

# City welcomes its new Makar

Poet Alan Spence is the Scottish Capital's next poet laureate and was welcomed into the post by the Lord Provost earlier today at the City Chambers.

With a final hurrah from the outgoing Makar Christine De Luca in the form of a poem (what else?) and a speech by the Lord Provost the Rt Hon Frank Ross, Alan Spence has now been officially welcomed into his new post.

A highly respected poet, playwright, novelist and short story writer, Alan lives in Edinburgh although he was born in Glasgow. His writing spans many genres and themes, often falling somewhere between literature and philosophy with poetry inspired by Zen and meditation. His writing covers many forms including haiku and tanka, often in collaboration with artists such as Elizabeth Blackadder and Alison Watt.



Councillor Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener, said: "Alan Spence is an accomplished and highly-regarded writer whose work often features a hint of Scottish wit and shines with beautiful observations and revelations.

"He is the fifth addition to an illustrious group of writers who have filled this important role in Edinburgh – the original City of Literature. Each writer has enthralled and benefited the city with their talent and Alan is an excellent choice.

"He will fill the shoes of the brilliant Christine De Luca, whose poetry has been prolific over the last three years. It has been an absolute joy to experience her perspective of Edinburgh and its people and I would like to thank her for the energy and insight that she has brought to the role."

Alan Spence said: "I'm delighted and honoured to be nominated as the fifth Edinburgh Makar, the Poet Laureate for this wonderful city that has been my home for over 40 years.

"I look forward to following in the footsteps of my illustrious predecessors, Stewart Conn, Valerie Gillies, Ron Butlin and Christine De Luca. I know them all and they're fine poets who have done a great job. We live in troubled times and poetry has never been so important."

Christine De Luca said: "I am delighted that Alan Spence is to

be our next Makar. Besides being a wonderful writer, he is out-going and generous-hearted. I'm sure he'll take the role in fascinating new directions.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as the Edinburgh Makar and found nothing but support from the Council and its staff and from the other organisations supporting the role. Local poets too have been hugely encouraging and have willingly taken part in a range of projects."

The Edinburgh Makar is a civic post instituted in 2002 by the City of Edinburgh Council. The writer is selected and nominated by representatives of the Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish PEN, The Saltire Society, Edinburgh City of Literature Trust and the Council.

The meaning of the Scots word Makar stresses the role of the poet or author as a skilled and versatile worker in the craft of writing. Edinburgh has always been a literary city, and to celebrate the importance of writers in the Capital the Council continues to show its commitment to the promotion of writers and literary projects, which enhance Edinburgh's international reputation, including the post of the Edinburgh Makar.