



Being Human festival: 11–20 November 2021

Being Human Café application guidelines

About Being Human Cafés

Being Human Cafés offer a simple and fun way for people to get involved in the festival. Based around the idea that even the most complicated research can be encountered in the time that it takes to have a cup of tea or coffee, Being Human Cafés are all about offering a really good, effective way for people to encounter some new ideas in the humanities. Whether in digital form or in person (Covid restrictions allowing), they can be really simple: just tea, coffee, chat. Alternatively, they can be more ambitious, bringing in elements of performance, storytelling, games, art classes and quizzes.

With Being Human Cafés, we've tried to do some of the thinking for you, and to offer a 'ready to go' format that you can use to get involved in the festival. We've created a toolkit, and there will be lots of other Being Human Cafés popping up across the UK. Using the toolkit as a guide, you can still make your Being Human Cafés special and memorable. You can theme them, add appropriate food and drink, and generally make them exciting and locally relevant.

So, as well as reading the guidelines below, make sure that you look at our [Being Human Cafés toolkit](#) before putting in an application. It really tells you everything you need to know to plan a successful event!

Being Human festival 2021

Being Human festival returns in November 2021. Amidst continued uncertainty, we still aim to deliver a national celebration of the humanities that inspires people and shows the resilience, creativity and imagination in communities across the UK. To enable planning to begin, we are committing to a **hybrid-delivery festival** this November that combines the best of online engagement with safe in-person activities. Together we will build on the best elements of Being Human 2020 to offer a national festival of public engagement taking place both in-person and online.

Although digital delivery helped expand the festival's horizons, it will continue to champion its core principles: Being Human remains a **place-based festival** that emphasises interaction, working with communities outside academia and those less typically engaged with humanities culture (people who might not normally go to a public university event, or an exhibition in an art gallery, for example). Whether digital, or in-person (socially distanced), we will support innovative, participatory, and creative activities that foster genuine, two-way connections with people not usually

engaged with academic research. As ever, events should be designed to facilitate mutual learning between researchers and publics.

Our festival theme in 2021 is 'Renewal', which can be used as broad inspiration for shaping events around research and will help promote connections within a very diverse programme. More on the theme can be found in the final section of this document.

We are especially interested in how humanities research might help us to 'renew' our understanding of what it means to be human in 2021, including our relationships with the places around us, how we work and play, how we understand identity and culture, and how we interact with the planet and nature.

What support is available?

Being Human is committed to supporting everyone taking part in the festival. The festival team offer advice and guidance to all organisers and makes available resources to help give activities the best possible chance of success.

Available support and resources for café applications include:

- a training "Masterclass" series run throughout the festival year for practical advice with designing, planning, promotion and delivery of your project;
- public engagement toolkits, resources and helpful advice from the festival team;
- guides to promoting your event that contain hints and tips about marketing and press;
- copies of Being Human print and digital materials geared towards promoting the national festival and access to other marketing materials (e.g. banners and badges) to promote your activity;
- templates you can use to produce your own marketing materials (posters, banners, digital and PowerPoint templates etc.);
- support from the central Being Human social media accounts.

You may also be invited to take part in centrally organised festival activities such as the festival launch.

What criteria are there for Being Human Café applications?

Being Human Café applications stand a good chance of being accepted into the festival programme. However, all events must meet the general eligibility criteria for taking part in the festival. They must

- demonstrate aspects of humanities research in ways that are entertaining, accessible and relevant for non-specialist audiences;
- have direct involvement from a humanities researcher in delivering (not just planning) the activity, to ensure that research expertise informs the activity that audiences encounter; *

- be held during the festival dates be completely free to attend. This includes free access to venues where events are being held (such as heritage sites or museums that charge an entrance fee);
- respond to the interests and needs of a clearly defined audience;
- be well thought through and achievable within the timeframe;
- be held off-campus wherever possible (excluding campus-based theatres etc.);
- consider issues around diversity in the speakers and researchers represented at events (e.g. in terms of gender, age, ethnic diversity);
- are held using accessible platforms/ venues;
- be no more than 90 minutes in length, or an hour if online.

* See our [FAQs](#) for our definition of a professional researcher. This could mean simply inviting a university researcher to speak at an event.

Activities that are not suitable for the festival programme are ones that:

- have only a tenuous link to humanities research (see our [FAQs](#) for our definition);
- are unrepresentative, for example 'about us without us' activities that address issues without directly including perspectives from people impacted by them;
- feature 'non-diverse speaker line-ups such as 'manels';
- are not designed to appeal to a clearly defined non-specialist audience;
- make use of platforms, venues or formats that have not been carefully chosen, are inaccessible, or are unlikely to appeal to a public audience;
- may be unsuitable for a public festival context (i.e. highly sensitive or emotionally triggering topics);
- are over-ambitious and thus at high risk of failure;
- are deemed to be unlikely to succeed in the context of ongoing restrictions/ uncertainty around Covid-19.

It is also important that all Being Human activities consider issues around diversity in the speakers and researchers represented at events (e.g. in terms of gender, age, ethnic diversity), and that activities are held in accessible venues.

Application process

The Being Human Café application form is available on our website at www.beinghumanfestival.org/apply. Letters of support should be provided from any cultural and community partners named on your application. Applications should be made on the correct form and returned via email to: apply.beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

- Friday 27 August (5pm) – Deadline for Being Human Café applications
- By mid September – Notification of outcome of applications

Further information about the festival and the level of support available when organising your activity can be found on the [FAQs](#) section of our website. If you have any questions, please email beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

2021 festival theme: 'Renewal'

The past twelve months have brought enormous challenges across the globe. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, have been world-changing and are from over. Whilst we continue to live through a moment of unprecedented challenge, strain, and change, however, one thing is clear for many people: whatever follows on from Covid-19 must, if nothing else, be an opportunity to do things differently. Whether in relation to our political systems, the cities in which we live, the ways in which we work and spend our leisure time, our relationship with the planet and the natural world, the current historical moment offers an opportunity to rethink, to do things differently, to *renew*.

In 2020 Being Human festival imagined 'New Worlds'. In 2021 it is time to renew our sense of Being Human.

This year's Being Human festival will focus on 'renewal'. Across the humanities we are interested in new ideas, new generations, new ways of doing things, new responses. This year sees a new president take office in America; Britain and Europe embark on a new relationship; and the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow will focus the attention of the world on finding new solutions to the climate emergency and ways to address it, from renewable energy to a renewed social contract between humans and the world that they inhabit. Cityscapes are being renewed, with monuments and public history being interrogated and interpreted in new ways. Different ways of living are being considered, different identities are being explored, and the pandemic has pushed people all over the world to invent new ways of being social, being professional, and being human.

Of course, 'renewals' don't have to be only contemporary. Renewals can also revisit past times of change or disruption, discoveries that altered our world, or renew our ideas about the past. They can be about breakthroughs in art, literature, film. They can be moments in which national cultures and identities were reconsidered, reimagined, realigned.

Across all the disciplines of the humanities, we are keen to support projects that help us think of ways of renewing approaches to:

- Health
- Faith
- Work & play
- Identity
- Climate

These are just starting points to get you thinking though. Surprise us! The main thing that we are looking for are projects that help us to demonstrate why the humanities are relevant to people's lives and how they help us understand what it means to be human.