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THE STAGE IS SET FOR A SPECTACULAR FESTIVAL

The 2nd Findhorn Bay Festival will burst into life next week - a spectacular six-day celebration of arts and culture running from Wednesday 21 to Monday 26 Sept all set in various venues throughout, in and around the bay of Findhorn area.

Events and performances billed as offering 'something for all' will feature artists of local, national and international renown. Staged in unexpected spaces and scenic locations around the Bay of Findhorn, the Festival is set to attract visitors to the Forres area from far and wide.

Speaking ahead of the event, Festival Director Kresanna Aigner said "The Findhorn Bay Festival offers an enormous opportunity for all in Forres, Moray and beyond. Local businesses will be boosted, young people can participate and learn at the festival, visitors can explore the area and become immersed in quality arts and cultural activities, and the Moray area can be spotlighted as go to tourist destination".

Kresanna continued "the atmosphere and anticipation for the Findhorn Bay Festival is buzzing now. We are delighted with the great media attention received locally, nationally and internationally. So far we have visitors booked to join us from across Scotland, England, Ireland and further afield from Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands, and even from the USA."

As well as attracting international audiences, representatives from Creative Scotland, Event Scotland and VisitScotland will be attending along with a host of local and national media outlets to review the festival and the Moray tourist experience. Kresanna explained "this year's Festival has already enjoyed a flurry of arts and media coverage and we are excited to open the creative door of Moray to the world". She continued "the Findhorn Bay Festival undoubtedly shines a spotlight on the area as a go to destination as well as providing a unique stage to showcase local and national creative talents".

Something for All

Local artists include **Nairn Gaelic Choir** who will feature in the festival opening concert with renowned Gaelic singer **Julie Fowlis** in the exquisite St Laurence Church in Forres. The chocolatey voice of Forres based **Andrea Turner** and local glamour belles **Too Many Kooks** will be warming up an evening of **Wine, Women & Song** with **The Bevy Sisters** at the picturesque Kinloss Church Hall. And hailing from Forres, the festival musician in residence **Michiel Turner** will be appearing at impromptu gigs throughout the six-days to entertain with his melodic guitar sound and dynamic vocals.

Visiting artists include **The Banjo Lounge 4** who will serve up an evening of bluegrass-funk at the Town Hall in Forres. One of Scotland's most highly touted folk bands **Old Blind Dogs** perform at the Universal Hall. Hobo chic singer songwriter from Northern Ireland **Duke Special** features in a fantastic triple bill with **James Yorkston** and **Randolph's Leap** at the Town Hall in Forres, and straight from her Edinburgh Fringe run which received 5 star reviews **Mairi Campbell's Pulse** will be brought to the shores of Findhorn at The James Milne Institute. A shadow puppet show of the **Jungle Book** will delight audiences young and old, whilst Brodie Castle hosts **Luke Jerram's Glass Microbiology** exhibition which will show in Scotland for the very first time during the festival. The well know Janice Connolly from *Phoenix Nights* will join the festival line up as **Mrs Barbara Nice**, and Forres Town Hall will be transformed for highlight Saturday Night out at the **Glitter and Sparkle Festival Ball**. **Scottish Opera** will close the festival on Monday 26 in Elgin Town Hall with the magnificent and sunny comic opera **The Elixir of Love**.

Culture Day Forres at the Heart of the Festival

On the Saturday during the festival, September 24 (11am to 4pm), **Culture Day Forres** will return for a fourth year filling the streets, parks, shops and public buildings of Forres with a carnivalesque explosion of FREE arts and cultural activities. There will be colourful characters, street performers, a science and innovation fair, a go mad animal antics safari, Scottish country dancing on the street, a pop up skate ramp, an introducing performance stage for young musicians all culminating with a Big Sing, Big Dance and Big Street Band!

New for this year on Culture Day Forres, Tolbooth Street will be closed to traffic from 11am to 4pm so that performers, businesses, and visitors alike can take to the street and enjoy food, drinks and performances outdoors in the historic town centre. Managing Director of MacLean's, Lewis MacLean, said "I am in the very unique position of both living and trading on Forres High Street. I have witnessed first-hand over the last three years how this event has gone from strength to strength. Not only is the High Street busy but there is also a great atmosphere. Last year's event gave our shops their highest sales record for a Saturday. I think it is only right as both individuals and businesses we support this event."

Culture Day Forres maps are available now to collect from local Forres shops and at Tesco and can also be downloaded from the festival website www.findhornbayfestival.com

The six-day Festival will feature a fabulous array of FREE events including **Live Music Sessions** in local pubs from Thursday to Sunday, a Light Night Flash Mob will hit the streets of Forres and Findhorn with **Guerrilla Lighting** tours led by **Light Collective, Street Scene** projections from windows in Forres town centre will feature on Friday and Saturday night and exhibitions at The Bird House, The Nicholson Building, Moray Art Centre, Forres Heritage Centre, Brodie Castle and The Forres Tolbooth will all be FREE for everyone to enjoy.

Festival in a Day

What could a day at the Festival look like for you?

To give you an idea of what a day at the Festival could look like for under £30, here is a taster of a fabulous festival frenzy of fun: Start your day in Forres and visit one of three FREE Festival exhibitions including Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year **Ian Cameron** at The Tolbooth; make your way to Findhorn for lunch time theatre / comedy with **Mrs Barbara Nice** (£8/£6 and includes complimentary soup courtesy of the Bakehouse); hop on board a vintage bus in Forres at 3pm for a **Secret Studio Tour** for £10 (includes complimentary nibbles and drink along the way); return to catch a FREE **Live Music Session** at the Mosset Tavern; pick up our FREE vintage shuttle bus (running evenings Thursday to Saturday) which can take you to Kinloss for an enchanting evening with **Wine Women and Song** (£12/£10); and round of your day with a FREE late night **Music Session** at the Carlton Hotel. This suggested Festival in a Day comes to a total of just £30.

On Sunday the Festival focus will be in Findhorn with an eclectic mix of arts to enjoy. You can start your day with a dawn performance of **The Lady Vanishes** at Kinloss Abbey (£5); later hop on board our FREE vintage Festival shuttle bus (runs from 11am to 7pm on Sunday) and make your way to Findhorn Heritage Centre to watch **Sophia Shepard's With the Rising Tide** for FREE; wander to the back beach at Findhorn for a performance installation of Vision Mechanics **Drift** (£5) before catching some FREE street theatre, choirs and music sessions throughout Findhorn village all day long. You can pas de bas along to a **Family Ceilidh** with the **Boatshed Ceilidh Band** at the James Milne Institute at 2pm (£5), and later make your way up to **Picnic at the Park** at the Findhorn Foundation Eco Village with your hamper or enjoy the feast of cuisine available as well as FREE music, tours and entertainment all day long. And culminate your Sunday to the swagger of a Balkan wedding band and the rebellious energy of Latin carnival with **Orkestra del Sol** at the Universal Hall (£12/£10). This suggested Festival in a Day comes to only £27.

Kresanna explained "everyone can enjoy the Festival on our very own door step here in Moray. With accessible venues, concession tickets, and prices kept as low as possible. Events like this don't come around very often and we are working hard to make this Festival both a lasting legacy and a sustainable event that brings numerous benefits to local business and the community in general. It is essential the local community support it, take part, enjoy free events, buy tickets and have fun too!"

For full programme details, to sign up to join our mailing list and ticket sales please visit the festival website www.findhornbayfestival.com.

Tickets can be bought in advance and there will be some capacity at doors too. If events are at limited capacity or sold out, this will be noted on our website and through our social media.

For further information, interviews or images please contact:

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Notes to Editor:

Year of Innovation, Architecture & Design 2016

2016 will shine a spotlight on Scotland's achievements in innovation, architecture and design through a wide-ranging, variety of new and existing activity. The Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design started on 1 January 2016 and will run until 31 December 2016. It will build on the momentum generated by the 2015 Year of Food and Drink as well as previous years including Homecoming Scotland 2014.

Through a series of exciting events and activity, the year will showcase Scotland's position as an "innovation nation", its outstanding built heritage, and its thriving, internationally acclaimed fashion, textiles and design sector. The Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design is a Scottish Government initiative being led by VisitScotland, supported by partners including Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, Architecture + Design Scotland, Scottish Tourism Alliance, Scottish Enterprise, The National Trust for Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS).

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