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## **The Duchess of Cornwall hosts celebratory tea for Waterstones Children's Laureate 20th anniversary**

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*(L-R: The Duchess of Cornwall with Anthony Browne, Julia Donaldson, Jacqueline Wilson, Cressida Cowell, Chris Riddell; Cressida Cowell © David Bebbler)*

Today, **Wednesday 16 October**, The Duchess of Cornwall has hosted a tea at Clarence House to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Waterstones Children's Laureate, which is awarded once every two years to an eminent children's book writer or illustrator to celebrate outstanding achievement in their field.

The Duchess of Cornwall welcomed the current Waterstones Children's Laureate, **Cressida Cowell**, and four former Laureates, **Jacqueline Wilson**, **Julia Donaldson**, **Anthony Browne** and **Chris Riddell** this afternoon, where they discussed, amongst other things, the importance of libraries, sharing the powerful experience of reading aloud and how books inspire children to unleash their creativity.

**Cressida Cowell, Waterstones Children's Laureate 2019–2021**, said:

"It was so kind of The Duchess of Cornwall to invite our League of Laureates to tea. She has been a staunch champion of literary causes and charities for so many years, and it was an opportunity for us to say how very grateful we are for her support. Over tea in the Garden Room, we discussed the invaluable role of libraries in both schools and communities, and why it is so important that every child has access to books and can experience the transformative magic of reading."

The Waterstones Children's Laureate is managed by BookTrust, the UK's largest children's reading charity, and sponsored by Waterstones. The Duchess and Laureates were joined by Diana Gerald, CEO of BookTrust, alongside Jill Coleman (Director of Children's Books), Emily Drabble (Head of Children's Books Promotion and Prizes).

**Diana Gerald, CEO of BookTrust**, said:

"BookTrust was delighted to be invited to Clarence House by The Duchess of Cornwall, who is clearly just as passionate as we are about ensuring the next generation of young readers are inspired to discover the wonderful world of words. We spoke about the powerful experience of reading aloud, with The Duchess sharing her strong, beautiful memories of being read to as a child by her father, and how she now reads to her grandchildren and encourages them to lose themselves in a book."

Originally created by Poet Laureate Ted Hughes and author Michael Morpurgo, eleven authors and illustrators have been appointed to this prestigious role: Quentin Blake, Anne Fine, Michael Morpurgo,

Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Rosen, Anthony Browne, Julia Donaldson, Malorie Blackman, Chris Riddell, Lauren Child and current Laureate Cressida Cowell, author-illustrator of the *How to Train Your Dragon* and *The Wizards of Once* series, and author of the *Emily Brown* picture books, illustrated by Neal Layton.

The 'League of Laureates' are the foremost representatives of children's literature, showcasing the extraordinary and dynamic artform and its rich contribution to culture in the UK and bringing it to the attention of a wider audience. Together the Laureates encompass all genres of children's literature – illustration, poetry, picture books, YA and everything in between – and have introduced millions of children to an extraordinary world of creativity.

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### **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://booktrust.org.uk)