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For Immediate Release

**EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL
CITIZEN WINTER WARMER WEEKEND**

The Edinburgh International Book Festival has teamed up with The Brunton Theatre and North Edinburgh Arts to host a weekend of inspiring creative activities and conversations. The second **Citizen Winter Warmer** presents two days of heart-warming, interactive and fun events celebrating local community voices and creating opportunities for new stories to be heard. Featuring fun-filled afternoons of art and stories for families and an evenings of celebration featuring local residents side-by-side with professional writers, the Citizen Winter Warmer will take place on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 November 2021 and is part of Book Week Scotland. The Edinburgh International Book Festival's *Citizen* project is supported by the players of People's Postcode Lottery and through the PLACE programme.

Noëlle Cobden, Communities Programme Director at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said *"We're delighted to be working with our partners North Edinburgh Arts and The Brunton on our Citizen Winter Warmer. Through our year-round Communities Programme, the Book Festival provides a platform for local people to share their stories, helping to bring us together in challenging times. The Winter Warmer all is about celebrating community and connection, spreading a little bit of light in the darkest point of the year, and we hope that everyone, whether or not they've been to a Book Festival event before, feels welcome to join us either in Musselburgh or North Edinburgh."*

The *Citizen* Winter Warmer is all about sharing stories from local communities and, prior to the event itself, writer Luke Winter is joined by *Citizen* Writer in Residence Eleanor Thom as they park the **Story Wagon** outside each venue (Tuesday 16 November at The Brunton, Musselburgh and Wednesday 17 November at North Edinburgh Arts, 10.00am to 2.00pm each day). Local residents are encouraged to drop in, have a chat and tell their stories to Luke and Eleanor.

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The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd is a Scottish charity (SC010120) and a limited company (registered in Scotland no 79939) and has its registered office at 5A Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4DR.

The Winter Warmer kicks off on Friday 19 November at The Brunton in Musselburgh, moving to North Edinburgh Arts in Muirhouse on Saturday 20 November. **The Great Big Story Show** presents two afternoons of family entertainment, with the fun-loving duo Macastory bringing their hilarious songs and stories to the stage. Writer Luke Winter creates a fresh story live on stage from audience suggestions and much-loved children's authors Maisie Chan and Elle McNicoll read from their brand-new book *The Very Merry Murder Club* – packed with Christmassy crimes, festive foul play and murderously magnificent mysteries – perfect for inquisitive kids! In Musselburgh on Friday author Christopher Lloyd also joins to explain how to stand up for the environment with his beautifully illustrated nature book *It's Up to Us*, while at North Edinburgh Arts on Saturday illustrator Eilidh Muldoon creates a beautifully illustrated map of North Edinburgh featuring all the audiences' favourite places.

Audiences can tuck into two evenings of terrific tales and delicious food as the Book Festival's *Citizen* participants share stories of life in Musselburgh and Muirhouse, and writers explore what community means today in the popular **Stories and Scran** event. The evening offers a sumptuous three course meal provided by the Scran Academy, a social enterprise catering company supporting vulnerable young people, and brilliant new writing inspired by the surrounding areas from local people who have taken part in *Citizen's* creative conversations and workshops.

In Musselburgh the writers from the community will be joined on stage by the award-winning author of *Scabby Queen*, Kirstin Innes, and poets JL Williams and Andrés Ordorica, who share their own powerful writing and discuss their views on community, identity and home. At North Edinburgh Arts the evening is hosted by Scran Academy founder, social entrepreneur, youth leader and campaigner John Loughton. The local community writers are joined by the award-winning poet, playwright and author of *Luckenbooth* Jenni Fagan, as well as poets Courtney Stoddart and Ryan Hay, who share new work and reflect on what community, identity and home mean today.

In 2019, local photographers Karmen Bermudez and David Coxon took to the streets around North Edinburgh Arts to shoot the urban landscape, capturing incredible images which inspired short written responses from visitors to that year's Edinburgh International Book Festival. As part of the

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Citizen Winter Warmer celebration in north Edinburgh, a free exhibition titled *Who Lives in a Place Like This?* showcases these photos and the writing inspired by them, returning to the community that birthed them along with words and images created by young people from The Alternative School at Spartans Community Football Club which offer a vital snapshot of their lives and a sense of their world and their community.

Michael Stitt, Chair of Brunton Theatre Trust, said *“The Brunton is dedicated to bringing the very best theatre, music, dance, comedy, children’s theatre, film and live screenings to East Lothian for the enjoyment and enrichment of as many people of all ages, as possible. Situated within the heart of the vibrant and creative community of Musselburgh, the breadth of our programming is ambitious and takes account of the interests of all communities we serve. We also have an exciting creative participation programme. We are delighted to be working in collaboration with our partners Edinburgh International Book Festival to deliver the Citizen Winter Warmer programme that supports creative activities with local communities.”*

Kate Wimpress, Director of North Edinburgh Arts, said *“NEA is delighted to be working once again with the Edinburgh International Book Festival on the Citizen Winter Warmer. The creative life of our community has been the golden thread that has helped us all through these last 18 months. The chance to get together to share stories, food, and good company is so very welcome. We’re looking forward to hosting artists, writers, near neighbours and new friends in November, all bringing something to the table; food for the mind as well as the body.”*

The Citizen Winter Warmer is part of Edinburgh International Book Festival’s Citizen project– an ongoing programme of events, festivals and residences taking place around Edinburgh and the Lothians throughout the year, supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery and through the PLACE programme.

Laura Chow, Head of Charities at People’s Postcode Lottery said: *“I’m delighted that players are supporting the Citizen programme, helping bring communities together and hearing their stories. The Winter Warmer is an opportunity for us all to learn more about this city and its residents.”*

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As part of the Winter Warmer, featured children's authors Christopher Lloyd, Maisie Chan and Elle McNicoll will be visiting local schools. Children will get to explore their fascinating stories through a mix of interactive activities, readings and Q&A sessions led by the authors themselves.

Tickets to all events at The Brunton, Musselburgh are available through <http://thebrunton.co.uk> or on 0131 653 5245 (Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm). Tickets to all events at North Edinburgh Arts are available through <http://northedinburgharts.co.uk> or on 0131 315 2151 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm). Full details of the Citizen Winter Warmer Programme can be found at <https://ontheroad.edbookfest.co.uk/>.

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Notes to Editors:

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- It costs £10 a month to play and winning postcodes are announced every day. The maximum amount a single ticket can win is 10% of the draw proceeds. For details, please visit www.postcode lottery.co.uk/prizes
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