



Environmental focus next up for the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour

Bestselling Author hosts Magical Beast Workshops at Edinburgh Zoo

From Monday 27 September to Saturday 2 October, the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour will visit primary school pupils across the country as it continues its series of virtual events.

The tour will focus on the environment, with talks from conservationist, vet, TV presenter and author Jess French; author and rewilding pioneer Isabella Tree and illustrator Allira Tee; and adventurer and bestselling author Abi Elphinstone.

The Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour is supported by Scottish Friendly and organised by Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing. During the pandemic, the tour has been delivered virtually, live streaming into classrooms and living rooms across Scotland and the rest of the UK, with educational [watch on demand](#) video content viewed over 100,000 times.

The Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour will host virtual events on the environment for schools across Scotland, with an audience of around 5,000 pupils. Jess French will talk to young people about the world's incredible forests and how they can get involved and learn how to protect them. She will share educational extracts from her book: *'Let's Save Our Planet: Forests: Uncover the Facts. Be Inspired. Make A Difference.'*

Isabella Tree and Allira Tree will discuss insights from her book: *'When We Went Wild'*, a joyful, sustainably printed picture book about two farmers who decide to let their farm run wild, inspired in part by Isabella's own experience at the world-renowned Knepp rewilding project in West Sussex.

Isabella will also show pupils around the farm via a virtual video tour before reading the book and sharing how she and her husband turned a loss-making farm into a sustainable, wildlife enterprise. This will be followed by an interactive drawalong with the book's illustrator Allira Tee, who joins the tour live from Melbourne, Australia.

Author Abi Elphinstone will virtually visit P4–7 pupils about her real-life adventures, living with the Kazakh Eagle Hunters in Mongolia to kayaking through the Norwegian fjords. Abi will also discuss her Unmapped Chronicles series: *'The Crackledawn Dragon'* – a voyage across a secret kingdom full of silver whales, fire krakens, and underwater palaces. She will share how her own experiences and adventures in the natural world inspire her magical realms and beasts, as well as showing pupils how easy it is to leap into stories of their own.

[Authors Live](#) will also return on Thursday 30 September with Abi Elphinstone. Schools across Scotland can sign up for P4–7 classes and watch the event live from their classrooms. There will also be a chance to ask the author questions during the event through a Twitter Q&A.

Magical Beasts at Edinburgh Zoo

For budding young writers and animal lovers, Abi Elphinstone will also host [Inventing Magical Beasts](#) workshops at Edinburgh Zoo (Budongo Theatre) on Saturday 2 October, starting at 10am and 11.30am. The event is included in the price of zoo admission, and families are invited to come along and meet the author. Abi will demonstrate how young people can invent their own magical beasts, using animals from Edinburgh Zoo as inspiration. There will also be signed copies of the author's book available to purchase.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust said:

"We are delighted that the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour is focusing on the environment, a topic that young people are incredibly engaged with. We're pleased to have experts in both conservation and rewilding joining the tour. The pupils are sure to learn more about their planet and how to protect it for many years to come.

"We hope families can join our event at Edinburgh Zoo, where Abi Elphinstone will help inspire the next generation of budding writers."

Beccy Angus, Head of Discovery and Learning at Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, the wildlife conservation charity which leads Edinburgh Zoo, said:

"It is wonderful to welcome Abi Elphinstone to the zoo.

"As a wildlife conservation charity, education is at the heart of what we do. We hope this event will help our visitors learn more about the spectacular species in our zoos and around the world, and inspire the next generation of conservationists."

Notes to Editors

For all press queries, please contact:

Keara Donnachie Keara.Donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com or call 07956 773749.

About Scottish Friendly

Scottish Friendly is one of the UK's largest mutual life offices. At Scottish Friendly we believe saving and investing should be for everyone, which is why we offer a range of affordable investment and savings products to help individuals and their families achieve their financial goals.

Scottish Friendly has sponsored the programme for the past 20 years, touring some of the finest children's authors and illustrators including former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell, Malorie Blackman, Michael Rosen, Jacqueline Wilson, Melvin Burgess, Steve Cole, Michael Morpurgo and Sophie McKenzie.



Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity that believes everyone living in Scotland should have equal access to books. Our work provides opportunities to improve life chances through books and the fundamental skills of reading and writing. Access to books and a love of books bring many important benefits from family bonding and advancing children's learning, to unlocking creativity, helping employability and improving mental health & well-being. Scottish Book Trust aims to support all communities across Scotland, with particular focus on those who are vulnerable and under-represented.

Our programmes and outreach work include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home, through Bookbug and Read Write Count
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, book awards and author events such as Authors Live with the BBC and our Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour
- Supporting and nurturing Scotland's wide-ranging literary talent, both emerging and established through our training, awards and writing opportunities including New Writers Awards
- Creating events to share books and connect writers with communities, including Book Week Scotland
- Providing support to people living with dementia, and their carers, through Reading is Caring

In addition to the funding we receive from the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland, we need the constant support of trusts and foundations, corporate sponsors and individual donors.

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