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First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in Conversation with Maggie O'Farrell

Exclusive event at Stirling Castle for Book Week Scotland

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and award-winning author Maggie O'Farrell will headline Book Week Scotland 2018 with an exclusive event at Stirling Castle. Book Week Scotland is the annual national celebration of reading and writing, and the First Minister and Maggie O'Farrell will be in conversation on 22 November, 7.30pm.

The event is programmed by Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing, in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland (HES). In keeping with this year's theme of Rebel, the First Minister and Maggie O'Farrell will discuss what being a feminist means to them, and how their reading lives have contributed to their wider identities.

The First Minister is a self-confessed book lover, and often shares her reading recommendations via her social media channels. In 2016, the First Minister's Reading Challenge was launched to encourage a reading culture within schools. It was recently expanded to support children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18 develop a love of reading.

Maggie O'Farrell is the author of seven novels and winner of the 2010 Costa Novel Award for *The Hand That First Held Mine*. Her recent work *I Am, I Am, I Am*, is an astonishing memoir of the near death experiences that have punctuated and defined her life. The title has been critically acclaimed and is a Sunday Times bestseller. After the event, Maggie O'Farrell will be signing copies of her memoir.

There will also be representatives from ROAR (Represent, Object, Advocate, Rewrite) present at the event, seeking consultation on their current research into the inequalities in Scottish writing and publishing. Guests are welcome to suggest their thoughts or ideas.

100 free tickets and a travel bursary will be offered to young women aged 16-25, through various partner networks.

Priced from £8.10, tickets are limited and are available from Stirling Castle's website <http://bit.ly/BWSOFarrellSturgeon>. The event also be live-streamed as part of Book Week Scotland's Digital Festival, and can be watched on [Facebook](#).

Initiated by the Scottish Government and supported by National Lottery funds through Creative Scotland Targeted Funding, Book Week Scotland is delivered by Scottish Book Trust and its partners from 19 November to 25 November 2018. There are hundreds of free events taking place across many different local authorities, funded by Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC).

For more information about Book Week Scotland 2018 and how you can get involved, visit www.bookweekscotland.com where you can find information about all the events taking place in your local area.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said: "Scottish Book Trust is honoured to present First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and award-winning author Maggie O'Farrell as part of our Book Week Scotland programme. Many thanks to Historic Environment Scotland for hosting us at



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Stirling Castle: it's sure to be a magical evening, and we look forward to the conversation between these wonderful role-models, around the theme of Rebel."

Mairi Kidd, Interim Head of Literature, Languages & Publishing, commented: "Book Week Scotland's aim is to help everyone, everywhere discover the transformative power of books and reading and it's fantastic to see the First Minister getting involved with what promises to be an inspiring event, exploring the ways in which reading can shape identity. This event is a must-see for so many reasons – a remarkable writer, a remarkable book and a wonderful location – and it's great to see partner networks facilitating attendance by those who might otherwise struggle to cover travel and ticket costs."

Liz Grant, Executive Manager of Stirling Castle (managed by HES) said: "We're delighted that Stirling Castle will host this prestigious event as part of Book Week Scotland."

"This iconic site was the childhood home of Mary Queen of Scots, perhaps the most famous woman in Scotland's history, making it a fitting setting for a discussion on female identity."

"We look forward to welcoming the First Minister, Maggie O'Farrell and a host of book-lovers to the Castle for this event."

Notes to Editors

Please direct all queries or interview requests:

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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 include:

- Gifting 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 classroom 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.

www.scottishbooktrust.com @scottishbktrust www.facebook.com/scottishbktrust

For more information about **Book Week Scotland**, visit www.bookweekscotland.com. Follow @Bookweekscot on Twitter, check out #bookweekscotland or like the Book Week Scotland Facebook page.



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Initiated by the Scottish Government and supported by £200,000 from the National Lottery through Creative Scotland Targeted Funding and £26,000 from SLIC, Book Week Scotland 2018 will be delivered by Scottish Book Trust from 19 November – 25 November.

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. We enable 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. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com. Follow us @creativescots and www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland.

Historic Environment Scotland

1. [Historic Environment Scotland](http://www.historicenvironment.scot) (HES) is the lead public body charged with caring for, protecting and promoting the historic environment. HES is also the lead on delivering Scotland's first strategy for the historic environment, Our Place in Time.
 - Historic Scotland, Scran, Canmore, The National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP), The Engine Shed, Stirling Castle and Edinburgh Castle are sub-brands of Historic Environment Scotland.
2. Historic Environment Scotland is a registered Scottish Charity. Scottish Charity No. SC045925
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ROAR

Founded in 2016, ROAR stands for Represent, Object, Advocate, Rewrite. ROAR is a group working to combat inequality in Scottish writing and publishing, holding Scottish literature to account. Scottish Book Trust is involved with Christina Neuwirth, a member of ROAR, whose doctoral research looks into gender inequality in Scottish writing and publishing. She recently launched new statistics reflecting the state of Scottish literature and began a consultation with members of the public on what's important to them, what barriers they have encountered, and what we could all do to make things better. More information about ROAR's past activities and members can be found here: <https://womenslibrary.org.uk/2018/08/16/meet-roar/>