

# Ashford Place mental health festival Shout London to return

**F**ollowing the success of the inaugural SHOUT LONDON last year, the mental health film and arts festival, Ashford Place have announced the dates for this year's event.

The second SHOUT LONDON will take place on Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 October, coinciding with World Mental Health Day and be held at The Kiln Cinema, Kilburn High Road on Day 1 and The Crown Hotel, Cricklewood on Day 2.

Ashford Place held their first mental health and arts festival SHOUT LONDON in October last year with Eastenders star Michelle Collins, who has long been an Ashford Place patron, and presenter, model and actress Gail Porter two of the big names to take part.

The emphasis of this year's Festival will be neurodiversity.

As with last year, SHOUT LONDON will see Ashford Place collaborating with mental health campaigner Jon Salmon and WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR HEAD? whose mission is to explore the secret inner workings of the mind through live performance and discussion.

The ticketed, free to attend event for over 18's encompasses film, music, theatre, dance and poetry.

Ashford Place CEO Danny Maher, who has worked closely with festival director Carey Fitzgerald in developing SHOUT LONDON, highlighted the success of the inaugural Event.



Harriet Thorpe and Michelle Collins at last year's inaugural SHOUT LONDON

Maher said: "We are realising our long-term plan of building SHOUT LONDON into one of the most diverse cultural annual events in the calendar. By engaging with communities, the festival celebrates the artistic expression of people with experience of mental health issues, exploring the relationship between creativity and the mind, while promoting positive mental health and well-being."

Carey Fitzgerald added: "One of the biggest compliments from last year's

SHOUT LONDON was when members of the audience asked us how many years the festival had been running, which was the biggest compliment for year one. Combining the subject of mental health with expression through the arts made total sense as everyone was so comfortable in discussing their experiences."

Festival Director Carey Fitzgerald, an Ashford Place trustee and Managing Director of Silver Mountain Productions and Irish Film and TV UK Chair, told The

Irish World previously how the festival came about: "Shout London really came out of an idea that I had with Danny Maher from Ashford Place."

"We were trying to think of a way we could combine my film career with all the wonderful work that Ashford Place do with health and well-being."

"So we came up with this idea of the film and arts festival."

"So Michelle being the fabulous patron that she is brought in a whole new dimension, because she brought in all her contacts. And that's how it all began."

Michelle Collins added: "There are a lot of festivals around but how apt to have a film festival about mental health awareness and well-being."

"I think it affects all of us in our everyday life now and so it's something that we all are living with, I think, with the current climate, with COVID."

"And a lot of filmmakers have also been affected by it so I think they are making films that are kind of about mental health as well in a positive way. Because life is about our mental health."

"It's not like 100 years ago when people didn't talk about it and it used to be a taboo subject."

"If people can see it in films, and they can go and see it, maybe it kind of resonates with things that are going on in their lives."

"And that's kind of what it's all about."

At last year's event Danny Maher told The Irish World what it meant to be launch-

ing the festival: "It's great, because Ashford Place is about helping to change people's lives."

"But we also want to change people's perceptions, and understanding of mental health and wellbeing, which of course applies to all of us."

"So this festival is our first attempt to really take the conversation out into the community and to the wider society and encourage people, encourage all of us to start talking about mental health and to find a way of making sure that mental health is portrayed in a positive and productive way."

"As I say, it applies to all of us and particularly in these post-COVID times and cost of living crisis, we all need to look after our wellbeing and indeed support each other."

"This festival is kind of the beginning of that conversation for us."

"If you've got mental health problems yourself, the last thing you want is people you know shying away from you or being embarrassed to talk to you."

"We want people to be mature in the way they respond to other people's mental health issues and be actually able to be somebody that can support them."

"We all have mental health issues in some way or another so it's about time, we need to talk more positively and productively and support each other."

The full programme for this year's festival will be announced soon.

More information at [www.shout.london](http://www.shout.london).

## DOUBLE BIRTHDAYS IRISH WORLD READERS' CELEBRATE

● Sligo native Maggie Conway celebrated her birthday at The Mazenod Social Club recently with Anna Redmond and McGinty. Congratulations Maggie!



● Celebrating his birthday Meath native Tom Monaghan with his wife Bridie at The Mazenod Social Club in Kilburn. Many happy returns, Tom! PHOTO: LUCIA BUTLER