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## **Susannah Herbert to step down as Executive Director of Forward Arts Foundation**

Today Forward Arts Foundation announced that the charity's Executive Director, Susannah Herbert, will be stepping down after 8 years in the role.

Herbert has led the development of National Poetry Day and the Forward Prizes for Poetry, helping to make poetry part of the national conversation. During her tenure, National Poetry Day in October has grown into the UK's biggest one-day poetry festival, an annual moment when old and young across the nation – from HRH The Prince of Wales to buskers on Newcastle's Metro system – celebrate poetry in events of all sizes: from tea parties to giant screen city square broadcasts.

She has made the Forward Prizes into the most influential awards for new poetry in the UK, broadening the range of contemporary poets studied in schools by getting Forward anthologies on the syllabus and bringing voices as various as Claudia Rankine, Liz Berry, Kei Miller and Vahni Capildeo to wider public notice in high profile events.

The charity's Founder, William Sieghart, said: "Forward Arts Foundation has been transformed under Susannah's leadership. She has developed National Poetry Day and the Forward Prizes into highlights of the cultural calendar and platforms for exceptional talent: she has changed perceptions of poetry in schools and in public life, pushed contemporary poetry to the front of bookshops and held the door open for small publishers, debut poets and online innovators. On her watch, young audiences have found in poetry a space for new accents, voices, registers - a space where they can see themselves as creators. We wish her all the very best in her future projects."

Susannah Herbert, who will leave in the New Year to pursue personal projects, said: "After eight exciting years seeing poetry grow in popularity, it's great to go out on a high, with new poets and new poems at the centre of the nation's conversation with itself during the pandemic. There's nothing more rewarding than making space for fresh voices, inspiring readers to write and writers to read. I wish the

Forward Arts Foundation board and team - Holly Hopkins, Natalie Charles and Mónica Parle – the best in continuing to change the world through poetry.”

The Forward Arts Foundation will shortly be launching the recruitment process for Herbert’s successor.

For press enquiries and pictures, please contact [Natalie Charles](#)



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