



PRESS RELEASE – Wednesday 16 May

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NEW MOVEMENT TO HELP END HOMELESSNESS ANNOUNCED BY THEATRE COMPANY CARDBOARD CITIZENS

- NEW GRASS-ROOTS MOVEMENT FROM AWARD-WINNING THEATRE COMPANY CARDBOARD CITIZENS TO HELP END HOMELESSNESS
- THE CAMPAIGN *CITIZENS DO* IS THE ORGANISATION'S LATEST INITIATIVE, FOLLOWING RECENT UK TOUR OF ALI TAYLOR'S *CATHY*
- SIGN UP FOR THE MOVEMENT AT WWW.CITIZENSDO.COM OR FOLLOW ON SOCIAL MEDIA VIA #CITIZENSDO

Award-winning theatre company **Cardboard Citizens** has today announced *Citizens Do*, a grass-roots movement which aims to engage and empower everyday citizens to help tackle homelessness. The campaign has been gaining momentum over the past three months as Cardboard Citizens toured the UK with *Cathy*, working with audience members to collate suggestions on how the public can help people with experience of homelessness. Over 1000 people so far have signed up for the movement and Cardboard Citizens is now calling on the general public to sign up by Wednesday 23 May at www.citizensdo.com or share their actions using #CitizensDo.

Inspired by **Ken Loach** and **Jeremy Sandford's** ground-breaking film *Cathy Come Home*, **Ali Taylor's** *Cathy* continued Cardboard Citizens' exploration of the state of housing and homelessness. Based on true stories, the timely drama explored the impact of spiralling social housing costs, gentrification and the challenges of forced relocation through the compelling story of one family. Following each performance the cast discussed the issues raised in the play with audience members, asking for suggestions on how the general public could be empowered to make a difference and tackle homelessness.

Over the course of the three month tour, hundreds of ideas were collated, ranging from addressing issues around stigma to offering spare rooms to homeless people. Inspired by these suggestions, people who signed up to be part of the movement have received an action or mission to tackle each week. The next stage of *Citizens Do* will see Cardboard Citizens continue to build the movement, helping enable people to make a difference. The organisation has worked with leading graphic artist **Patrick Thomas**, who has designed each of the actions which will be emailed each week to those who sign up for the movement.

Citizens Do marks the latest initiative by Cardboard Citizens to use theatre and the arts to reach the most marginalised in society and make a positive difference. During the original tour from 2016-2017, *Cathy* asked audiences for their ideas as to what government and policy makers could do to end homelessness. This resulted in hundreds of Cathy Law

suggestions, the top five of which were presented by invitation to the House of Lords at the second reading of the Homelessness Reduction Bill.

Adrian Jackson, Cardboard Citizens' Artistic Director said: *“After the grandeur of the House of Lords last year, we are excited to live up to our name and try seeing what we mere citizens can do to make the world a better place. It’s an exciting experiment in using theatre to mobilise people.”*

Kate Winslet, CBE said: *“As Cardboard Citizens’ Ambassador for more than 10 years, I’ve repeatedly seen how the company use art to effect change. Their work is always both powerful and inspiring, and I’m excited to see how the Citizens Do movement grows. Sign up and take part!”*

Jon Sparkes, CEO of Crisis, said: *“As a society, we need to address the root causes of homelessness to end it once and for all. In the meantime, we need to do as much as we can to give people the support they need to leave homelessness behind for good. The Citizens Do campaign, a legacy to the powerful and poignant performances of Cardboard Citizens’ Cathy, reminds us that we all have a part to play when it comes to tackling and ending homelessness.”*

To date, **Cathy** has been seen by more than 12,000 people across theatres, hostels, prisons and day centres in 35 towns and cities nationwide. Nearly 15% of audience members for Cathy across all tours were from homeless or at-risk backgrounds, including more than 590 vulnerable people who attended free performances at prisons and hostels. The 2018 tour visited 10 venues across Cornwall, London, Scotland and Wales, culminating in a run at London’s Albany Theatre from 1 to 5 May.

Citizens Do is part of Cardboard Citizens’ wider social change and campaigning work, sharing stories, challenging perceptions and stigma, and changing lives. Cardboard Citizens are currently supporting a group of young people with lived experience of homelessness to become **Citz Young Storytellers**; advocates and campaigners for issues around youth homelessness. Later this year, Cardboard Citizens will be running its first **Arts for Social Change event**, bringing together artists and campaigners to explore how arts and creativity can create change. Cardboard Citizens is also using Forum Theatre to train Local Authorities to improve their support of homeless people in light of the new Homelessness Reduction Act.

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

To sign up for Citizens Do visit www.citizensdo.com and share actions using #CitizensDo

About Cardboard Citizens

Cardboard Citizens is an award-winning theatre company and one of the world’s leading practitioners of Forum Theatre. It has toured across hostels, day centres and prisons for the past 26 years, bringing theatre to the most marginalised in society. Through bold and immersive theatre, Cardboard Citizens break down conventional divisions between audiences and performers. Past productions include the Evening Standard Award-winning

Mincemeat, Pericles and Timon (with RSC) The Beggar's Opera (with ENO), The Lower Depths, A Few Man Fridays and Home Truths at London's The Bunker.

Cathy was made possible with the support of Arts Council England, Prudential PLC, Moondance Foundation, Shanly Foundation, St Petroc's Society, Royal Victoria Hall Foundation, Hyde Park Place Estate Charity and the Unity Theatre Trust.

Citz Young Storytellers, part of Cardboard Citizens' ACT NOW young people's programme, is supported by funders including Comic Relief and the Big Lottery Fund, as part of the #iwill fund, an initiative of the Big Lottery Fund, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Step up to Serve, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the Cabinet Office. Other funders include St James's Place Foundation, Henry Smith Charity and Arts Council England

