



For Immediate Release

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Basingstoke Festival set for a flying start with free events for all the family

Flying astronauts and singing jukeboxes will help draw the crowds to Basingstoke Festival's first weekend of creative arts and entertainment later this month.

The return of the popular Basingstoke Festival, which was cancelled last year due to COVID-19, has a fabulous programme of open air theatrical productions, music and dance performances, creative workshops and much more, planned from Friday 25 June to Sunday 11 July.

With health and safety measures in place to protect the public at all events, the festival will launch with a socially distanced town centre procession on Friday 25 June, featuring the Bollywood Brass Band working in collaboration with local dance company Kala The Arts.

Topping the bill is the Urban Astronaut – landing on Basingstoke town centre on Saturday 26 June and Sunday 27 June. Artists from the Highly Sprung Performance Company will combine storytelling with stunning design and an aerial performance, using a unique travelling flying machine that suspends the performer 20ft in the air.

The processional piece will take place on Saturday at the Top of the Town, moving through London Street and Winchester Street. On Sunday, a static performance will take place in the centre of Eastrop Park.

Town centre visitors can also hit the high notes with Bootworks' two classic 1950s juke boxes on both days. The audience will be invited to sing and dance along as classic pop music videos from the Beatles, Spice Girls, Stevie Wonder and other pop favourites are recreated in a lip-syncing musical medley. Located within the Saturday market at the Top of the Town, Bootworks will perform 12 times between 10am and 3pm.

Pull on your dancing shoes for a community-led Social Dis-Dance by local dance choreographer Faye Cottrell, of Dance Phaze, in Basingstoke's Glebe Gardens – a workshop and a performance on Saturday 26 June for people of all ages wanting to find freedom through dance. The workshop and performance will take place, socially distanced, among the trees in the gardens.

Junk Jodie will be providing COVID-safe make and take environmentally-themed craft packs in Eastrop Park on Sunday for families to get involved in.

Other fun activities during the festival's launch weekend include Basing-Folk Tales by local storyteller and theatre-maker Josh Dixon of Pumpkin Pantos, which will bring favourite fairytale characters to Basingstoke on Saturday, and Grimm Tales, performed by Proteus Youth Theatre, on Saturday and Sunday.

Two dance acts with a difference will be performing - iRobot on Saturday, when a human and a robot will fly through the air on a trampoline, set to a background of electro rock in the amphitheatre space next to Festival Place. On Sunday, a French dance duo will present Lance Moi En L'Air – an acrobatic love story of international dance, circus and theatre skills.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Planning and Infrastructure Cllr Simon Bound said: "We are really excited to be bringing back Basingstoke Festival and the return of live art activities following a difficult year for everyone.

"It's returning with a flying start during the first weekend and there is a fantastic line-up of free outdoor performances and workshops, with something for children and adults of all ages to enjoy. We're making sure the events are all COVID safe, with social distancing measures in place, so come along and join in the summer festival fun."

More information on the outdoor arts programme of town centre activities can be found at www.basingstokefestival.co.uk/outdoorarts

For more information about the activities on offer during Basingstoke Festival, please visit www.basingstokefestival.co.uk. Follow Basingstoke Festival on social media for the latest updates on Facebook: [@basingstokefestival](https://www.facebook.com/basingstokefestival); Twitter: [@bstokefestival](https://twitter.com/bstokefestival) and Instagram: [@bstokefestival](https://www.instagram.com/bstokefestival)

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