

For immediate release

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Digital Storytelling Programme Launched in 5 Scottish Areas **Government-backed project will capture local voices and build skills**

A programme to gather stories and build digital skills has been launched by Kate Forbes, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy.

The Digital Storytellers in Residence programme is co-ordinated by Scottish Book Trust, the charity transforming lives through reading and writing. It will take place in five library services, from September 2018 to May 2019: Leisure and Culture Dundee, East Ayrshire Leisure, Falkirk Community Trust, Inverclyde Libraries, and Orkney Library and Archive.

More than one in five adults in Scotland lack basic digital skills¹. This is often due to factors such as poverty, lack of educational qualifications, disability and age. Through careful selection in each of the five locations, the project will work with people who aren't currently digitally-confident and introduce them to online culture in a way that builds skills and emphasises the personal relevance for them.

Following a successful pilot of the project in 2017, in Ayrshire and Fife, Scottish Book Trust was funded by the Scottish Government to support Digital Storytelling residencies in the five locations.

Each library service will host a Digital Storyteller, recruited by Scottish Book Trust, to support specially selected groups to create their own digital stories about personal experiences important to them.

Participants will use digital technology such as tablets, microphones and editing software to produce a narrated story, accompanied by photographs and visual footage. Each story will be narrated and edited by its creator.

The Digital Storytellers are: Dan Brown in Dundee, Taylor McInroy in East Ayrshire, Sabine Hellmann in Falkirk, Paul Bristow in Inverclyde, and Mark Jenkins and Rebecca Marr in Orkney.

The Digital Storytellers will work with library services, community groups, third sector organisations, schools and Scottish Book Trust to:

- Support local people to develop their skills and confidence in using information technology by creating digital stories;
- Collect the digital stories created for the libraries to share with the public online;

- Build skills among library staff, local volunteers, third sector and community organisations to ensure there is a lasting benefit for the local area after the residencies are completed.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said: “We are delighted to be expanding Digital Storytelling after the successful pilot schemes in Glenrothes and Saltcoats. Digital skills are increasingly important for people to navigate all areas of life and connect with others, and by focusing on storytelling, this project makes it accessible to everyone. We all have stories to share, whether it is personal or about a community or a place or time. By capturing these local stories and building skills in communities, the project will have a long-term impact.”

Kate Forbes, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy, said: “I’m delighted to launch Scottish Book Trust’s Digital Storytellers in Residence programme. The importance of this project in building digital skills and providing benefit to wider communities is invaluable.”

The Digital Storytellers for Orkney, Rebecca Marr and Mark Jenkins, said: “We are really looking forward to embarking on this project. Telling stories is an important feature of Orkney culture and the Orkney Library & Archive hold a wealth of sound recordings. There is something very powerful about people’s own stories told in their own voice and with this project we plan to work with communities to create a new collection of Orkney voices for the library.”

The pilot programmes ran for six months in Saltcoats and Glenrothes, with specially identified local groups. The projects:

- Up-skilled library staff, local volunteers and community organisations to ensure the work could continue at the end of the residencies.
- Introduced people to the web and helped them build their digital skills whilst they learnt why it is important for them to be online;
- Improved basic digital skills amongst participants in a fun and creative way;
- Ensured groups across the community can access equipment from the library for storytelling purposes;
- Valued the voices and experiences of a range of people from local communities traditionally least likely to participate or be represented in the cultural life and artefacts of the area;
- Contributed to a living, growing local history resource within the library;
- Encouraged skill-sharing between generations, different parts of the community and between libraries and their audiences.

Ends

Notes to editors

¹ 21% of the Scottish population lack basic digital skills. (Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations report, 'Tackling Digital Exclusion in Scotland'. August 2017)

Biography information for the Digital Storytellers is available on request.

For further information, please contact Rachel Goddard, PR & Marketing Manager at Scottish Book Trust, on Rachel.Goddard@ScottishBookTrust.com or on 0131 524 0160.

Image 1 and 2 caption

Sabine Hellmann Falkirk's Digital Storyteller; Marc Lambert CEO of Scottish Book Trust; Dan Brown Dundee's Digital Storyteller; Taylor McInroy East Ayrshire's Digital Storyteller; Mark Jenkins Orkney's Digital Storyteller; Rebecca Marr Orkney's Digital Storyteller; Paul Bristow Inverclyde's Digital Storyteller. Front centre seated: Kate Forbes Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy.

About Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that includes:

- Giving free books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home.
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classrooms activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland's diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.

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Creative Scotland

In addition to general fundraising, Scottish Book Trust receives Creative Scotland support through Regular Funding.

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. It enables people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen

and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. It distributes funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery.

For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com, and follow @creativescots www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland