



Editorial July 2020

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Comment from the editor

Our [March editorial was provided by Gill Lewis](#) [2] who, in a typically thoughtful and interesting piece, advocated the special importance of play for children. Two months on, our world has changed out of all recognition, so many things that we took for granted, including the ability of children to play freely outside or with friends in the playground, are now rationed or simply impossible. Children's books meanwhile, as a means of providing escape, a sense of hope, an idea of normality, are now more important than ever. Yet those who write, publish and sell them are facing enormous difficulties.

In [a report into authors' earnings](#) [3] published last year, ALCS raised serious questions about the sustainability of the writing profession, as it revealed that typical earnings are less than £10,500 a year. Many children's authors rely on fees from school visits to boost their income; many more choose to sell books direct at such events to further supplement their earnings. With schools closed and festivals cancelled, none of that is now possible, and it is impossible to predict what form school visits will take in the future, and whether literary festivals will ever recover from Coronavirus. Many authors are doing great things online for children ? see our round up on page x - but it's concerning that they are being asked to provide what they would have been paid for, entirely for free. Congratulations to the organisers of [The Big Book Weekend](#) [4], who paid all participating authors a fee.

Publishers too are under extraordinary pressure with staff working from home or furloughed, and publication schedules emptying as books are moved to Autumn or into 2021, with likely knock on effects down the line. Small publishers are affected the most and last week, independent publishers **Knights Of** and **Jacaranda Books** partnered with **Spread The Word** writer development agency to create a fundraising campaign to support independent, diverse publishing with a target of £100,000. You can find out more ? and donate ? at [Inclusive Indies](#) [5].

Meanwhile, bookshops too are shut to the general public and who knows what high streets will look like in the months or years ahead. Many are doing sterling work, selling online and hand delivering locally. Though Amazon provides **Books for Keeps** with some much-needed income, we strongly recommend that you choose to buy your books from a local independent or bricks and mortar bookshop to support them now and ensure they will still be there in the future.

We wish you all the very best and look forward to sharing more positive news in our July issue.

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