

## WRITE ON

**Makin the most** Pictured, in front of the statue of renowned Paisley poet Robert Tannahill are, from left, Councillor Eileen McCartin, Makar Brian Whittingham, Provost Lorraine Cameron and Councillor Andy Doig



# Poet laureate takes a bow

## Important events to be recorded in verse, thanks to appointment of makar Brian

**Kenneth Speirs**

**A poet laureate has been appointed for Renfrewshire.**

Sixty-eight-year-old Brian Whittingham is taking up the post of makar, which will see him write poems to mark important events in the area.

The post has come about after Renfrewshire Council agreed to a proposal by Councillors Eileen McCartin and Andy Doig at a council meeting last year.

Appointed for the next three

years, the makar will also visit schools, libraries and groups to give readings and talks aimed at encouraging an interest in poetry.

Brian said: "I would like to leave some kind of legacy by developing a love of poetry in the community."

"I hope to raise awareness of poetry and appreciation of the art form."

The new makar lived in Renfrew for many years and at one time was a plater and then draughtsman in the Clyde shipyards.

"It was during this period he became interested in writing poetry while attending the Paisley Writers'

Group.

He has had nine collections of poetry published and spent the last 16 years lecturing in creative writing at the City of Glasgow College.

In 2000, he won first prize in the Sunday Herald Short Story Competition and his work has been widely anthologised.

Four of his stage plays have been performed by Scottish theatre companies.

In 2006-2008, he was editor of New Writing Scotland.

In 2011, Brian was visiting professor of creative writing at Seattle University, Washington

D C, where he taught a narrative poetry class.

Provost Lorraine Cameron said: "The makar will reflect the life of Renfrewshire through formal readings of poetry."

"He will write at least five poems every year to mark moments of cultural importance or local life."

The name Makar goes back hundreds of years, and means poet or bard.

There are a number of local makars in Scotland.

In 2004, the position of The Scots makar, in the sense of a Scottish poet laureate, was introduced by the Scottish Parliament.



He'll write five poems a year  
**Lorraine Cameron**

## Time to nominate your hero pooch

Paisley pooches are in with the chance of scooping a prestigious prize for their efforts to protect their owners and members of the public.

A nationwide search has begun to find the UK's top hero dogs for the Kennel Club's Friends for Life competition.

Buddies are being asked to nominate a dog that has changed the life of its owner, or another person, and deserves recognition.

There are five categories, including Extraordinary life of a working dog (active or retired), Hero assistance dog (active or retired), Man's best friend, Child's hero and Breed Rescue dog of the year.

There will be one winner per category, decided through a public vote and the overall winner will be announced in the main Arena at Crufts 2019.

The winner will also be awarded £5,000 and the runners up will each receive (for their nominated canine charity) £1,000 from the Kennel Club Charitable Trust - helping to make a difference for dogs.

The public are being asked to nominate dogs under all five categories via [www.crufts.org.uk/friendsforlife](http://www.crufts.org.uk/friendsforlife) until midnight on Monday.

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## Woman on theft rap

A woman was arrested after allegedly trying to steal from Poundland in Paisley's Piazza Centre.

The 29-year-old was released and report will be sent the procurator fiscal.

It's claimed she tried to walk out with a three figure sum of goods without paying but was halted by security.

The alleged incident happened around 4pm on Thursday, November 29.

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