



Dear all,

As the school summer holidays begin on the 20th July this is the last newsletter of the term. We will be continuing to pick up emails and post over the summer but on very reduced hours. We hope everyone enjoys the long summer break and comes back refreshed and ready for the new term.

It is always a good idea to add a note to your diary at the end of term to find out when your school would like you to restart with them in September. In a normal year you will probably work with new children and 'child details forms' can be requested from your fieldworker (and printed from our website under Volunteer Resources) but we do know that many of you may return back to school and be supporting the same children that you have been over the summer term. We hope you find the Special Certificates rewarding when presenting them to your children at the end of term, if you do not have these then please request them from your fieldworker or the office or you can print directly from our website:

<https://www.abctoread.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ABC-to-read-Special-certificate.pdf>

During lockdown we have found that many of our resources have gone missing in schools. We have found some of the books have been mislaid and placed into the school library while others have been put into store cupboards and in one case we found out that a book box was to be thrown away in the school's next clear out! Most of our boxes and bags have our logo on them so if you do see a box or bag taking up space with the ABC to read logo on it before you finish the end of term and you know it is not in use then can you please let us know and we will arrange to collect them as we are running low on some of our stock.

BOOK EXCHANGE DATES

WINDSOR - 14th September

10-11.30am—Redwood House, 9 Queen Annes Road, Windsor SL4 2BJ

READING - 21st September

10.30 - 11.30am - St. Marks Church Hall, 94 Cranbury Road, Reading RG30 2TA

WEST BERKS. - 22nd September

10.30 - 11.30am Thatcham Town Council Chamber, Brownsfield Rd, Thatcham RG18 3HF

WOKINGHAM - 15th September - to be confirmed

VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP

5th October

10.30-noon

Crowne Plaza, Reading
Refreshments on arrival and parking on site



Left: Sulham Woods, walking amongst the poppies

Thank you to you all

It is absolutely crucial to address the education gap caused by COVID-19, to improve the future prospects of our local youngsters. Our volunteers are a critical part of the recovery process at this difficult time, bridging that gap and inspiring a love of reading, and we are ever grateful for the ongoing support of our volunteers and supporters in helping us impact as many Berkshire children as we can.

In an average year, 500 children are encouraged and mentored by an ABC to Read volunteer every year, with 12,000 hours invested into improving not only their reading ability but their enjoyment of the pastime as well as their general attitudes and confidence.

Thank you on behalf of the schools and the children that you are supporting.

We need more volunteers!

We have many vacancies that could be filled with more volunteers and increasing numbers of children who need catch-up support as schools have re-opened, ABC to Read are actively looking for new volunteers to take part in training this year, likely to be September and November. If you know of anyone that is looking for a volunteer role then please do let them know about us. We also have leaflets to place up in local libraries, supermarkets and halls to help with our recruitment so if you visit somewhere on a regular basis and would like to help us by putting up a leaflet then please do let us know and we can send a few out to you.

Summer reading

Would you like to offer story time sessions during 2-26 August at chosen areas of deprivation in Reading with Nature Nurture and take along some of ABC to read's promotional materials too. Free activities are being provided for children who have been particularly challenged during the pandemic at Dee Road, Whitley, Southcote and Amersham Road in Reading's green spaces. If you are interested in supporting Nature Nurture and reading stories, then please do let us know so we can pass your name onto the organiser.

Welcome to our new Wokingham & Bracknell Fieldworker

We would like to welcome an additional staff member to our team, Claire, who has now joined us as a fieldworker for the Wokingham and Bracknell area. She is currently working alongside Clare Meldrum who will be leaving at the end of term.

Right: Wokingham & Bracknell Fieldworker, Claire, and her family



Results of the amazing work of our volunteers!

We very much missed our usual AGM this year; the time when we celebrate our year's work and its impact as well as present volunteer certificates and awards.

We are still aiming to run our volunteer workshop on 5 October, and this will be based on our cancelled AGM as well as a presentation to help volunteers run their sessions to anxious children. This is because we are aware that the long-lasting impact COVID 19 is having on children's literacy learning. We will have a presentation from Anne-Marie from Unlock your Wellbeing. The group deliver training on wellbeing and mental health matters, and she will share with us ideas around managing stress for ourselves and children with a great simple model and will also cover increasing resilience and self-compassion, Invites will be sent after the summer.

Whilst the restrictions meant our AGM was not able to go ahead, we did still carry out the formalities online with our trustees.

Our chair, Paul Dieppe opened the meeting, and the minutes of our last AGM were approved. Hannah McNicholl was proposed and accepted as a new trustee to ABC to read. Our accountant and auditor, John Mack, stated that ABC to read has done extremely well considering the circumstances over the last year with Covid-19. Thanks were given to all staff and volunteers and the accounts were approved.

We would like to welcome our new trustee to the team, Hannah McNicholl (below). Charity trustees play a very important role in making sure that the charity is run in the interests of the people it is there to support. Read more about our team:

<https://www.abctoread.org.uk/about/who-we-are/meet-the-team/>



New resource for you to use

One of our West Berkshire volunteers, Elizabeth, has been introduced to a new website and would like to share it with others: <https://thinkably.org/>. It is a website with books that introduce those difficult discussions so that families can start the conversations they need to. The books are readable on-line, and many (or most) have an audio as well. We will be sharing this website with schools but you may also find it useful: <https://thinkably.org>

This page has 3 stories to try: <https://thinkably.org/stories/>

We wish you all a relaxing Summer break and look forward to continuing to work with you all in the next academic year.



Please note that the office will close for the summer break on Tuesday 20th July and will re-open on Monday 6th September



A fond farewell

We are sad to report that Clare, our Wokingham and Bracknell fieldworker, is moving to pastures new at the end of this academic year. We would like to welcome a new member to the staff team. Claire Tootill. Claire is excited to be joining ABC to read and I am sure will be in touch with the area team very soon. She will be shadowing Clare Meldrum, until the end of term starting from mid-June and will be joining us at our AGM.

“My daughter loved her reading sessions with [volunteer]. She was able to bond well with the mentor and always looked forward to the session.”



Office closure - Summer holidays

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