\*\*\*Photos available on request\*\*\*

**Nick Sharratt to celebrate the extraordinary power of pictures in children’s books as BookTrust’s latest Writer-Illustrator in Residence**

One of the nation’s favourite children’s author-illustrators, Nick Sharratt, has today (Wednesday 21 September) been appointed as the new Writer-Illustrator in Residence at BookTrust, the UK’s largest children’s reading charity. Sharratt plans to use the residency to celebrate the extraordinary power of pictures and visual images in children’s books and the crucial role they play in enriching a child’s experience when it comes to reading.

Nick Sharratt has created illustrations for over two hundred and fifty books during his illustrious career. He has produced over sixty of his own titles, including much-loved favourites *Ketchup on Your Cornflakes and Shark in the Park*. He has worked with celebrated writers including Julia Donaldson, Kes Gray and Michael Rosen and is well known for his collaboration with Jacqueline Wilson, for whom he’s illustrated more than fifty novels.

He has been the official illustrator for World Book Day and together with Katrina Charman, was awarded the 2021 BookTrust Storytime Prize, which recognises the best book for sharing with babies and young children, for *The Whales on Bus*. The award formed an integral part of the charity’s new national library experience BookTrust Storytime which was piloted together with libraries and aimed at encouraging more families with young children, especially those who are disadvantaged, to share stories together and make visiting their local public library a regular part of family life. Sharratt will now sit on the judging panel for the 2022 BookTrust Storytime Prize.

With a new strategy which has a strong focus on supporting the most disadvantaged children to build a reading habit, the BookTrust residency provides a platform for writers and illustrators to explore issues that they are passionate about and use their creativity to inspire more children and families to read together.

**Nick Sharratt said**, “My six months as BookTrust’s Writer-Illustrator in Residence is going to be one long picture party! I’ll be celebrating the extraordinary power of the visual image on the page and the enormous impact pictures have on us, right from the very first books we encounter. I’m passionate about how pictures and images encourage and enrich children’s reading experiences and how frequently they can take us on wonderful journeys independent of the words. Pictures can be incredibly freeing and empowering, particularly for those children who aren’t big readers. So many children enjoy sharing books by focussing on the imagery rather than the text so look out on the BookTrust website for tips on how to get the most out of illustrations in picture books and find out how you can take part in fun, easy drawalongs I’ll be hosting. No matter how young or old we are, we can all create wonderful pictures too!”

**Diana Gerald, CEO of BookTrust, continued:** “Nick has been a powerful advocate for children’s books during his extensive career and we’re delighted to welcome him as our new Writer-Illustrator in Residence. Pictures and images have a unique and critical role to play within children’s books, whatever the age of the child. Younger children love looking at the pictures together with their families. The use of colour, shapes and contrast, together with words and language in books, are an important part of their early development. Older children want to choose their own books, and we know it’s often the pictures and illustrations that initially grab their attention and continue to provide joy and excitement even to those children who might not see themselves as readers. We’re thrilled to see how Nick’s residency will inspire and empower children on their reading journeys, so all children can enjoy the life-changing benefits of reading.”

The BookTrust Writer in Residence project has been running since March 2009 and has featured several authors and illustrators including Cressida Cowell, Sita Brahmachari, Patrick Ness, Polly Dunbar, Bali Rai, Matt Haig, Laura Dockrill, Chris Riddell, Nicola Davies, Cerrie Burnell, Sarah McIntyre, Philip Ardagh, Taran Matharu, Nadia Shireen, Candy Gourlay, Phil Earle, Ed Vere, Smriti Halls, Onjali Q Raúf, Dapo Adeola and Michael Rosen.

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

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**About Nick Sharratt**

Author and illustrator Nick Sharratt has created illustrations for over two hundred and fifty books. As well as producing around sixty of his own titles, he’s worked with numerous writers, including Julia Donaldson, Kes Gray, Michael Rosen and Giles Andreae; his most famous collaboration being with Jacqueline Wilson, for whom he’s illustrated more than fifty novels. His books include *Ketchup on Your Cornflakes?* and the million-selling *You Choose* (written by Pippa Goodhart) and *Shark in the Park* books, both of which have been adapted for the stage. His work has won many prizes, the most recent being the 2021 Storytime Book Prize, for *The Whales on the Bus*, written by Katrina Charman. He has been the official illustrator for World Book Day and his illustrations cover the two Leeds Libraries Story Buses. Nick’s also the proud recipient of a gold Blue Peter badge!

**About BookTrust**

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 3.9 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 services, libraries, 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/)