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**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**Funding secured to support the creative industries in Bucks**

[Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](https://www.buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP), a partner in a consortium led by Royal Holloway, University of London, is delighted to be named by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as one of nine successful bids to host an ambitious Research and Development partnership aimed at boosting the UK’s creative sector.

The project, part of the [AHRC](https://ahrc.ukri.org/) Creative Industries Clusters Programme, will be known as [StoryFutures.](http://storyfutures.com/) It will bring together universities, world leading creative and technology companies with the region’s SMEs to tackle the challenge of next-generation storytelling: how the creative sector will harness technologies such as immersive, including Augmented, Virtual, Mixed and Cross Reality (AR, VR, MR, XR), smart devices and Artificial Intelligence, to engage audiences in new experiences.

Andrew M. Smith, Chair of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “Realising the enormous potential of the Creative Industries and Digital Sectors is vitally important to the Buckinghamshire economy. Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP are delighted to have been able to support this successful Story Futures submission and look forward to helping this vibrant creative cluster develop and build on the international reputations of our world leading assets including Pinewood and the National Film and TV School.”

**more…**

**Funding secured to support the creative industries in Bucks: 2**

Buckinghamshire is at the forefront of the creative industries and has one of the highest proportions of employment in the sector in the UK with over 17,200 jobs across 4,430 businesses.

StoryFutures’ work will cover an area to the west of London and includes Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire.

Professor James Bennett from The Royal Holloway, said: “We are delighted to have secured funding for this exciting projects. This award recognise the world-leading multi-disciplinary research at Royal Holloway and the strength of the amazing partnerships we have forged.

“The UK has a world leading reputation in storytelling, whether that’s TV, film, theatre or computer gaming. We also have great technology companies and the challenge for the future will be to bring them together and find new ways of telling those great stories.

“Consumers increasingly want to become part of the story and enjoy an immersive experience. Our work will provide an R&D platform to develop those experiences. We will enable innovative new products, content and services,” James added.

The project will immediately create 10 jobs at Royal Holloway, but the aim is to support the growth of creative businesses in the region to create many new jobs.

Buckinghamshire is the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain where, for well over a decade, more businesses have started here than anywhere else in the UK. This is borne of the heartbeat of enterprise, which is manifest in a propensity to act; and a

propensity to successfully exploit new ideas. It is no accident that we are the Birthplace of the Paralympics at Stoke Mandeville, the creative film engine for James Bond and Star Wars at Pinewood Studios, and the joint home of the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit.

**Ends**

**Photo caption:** *BTVLEP looking forward to helping this vibrant creative cluster develop and build on the international reputations of its world leading assets including Pinewood and the National Film and Television School.*

**Note to editors**

The [**Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership**](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County.

[**Buckinghamshire Business First**](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities.  BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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