

Evesham: Town of Culture – Expression of Interest.

Evesham has submitted an Expression of Interest in becoming a 'Town of Culture' based on 'Lift the Vale: Journeys of a town – stories of a nation'.

Evesham sits at the heart of the nation, geographically, historically and culturally. Shaped by the River Avon, set within the Vale, it has long been a meeting point for the journeys of pilgrims, traders, reformers, growers and migrants. For centuries, people have passed through, settled and worked here, making the town a microcosm of the nation's wider story.

The vision is to reveal how Evesham's people and defining moments reflect national history and contemporary life. The programme aims to show how one market town can be a lens through which the 'journeys' that have shaped the country can be viewed, from faith and pilgrimage, to democracy, migration, agriculture and the renewal of rural communities.

Evesham and the Vale are rich with stories of national significance. The founding vision of St Egwin and the rise of the great Abbey reflects England's early religious life and traditions of pilgrimage. The Battle of Evesham (1265) which killed Simon de Montfort, marked a key moment in the development of parliamentary democracy. The area's growers and migrant labourers helped establish one of Britain's most productive horticultural regions, whilst during the twentieth century the town contributed to national life through the BBC's covert wartime operations and innovations in IT by Evesham Micros.

What makes Evesham distinctive is how these themes converge in one place. Few towns encapsulate so many strands of the national narrative in such a defined area. Our cultural programme will bring these connections to life, telling national stories through the lives of local people, from saints, reformers, workers, migrants and community figures whose experiences reflect the story of the nation.

Through arts, sport and heritage activities, Evesham's streets, river and surrounding villages will become stages for storytelling. Hidden histories, currently glimpsed in Abbey remains, traditions and local memories, will be reimagined through contemporary creative activations, enabling residents/visitors to engage with the past and more recent struggles of the town and Vale, in new and meaningful ways.

The programme will strengthen civic pride and raise its national profile, literally 'Lifting the Vale'. Visitors will discover not just a picturesque riverside town and verdant Vale, but a rejuvenated community re-emerging with renewed confidence - a place where England's past, present and future can be experienced through one shared story.