**World-famous visitor attraction, Strawberry Field, opens its gates for free to celebrate 5th anniversary**

Marking five years since The Salvation Army’s Strawberry Field opened its iconic red gates to the public on 14th September 2019, the world-famous visitor attraction is inviting the public to celebrate this special milestone with free entry to its exhibition and gardens.

Strawberry Field, an iconic Liverpool tourist attraction that has captivated visitors worldwide, will kick off its anniversary celebrations on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th September. During this weekend, visitors can enjoy free access to the interactive exhibition and garden tour, which includes the globally significant ‘Imagine’ piano, the must-see Sgt Pepper inspired bandstand, and the original, famous red gates, as well as enjoying music and children’s activities.

Since its grand opening in 2019, Strawberry Field has transformed into more than just a place of historical significance - it has evolved into a symbol of peace, love and hope. Over the past five years, Strawberry Field has welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors - from local residents to international fans and tourists, and from famous faces to socially isolated members of the community.

The site has not only been a place of cultural pilgrimage, it has played host to a variety of significant milestones since it opened half a decade ago, including the display of John Lennon’s ‘Imagine’ piano since his 80th birthday, the installation of the Ukrainian Peace Monument ahead of the Eurovision Song Contest; the grand opening of the Strawberry Field Bandstand; and the unveiling of a limited edition of John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band’s seminal record, ‘Give Peace a Chance’; all of which visitors can enjoy for free throughout the anniversary weekend.

Strawberry Field continues to honour John Lennon’s legacy and the work of the children’s home by offering a space for peace, reflection, and connection with nature, music and art - just as Lennon himself once experienced. From renowned singer-songwriters and international Beatles fans to local schools, residents and neighbours, Strawberry Field remains a place of sanctuary for all who visit.

At the heart of Strawberry Field’s success have been the transformative Steps at Strawberry Field programmes which over the past five years have supported almost 300 people into paid employment, higher education and meaningful volunteering roles. The core Steps to Work initiative empowers people with learning difficulties or barriers to employment, guiding them towards meaningful careers, making a lasting impact on their lives and the wider community. Impressively, over 40% of Steps to Work graduates achieve paid work, surpassing the national average of 4.8% for adults with learning difficulties.

**Major Kathleen Versfeld, mission director at Strawberry Field, said:**

“Celebrating the fifth anniversary of Strawberry Field is a testament to the commitment of The Salvation Army to keep this special place open to visitors, the power of John Lennon’s legacy and the hard work of a committed, resourceful local team. We have seen the positive impact responsible tourism can have on communities and have felt honoured to welcome visitors from around the globe, each individual contributing to the rich tapestry that makes this place so special. Our mission has always been to create a space where visitors not only experience the beauty of this iconic site, but also contribute to the legacy of positive change brought about by our Steps to Work programme. Seeing young people arrive at Strawberry Field anxious and unsure, only to leave with newfound confidence and hope for a bright future fills me with immense pride and inspires me to make the next five years even more fruitful.”

**Julia Baird, Honorary Patron of Strawberry Field and John Lennon’s sister, said:**

"I have been delighted to see how well Strawberry Field has developed over its first five years and I am sure John would have been delighted too. It has come from nothing to being one of Liverpool's leading and award winning attractions in such a short time. I am particularly thrilled and proud of the work of their Steps training hub which has engaged with hundreds of adults with various difficulties and inspired them to realise their dream of a meaningful working life. I hope the community will give every support for the continuation of this vital work."

For information on Strawberry Field’s fifth year anniversary weekend activities, visit https://strawberryfieldliverpool.com/gates-open-all-5-years-strawberry-field

For more information about Strawberry Field, visit the [**website**](https://www.strawberryfieldliverpool.com), and on social media - [**Twitter**](https://twitter.com/strawberryfield)**,** [**Facebook**](https://www.facebook.com/StrawberryFieldLiverpool/)and [**Instagram**](https://www.instagram.com/strawberryfieldliverpooluk/?hl=en).

**Editor’s notes**

**Employment Statistics**

British Association for Supported Employment 2022

**Strawberry Field**

Strawberry Field is an award-winning visitor attraction located in Woolton, south Liverpool, located at the iconic site immortalised by John Lennon in The Beatles' hit, ‘Strawberry Fields Forever’.

Telling the story of John Lennon's childhood and the writing and recording of the iconic song ‘Strawberry Fields Forever’, the Strawberry Field attraction is home to an interactive visitor exhibition which includes the actual ‘Imagine’ piano, the original red gates, and the magical gardens where John played, climbed trees and dreamed as a child.

Through archival footage, photographs, timelines and specialist media guides, visitors to Strawberry Field can experience where John Lennon played and what happened behind the famous red gates.

Profits from the visitor experience and commercial operations go towards keeping the gates open for the good of the local community; and to help fund Steps at Strawberry Field, a series of programmes aimed at those with learning difficulties or other barriers to employment.

**The Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army is an international Christian church and registered charity which has been transforming lives for more than 150 years. Working in 132 countries worldwide, The Salvation Army offers friendship, practical help and support for people at all levels of need. In the UK and Republic of Ireland this work includes more than 650 community churches and social centres. Registered Charity Nos. 214779, 215174 and in Scotland SC009359, SC037691. For more information visit the website [www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/)

Strawberry Field was purchased by The Salvation Army in 1934. The organisation opened the site as a children’s home in 1936 and for nearly 70 years the site supported some of Liverpool’s most vulnerable children until it closed in 2005.

A young John Lennon lived nearby and played in the grounds, eventually inspiring him to write the song Strawberry Fields Forever.