



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Shaping the Narrative: a development program for literature chairs

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

NOVEMBER 2020

Do you need this information in another format?

Creative Scotland is committed to offering clear and accessible application processes and programmes that are open to everyone. On request this information is available in alternative formats including translations.

We offer access support to disabled applicants, tailored to individual requests. Support includes Sign Language Interpreters for meetings and scribing support for dyslexic applicants. Officers can offer advice to new applicants and support them to make an application. The Equalities Team can offer additional one-to-one support to applicants with access requirements.

Please note we will accept applications and supporting materials which are written in English, Gaelic or Scots. The course will be taught in English but will have relevance for events in other languages. If you require support, further information or have any general enquiries about the fund and how to apply please contact alan.bett@creativescotland.com who will be able to advise you or will put you in contact with one of our officers.

If you are a D/deaf BSL user, you can access our services with the Contact Scotland-BSL programme. Go to: contactscotland-bsl.org/deaf-bsl-users for more information.

About the Programme

Book festivals and live literature events are among the primary channels through which authors can promote work, reach new readers and build their professional profile. This programme aims to develop the practice of a group of chairs for Scottish literature events and increase the quality of live engagement with the work of Scottish writers. The programme will also respond to the increased move to digital event programming by developing skills and best practice in virtual chairing. The event chair, as is true for journalists and print criticism, shapes the conversation and the way audiences engage with literary work, therefore a lack of diversity in the pool of skilled event chairs can narrow the viewpoints through which literature is addressed and presented to audiences. This programme aims to address this by encouraging a broad and diverse set of applicants.

The Purpose of the Programme

This programme will aim to:

- **Develop skills** through a programme of bespoke training in chairing literature events
- **Promote diversity** in the pool of individuals trained to chair literature events in Scotland
- **Respond** to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and their expected legacy by promoting skills and best practice for virtual event chairing
- **Develop a new revenue stream** for writers and other professionals working in Scotland's literature sector

This pilot programme will recruit around 10 trainee chairs, providing them with the skills and opportunities to professionally chair live literature events for both adults and young people.

Delivery partners

The lead partners for the development and delivery of both children's and adult sections of the programme are listed below:

- **Jenny Niven**, project managing and delivering the core training, aimed primarily at adult events

Jenny Niven works freelance across a range of literature and cultural projects. Previously, she co-founded and directed Beijing's first book festival, and was Head of Programming at the Wheeler Centre for Books Writing and Ideas, Melbourne. From 2014 to 2019 she led the Literature, Languages and Publishing team at Creative Scotland. Over the last 20 years she has chaired writers such as David Mitchell, Andrew O'Hagan, Yiyun Li, Masha Gessen, Helen Garner, Ottessa Moshfegh, Colson Whitehead, Jeffrey Eugenides and, winner of the Nobel prize for literature, Mo Yan.

- **Janet Smyth**, delivering specialist training sessions for children's events

Janet Smyth is Deputy Head of Learning & Engagement at the National Galleries of Scotland with responsibility for programmes seeking to overcome barriers (social, health and access) to active participation in the arts. Prior to this, Janet was a Programme Director at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. In this role she was responsible for children, school and community programmes, establishing activity across Scotland, including in prisons. She also lead two arts and health projects funded by Wellcome Trust. She is also a programme consultant with Bath Festivals and recently led on the creation of the Reading is Magic, a digital children and schools book festival that established a partnership of seven UK and two international festivals.

- **Lee Randall**, delivering a specialist session on digital chairing

Lee Randall has more than 30 years' experience in book publishing and media, including 13 years with The Scotsman Publications. She is a freelance writer, book festival programmer (Granite Noir, Aberdeen's crime fiction festival), and live interviewer, working with festivals and bookstores throughout the UK.

- Festival partners including Aye Write, Bloody Scotland, Borders Book Festival, Creative Conversations (at University of Glasgow), Cymera, Paisley Book Festival, StAnza, Wayword, Wigtown
- Bookshops and other programs running regular literary events

Programme content

The following key elements have been identified in terms of training and development:

The role of the chair – understanding the importance of the role of the chair in shaping conversations, ensuring successful events and facilitating a conversation between author and audience

Preparation and presentation skills – practical skills for live presentation of events, including preparation and event management

Literary criticism, questions and interviewing – developing a professional understanding of how to engage with literature in a live setting and connect it to relevant contemporary world issues

Accessibility – considering what makes an event accessible to both authors and audiences and the chairs' role in ensuring and facilitating this, including working with interpreters

Troubleshooting – pitfalls and how to avoid them

Virtual chairing – knowledge of the various platforms available for virtual events and matching these to event aims and target audience

Live chairing opportunities – with festivals, Book Week Scotland and leading Scottish bookshops through mentoring model

Following the core training period, trainees will be matched with a lead programming contact from book festivals from across Scotland to provide further development and offer opportunities to participate in programs as appropriate.

By working with experienced mentors and connecting with Scotland's book festivals, the scheme will ensure that you will have the skills and contacts to develop as an event chair. The programme will be delivered digitally and is designed with accessibility in mind to fit with ongoing freelance careers, access needs and to accommodate those in all locations.

Learning Model

The programme will comprise 8 sessions, each to be delivered via zoom. Sessions will be 2 hours long and take place on Wednesday afternoons, from 20 January 2020 to 17 March 2020 (with a break during the week commencing 3 February 2020). Participants are expected to attend all sessions.

Opening Session – 20 January 2020 – introducing participants, festivals and course leads

Core training Part 1 – 27 January 2020

Core training Part 2 – 3 February 2020

Core training Part 3 – 17 February 2020

Chairing events for children and young people Part 1 – 24 February 2020

Chairing events for children and young people Part 2 – 3 March 2020

Specifics for digital training – 10 March 2020

Closing session – 17 March 2020

Paired relationships between trainee chairs and Scottish book festivals
– ongoing throughout 2021

When does the programme take place?

Mentee call out: **Monday 9 November 2020**

Closing date: **Friday 27 November 2020**

Mentees announced: **Monday 14 December 2020**

Training program: **20 January 2021 – 17 March 2021**

Festival-mentee consultations: **throughout 2021**

Mentee chairing events: **throughout 2021/early 2022** as appropriate for each festival

Trainee Selection

The opportunity will be made available via application and advertised via all major channels and partners to allow a connection with diverse groups and communities.

There will be a flexible and accessible approach to applications, allowing text, video or audio. The application will ask mentees to supply a CV and demonstrate how they would introduce authors to stage and engage with their work.

The selection panel will consider presentations skills and current engagement with literature. The programme will expect applications from practising writers and those with an existing connection to the literature sector.

Who can apply?

- Individuals with a knowledge and passion for literature and who are able to evidence a degree of existing engagement with the sector (this may be in any capacity)
- Ability to present in front of an audience, or demonstrable potential to develop into a confident presenter on stage
- People interested in a wide range of publishing styles and types/genre of literature
- People willing and able to commit to the entirety of the program including any background research, reading or exercises (access needs will be met)
- All applicants must be based in Scotland

You may have some track record in chairing events, but we are looking for those who feel they would benefit from training.

We would particularly encourage applications from those who self-identify as sharing one or more protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010. The General Equality Duty covers nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

While current students are eligible to apply for the program, the course is entirely separate from – and does not contribute to – any existing university or college training course. We expect applicants to have at least entry-level engagement with the professional literary sector and be able to demonstrate this. We encourage applicants to think carefully about whether applying to the program will contribute to a professional career in the arts as it is intended.

When can I apply?

Applications are invited from Monday 9 November to Friday 27 November 2020. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by Monday 14 December 2020.

How do I apply?

To apply for the mentoring programme please send the following information to alan.bett@creativescotland.com by **5pm on Friday 27 November 2020**:

A video or audio file (no longer than 8 minutes) where you:

- introduce yourself and explain your connection to literature in Scotland
- state the author whose event you would most like to chair and tell us why, introduce your chosen author to the event, and list the top five questions you would ask them
- **A short biography of yourself or a CV (Curriculum Vitae)**, no longer than 2 sides of A4

If you would prefer to submit your application in a different format, or if you have any queries about the programme, please contact Alan Bett to discuss.

Please only send your CV as an attachment. Your audio or video file should be a link. Your video does not have to be public, but we will need to be able to view it via a shareable link. If you have any questions on this, please get in touch. Any files in support of your proposal should be clearly titled and dated. There are a number of ways that you can share such materials and the following are provided as examples only. Please ensure you read and accept the terms and conditions of any online service that you use before sharing your materials with us. In many cases you can make materials private and limited to a specific, hidden web link. You can then share that link with us via email – this may be useful if you do not wish the materials to be openly available:

Audio: SoundCloud allows you to upload audio files which can be Public or Private – go to the [Soundcloud website](#)

Video: Video files can be shared via YouTube or Vimeo. To adjust the privacy settings of each video, go to the [Vimeo website](#) and the [YouTube website](#)

Please remember in your email to clearly outline what additional supporting material/s you have submitted, where they are and how we can access them.

Data Protection

Creative Scotland (CS) requires some personal information about you / your organisation to consider your application for funding. Without this information CS will be unable to process your application.

If you would like to see a breakdown of the personal information CS requires, why it is required, what CS does with that information and how long CS keeps it, please refer to CS's Funding Privacy Notice available online www.creativescotland.com/privacy-policy.

CS may share your personal information with third parties to comply with the law and / or for the legitimate interests of CS and / or the third parties concerned.

Where the personal information you have provided to CS belongs to other individual(s), please refer to CS's Funding Privacy Notice. You must share this Funding Privacy Statement and CS' Funding Privacy Notice with the respective individual(s).

You have some rights in relation to the personal information that CS holds about you under data protection law. Information on how to exercise these rights is contained in CS's Funding Privacy Notice or you can contact CS's Data Protection Officer.

If you have any concerns with how CS has processed your personal information, you should contact CS' Data Protection Officer in the first instance, as CS would welcome the opportunity to work with you to resolve any complaint. If you are still dissatisfied, you can submit a complaint to the Information Commissioners Office.

Making a complaint

As an organisation, we will always listen to and respond to any concerns that you may have. If you would like to make a complaint about either the service you have received from Creative Scotland or the way we have handled your application, we have a process that you can use.

Please note that Creative Scotland does not have an appeals process and for this reason, we are unable to accept complaints that relate solely to the decision we have made rather than how we have made it.

For more information, please visit the Complaints section of our website: www.creativescotland.com/resources/our-publications/policies/complaints-handling

Freedom of Information (FOI)

Creative Scotland is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions. You can see details of our FOI handling on our website here: www.creativescotland.com/foi

We are listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks to see them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at www.itspublicknowledge.info for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions. We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.

Waverley Gate
2-4 Waterloo Place
Edinburgh EH1 3EG
Scotland UK

The Lighthouse
Mitchell Lane
Glasgow G1 3NU
Scotland UK

www.creativescotland.com
enquiries@creativescotland.com

Please note: due to COVID-19, Creative Scotland staff have been working from home since March 2020. This has affected our phone services and we ask that at this time, for any queries relating to our complaints process, please contact us by email in the first instance via enquiries@creativescotland.com

November 2020

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