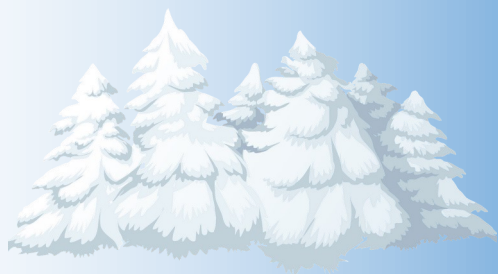


January 2022



Dear all,

We begin this newsletter by sending everyone the very best wishes for a happy, healthy 2022!

There has been so much disruption to children's education during the last two years your support has never been more needed. We are hoping to recruit more new volunteers than ever before this year. Last year we recruited and trained an outstanding 95 volunteers but unfortunately did have many volunteers leave us too, so we hope to be able to focus on growing our workforce of volunteers this year. Our Zoom interviews and trainings are proving successful and time effective, meaning that we have been able to place new recruits into schools quickly. If you have yet to be placed into a school, then please do contact your fieldworker or the office.

Volunteers are our best advocates so please talk about your work to everyone! Why not bring someone interested to a coffee morning or book exchange as we are always happy to have a no obligation chat! Perhaps you can help us advertise – we provide leaflets for displaying and write articles for local publications. We can always talk and give presentations to groups that you may belong to.

We were very fortunate last term to be a part of the Local Giving Tree and Toy appeals with support coming from Thames Water and Hammerson Oracle Reading, enabling us to receive new books for this year.

BOOK EXCHANGE DATES

WINDSOR - 25th January

10-11.30am

Redwood House, 9 Queen Annes Road, Windsor SL4 2BJ

READING - 27th January

10.30 - 11.30am

St. Marks Church Hall, 94 Cranbury Road, Reading RG30 2TA

WEST BERKS. - 26th January

10.00 - 11.30am

4, The Oaks, Tadley, Berkshire RG26 4XX

WOKINGHAM - 24th January

12.15pm - 2.15pm

Jennett's Park Community Centre, Tawny Owl Square, Bracknell RG12 8EB



Social media

You can view all our news on our social media accounts: twitter @abctoread. Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/abctoread2>, like these and follow, share and/or retweet our posts as this helps us to raise our profile further.



Secondary school workshops

We are so proud of the partnerships that we are developing with secondary schools. Last term, our trustee, Pauline, ran workshops to approximately 100 students with the support of our staff, giving the students a volunteering opportunity, and the responsibility of helping struggling readers in primary schools close to their schools. Some of the students also support their younger peers who are struggling with reading in Year 7, and we hope to develop this further this year so that more and more children are benefitting from the joys of being able to read.

We also aim to promote our Ready to read workshop into more primary schools to give parents the confidence to support their children at home. Over three quarters of schools in a 'State of Primary School Reading' survey flagged that reading is an area for focus and concern in their school development plans and there is a greater need for families to gain the confidence to support their children with reading.

If you have contacts within schools, then do please share with them that we offer extra support with our extended services. If you require a leaflet, then do please ask the office and we can arrange for them to be sent to you for sharing.



Competition time!

This term we are planning a competition for children to take part in to help encourage reading further. Volunteers can join in with the competition and make it an activity as part of your sessions! We will be sending out information to schools and volunteers shortly once we have set out all the terms and conditions.

It will be called "Be a book critic for the day". We will be running a children's competition to help encourage reading, especially as some children are having to stay at home and missing out on either our sessions or their everyday learning. This also helps to keep us active amongst our schools during these strange times we are in. It will be based on climate change and challenging children to review a book. Entries can be written or drawn or via video and it will be open to all primary school children in Berkshire. Winners will receive some books for themselves and for their school with a proportion linked to climate change and the environment. A visit will be received from our patron, AF Harrold who will read a book in school assembly or via video chat and provide a signed book to winners.

If there is not a climate change book that a child would like to review, then they can choose an e-book or write their own short story. More information will follow soon!

Online reading support

If you would like to take part in carrying out online sessions to those children needing support whilst unable to go to school, or for those schools not accepting volunteers, then please do let us know so we can consider making plans should we need to adapt to online sessions again swiftly.

Please vote for us

Each year, the Asda Foundation invests over £1.4m to more than 4000 good causes through Green Token Giving. The In-store Green Token Giving activity is currently on pause due to Covid restrictions but they have set it up online. Please do vote for us, we have until 31st January.

Here is the link: <https://www.asda.com/green-tokens/store?store=4994>

A new book published by one of our volunteers!

Bert Clough, a former ABC volunteer, has written a fantastic children's book which is now available to purchase on Amazon with all proceeds being donated to ABC. Bert tells us a little of his story below:

"When my mother was told by the deputy head that I was underperforming, she responded that, anyway, I had a good imagination. 'That may be so', he sighed, 'but sadly there isn't an O level in imagination'.

Ever since, I have always felt that schools should value and nurture imagination.

Many, many years ago, I used to make up stories to entertain my young son as we walked through the Hampshire countryside. I wrote one down and read it to a group of children. They liked the story. Then in retirement, and over twenty years later, I thought I might get it published. But first, I had to find an illustrator. I found Sam via the Internet and his illustrations certainly brought the story line to life.

It is not easy for a first-time author to get a publisher and all manuscripts have to be reviewed by a panel; about one in four being successful. Luckily, I received offers from three publishers. I have written a second book with the same persona - the boy and the witch - but aimed at older children. It is a hybrid book, combining fantasy with ornithology and is to be published in the summer.

The story book is now available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Birthday-Boy-Bert-Clough/dp/1739805240>

All profits made from its sale will go to ABC.

All the best, Bert"



Community donation

Just before we closed the office down for Christmas, we faced the tragic news about the blaze in the four-storey flats, containing 24 homes at Rowe Court, Reading. The flats are a couple of minutes away from us and we were able to donate a few boxes of both new and very good condition books and games to the families that were impacted by the fire. This donation enabled several children to have items gift wrapped for Christmas as well as enabling them to have items to play with/read whilst they were rehomed in emergency accommodation.



Please note that the office will close for the half-term break on Thursday 17th February and will re-open on Monday 28th February

