



# First Minister's Reading Challenge Advisory Group

## Minutes

19 September 2016

10.00am – 12.00pm

Scottish Book Trust, Sandeman House, Trunk's Close, 55 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1SR

### Present:

Kevin Brack – Brunstane Primary School  
Derek Brown – Association of Directors of Education  
Laura Dougan – Scottish Book Trust  
Lindsey Duncan- Education Scotland  
Lindsey Fraser – Fraser Ross Associates  
Lucy Juckes – Chair  
Margaret Leitch – National Parent Forum of Scotland  
Amina Shah – Scottish Book Trust  
Rosie Sim – Scottish Book Trust (note-taker)  
Pamela Tulloch – Scottish Library and Information Council  
Rosemary Ward – Gaelic Books Council

### Apologies:

Hugh Andrew – Birlinn Ltd  
Lindsey Barley – Community reading projects/Musselburgh Burgh Primary School  
Caitlyn Bannatyne – Graphic Novelist  
Angie Crawford – Waterstones  
John Doherty – Larbert High School  
Moirra Findlay – Scottish Book Trust (observer)  
Catriona MacKenzie – Scottish Government  
James Robertson – Writer

## 1. Minutes from Previous Meeting

### 1.1. Funding

Scottish Government are looking into additional funding for Inspiring Classrooms. A decision is pending but conversations thus far have been positive.

## 1.2. Evaluation

Scottish Book Trust have been looking into the different options for the evaluation of the First Minister's Reading Challenge. Due to the timeframe and resources required, it has been decided that an independent agency is the best option to carry out the research. Scottish Book Trust are looking at agencies available and welcome any suggestions from the advisory group.

## 2. Update on Launch

Scottish Book Trust updated the Advisory Group on the launch of the First Minister's Reading Challenge.

Due to very high levels of participation, additional reading passports have been ordered. The impact of this on the project budget has been reported to Scottish Government.

### 2.1. Materials:

A summary of the resources provided since the launch

- 12 online resources for teachers (incl. adaptable presentations; quizzes; class activities; templates)
- 2017 information packs sent to Local Authority Primary Schools
- 507 packs of materials sent to public libraries
- 100 Places to Start your Reading Journey sent to every MSP

Feedback from teachers has been extremely positive. The resources are user-friendly and helpful, giving teachers lots of ideas and inspiration for how to get involved. The Book Personality quiz has been raised as particularly useful and fun by teachers.

Additional reading lists have been produced to go alongside the '100 Places to Start Your Reading Journey'. So far there is a list from Michael Morpurgo (author), Dennis the Menace (fictional children's book character), Cleo Jones (Information and Learning Resources Manager at The City of Edinburgh Council), Rosemary Ward (Director, Gaelic Books Council) and Making Maths Count (Scottish Government Initiative).

Ultimately it is hoped that children and schools will start sending in their own lists that can be shared on the website.

The Advisory Group is asked to suggest this to their contacts who would be interested in submitting a reading list.

### 2.2. Engagement and outreach

There have been meetings and visits happening across Scotland for different local authorities, individual schools, libraries, and literacy groups. There are also CLPL events for teachers and librarians.

Feedback from these has been that teachers are often initially nervous about participating in the challenge, and then pleasantly surprised at how adaptable, inclusive and user-friendly it is.

A common question asked by teachers is how they can showcase and share the work their school is doing for the challenge. Scottish Book Trust is providing means to do that through the website and social media channels. The Advisory Group discussed additional ways this could be done, and a Glow session was suggested.

The group discussed how long it takes for the Reading Challenge to start in schools. It was acknowledged that this is the discretion of the school and each one will be different. Many schools will still be in the planning stage and will not have started sharing the challenge with their pupils yet. It was noted that the Outreach Coordinator is available to support schools to get involved and can be contacted at [readingchallenge@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:readingchallenge@scottishbooktrust.com).

### 2.3. Social media and website

Summary of social media and web data:

- 6775 website users, making 8994 visits
- 50,688 page views
- Average 5.64 pages per visit
- Average 4.5 minutes spent on the site
- 355 Twitter followers (95 mentions)

### 3. Strategic Approach to Partnerships

The Advisory Group discussed what the benchmarks should be for the FMRC's approach to partnerships. Specific areas looked at were:

- Commercial partnerships
- Partnerships between the FMRC and independent organisations
- Existing relationships with organisations who approached the First Minister's Reading Challenge very early on.
  - Such as RNIB, RM Books and the Children's University.

The following objectives were recommended for partnerships:

- Partnerships should aim to increase access to books for schools
- Partnerships should look to empower local businesses and encourage community engagement

- Partnerships should be diverse and not heavily reliant on single big nationwide household names

The Group also agreed that in forming local partnerships, care must be taken over equity issues related to access which may vary across different local authorities.

A pilot approach is recommended for the first year to test both local and national approaches to partnerships.

The group discussed the forms of partnerships that could take place:

- Use of the project's marketing assets to promote a culture of reading: companies can use the logo under certain conditions. For example, in the same way companies use the 'Investors in People' logo in their marketing materials, email signatures and other forms of communication, they could use the phrase 'We are supporting the First Minister's Reading Challenge'.
- Trust Fund Model: companies could contribute towards a fund for schools to receive free books. In return they could gain staff development opportunities, similar to the model used by Lloyds Bank volunteers. For example, employees could visit schools and libraries to read with the children and talk about their favourite books.
- Non-monetary forms of partnership and support: Companies who have Corporate Social Responsibility policies but are unable to give money could support in other ways such as volunteering, providing services, resources or products (such as those that can be used as prizes for challenges)
- Collaborative campaigning: the FMRC could work alongside other children's campaigns, such as those aiming to encourage children to take up sports. A joint venture aiming to increase sports and literacy with projects such as 'What do Olympians/Paralympians read?'
- Third Sector partnerships with charities who work with schools
- Book discounts and vouchers: the group warn against commercial partnerships that focus on discount schemes and vouchers as these can have a negative impact on local authors and booksellers.

#### 4. Networking

The Advisory Group members updated on the communication of the First Minister's Reading Challenge within their networks

The feedback has been very positive and the following points were raised:

- Education Scotland and Scottish Book Trust will look into working more with the Community and Family Learning Team at Education Scotland
- Secondary schools are very keen to be involved, particularly ASN and reluctant reader's groups

- Author feedback has been positive, with more to be done around promoting Inspiring Classrooms to authors. Suggestions to engage authors include: arranging a Glow meet with an author; Scottish Book Trust speaking at a Society of Authors meeting; creating a 'Patrons of Reading' programme for authors; more written resources for authors
- National Parents Forum: Scottish Book Trust to visit local authority parent forums, creation of Parent Representatives was suggested to help promote the reading challenge to families.

## 5. Strategic Planning

The Advisory Group discussed the long-term planning for the reading challenge, particularly focusing on how to increase its reach.

It was acknowledged that there is demand from teachers to expand the Reading Challenge to include secondary schools as the biggest drop off in reading for pleasure occurs at this level.

Key issues around rolling the challenge out to Secondary Schools were discussed:

- How to re-package the challenge for an older cohort
- A closer focus on health and well-being could be useful
- Would involve working with school librarians as well as local community librarians.
- Recommended that the challenge be adapted to meet the National Improvement Framework that focuses on Attainment; Well-being; Developing a Workforce and Equity.
- Operationally need to start planning how to roll this out now for 2018.
- It is recommended to do a small pilot in 2017 in which case studies are used to follow P7 pupils from this year to when they start Secondary School.

The Group also discussed expanding the Challenge into lower primary school. The Group noted it would be important to consider the linkages with the Read, Write, Count programme in primaries 1, 2 and 3.

The Group recommended that Scottish Book Trust and Scottish Government carefully consider expansion options and that expansion into secondary schools be piloted initially with a small number of schools.

## 6. AOB

- October meeting has been cancelled due to school holidays.
- November meeting will still go ahead but on an earlier date.

- The group agree that the meeting day should change from a Monday. Scottish Book Trust will issue a doodle poll to the group to find a day that suits more people.