



Embargoed until 00.01 Thursday 25 August

Edinburgh International Book Festival announces James Crawford as new Chair of Board of Directors

Images of James [HERE](#)

The Edinburgh International Book Festival today announces celebrated writer, broadcaster, and publisher **James Crawford** as the Festival's new Chair of the Board of Directors.

The author of ten books including *The Edge of the Plain: How Borders Make and Break Our World*, which investigates the shifting geopolitics of a world beset by climate change, James joins a number of new faces on the board as the Festival enters a new era under director Jenny Niven and in its new home at Edinburgh Futures Institute.

Bringing a nuanced understanding on topics ranging from law, history and technology, to globalisation and mass migration, James brings practical expertise on both the media and publishing landscapes thanks to his current roles as Editor-at-Large for the celebrated independent Scottish publisher Birlinn/Polygon, and as writer and presenter of landmark BBC One series *Scotland from the Sky*; and from previous experience, including as Chair of the Board at industry body Publishing Scotland. James joins recent Board appointees, disability advocate **Tomas Gerrard**, award-winning writer **Yassmin Abdel-Magied**, fundraising and sponsorship expert **Hannah Hyde**, and **Anna Frame**, Communications Director at publishing house Canongate, all of whom have been elected to the Board in the past 12 months. James will take up his role in September after the current chair, Alan Little, steps down at the end of this year's Festival.

James Crawford, incoming Chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival Board of Directors said: *"I was just seventeen when I first travelled to Edinburgh to visit the Book Festival, and I have been coming back ever since - first as an audience member, then as a publisher and author. The strength of the Festival has always been the melting pot of ideas, discourse, argument, imagination and inspiration that it offers. It is embarking on a new chapter now - with a new director and a new home - and it is a privilege to support Jenny and her team*

as they shape their vision for the Festival's future. While challenges lie ahead, the importance of book festivals - both what they are and what they represent - should never be underestimated."

Jenny Niven, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said: *"We are delighted to welcome James as Chair of the Board.*

As well as being a highly experienced writer, editor, broadcaster and chairperson, Jamie is hugely respected in literature and publishing, and understands the festival and the wider sector from a range of perspectives.

He's extremely well placed to help us achieve our goals to make the Book Festival as widely relevant as possible, to create opportunities for writers and the creative community and to champion good information and the exchange of ideas. Myself, the Board, and the wider Festival team are looking forward enormously to the energy he'll bring as we open a new chapter for the Book Festival, and to working with James in the years to come."

Jenny took up the role of Director in September 2023, taking over from Nick Barley who had been in post since 2010. A leading cultural producer and director, she has worked in literature for 20 years. Founder and Director of the award-winning Push the Boat Out, a festival of poetry, spoken word and language she was also formerly Executive Producer of Dandelion 2022, of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, and was Head of Literature at Creative Scotland from 2014-2018. She has extensive international experience; Jenny co-founded Beijing's first Book Festival, and was Associate Director at the Wheeler Centre for Books Writing and Ideas in Melbourne.

The 2024 Edinburgh International Book Festival runs from 10 – 25 August, and takes place for the first time at the new Edinburgh Futures Institute on Lauriston Place.

For more information on Edinburgh International Book Festival visit:

<https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>

-ends-

For further information please contact:

Sarah Drummond, Edinburgh International Book Festival

07741316934 / sarah.drummond@edbookfest.co.uk / sarah.drummond@premiercomms.com

Notes to Editor

About Edinburgh International Book Festival

We are Edinburgh International Book Festival: the world-leading festival of words, literature, and ideas.

We believe in the power of words and ideas to ignite imaginations, foster human connection, and challenge the status quo. Committed to innovation, inclusivity and accessibility, we platform 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.

Since 1983, we've welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to engage with the world's greatest and emerging writers, thinkers, artists, and performers. Iconic figures such as Margaret Atwood, Alain de Botton, Oliver Burkeman, Noam Chomsky, Seamus Heaney, Kazuo Ishiguro, Toni Morrison, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie and Benjamin Zephaniah have appeared on our stages over the years, alongside a wide range of debut and early career authors.

Each year, we programme hundreds of events that capture the hearts and minds of audiences, both in Edinburgh and online. Whether they take the form of on-stage conversations, workshops, creative masterclasses, think tanks, or more, they are all informed by a culture of open dialogue. Our programme is designed not just to spark new conversations amongst audiences, but to broaden them too: existing as a space where nuanced discussion happens, and ideas can settle.

As the world around us changes at pace, the Book Festival continues to transform too. 2024 is the beginning of an exciting new chapter under the leadership of our new director, Jenny Niven, as we also move to our new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.

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 – to foster a lifelong love of reading and develop engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all backgrounds and ages. We also stream hundreds of events online via a Pay What You Can model, offering audiences who cannot attend in person the opportunity to take part and experience the excitement of the Festival wherever and whenever suits them best.

About James Crawford

JAMES CRAWFORD is a writer and broadcaster. Born in Shetland in 1978, he studied History and Philosophy of Law at the University of Edinburgh, winning the Lord President Cooper Memorial Prize. He

has been a literary agent and a publisher, and for over a decade worked for and researched Scotland's National Collection of architecture and archaeology. He has scripted and presented three series of the landmark BBC One documentary 'Scotland from the Sky', and is the author of ten books. His first major work of non-fiction, 'Fallen Glory: The Lives and Deaths of History's Greatest Buildings' was shortlisted as non-fiction book of the year at Scotland's National Book Awards 2016. His most recent works are 'The Edge of the Plain: How Borders Make and Break Our World', which was shortlisted as non-fiction book of the year at Scotland's National Book Awards 2023; and 'Wild History: Journeys Into Lost Scotland', which was long listed for the Highland Book Prize 2024. His work has been translated into 6 languages including Spanish, Japanese, Italian and Portuguese. In 2019 he was named as the Archive and Records Association's first-ever 'Explore Your Archives' Ambassador, and he is a former Chair of the Board of Publishing Scotland and the Bloody Scotland Crime Writer's Festival. Since 2019 he has also worked as Editor-at-Large for the independent Scottish publisher Birlinn/Polygon. He lives in Edinburgh.