**BookTrust announces judges line up for Blue Peter Book Awards 2019**

10th September 2018 – Darren Chetty, Louise Pentland and Alex T. Smith have been revealed as the judges for the 2019 Blue Peter Book Awards. Between them they bring a wealth of expertise and experience about children’s books and what makes a good read.

Darren Chetty is a teacher and writer, who contributed to the bestselling book *The Good Immigrant*, edited by Nikesh Shukla. Louise Pentland is a bestselling author and creator of YouTube videos about lifestyle, motherhood and beauty. Her vlog A Sprinkle of Glitter reaches over 2.5million YouTube subscribers and last but not least, Alex. T Smith, author and illustrator of several children’s books including, *Primrose, Egg, Ella* and the *Claude* book series.

Managed by [BookTrust](http://www.booktrust.org.uk), the UK’s largest children’s reading charity, the immensely popular Blue Peter Book Awards honour amazing authors, imaginative illustrators and the best books for children. The 2019 Awards champion children’s books published in the last 12 months in two categories: Best Story and Best Book with Facts. There will be three shortlisted books for each award chosen the judging panel and announced on Blue Peter on 8th November.

The winning titles, voted for by over 200 children from 12 schools across the UK, will be revealed live on Blue Peter on World Book Day on Thursday 7th March 2019, with the winning authors and illustrators appearing on a special awards episode of the show.

Entries are now open for schools to apply to be part of the expert reading panel. Schools need a minimum of 20 pupils in year 5 and/or 6 (or P6 and P7 in Scotland and Northern Ireland) to vote for their favourite book in each category.

**Teacher and Writer, Darren Chetty said:** “I’m delighted to be a judge for the iconic Blue Peter. Prizes like this are important because they help to open up the wide world of literature and books to children and young people.”

**Louise Pentland – a lifestyle vlogger who found fame on YouTube with her vlog A Sprinkle of Glitter said:** “I am so thrilled to be on the judging panel for the Blue Peter Book Awards! I have watched Blue Peter since I was a little girl copying the DIY and crafts and feel, especially now I’m an author myself, that helping to find their book of the year is a huge honour! So glad to be part of the team and so glad to be reading all these fabulous books- it’s going to be a very tough call!!!”

**Alex T. Smith – author illustrator of the Claude books, now an animated series on Disney Junior said:** ‘I’ve been a lifelong fan of Blue Peter, and I’ve always admired how they’ve put creativity and reading at the heart of their programming. I’m really thrilled to be one of the judges for this year’s Blue Peter Book Award and to be part of something that not only celebrates the quality of writing and illustration available for children, but how truly vital it is.’

Discussing the new judging panel, **Blue Peter editor, Ewan Vinnicombe said:** “. In Blue Peter’s 60th year the Book Awards will play a key role in our celebrations. I’m so pleased to have such a stellar line up of judges for this year. It’s going to be an exciting judging day with Louise, Alex and Darren who are all experts in their field. I can’t wait to find out what they decide to shortlist.”

The Blue Peter Book Awards have been celebrating children’s literature since 2000. BookTrust, the largest children’s reading charity in Britain, has managed the Blue Peter Book Awards since 2008. The 2018 winners were Cressida Cowell for *The Wizards of Once* and Susan Martineau and Vicky Barker for *Real-Life Mysteries.*

***[Ends]***

**Press Contacts:** Sinéad Gosai, Press Officer, BookTrust, [sinead.gosai@booktrust.org.uk](mailto:sinead.gosai@booktrust.org.uk), +44 (0)20 7801 8849

Keep up-to-date with the Awards at [www.booktrust.org.uk/bluepeter](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/bluepeter) and on Twitter by following @Booktrust and #BPBA

**Notes to Editors**

**Ewan Vinnicombe** (non-voting chair) has been Blue Peter Editor since January 2013. In his 18 years working at the BBC he’s worked on a number of Children's productions, including *Springwatch Trackers, Blue Peter, Record Breakers, The Saturday Show and Live & Kicking and CBBC & CBeebies Presentation.*

**Darren Chetty** is a teacher, writer and researcher. He has published academic work on philosophy, education, racism, children’s literature and hip-hop culture. He is a contributor to the bestselling book *The Good Immigrant*, edited by Nikesh Shukla and published by Unbound. Darren is co-author, with Jeffrey Boakye of the forthcoming “What Is Masculinity? Why Does It Matter? And Other Big Questions” published by Wayland. Darren tweets at @rapclassroom

**Louise Pentland** is a bestselling author, parenting, lifestyle and beauty blogger and vlogger. Her two YouTube channels have amassed over 3.7 million subscribers. In 2015, Louise released her debut non-fiction book which became a Sunday Times Number 1 Bestseller. 2017 saw Louise turn her hand to fiction writing with the release of her debut novel, *Wilde Like Me*, which also became a Sunday Times Number 1 Bestseller. And the follow-up *Wilde About the Girl*, which was published in August 2018 also went straight into the charts as a top 5 bestseller.

**Alex T. Smith** is an author-illustrator and the award-winning creator of the bestselling *Claude* series, which is published in 16 languages worldwide, and is now a TV show on Disney Junior. Alex's newest series, *Mr Penguin*, launched in 2017, to widespread praise. Alex's quirky, witty writing and illustrations are instantly recognisable, critically acclaimed and as popular with adults as children.

Alex is also widely praised for his work illustrating children's classics: he won Children's Book of the World Illustration Award for his illustrations in a new edition of Dodie Smith's *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*; he has created new art for books by Enid Blyton, Eva Ibbotson and Richmal Crompton. Alex has collaborated with *Watership Down* author Richard Adams on his last book, *Egg Box Dragon*, as well as David Almond and Juno Dawson.

Alex has won the UKLA Picture Book Award and the Sainsbury's Children's Book Award, and been shortlisted for the Waterstones Children's Book Award. He has also been the official World Book Day illustrator.

**Blue Peter** is the longest running children’s magazine programme in the world. As well as the Book Awards, the show’s family of presenters, live studio home, amazing competitions, incredible challenges, live music, interviews with celebrities, access behind the scenes, pets, makes and bakes, free games online and most importantly its commitment to the audience are all long standing elements of this iconic show. [www.bbc.co.uk/bluepeter](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bluepeter)

**BookTrust** is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach 3.4 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit**.** [**booktrust.org.uk**](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)