectares into new intertidal habitats for birds and other wildlife. People can find out more about the reserve by visiting: [**www.rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/medmerry**](http://www.rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/medmerry)

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

