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## **Edinburgh International Book Festival announces Communities Programme and Citizen events this August**

Throughout the year the Edinburgh International Book Festival brings authors, artists, and audiences together to inspire each other, share stories, and bring books to life via its longstanding Communities Programme. This August a selection of events, designed both for, and by those taking part in the programme, will unfold against the backdrop of the Book Festival, as well as at other locations across the country, both live in-person and online.

Ranging from free event screenings featuring the likes of Brian Cox and Nicola Sturgeon at a rural cinema in Aberfeldy, to a series of in-person author visits to hospitals, libraries, schools, and prisons, these events help underline this year's Book Festival theme *All Together Now*, by bringing books to life for people of all ages in their own communities, as well as at the Book Festival Village at the Edinburgh College of Art.

**Noëlle Cobden, Communities Programme Director at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said:** *"We are so excited to welcome so many different communities to the Book Festival Village this August - from our Citizen Writers' Group and The Citizen Collective who have been working with our writers and poets in residence all year (some longer), to a group from Deaf Action who will attend Sarah Smith: Hear No Evil, an event which uses a fusion of sign language, image, and performance, it's great to see such variety return in 2022. We are also delighted to be able to take what we do during August off the Book Festival site by organising author visits to communities who may face barriers to attending our festival site and putting on free event screenings for rural communities."*

*After a really tough two years, during which time many individuals, groups, and communities became increasingly isolated, it was so important to us that we got as many people involved in what we do, in whatever way we could. We continue to be grateful to*

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*both players of People's Postcode Lottery, and the talented collaborators and partners who make our Communities programme possible."*

Some of those most effected by the pandemic have been young people, in part as a result of disruption in schools, so this year the Book Festival are bringing together education pioneers to imagine the creative, bespoke settings needed to support young people in an event entitled ***Futureproofing Education***. Panellists include founder of **The Black Curriculum** campaign, **Lavinia Stennett**; **Emma Easton**, school manager at **The Spartans Alternative School**, **Ian Midwinter**, CEO of **Scran Academy**, and **Alexander Boys**, a former member of **The Citizen Collective**, the Book Festival writing group for 16-18 year olds.

Aimed at young people and adults alike, ***Planet Citizen!*** asks the question 'what would the planet look like if you designed it?' Posed by **Ryan Van Winkle**, Schools Writer in Residence, it is a question he has been exploring with local pupils at **St. Thomas of Aquin's RC High School** as part of **Citizen**, and throughout August people of all ages are encouraged to drop in (11am - 5pm) to explore the world they created in a multi-media installation. Featuring work from **Natalie Doyle**, **Faith Elliott**, **Lotte Fisher**, **Caitlin Hynes**, **Seamus Killick**, **Emily Randall** and **Natasha Russell** audiences can alternatively join free 30-minute tours at 11am, 2pm or 4pm every day of the festival.

***Stories and Scran***, which celebrates the dynamic and thought-provoking work created by local people, is returning for its third year. Audiences can enjoy a sweet treat provided by **Scran Academy** alongside a diverse showcase of readings, stories, and short films from communities in North Edinburgh and Musselburgh, either in person or from the comfort of their own homes. Not only that, but **Scran Academy** participants will be served up a treat of their own courtesy of author **Jack Monroe**, who will host a one-off event just for them on Thursday 25 August.

Another key Citizen event, ***One Day Ticket***, is a collaborative work for the stage written by Citizen participants with Communities Writer in Residence, **Eleanor Thom**, that follows a fantasy transport map through Edinburgh, where stories are told and thoughts unfold creating a series of narrative snapshots as seen from a train carriage with an unknown

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destination. Still being developed, the cast will perform with scripts in hand, and again this event is Pay What You Can and will take place both live and will be available to stream.

To celebrate **Scotland's Year of Stories 2022**, over the spring the Book Festival's Communities team delivered a participatory story-making project which placed professional authors into community settings in five Scottish Local Authority areas. **Andrew O'Hagan** worked with inmates at HMP Kilmarnock and **Mae Diansangu** with resettled Syrian women in Aberdeenshire. In Clackmannanshire **Bea Webster** collaborated with a group of D/deaf adults, while **Roseanne Watt** created film poetry with young people in Shetland, and in Edinburgh **Siân Bevan** created stories with children at the **Royal Hospital for Children and Young People**. The stories provide a snapshot of Scotland today from different parts of the country and from different perspectives. **Val McDermid** will host **Scotland's Stories Now**, a very special multi-artform extravaganza which spotlights these stories from across the nation.

As part of **Scotland's Stories Now** the Book Festival also asked people across Scotland – of any age, background or ability – to submit their own stories responding to the prompt 'On This Day'. What resulted was a fascinating portrait of Scotland in the here now, and throughout the Festival different contributors from around the country will be sharing their snapshots of life through the power of words at free daily sessions at 5pm in the Storytime Yurt.

Not everyone is able to attend Book Festival events in person and this year the Book Festival is working with a range of partners and institutions to bring authors to them. Through the **Story Nation** programme, the joy of the Book Festival will be delivered to those who otherwise cannot access it, through a weekend of events at the **Royal Hospital for Children and Young People**, as well as author visits to six Scottish Prisons, a local high school and the **Streetreads Library**, a dedicated place for readers who are experiencing homelessness. **Gabriel Krauze** will hold an event at HMP Edinburgh, while **Cressida Cowell**, **Alex Wheatle**, and a performance of **There's a Tiger in the Garden** will do the rounds at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People. Alex Wheatle will also visit to Craigroyston Community High School and **Ryan O'Connor** will attend **Streetreads Library**.

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In Aberfeldy a selection of this year's Book Festival events will be streamed live on the big screen at The Birks Cinema. Free of charge, these will include events with **Alexander McCall-Smith** and **Serhii Plokhy** on Wednesday 17 August, **Alan Cumming** on Monday 22 August, **Ian Rankin** on Tuesday 23 August, and **Brian Cox** in conversation with **Nicola Sturgeon** on the final night of the Festival, Monday 29 August.

With the support of players of People's Postcode Lottery, the Communities Programme has expanded its activities to take the essence of the Edinburgh International Book Festival on the road around Scotland.

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