

Book festival links to local communities

The Edinburgh International Book Festival has teamed up with The Brunton Theatre and North Edinburgh Arts to host a weekend of creative activities and conversations.

Featuring fun-filled afternoons of art and stories for families and an evening of celebration featuring local residents side-by-side with professional writers, the Citizen Winter Warmer will take place on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 November 2021 and is part of Book Week Scotland.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival's Citizen project is supported by the players of People's Postcode Lottery and through the PLACE programme.

Noëlle Cobden, communities programme director at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said "Through our year-round Communities Programme, the Book Festival provides a platform for local people to share their stories, helping to bring us together in challenging times.

"The Winter Warmer all is about celebrating community and connection, spreading a little bit of light in the darkest point of the year, and we hope that everyone, whether or not they've been to a Book Festival event before, feels welcome to join us either in Musselburgh or North Edinburgh."

Prior to the event writer Luke Winter is joined by Citizen Writer in Residence Eleanor Thom as they park the Story Wagon outside each venue (Tuesday 16 November at The Brunton, Musselburgh and Wednesday 17 November at North Edinburgh Arts, 10.00am to 2.00pm each day). Local residents are encouraged to drop in, have a chat and tell their stories to Luke and Eleanor.

The Winter Warmer starts on Friday 19 November at The Brunton moving to North Edinburgh Arts in Muirhouse on Saturday 20 November.

The Great Big Story Show presents two afternoons of family entertainment, with the fun-loving duo Macastory bringing their hilarious songs and stories to the stage.

Writer Luke Winter creates a fresh story live on stage from audience suggestions and much-loved children's authors Maisie Chan and Elle McNicoll read from their new book The Very Merry Murder Club which is packed with Christmassy crimes, festive foul play and murderously magnificent mysteries.

In Musselburgh on Friday author Christopher Lloyd also joins to explain how to stand up for the environment with his illustrated nature book It's Up to Us while at North Edinburgh Arts on Saturday illustrator Eilidh Muldoon creates an illustrated map of North Edinburgh featuring all the audiences' favourite places.

Audiences can tuck into two evenings of terrific tales and delicious food as the Book Festival's Citizen participants share stories of life in Musselburgh and Muirhouse, and writers explore what community means today in the popular Stories and Scrان event.

The evening offers a three course meal provided by the Scrان Academy, a social enterprise catering company supporting vulnerable young people, and new writing inspired by the surrounding areas from local people who have taken part in Citizen's creative conversations and workshops.

In Musselburgh the writers from the community will be joined on stage by the award-winning author of Scabby Queen, Kirstin Innes, and poets JL Williams and Andrés Ordorica, who share their own powerful writing and discuss their views on community, identity and home.

At North Edinburgh Arts the evening is hosted by Scran Academy founder, social entrepreneur, youth leader and campaigner John Loughton. The local community writers are joined by the award-winning poet, playwright and author of Luckenbooth Jenni Fagan, as well as poets Courtney Stoddart and Ryan Hay, who share new work and reflect on what community, identity and home mean today.

In 2019, local photographers Karmen Bermudez and David Coxon took to the streets around North Edinburgh Arts to shoot the urban landscape, capturing incredible images which inspired short written responses from visitors to that year's Edinburgh International Book Festival.

A free exhibition titled Who Lives in a Place Like This? showcases these photos and the writing inspired by them, returning to the community that birthed them along with words and images created by young people from The Alternative School at Spartans Community Football Club which offer a vital snapshot of their lives and a sense of their world and their community.

The Citizen Winter Warmer is part of Edinburgh International Book Festival's Citizen project an on-going programme of events, festivals and residences taking place around Edinburgh and the Lothians throughout the year, supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery and through the PLACE programme.

Tickets to all events at The Brunton, Musselburgh are available through <http://thebrunton.co.uk> or on 0131 653 5245 (Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm). Tickets to all events at North Edinburgh Arts are available through <http://northedinburgharts.co.uk> or on 0131 315 2151 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm). Full details of the Citizen Winter Warmer Programme can be found at <https://ontheroad.edbookfest.co.uk/>.