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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1 OCTOBER 2019
CHAIR'S REPORT**

2018/19 has been a busy, productive and positive period for Literature Alliance Scotland.

Alongside continued support, financial and otherwise, from the membership, the organisation applied for a Creative Scotland grant to continue their work in advocating for Scotland's literature and languages, at home and elsewhere. LAS was successful in securing £60,000 (having applied for £69,890), enabling the delivery of a two-year programme of work entitled: 'Turning the Next Page: Future-proofing our sector for 2020 and beyond'. This programme has five main components: amplifying, listening to, diversifying, strengthening and representing our sector.

Amplifying our sector: We will commission three pieces (six across two years) from leading writers and literature producers in Scotland, reflecting on the literary landscape in Scotland today. The first commission, in May 2019, was written by award-winning children's writer Theresa Breslin on libraries, continuing our support of libraries and raising our voice against senseless closures, and Theresa was featured on BBC Radio Scotland. The second, by award-winning writer and journalist Chitra Ramaswamy will be launched at our Sector Away Day in October 2019.

We were also involved in meeting and greeting Creative Scotland's 'Momentum' delegates, international festival programmers visiting the Edinburgh festivals in August 2018.

Listening to our sector: We revised our meeting structure to two half-day meetings (in Feb and May) with guest speakers sharing best practice and networking opportunities, and a Sector Away Day (plus AGM) in the Autumn. The first of these revised meetings took place on 14 Feb 2019 at Scottish Book Trust and featured speakers: Sasha De Buyl, Manager of Scottish Books International; Clive Gillman, Director of Creative Industries, Creative Scotland; and Christina Neuwirth, ROAR (Represent, Object, Advocate, Rewrite). The second meeting on 9 May was hosted by Publishing Scotland and members heard from Ali Bowden, Director of Edinburgh City of Literature, on the Literature House project, Sara Thomas, Scotland Programme Coordinator of Wikimedia UK on under-represented groups and Marie Christie, Head of Development – Events Industry, on VisitScotland's Year of Scotland's Stories 2022. Both were a success and praised for being stimulating and valuable events.

Diversifying our sector: Our new career development programme encourages inclusivity and seeks to future-proof our sector through a tailored development opportunity for two mid-career literature professionals (one each year) from a background not typically represented in the sector at leadership level. This opportunity will open in October 2019. In June 2019, we also supported the establishment of a new Scottish BAME Writers' Network, and co-hosted 'Breaking New Ground', a celebration of children's writers & illustrators of colour as part of a national touring showcase.

Strengthening our sector: A series of professional development training sessions will be held over two years on subjects identified by Members, including promotion and marketing, funding, and strengthening links with education. Sessions so far have included Reaching Out / Holding On: how to build and retain audiences and planning is in progress for further events in the new year.

Representing our sector: we established a new Writers' Advisory Group to help ensure that our activities, advocacy and campaigning reflects writers' concerns. The writers are paid for their time to

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meet with us twice a year. We have selected a group of five writers, representing a variety of genres, geographies, languages and identities. The first meeting was held in June and feedback was used to inform the content of our Sector Away Day. The second meeting is in November and we welcome two of the Group at this event today.

Membership

Two organisations, one full member organisation and one network associate, withdrew from the organisation and one of our Trustees David Wheatley sadly resigned due to pressures of work/life balance.

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