

# Alan Little to become Chair of Edinburgh Book Festival Board



The Chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, Lady Susan Rice has announced that she will be stepping down in October 2015 after 14 years in the position. Alan Little BBC Special Correspondent will take over the position from her.

Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said “Under Susan Rice’s exemplary guidance, the Book Festival has enjoyed more than a decade of sustained achievement. Susan has, quite simply, achieved a level of success, stability and good non-executive governance that every arts Board in the world would aspire to. I am deeply indebted to her for everything she has done. We are fortunate that her successor, Allan Little, brings with him such a deep, sophisticated knowledge of Edinburgh and its Book Festival.”

Susan Rice commented: “It’s been above all a privilege to have chaired the Book Festival Board over these years. And it gives me great pride to see it in such good heart – led and managed so well, and respected, indeed revered, around the world.”

Allan Little said: “It is a privilege – if a daunting one – to follow Susan Rice as chairman of this most cherished and globally respected of festivals. Her wise and thoughtful leadership of the board of the Book Festival has been an inspiration. I am very excited to be taking on the chairmanship at a time when the Book Festival is scaling new heights in its ambition and reach. It is through literature

that human society confronts itself, interrogates itself and comes to know itself. I am very proud to be associated with a Festival that does so much to celebrate and explore the value and sheer joy of the written word”.

Having been Managing Director, Lloyds Banking Group Scotland, and previously Chief Executive then Chairman of Lloyds TSB Scotland, Susan Rice was the first woman to head a UK clearing bank in 2000, and became the first woman to be appointed President of SCDI in 2012. In July 2014, she became the first Chair of Scotland’s new Fiscal Commission and in June 2015 she became Chair of the Board of Scottish Water, continuing as well on the board of J Sainsbury and the Court of Edinburgh University.

Alongside her roles as both a commercial banker and non-executive director of the Bank of England, Susan Rice was also a member of the recent First Minister’s Council of Economic Advisers. A founding and current non-executive of Big Society Capital, and previously of Charity Bank, she has helped develop numerous social finance models in the US and the UK. In the arts, as well as chairing the Edinburgh International Book Festival and Edinburgh’s Festivals Forum, she works extensively with Scotland’s National Galleries to ensure a vibrant cultural base in the country.

Allan Little started his BBC career in 1983 as a researcher in Glasgow before joining the Today Programme, specialising in foreign reporting. As a correspondent in Johannesburg, Moscow and Paris he won several awards for his reports and documentaries. In 2012, Little received the coveted British Journalism Review Charles Wheeler Award for Outstanding Contribution to Broadcast Journalism. In his more recent role as a BBC special correspondent, he has reported widely on devolution and the questions around Scottish independence. Little has been a regular participant, both as an author and mediator, at the Book Festival.