



Public and Community Engagement Newsletter, May 2023



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Staff

Welcome to the Research and Enterprise Public and Community Engagement newsletter

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Call for applications - ESRC Manchester Festival of Social Science

The FoSS23 will take place from **21st October – 17th November** and we are inviting expressions of interest for events and projects from across the university that celebrate the social sciences.

Applications for sponsorship of **up to £500** can be made to assist with the production and delivery of in-person/online events and resources. All events must be free to attend.

The Festival offers an opportunity for researchers (PhD students are also eligible) to hold either in-person or online events/resources aimed at **non-academic** audiences. Events/resources which are aimed primarily at academic audiences **are not eligible** to be part of the Festival or to receive sponsorship. Applicants are welcome to apply for sponsorship for more than one event although a separate application form must be submitted for each event.

This year, as the Festival theme is **Lifelong Wellbeing** the ESRC has requested that at least 25% of our total Festival programme be dedicated to events that match this theme. As such, events with links to this theme will be given some priority. The Festival particularly welcomes applications which showcase collaborations across multiple ESRC IAA institutions, promoting a joined-up approach to the Festival including online collaborations which may have been prohibited due to geographical boundaries.



[The application form is available here:](#)

Please read [the guidance document](#) before submitting your application.

Your application must be submitted online by 14th June 2023.

If you have any questions or issues, please contact the Health School Knowledge Exchange Fellow, Holly Flynn-Piercy (h.flynn-piercy2@salford.ac.uk)

or

Public and Community Engagement Officer, Dan Williamson, (d.williamson2@salford.ac.uk).

Community of Practice #2 with Prof Chloe James

In the second in our series of Community of Practice for Engagement events we welcomed **Prof Chloe James**, a **microbiologist** who studies **phages**. Prof James told us her engaged research story and how after joining Salford, her public engagement work '*ramped up massively*' when Prof Andy Miah joined the University and '*dared me to get a bit more exciting*' with Sci-comm work.

To summarise this engaged research project, bacteriophages can help with antimicrobial resistance to antibiotics and become an alternative therapy for viral infections. But, phages are a type of virus, and this has a negative public perception in the treatment of disease, (who wants to drink a vial of virus?) Therefore, public engagement and knowledge exchange are essential to better understand and challenge these perceptions, to pave the way for new phage technology treatments in the future.

Here are some quotes pulled from her presentation that cover key themes, ideas, experiments and techniques used in engaging the public in the research.

Inspired by interactions with colleagues and the public...

In 2015 at Manchester Science Festival Prof James discovered that it was '*really quite exciting to see how interested and excited members of the public were when they saw with their own eyes what their bacteria [a sample taken from their skin] made [on a petri dish] and also when they got this chance to be creative.*'

Connecting the research to real-world public interest creates meaning and purpose...

'Over the last sort of 10 years, people have really got over that barrier [this idea that microbes are bad and caused disease] and are now quite accepting of the fact that microorganisms are really crucial for our health. And I can't say that that's all down to me, but maybe we played a tiny little part in that.'

'There's a genuine, real, real, real public interest [because of the threat of antimicrobial resistance and phages can help combat that] I feel it because I've been building up my sort of public engagement and sci-com skills. I'm really excellently placed to engage with the public because I think the government needs to understand about phages. But actually, I think there's a big conversation that needs to be had with the general public and also with other people from other sectors so that people can understand what phages can do, but also what phages can't do.'

It is invaluable to work with students from other schools and disciplines as well as artists to gather different perspectives

'I genuinely feel passionately that engaging and working together and co-creating things with creative people that aren't necessarily scientists or experts really helps to kind of create a message that the public can engage with and be interested in.'

'Usually when I present this information, it's quite dry. It's diagram showing what happens and it's quite boring. So the fact that we've engaged with our [animation and creative tech] students to create, you know, I never would have thought of presenting it

like that. But I think it's genuinely beautiful. And now I use that in my teaching as well. And I've used that conferences and I think it's really, really visual and engaging.'

'I had a couple of sessions with these students where I told them about our research and about phage, and I gave them some basic facts and they came up with their brief was to come up with a one minute animation that told some sort of story about phages or excited people about phages and all the students chose a younger audience to be their target audience'

'It conveyed the science in a very different way, and it absolutely did capture the imagination of the younger audiences at the festival who sat with his headphones on and watched. And I could hear them giggling with delight, watching these cartoons.'

Check out all the animations here:

<https://scicomm.space/royal-society-our-animations>

Embracing Technology

'What happens in reality in a real life situation when this [phage infesting a bacteria] is happening? So we created [a virtual reality lung](#). And this is where I think it's a real fantastic application for virtual reality tools cause as a microbiologist and privileged I get to see bacteria and viruses every day. And you know, in my mind's eye I can picture exactly what's happening. And so the concepts are really alive for me and in my head all the time. But for most people, these are really alien concepts, and grasping them is really quite hard. So virtual reality is a way that we can kind of draw people into that world so that they can see what's happening.'

'And so we teamed up [\[with artist\] Paul Miller](#) on the slide here and this is his studio [slide left], which is like the coolest place I've ever been. And full of wires and guitars and synths and stuff. And this is where he created this virtual reality lung, along with [Richard England from Reflex Arc](#). So we've built up quite a relationship over the last five or six years on various projects and we can work with each other quite well where I described the concept and he sort of creates simulation of it.'

[\[On the Microcosmic installation\]](#) 'I really gave Paul freedom to sort of do what you wanted with this because it was primarily our exhibition [and] he was playing with ideas of scale. Phages are absolutely tiny. You can't see them. People don't know they exist, but they have these monumental effects on the universe, so he was playing [with this, and] wanted it to feel quite close. Like you're kind of inside the body when you're in there, but also that there are endless possibilities with this idea of space and stars. And so, I think he did a really fantastic job at conveying these concepts of phages without hitting you with any kind of facts or science or anything like that. And as people came out of the room, they really wanted to talk with us'

Making the most of university resources, especially the Morson Maker Space.

'We've worked quite closely with the [\[Morson\] maker space](#) and what I've really had this idea of wanting to have this big, physical object that people could get their hands on and do a phage infection themselves and see what could happen with their own eyes. So I kind of drew some pictures and went to the makerspace to ask them. Can we make [these models](#)? And they did so. It took us about six months in development of back and forth and [they] designed different prototypes'

Connecting with the public through experiences and activities whilst collecting data and impact

'I was really surprised that people that came in, I think because they've been around the art exhibition [Microcosmic] and they were really excited by what they've seen. They wanted to find out more. So they sat with us and they would sit for half an hour [making these \[cardboard model\] phage](#) and really quizzing us about phages. And we had these really deep conversations with mainly with families but with all kinds of audiences. And I think it's a great way to have those deeper conversations.'

'Giving someone a [a temporary transfer] tattoo is a fantastic thing to do because it takes a couple of minutes and so you've got this real close engagement opportunity where you're touching somebody they can't get away and it's quite relaxing. You can have a conversation where you're not having eye contact with people and we've got some really, really rich conversations that way when we're giving people tattoos and then we could count how many tattoos did we give? How many stickers did we give away? And that gave us an idea of how many people we'd engaged with properly, rather than just counting that they were there.'

'40% of people say they never heard of Phage before, so we knew that we had had some sort of impact. It's not rich enough for an impact case study, but it starts to build a narrative [pathway to impact] for us about how many people are aware of phages in the

country, and this got picked up by some media. We got a really nice interview with the [BBC] World Service and that obviously reached lots more people as well.'

You can watch the full presentation on [catch up here](#) including a Q&A with colleagues from across the University.

You can also [Watch Prof James' Inaugural Professorial Lecture here](#)

Visit our Engage Sci-comm.space here to find out more about the project: <https://scicomm.space/rs22>

Please join our [Community of Practice for Engagement Teams site](#) to keep up to date with future meet ups, events, activities, and advice.



This is Ty D'Arcy with the models they created for their stop motion animation about a mis-understood phage at a bacterial Christmas party. The story

demonstrates how phages can help bacteria to adapt to their environment.

Our next Community of Practice for Engagement will take place on 13 June, 1-2pm on Teams. Marta Strzelecka from the Sustainability and Engagement Team who will talk about [Go Green Salford 23](#) as well as other projects environmental engagement projects.

Please email d.willamson2@salford.ac.uk to book a place.

We Invented the Weekend

A new festival for Salford comes to MediaCity Campus

We Think Big workshops at The University of Salford

The University of Salford is hosting workshops across the weekend, from stop motion to presenting the weather! Take a look for what's on offer below.

[We Think Big workshops at The University of Salford - We Invented the Weekend](#)

Did you know, the weekend as we know it was invented in Salford?

Up until the 19th century, everyone in the UK worked a 6-day week. In 1843, workers' rights activists launched a campaign to finish early on Saturdays in Greater Manchester. They won, and in doing so, invented the weekend – a gift to workers the world over. We Invented the Weekend is marking this enormous achievement with a new and imaginative free festival from Salford. One massive, colourful, exciting weekend of music, theatre, sport, workshops, dancing, laughs, and more to celebrate the joy of free time.

We Think Big talks by the University of Salford

We Think Big is a series of upbeat and topical talks and debates hosted by the University of Salford. This is your chance to hear from local and national industry experts on important subjects of today, with the aim of initiating conversation and driving positive change.

Saturday 3 June

- The Highs Achieved by Robert Lowes - How one man changed history
- How what we eat shapes who we are
- Travelling the world without costing the earth
- The grass can be greener in Salford - From a model green city to a more equal society
- Making work work for everyone
- Short and sweet - The four day working week

Sunday 4 June

- The devil wears fast fashion
- Happier Monday - music driving change
- Let's have a kickabout - how sport brings people together

Choose an event or two and book your free space below!

<https://www.weinventedtheweekend.com/events/we-think-big-by-university-of-salford/>

Lots of other free and exciting activity across the weekend:

<https://www.weinventedtheweekend.com/>

Our QR and RIPE funding pots have enabled more researchers to ever to develop and deliver public engagement events this year. There are loads coming up in June and July to look out for. Here are a couple of highlights for June.

Spatial Audio Festival '23 - 22nd June, MediaCity

In the Heart of MediaCity UK, join industry experts to share their insights through talks, demonstrations, discussions, and workshops.

Featuring unique live performance demonstrations through d&b's spatial audio soundscape system featuring **808 State's Graham Massey, The Cinematic Orchestra's guitarist Stuart McCallum**, and more.

Spatial audio is an innovative technology that spans various sectors such as Post-Production, Gaming, VR, Music, Events & Performance, Theatre, Consumer & Pro Audio Manufacturing, and more. This event will ignite cross-industry conversations and collaboration, providing attendees with a fun and engaging experience.

Our partners include industry leaders such as, Avid Technologies, d&b Audiotechnik, BBC R&D, Tube UK, Mediaspec, Salford University, UKAN, and more.



Book your free place here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/spatial-audio-festival-23-tickets-634667175607>

Vera's Not Alone - A Nested Cinema experience

Vera's Not Alone is a short story written and developed for Nested Cinema. Vera is unique. Vera might be just like you. Vera is a human being. Vera is a survivor, in a strange near-future world that is lonely and uncertain. But she is not alone...

Come and meet Vera, and experience her world at the Nested Cinema

Nested Cinema is a new immersive experience that complicates the boundaries between the physical and the virtual, between the real and the imaginary.

Nested Cinema reimagines film through orchestrating smart technology and devices across three distinct layers of experience – traditional screens, the installation space, and virtual reality – extending cinematic atmospheres across the three nested layers, giving rise to a new immersive mode of dramatic fiction.

Media City University of Salford Campus, 27-30 June 2023

Book your free place for the opening celebration here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/veras-not-alone-a-nested-cinema-experience-private-view-tickets-640567433437>

You may have missed...

Book now for these other great events in June and July

SPARC 2023 - 5 & 6 July 2023

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Salford Postgraduate Annual Research Conference SPARC is a forum for developing research, offering a space for postgraduate researchers from all disciplines to exchange ideas. Taking part will enable you to actively engage with Salford's PGR communi...

[Find out more about SPARC 2023 and book your free place here](#)

Celebration of Innovation - 2023 We warmly invite you to join us in celebrating the research, enterprise and engagement across the University. The in-person event at Peel Park, will celebrate and recognise the real-world impact University of Salford...

Dont forget to Vote for the Best Public Engagement Initiative [here](#)

3 Minute Thesis™

Our annual [Three Minute Thesis™](#) competition will take place on **Monday 26th June** this year and is a great opportunity to hone those all- important communication skills which are essential for public engagement, impact and funding bids. The winner will be announced at our SPARC prizegiving and they will be put forward into the national [Vitae](#) competition.

[Book your place to watch the Three Minute Thesis Final here.](#)

Other highly recommended events this month:

Babel Lecture 2023: Robin Ince

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The Babel Lecture 2023 Robin Ince 'Weapons of empathy How the written word lets us walk in the boots and minds of others'.

Robin Ince is a comedian, author, broadcaster and science communicator. He is best known as the co-host of the BBC Radio 4 ser...

MUSIC AWARDS NIGHT

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An end of year celebration event, featuring various performances and marking the achievements and highlights of 2022/23. This event includes the announcement and presentation of many awards. There are always special features to this celebration to br...

Creative Forces Event Day

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On 23rd June 2023 The University are organising an event with Health Education England in Mary Seacole Building that brings together children (aged 11-16) from schools across GM that have a parent or carer in the UK Armed Forces. The event is aime...

Exploring Legacies of Empire: Perspectives from the Global South

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About this event

We welcome 16-24 year olds to take part in a series of interactive workshops that explore the impacts of the British Empire on Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Join us as we discuss the ways in which colonialism has had huge effects...

Browse all engagement events happening across Salford on our new events calendar

If you would like your event adding to the calendar, please email d.williamson2@salford.ac.uk with short copy and good image or let me know if you would like support creating this.

Contact Us

For more information or to discuss any aspect of Public and Community Engagement at Salford, please get in touch with Dan Williamson.

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Maxwell 841

Research and Engagement with Impact Blog: REF2021 Results with Impact - Research and Engagement with Impact (salford.ac.uk)

Twitter: @EngageSalford

More Engagement Resources on our staff hub site: [Public & Community Engagement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Back to [Public & Community Engagement \(sharepoint.com\)](#).