

Hundreds of books donated to The Venchie

Fort Kinnaird has gifted bundles of popular children's books and engaging activity booklets to the Venchie Children & Young People's Project in Edinburgh to support families in need during the coronavirus pandemic.

300 children's books have been shared with local families, including *Gargantis* by Thomas Taylor and *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney, along with free activity booklets filled with fun and educational worksheets based on familiar fictional characters such as *Alex Rider*, *Judy Moody* and *Maisy Mouse*.

Susan Heron from Venchie Children & Young People's Project said: "It's been great to watch so many of our local families get excited about the activity booklets and choosing brand new books to take home. This has really meant a lot to us and we know just how much of a difference they will make to children in our local area."

This new initiative is led by Fort Kinnaird's co-owner, British Land, and the National Literacy Trust. It follows a long-running partnership to help encourage children to enjoy reading outside of the classroom and to provide them with the resources to do so.

Recent research from the National Literacy Trust reveals that children who own their own books are happier¹. Yet, 1 in 11

children and young people in the UK don't have a book of their own at home². With many children not attending school due to Covid-19, this project aims to help tackle the problem and give local families brand-new books and educational materials.

Liam Smith, centre director at Fort Kinnaird, added: "Encouraging children to love to read and giving them access to their own books is so important, especially at this particularly difficult time.

"We're really pleased to be able to continue to work with the National Literacy Trust to support amazing local organisations such the Venchie Children & Young People's Project."

As part of British Land's partnership with the National Literacy Trust, families in Edinburgh also have free access to virtual storytelling sessions which support children's listening and creative skills and help to spark a love of stories.

The 'Young Readers Story Club' videos feature professional storytellers sharing different stories each week, including award-winning children's poet Dominic Berry and the storyteller Amanda Edmiston.

St Francis' RC Primary School, Castleview Primary School and Niddrie Mill Primary School have be given exclusive 'first look' access to the videos before they are made available for local families to view on the National Literacy Trust's [Family Zone website](#).

Jonathan Douglas, Chief Executive of the National Literacy Trust, said: "Books have the power to enrich children's lives – they fuel imaginations, help children learn new things and support mental wellbeing. Yet hundreds of thousands of children across the UK are missing out on these benefits at a time when they need them most, simply because they don't have

a book of their own.

“By bringing the magical world of stories into children’s homes through brand new books, activity booklets and incredible storytelling videos, this initiative will provide much needed inspiration and comfort during a time of uncertainty.”

