

Press Release - for immediate release

FREE Creative Summer Play Days in South Somerset

The Octagon Theatre and Westlands Entertainment Venue in Yeovil are working with local, and national arts practitioners and local organisations to bring **FREE** creative activities and live theatre to residents this Summer, as part of the Play Day initiative.

Play Days are a national initiative that celebrates children's right to play, this year's theme is: 'Spaces for Play' highlighting the vital importance of accessible inclusive spaces where children and young people have opportunities to play freely, spending time, and connecting with friends – and feel valued as part of their community. For 2025, our second year, we have planned a series of four Play Days taking place in, and bringing creativity direct to communities across South Somerset.

This summer we will be in Yeovil, Langport, Wincanton and Chard. The Play Day events will be free for all to attend, taking place in local parks and recreation grounds, with the opportunity to play and get creative with other families, children and young people during the long summer holidays. Each of our Play Days will run from 11am – 3pm with a variety of different creative workshops for families, children and young people to take part in.

There will be a range of activities on offer at each event from music-making to circus skills to air-drying pottery to face painting, alongside other activities all of which will be free for families to take part in. To each Play Day we will be joined by various local and national touring theatre companies, with a free live outdoor theatrical production, to entertain, inspire and educate audiences.

We have invited the Sonia Sabri Company to perform their show **Mughal Miniatures: The Awakening** at our first Play Day on **Wednesday 6th August** (which also coincides with the National Play Day) **at Mudford Rec in Yeovil**. The show is a vibrant outdoor performance for all the family, which celebrates and takes inspiration from the exquisite traditional art of Indian and Persian miniature painting. A funny, joyful, and empowering journey of discovery complete with incredible dancing and a brilliant original soundtrack where performers in sumptuous costumes create a captivating living-picture, transporting you back in time to the richness of the Mughal Empire with a surprising contemporary twist.

Tit for Tat Circus Theatre Company will perform at the second Play Day on **Tuesday 12th August at Cale Park in Wincanton**. Tit for Tat is an unusual juggling company that believes in celebrating the ordinary, in their show **BOOKS!** Where four bedraggled book enthusiasts are travelling from town to town – forced between the margins – on a mission to protect literature. Without new members, the book club and the books it has sworn to protect, will surely perish! An adventure where audiences can expect juggling, fire, comedic routines, and

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plenty of books! They wowed audiences in Yeovil last year, and this year it is Wincanton's turn to witness the madness.

Our next Play Day on **Wednesday 20th August** will be alongside the **River Parrett at Cocklemoor**. Where you can come and meet the Dragon Whisperer and his magical dragons with Jellyfish Theatre and their production of The Dragon Wagon. A joyfully interactive family show set on a colourful retro caravan, packed with puppetry, music and laughter. All performances are relaxed with integrated Sign Supported English.

The fourth and final Play Day will be in **Chard in the grounds of Holyrood School on Thursday 28th August**, where we welcome The Mushroom Show! Join the party and discover how fungi grow, connect and help the natural world, including us humans. Packed full of interactive games, playful music and lots of laughs for all the family, The Mushroom Show is one person's mission to build a community... and maybe it'll become your mission too? Scratchworks Theatre Company will fuse their signature style of physical comedy, audience interaction and family theatre, with the world of fungi.

To each Play Day we have invited local organisations and services to attend, offering the opportunity to promote their service and provide additional activities, this includes Freedom Leisure, Young Somerset, Somerset Libraries, Somerset Film, the Fire Service, the Police Service, Somerset Rivers Authority, Somerset Skills and Learning and Children's Autism Outreach team.

This project has been made possible thanks to The Octagon Theatre becoming an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and being awarded an investment of £760,000 to support arts and cultural activities in Somerset from 2023-2026. Each Play Day will be **FREE** to attend thanks to support received from Yeovil Town Council, Brympton Parish Council, Yeovil Without Parish Council, Wincanton Town Council and Langport Town Council. The Arts Engagement and Outreach Team are striving to provide affordable, accessible arts activities and experiences in the heart of local communities and delivering four free Play Days during the summer holidays is just part of their work.

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