

After the tents are packed away – the Book Festival

In their new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute the Edinburgh International Book Festival welcomed around 100,000 visitors to almost 600 events.

Around 100 of those were sold out, 90% of the tickets for 200 events were sold and audience members from 55 countries watched online.

Many who visited the Book Festival were coming into the old Royal Infirmary for the first time since its complete makeover by the University of Edinburgh.

More than 4,500 school pupils were transported to the event (31 groups free of charge) and all took home a free book thanks to the last tranche of funding from Baillie Gifford. Audiences can [still watch some of the events online](#) for a nominal charge.

Organisers at the charity said that ticket sales were up on previous years with events including poets and politicians, actors and musicians as well as writers and broadcasters.

The festival tackled topics of global importance ranging from AI to the climate crisis, capitalism to the war in the Middle East, migration to inheritance, and more.



Courtyard at night Credit Chris Scott





Jenny Niven



Alan Cumming, Forbes Masson and Jack Kay – credit Robin Mair
Legendary authors, writers, poets, thinkers and entertainers

including Margaret Atwood and Salman Rushdie (who joined down the line), Richard Osman, Dolly Alderton, Alan Cumming & Forbes Masson, Phillipa Gregory, Jackie Kay, James O'Brien, Lemn Sissay, Elif Shafak, Louise Welsh, Raja Shehadeh, Marian Keyes, Roger McGough appeared on stage, alongside RF Kuang, Blindboy, Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson, Evie Wyld, Julius Roberts, and Samantha Shannon.

As well as greats from the literary sector, stars of music and film (Stuart Brathwaite of Mogwai, Esther Swift, Evelynn Glennie, Stuart Murdoch, Steven Moffat, Anjoa Andoh), theatre makers (including Grid Iron's Ben Harrison), producers, publishers (many appearing as part of the Business of Books strand aimed at those in the industry, and artists (Ruth Millington, Kate Leiper) and actors also featured, bringing the multi disciplinary magic of the Edinburgh Festivals to life, right at the heart of the city.

This year brand new types of events were held, with many celebrating cross-discipline collaboration, including the ambitious digital experience, Perambulations of a Justified Sinner and the intimate Have Lunch With... series at Elliott's Studio, featuring chef-writers (Asma Khan, Sami Tamimi and Rachel Roddy).

Clean Money: Can Fundraising Ever Be Ethical brought in audience members with a variety of views to discuss the detail and nuance of modern arts funding in a safe and supported space, and events including ThinkTanks offered audiences unparalleled access to world-class minds including Harold Hongju Koh, Ingrid Robeyns, Joseph Stiglitz and Ken Costa. Voices from across the political spectrum also joined the conversation, with appearances from John Swinney, Jess Phillips, Caroline Lucas, Andy Burnham and Sadiq Khan.

Jenny Niven, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said: "We are absolutely thrilled with the success of the Book Festival this year. Audiences have voted with

their feet and we've seen full houses and brilliant, engaged crowds. Debate and discussion has been relished by audiences and authors alike proving the Festival is a truly important space for people to be inspired and come together.

Edinburgh Futures Institute as a Book Festival venue has been terrific and we're already looking at the ways we can build on what we've created for next year. We're looking forward to beginning conversations in the Autumn with everyone who will be part of our story in our next glorious edition."

Jamie Crawford, incoming Chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival Board, said: "For the two weeks, the excitement at this new chapter in the story of the book festival – from authors, staff and audiences – has been palpable. The new space at the Futures Institute has opened up a long-dormant part of the city, and it has clearly demonstrated its value and its huge potential for the future. As for right now, it is crucial to reflect on the great success of this year's festival to underline the critical importance of literary culture to Edinburgh and Scotland. It is in everyone's interests to support it and to see it thrive."



