OPEN EVENTS FUND

This programme is designed to support eligible events being delivered to celebrate the upcoming Themed Year, Scotland’s Year of Stories 2022 (YS22). The deadline for funding applications to the YS22 Open Events Fund is Thursday 12 August 2021.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE YEAR OF STORIES 2022

The love of stories is hardwired into us all; it is one of the strongest ways we connect with one another and share our experiences. Great stories, well told, can evoke indelible images in our minds and bring contemporary and traditional cultures to life. Every culture has its stories to tell, and Scotland has a particularly rich heritage of stories and storytelling to spotlight and celebrate. These include our local tales, oral traditions, great stories told in books or on screen – all inspired by our country, our culture and reflected back by many diverse voices and across the widest range of forms. Stories are vital to every part of Scotland. Every community has its own tales to tell, places to highlight as inspiration for well-known books and films, visitor attractions that showcase our literary and storytelling heritage and all kinds of places and spaces where stories, old and new, can be enjoyed.

Scotland’s stories reflect who we are and shape how others see us. 2022 gives us the opportunity to work in partnership to further harness this powerful means to engage and thereby inspire locals and visitors to discover, celebrate and share their own stories of Scotland.

A programme of activity will be designed and delivered in celebration of the Themed Year to support the nation’s tourism and events sectors. The Year of Stories funded events programme will be central to the overall programme of activity delivered as part of the Themed Year.

Borders Book Festival  
Beltane Fire Festival
AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Scotland’s Year of Stories will sustain and build upon the momentum of the preceding Themed Years to spotlight, celebrate and promote the wealth of stories inspired by, written, or created in Scotland. From icons of literature to local tales, the year will encourage locals and visitors to experience a diversity of voices, take part in events and explore the places, people and cultures connected to all forms of our stories, past and present. It will contribute to recovery from the pandemic and inspire new stories of Scotland to be shared.

The key objectives for Themed Years are around:

• Promotion
• Celebration
• Participation
• Collaboration
• Industry Engagement

This fund will support the safe delivery of events in Scotland as we move through Covid-19, in accordance with relevant Scottish Government legislation and guidance and also aims to complement the wider recovery of the tourism and events sectors in Scotland.
EVENTS PROGRAMME SCOPE

The YS22 Open Events Fund will support the objectives of the year through the development of a programme of events that create opportunities for responsible participation, celebration, and promotion of the themes.

Scotland regularly hosts a wealth of exceptional events that celebrate our Stories from literary events and book festivals to heritage, cultural and film festivals. Funding will be awarded to support event proposals from across Scotland that complement and enhance the existing offer. Events supported through this programme will form a key aspect of the promotional campaign and will offer new, high profile, creative activity that will capture the attention of audiences and media.

Supported events must demonstrate alignment with responsible tourism values and plans must directly relate to the story or stories they wish to tell, with a strong event narrative and connection to place that will result in an authentic event experience. In selecting the overall programme of successful events, attention will be given to spreading activity across the country throughout the year and engaging a wide range of partners across the themes.
PROGRAMME STRANDS

YS22 will be inclusive, embracing a wide range of activity and content aligned to the themes with a focus on widening awareness, engagement and participation and promoting access, inclusion, and diversity. Given the potential scope of the opportunity, the events programme will be developed around five broad strands, designed to offer a range of experiences and activity.

The five programme strands that we invite applicants to respond to and celebrate are:

1. ICONIC STORIES AND STORYTELLERS

Across literature, screen and entertainment, YS22 will celebrate and showcase Scotland’s wealth of treasured and iconic stories and storytellers from classics to contemporary.

2. NEW STORIES

We want to shout about Scotland’s new and untold stories. YS22 will shine a light on emerging, fresh and forward-looking talent and highlight the innovators that break boundaries across all forms of storytelling.

3. SCOTLAND’S PEOPLE AND PLACES

Our people and places have inspired the widest range of stories and storytellers across the world. YS22 will promote how Scotland’s diverse culture, languages, landscapes and ways of life, urban and rural, provide a source for all types and forms of stories, encouraging visitors and audiences to find out more.

4. LOCAL TALES AND LEGENDS

Every community has its distinct tales to tell, stories of now and those passed through the generations. These are the stories we tell ourselves and share with others to make sense of time and place. YS22 will provide the opportunity for every part of Scotland to tell its story.

5. INSPIRED BY NATURE

Our encounters with nature are an unfailing source of stories, old and new. Whether by the sea or land, along rivers or through woods, in city and country, we discover stories of birds, insects, animals and plants. These stories define our place in the natural world and help create a more sustainable future for Scotland, and a greener planet.

Event proposals may focus on one or more of the above programme strands and the following event categorisations will be considered for support:

- **Live, public facing events** which welcome audiences in person to participate or spectate
- **Hybrid event models** which have both in-person opportunities to attend or participate and offer an online, virtual or digital opportunity to engage

In addition to this funded events programme, a funding opportunity targeted specifically at community level organisations across Scotland is in plan to be launched later in 2021. A non-funded Partner Events Programme will also be coordinated alongside and will provide a structured opportunity for all eligible events and festivals that fit well with the themes to take part in the year and benefit from the wider promotional platform.
ABOUT THE FUND

The YS22 Open Events Fund has been designed to support new, creative event proposals and programming that will provide high profile content created especially in response to the 2022 Themed Year opportunity.

We are seeking event proposals that will capture the imagination and help us to tell and to celebrate Scotland’s wealth of unique stories. Successful proposals must provide strong engagement opportunities that create key moments across the year capable of driving high levels of media coverage, audience awareness and attendance. Both brand new and one-off events as well as high profile new programme strands created to provide additionality within existing events or festivals specifically for the Themed Year are eligible.

A total fund value of £600,000 is available for eligible events planned to take place across 2022. Organisers may apply for individual grants of between £15,000 - £60,000. The deadline for all applications is Thursday 12 August 2021.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

YOUR EVENT

• Events must take place in Scotland in 2022, be public facing and attractive to visitors and locals alike
• Plans must resonate strongly with the themes, aim and objectives of the year as outlined above and bring to life one or more of the five programme strands
• Proposals must clearly articulate responsible tourism and sustainable development principles, including how the event will manage economic, social, and environmental impacts and maximise positive outcomes
• Applications will be considered from both brand new and one-off events as well as from existing events and festivals creating new high-profile programming especially for the Themed Year
• To support resilience of the programme, applicants will be asked to include details of their approach to Covid-19 risk management and detail contingency planning, i.e. digital or virtual programming or dispersed, community based activities, as part of their proposal

YOUR FUNDING REQUEST

• A minimum award of £15,000 and maximum award of £60,000 can be applied for
• The proposed budget, event plan and communication plan presented must be viable and demonstrate the case for financial support
• A balanced and achievable event budget showing other income sources, including where possible funding contributions from other partners, should be presented. Stronger applications will demonstrate confirmed, or good potential for, partner support
• The level of award applied for should be supported by a clear business case and budget that justifies the request
• All applicants should discuss their intended funding request with EventScotland prior to application. Given the overall budget available and scope of programme desired, it is expected only a small number of proposals will be supported towards the maximum funding level.

• **New Events:** Applications from new events will be assessed on evidence of a sound budget, strong event credentials and content with reference to the objectives and criteria. The applicant must demonstrate the relevant relationships and partnerships are in place to be able to mobilise collaborations immediately in developing the event.

• **Existing Events:** Applications will be accepted for new, high profile programme elements within existing festivals or events. In addition to sound budget, these events will be assessed specifically on the added value proposals will bring in terms of promotion and audiences.

**ALL APPLICANTS**

• Applicants must confirm that their events will be delivered in line with the [Scottish Government’s Events Sector Guidance](https://www.gov.scot/) and any other government advice applicable at the time of the event delivery.

• Strong applications will demonstrate confirmed partner support. Wider financial and in-kind support in place to support your plans will be assessed.

• This fund cannot be used to support core business costs or overheads and is not designed to augment previously announced Scottish Government Covid-19 business support schemes.

• Support of hospitality or capital purchases for equipment and infrastructure cannot be covered.

• Awards cannot offer replacement funding or fill budget gaps (e.g. created by the withdrawal of another funder).

• Only new, creative proposals for events activity can be supported through this fund. If you are an existing event, please note that this fund cannot be used to support core activity.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Applications will be assessed on their own merit covering their relevance and fit with the programme, viability of the proposal, evidence of sustainable development principles and it’s impacts aligned to the National Events Strategy; [Scotland, the Perfect Stage](https://www.visitscotland.com/). All applications will then be brought to panel where proposals will be considered competitively in the context of the overall programme. In our assessment of applications, we will consider the following areas:

**RELEVANCE AND FIT**

• Strength of event concept and relevance to the aim and objectives of the Themed Year.

• Alignment with access, inclusion and diversity objectives including promotion of emerging and undiscovered talent, underrepresented groups, our indigenous languages, young people, and new Scots communities.

• Potential to generate new and creative content which drives engagement with the theme and increased attendances to destinations and/or attractions connected with our Stories.
• Capacity to drive national and/or international profile and tourism impacts

• Fit within the overall programme of activity and contribution to balance across the five YS22 programme strands: Iconic Stories and Storytellers; New Stories; Scotland’s People and Places; Local Tales and Legends; and Inspired by Nature

• Contribution to spread of programme across Scotland including geographic and calendar spread. It is also important that we achieve an appropriate balance of live and digital opportunities to engage and that plans do not clash with other high-profile events in the same region and/or time

VIABILITY

• Sufficient event management, financial administration and other necessary experience and skills required to deliver the event

• Relevance of funding request and viability of overall event budget (projected and secured additional income), business, operational and marketing plans

• Sufficient financial and in-kind support from other public and/or private sector organisations

• Demonstration of Covid-19 risk management and planning that ensures activity can be responsive to the evolving situation and resulting in a resilient and robust proposal

SUSTAINABILITY

Your application will also be assessed in line with the three dimensions of sustainable development; social, environmental, and economic:

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

• Creation of opportunities for artists, storytellers and creative talent to create new work and/or reach new audiences

• Potential to extend participation and broaden engagement across the programme strands (including with our diverse communities and underrepresented groups and involvement of young people in the co-design and delivery of the event)

• Capacity to promote and protect Scotland’s unique culture and heritage and showcase talent connected to our Stories

• Wellbeing benefits from attending or participating in the event

• Opportunities the event offers around outreach, participation, boosting equality outcomes and community engagement in line with our Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide

ECONOMIC (TOURISM AND BUSINESS)

• Innovative approaches to event delivery and collaboration including new partnerships created or developed

• Promotion of partner initiatives that inspire greater participation including encouraging reading, writing and creating stories
• Contribution to local, regional and national tourism and economic recovery plans and ability to support the restart of Scotland’s tourism and events industries

• Opportunities to provide benefits to Scottish business and the events supply chain and to showcase local talent, producers or other attributes

• Potential to attract visitors to the host region in a safe and sustainable manner and in line with any relevant Covid-19 restrictions

ENVIRONMENTAL

• Evidence of resource efficient planning in line with Resource Efficient Scotland’s How to plan and deliver environmentally sustainable events guide

• Potential to promote and deliver best practice in terms of environmental impact and responsible tourism

• Evidence the promotion of environmentally sustainable development practices including the use of local suppliers

FURTHER IMPACT AREAS

BRAND, IDENTITY AND REPUTATION

• Fit with the National Events Strategy: Scotland, the Perfect Stage

• Ability to positively showcase the unique identity of the host area and fit with the host region e.g. alignment with local event and tourism strategies, celebrating local priorities, heritage and stories etc.

• Potential to align with wider national event and tourism campaigns where appropriate

MEDIA AND PROFILE

• Potential to promote the YS22 themes and key messages to a wide audience through effective marketing

• Implementation of clear and responsible messaging to reassure attendees and inform safe engagement with your event

• Potential to generate positive media coverage (broadcast, digital, social, print) promoting the themes (local, national, international)

• Potential to drive effective social media engagement

• Potential to generate positive media and profile for the host region and/or wider Scotland
APPLICATION AND FUNDING PROCESS

• Read and follow the ‘How to Apply’ notes below to submit a Funding Enquiry online.
• Remember the deadline for completed applications is Thursday 12 August 2021.
• It is not expected that applicants will hear the outcome of their application before October 2021 and this timeline should be considered in planning and budget forecasting.
• All applications will be considered and assessed in line with the Evaluation Criteria detailed above. Applications will then be brought to panel where they will be considered competitively in line with the aim and objectives of this fund.
• Successful applicants will be required to sign a formal funding agreement, agree relevant key performance indicators, provide recognition and acknowledgement of YS22 in all event materials, undertake appropriate visitor research and complete a Post-Event Outcome Report.
• Grant funding will be paid in instalments against an agreed payment schedule. The final payment will be made after the event on submission of your Post-Event Outcome Report.
• All grant recipients must agree to implement a robust means for measuring event outcomes, in line with the aims of the Themed Year in order that the year can be evaluated.
• VisitScotland will deliver an overarching Themed Year Marketing and PR campaign. Funded events will be required to work pro-actively in partnership with our team as part of this campaign and in line with specific communications guidance which will be issued.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Submit a Funding Enquiry online at www.visitscotland.org/events/funding/make-a-funding-enquiry

2. A member of the EventScotland team will be in touch to discuss your application and, if appropriate, issue the Application Form.

3. You should complete the Application Form in full and submit it on or before the deadline (Thursday 12 August 2021) along with your supporting documents. Refer to the Application Checklist at the end of the form to ensure you have included all relevant documents.

4. Completed applications should be submitted in Word format to ThemedYearsEvents@eventscotland.org. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application.

5. Funding decisions are not expected to be made before October 2021. Successful applicants will be allocated an Event Manager who will be in touch to discuss next steps including the contract paperwork and will be assigned to work with you, along with a VisitScotland Marketing and Communications lead, for the duration of the contract term.
CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you have any issues with completing the online enquiry form, or require additional support for accessibility reasons, you can contact us by email to ThemedYearsEvents@eventscotland.org.

Please include your contact details and some basic event information and a member of the team will get back to you.