

Estuary Festival & ARISE

Riverfly writers in residence - project brief



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What we are looking for

- Contemporary writers with a strong track record and experience in creative writing (minimum 5 years of experience)
- Writers who can use their creative practice to respond thoughtfully to environmental and community-based work.
- Writers interested in being embedded within a citizen science project and following its development over a year.
- Writers able to observe, engage with, and interpret biodiversity and environmental data creatively.
- Must be available to attend the Riverfly Monitoring Training dates

The opportunity

[Estuary Festival](#) is looking for contemporary writers with a strong track record of experience who can use their creative practice to respond thoughtfully to environmental and community-based work.

Four writers to be embedded in the [ARISE](#) 'Riverfly Monitoring Initiative' (RMI) taking place in four different coastal locations: Minster (Kent), Mayland (Essex), Coldfairgreen (Suffolk) and Ingoldisthorpe (Norfolk).

Each writer will follow the progress of this citizen science programme from training to continual monitoring over the course of one year.

The commissioned writer will then create a new piece of creative writing as a final outcome that will imaginatively celebrate and reveal the biodiversity discovered through the RMI process.

Each piece of writing will be brought together in a beautifully designed online publication, accompanied by photography taken in each location to share the findings of the project creatively with a wider audience.

These commissions are part of [ARISE](#), a major UK research project on coastal resilience. The programme combines environmental science, community engagement and contemporary writing to bring new perspectives to the challenges facing coastal landscapes.

What is Riverfly Monitoring?

Riverfly Monitoring is a citizen science initiative where trained volunteers survey freshwater rivers to assess their overall health. By sampling and counting specific pollution-sensitive aquatic invertebrates (such as mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies), volunteers can rapidly detect changes in water quality and act as an early warning system for pollution events.

About writer in residence (days, fees, expectations)

Each writer will be embedded in that particular location joining the training day alongside local volunteers. The commission will cover a total of 5 days to include:

- 3 days to cover time spent alongside the RMI volunteers during their initial RMI training final concluding event as well as joining any active RMI volunteer WhatsApp groups as an observer over the course of the 12-month monitoring period (see key dates [here](#))
- 1 day to produce a final written piece in response to the experience.
- 1 day attending an ARISE Community of Practice event to share the final piece of writing with the wider ARISE network.

Total fees for each writer in residence is £1,760 to cover the 5 days outlined above at £352 per day. Writers rates of pay are based on [Artist Union England](#) rates for artists with 5+ years of experience.

We are seeking writers that can travel easily to the locations for the training days detailed in the [timescale](#) section as we have a modest travel budget.

Timescale

Deadline for writers to register interest	Tue 28 July 2026
Interviews with shortlisted writers	w/b 10 August 2026
Writers contracted by Estuary Festival and introduced to the project	w/b 17 August 2026
Riverfly residency	Aug 2026 to Sep 2027
Initial Riverfly training for Ingoldisthorpe, Norfolk	29 August 2026
Initial Riverfly training for Coldfair Green/Knodishall, Suffolk	30 August 2026
Initial Riverfly training for Mayland, Essex	26 September 2026
Initial Riverfly training for Minster, Kent	27 September 2026
Initial Riverfly training back-up dates in case of weather cancellation	3-4 October 2026
Final Riverfly events on completion of 1 year monitoring	Sep 2027 (date tbc)
Final written works submitted to Estuary Festival	Dec 2027
ARISE COP event to share readings of written works	Feb 2028 (date tbc)
Publication designed & disseminated	Mar-May 2028 (date tbc)

Registering interest

Please register your interest by Tuesday 28 July by completing the short Google form here: <https://forms.gle/8TVjnZv4rNX62hsEA> The application questions are:

- Your name, address and email address
- Select the location you would like to work in and confirm you are available for the RMI training dates indicated
 - Ingoldisthorpe (Norfolk) I am available for training on Sat 29 August & 3-4 Oct
 - Coldfairgreen (Suffolk) I am available for training on Sun 30 August & 3-4 Oct
 - Mayland (Essex) I am available for training on Sat 26 September & 3-4 Oct
 - Minster (Kent) I am available for training on Sun 27 September & 3-4 Oct
- Please share a link to your CV or artist bio
- Please share 2-3 examples of your writing
- Up to 200 words to explain why you are interested in this opportunity

About ARISE

‘Advancing Resilience and Innovation for a Sustainable Environment’ (or ARISE) is a ground-breaking research project, funded by [UKRI](#), which seeks to develop resilience within the UK’s coastal seas and communities.

Over the course of five years, the project team will work with coastal communities across the Norfolk-to-Kent coastlines to design and test different ‘interventions’, or ways of tackling difficult and long-standing problems.

At the end of the project, we will have a powerful and practical toolkit which local councils and other organisations can use to address the challenges facing our coast.

The team, together with coastal community members, will propose, develop, and evaluate an intervention framework to practically address complex coastal challenges such as climate change, coastal realignment, demographic shift, inequality, poverty, infrastructure development and health-related challenges.

ARISE is an inclusive collaboration among local, regional, and national authorities, coastal residents, heritage groups, and people who care about UK coasts; experts in policy analysis, cultural engagement, creative practice, health sciences, biological sciences, computer science, pollution management, disaster studies, environmental sciences, economics, and geography.

The project team is led by Professor Gina Yannitell Reinhardt, Department of Government, University of Essex, and comprises investigators from across Eastern Arc Universities and beyond (Aberystwyth, Birkbeck, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Manchester, and Suffolk) and other regional partner organisations including the Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science and Estuary Festival. See more about ARISE [here](#).

About Estuary Festival

Estuary Festival shines a spotlight on the Thames Estuary region through high-quality contemporary arts programmes that celebrate the stories, places and people of the Thames Estuary.

Embracing the South Essex and North Kent coastlines as well as the river itself, Estuary Festival is a catalyst to embed long-term change. Through ambitious, multi-arts programmes inspired by the Thames Estuary and its connections with the rest of the world, Estuary Festival explores the rich, often overlooked stories of estuary people and places.

The third edition of the large-scale festival ‘Vessels’ took place from 21-29 June. Estuary Festival is now moving into its exciting next phase of commissioning, of which the ARISE programme is a key part.

We see this project as crucial in surfacing the themes to inform the next edition and will be seeking ways to extend and build on this work. See more about Estuary Festival [here](#).

Contact

If you have any questions about this opportunity please email info@estuaryfestival.com with *ARISE Riverfly* in the subject line.