

Edinburgh
International
Book Festival

**Trustee | Chair of Audit and Risk
Committee (ARC)
Recruitment Pack 2025**





Our Mission

To create a democratic, inclusive celebration of books and ideas which empowers creativity, exchange, and connection across communities.

Our Vision

To be a global hub which ignites exchange, celebrates books, writing and ideas, and empowers audiences to understand their relationship to the world, and the perspectives of others.



Background

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is a world-leading cultural festival, with democracy, creativity and ideas exchange at its heart. We celebrate the power of words and writing in all of their dynamic and imaginative forms, bringing diverse perspectives together, and empowering our audiences to deepen their understanding of our ever-changing world.

Since 1983, we have welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to engage with the world's greatest and emerging writers, thinkers, artists, and performers. Each year, we programme innovative events that broaden the horizons and enrich the minds of our audiences, both in Edinburgh and online. These take the form of on-stage conversations, workshops, creative masterclasses, think tanks, and more, all informed by a culture of open dialogue, curiosity about the perspectives of others, and active embracing of new ideas and experiences. Over the last four decades, we have continually transformed our Festival model to reflect our rapidly evolving world, and ensure our ongoing relevance, with a programme which platforms the most interesting and inspiring publishing from around the world, and balances today's most challenging topics with exploration of how we can work together towards a brighter future.

A registered charity, we are run by a passionate team who believe in the power of words and ideas to ignite imaginations, foster human connection, and challenge the status quo – as well as offer solace, nurture wellbeing, and spread joy. Our Festival aims not just to open up conversations, but to broaden them too: existing as a space at the heart of civil society where nuanced discussion can happen and a spectrum of perspectives can be explored. We believe this role, supporting and influencing public conversation, is vital to society and to the Festival's future.



“Thanks so much for these opportunities to get out and see these amazing book events, it has been life changing.”





At the heart of our Festival is a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and the creation of a truly democratic environment for the exchange of ideas and collaborative thinking. We give a platform to voices who are often overlooked and aim to break down barriers to access for those who might not typically see themselves as a book festival audience. More than just a summer festival, we work year-round with partners in the local community – with schools, libraries, prisons, hospitals, and other community hubs – with the aim of developing engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all backgrounds and ages. The Festival also makes hundreds of events available to watch online via a Pay What You Can model, offering audiences who cannot attend in person the opportunity to take part, and making the Festival truly global in nature.

In 2024, our evolution saw the beginning of a new chapter under the leadership of Festival Director, Jenny Niven. It was also our first year presenting the Festival in our new home of the Edinburgh Futures Institute – a cutting-edge university building created from the stunning renovation of the city’s old Royal Infirmary and positioned at the heart of the city’s Festival environment. We are excited about the opportunities this offers us to collaborate with new partners and share innovations and a wide range of voices with our audiences, both now and far into the future.

“The Book Festival has such a fun and immersive atmosphere.”



Programming Events

Across the hundreds of events in our Adults, Young Adults, Schools, and Children's programmes, the Book Festival offers audiences aged from 0 to 100 an active opportunity to engage with new and different perspectives on the world, create lasting memories through storytelling, fill their minds with fascinating knowledge, and discover the creative secrets of writers and artists. Recent events have included:

The masterful **Ian McEwan** is one of our greatest living writers. Ahead of the highly anticipated publication of his new novel, *What We Can Know*, McEwan reflects on a truly remarkable career which has produced so many works which are at once timeless and yet always remain in close conversation with current affairs, and looks towards to the stories he has yet to tell.

Sami Tamimi (co-author of award-winning cookbook *Falastin* and professional partner of Yotam Ottolenghi). From the personal to the political: what and how we eat says so much about who we are.

Scottish national treasure **Richard Holloway** on his new memoir, *Last Words*. Holloway shares the texts and music that have shaped him, reflects on a long life defined by great faith and grave doubt, and relates how he's found a gentle path between the two.

R F Kuang chatting about her highly anticipated page-turning thriller, *Katabasis*.

Beloved poet, novelist, playwright, and former Makar, **Jackie Kay** joins us with her latest poetry collection, *May Day*. These profound and urgent poems draw on Kay's decades of political activism, bringing influential figures from history to life, while interweaving her own personal experience of grief and loss, love and celebration.



“Excellent curation of writers and interviewers, which make for fascinating, in depth conversations – the Festival's unique strength in my view.”





Our Communities Programme centres on three core principles:

Welcoming People In

We work with five Edinburgh libraries on a long-term basis to co-create opportunities for local people to engage with the Book Festival. We foster relationships between professional authors/artists, the Book Festival team and local people; creatively exploring local issues and building a safe space for people to share their stories. We meet people in their local area throughout the year and break down attendance barriers to support them to join us on our Book Festival site in August as performers, participants and audience members.

Meeting People Where They Are

We work with partner organisations (including Spartans Community Foundation, The Royal Hospital for Children and Young People, Scottish Prison Service, The Ripple Project, CAMHS and Corstorphine Dementia Project) to bring the spirit of the Book Festival to people who, for various reasons, cannot access our physical events. We aim to combat isolation and create rich opportunities for engagement with the written word among vulnerable or unheard communities, enthusing readers across Scotland. We engage with people in a range of settings creating bespoke activities to suit each of their needs. Additionally, we provide a series of digital events for libraries, prisons and rural arts venues.

Quality

We engage talented, professional authors and artists to co-create, deliver and produce projects with community members, ensuring that both the process and creative outputs are of the highest standard. We work closely with our Site and Technical teams to ensure that any Book Festival events involving community participants are delivered with the same level of resources and high standard as our events with professional authors.

Communities Programme

Edinburgh International Book Festival Communities Programme brings together the very best from groups and organisations across the country with the energy and excitement of the August Book Festival. Produced in collaboration with a variety of partners, this programme of residencies, festivals and one-off events brings authors, artists and audiences together to inspire each other and to be inspired, to share stories and experiences, and bring books to life for people of all ages in their own communities.



Our Team

The Book Festival has a permanent staff of 25 throughout the year, expanding over the spring and summer to a peak of around 150 staff during the Festival. All team members play a role in the ongoing development of the organisation through full team planning and debrief meetings during the year. The heads of each department form the Senior Management Team.

Our Trustees

Current Festival trustees are: Jamie Crawford (Chair), Irene Grant, Alasdair Morton, Caroline Colliston, Mary Robson, Anna Frame, Tomas Gerrard, Yassmin Abdel-Magied, Hannah Hyde, Alisha Fernandez Miranda and Liz Lloyd.

“So many wonderful people with such amazing ideas and new perspectives to share! It was incredible to meet the book authors.”



The role of our Trustees

Key responsibilities:

- To act as an advocate and ambassador for the Festival, championing our activity and embodying our values
- To attend board meetings, and read papers in advance of meetings
- To participate in discussions during meetings, offering an informed and measured perspective
- To keep informed about the activities of the Festival and wider issues which affect its work
- To lead and attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- To participate in other tasks, such as supporting Board recruitment
- To support with fundraising through representing the Festival at events, and similar
- To ensure that the Festival complies with relevant legislation or regulations, and take accountability for the fiduciary and fiscal health of the organisation
- To ensure that the finance responsibility is a collective board remit

Interested candidates are recommended to read the publication, 'Guidance and Good Practice for Charity Trustees' to gain a full understanding of the responsibilities of this role. This is published by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and can be found at:

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees>.

Edinburgh International Book Festival has charitable status and is a company limited by guarantee. As such, each trustee is also appointed as a Director under the Companies Act legislation and registered with Companies House.

Person specification

All trustees must have:

- A commitment to the Edinburgh International Book Festival and its vision, mission, and values
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a member of the Board of Trustees
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a Trustee
- The ability to think and plan strategically
- Good, independent judgment and integrity
- The ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind, whilst demonstrating respect for other viewpoints
- The ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- A respect and understanding of the need for confidentiality
- A strong commitment to equalities, diversity, and inclusion



What We're Looking For :

- A chartered accountant to join our Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) as Chair.
- Senior-level experience in finance, audit, or risk management.
- A recognised chartered accountancy qualification (e.g. CA or ACCA) or equivalent expertise.
- A strong understanding of charity governance and regulatory frameworks.
- Experience chairing or contributing to Finance or Audit Committees.
- Excellent judgement, communication skills, and a collaborative leadership style.
- High ethical standards and independent thinking, with the ability to act as a critical friend to senior staff.
- Experience serving as a trustee or in a professional capacity within a charitable organisation.
- Understanding of, or willingness to learn about the current financial landscape in arts, culture or charitable organisations.

As a Trustee and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, you will:

- Provide strategic oversight of the Edinburgh International Book Festival's financial health, risk management, and internal controls.
- Lead the Audit & Risk Committee, working closely with fellow trustees, the Executive team, and auditors.
- Ensure compliance with charity and company law and uphold the highest standards of transparency and accountability.
- Act as a key ambassador for the Edinburgh International Book Festival, championing our mission and values both internally and externally.
- Promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in all decision-making and uphold the Nolan Principles of public life.





Equal Opportunities

The Edinburgh International Book Festival's work is framed by a commitment to equality, diversity, care, and inclusion.

We want to create a working environment where everyone is treated fairly and our differences are celebrated as strengths. We actively encourage applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply. We also welcome applications from younger people in the early stages of their careers (aged 21-35) who are keen to build their board and strategic leadership experience.

If you have any access requirements, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.





Further Information

Induction

Trustees will be expected to participate in an induction process which will include observing a board meeting and spending a day at the Book Festival offices to meet the team.

Meetings

Board and ARC meetings take place four times per year in March, June, October and December. Meetings are held in central Edinburgh and take place during the day. There is the option to join remotely. Board members are also invited to participate in committees and short-life working groups, and away days.

The successful candidate will be invited to shadow the Board and Audit and Risk Committee in Feb/March 2026, before formally taking up the role ahead of June 2026.

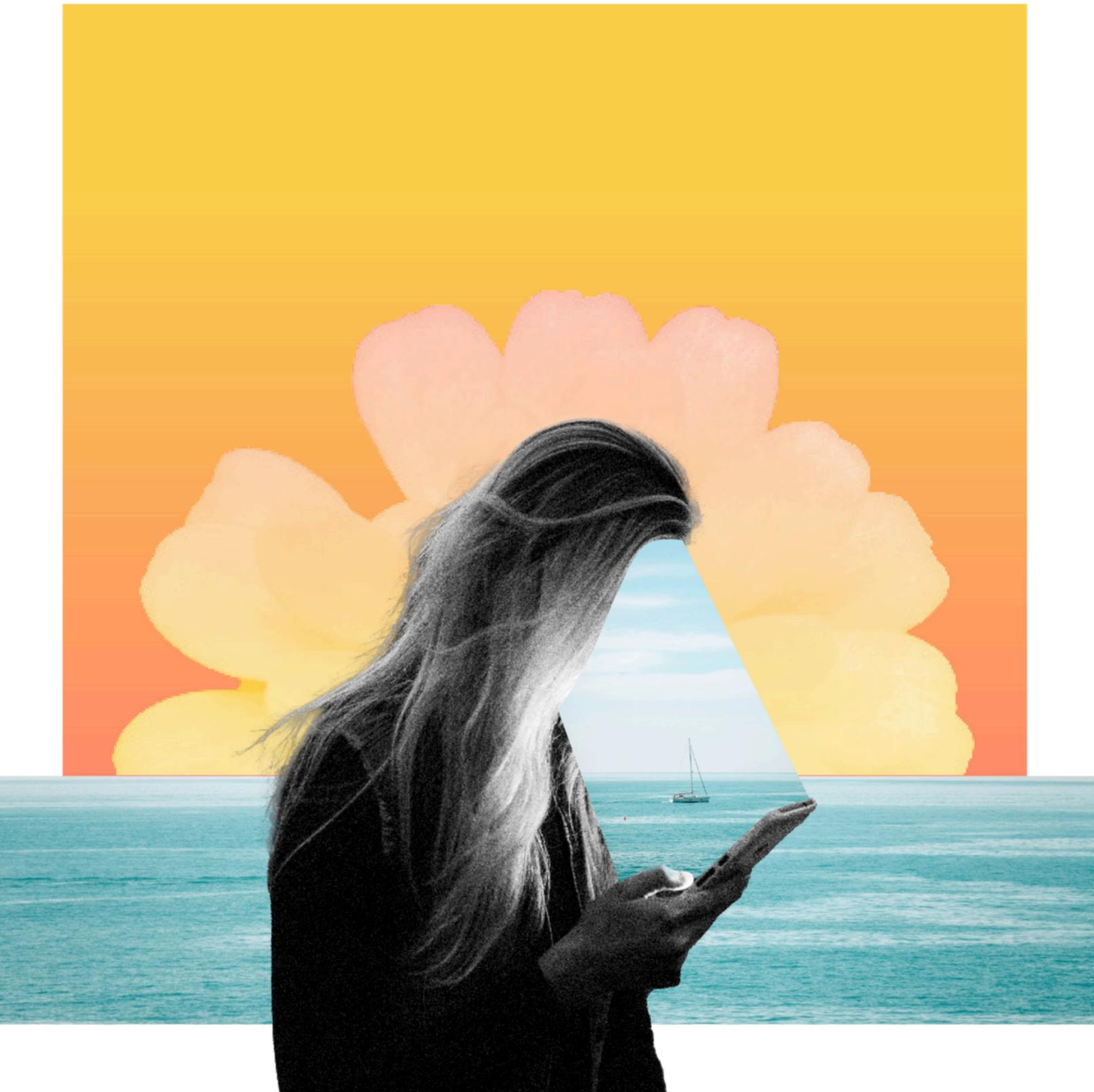
Length of Service

Trustees are appointed for a term of 5 years initially, with the option to stand for re-election for an additional 3-year period.

Expenses

This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings and other Festival related activities will be paid in accordance with our Board Expenses policy.





How to apply

If you are interested in joining us, **please send a CV and covering letter outlining your relevant skills and experience and why you'd like to be part of our board to: board@edbookfest.co.uk**

We welcome conversations with potential applicants. Please contact our Executive Assistant, Danielle McCann danielle.mccann@edbookfest.co.uk in the first instance to arrange a call.

Closing date for applications: Mon 8 Dec 2025

Interviews: January 2026

Interviews will be held in central Edinburgh. Online interviews are also possible on request.

For more background information about the Edinburgh International Book Festival please visit our website: edbookfest.co.uk

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd has its registered office at 121 George St Edinburgh and is a company limited by guarantee (SC079939) with charitable status (SCO10120).

