



First Minister's Reading Challenge Advisory Group

Minutes

23 May 2016

10.00am – 12.00pm

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

Present:

Madelaine Baker – Education Scotland (attending in place of Helen Fairlie)

Caitlyn Bannatyne – Graphic Novelist

Lindsey Barley – Community reading projects/Musselburgh Burgh Primary School

Kevin Brack – Brunstane Primary School

Derek Brown – Association of Directors of Education

Antonia Clark – Scottish Book Trust (note-taker)

Laura Dougan - Scottish Book Trust

Lindsey Fraser – Fraser Ross Associates

Lucy Jukes – Chair

Margaret Leitch – National Parent Forum of Scotland

James Robertson – Writer

Amina Shah - Scottish Book Trust

Tim Simons - Scottish Government

Pamela Tulloch – Scottish Library and Information Council

Apologies:

Hugh Andrew – Birlinn Ltd

Angie Crawford – Waterstones

John Doherty – Larbert High School

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Tim Simons from Scottish Government who was attending in place of Catriona MacKenzie. Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes from 25 April 2016

Subject to a small change on page 4 required for clarity, the minute of 25 April was approved as an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair noted that minutes (once signed off by the Group) and membership information will be published on Scottish Book Trust's website.

A number of matters arising were also addressed under this item.

Firstly, responding to some points raised at the last meeting, Scottish Government noted their appreciation for the work of the Group and advised that its independent advice has been and will continue to be submitted to Ministers for their consideration. The Group welcomed this reassurance.

Secondly, the Chair noted that some concerns had been raised in the first meeting and in subsequent conversations about availability of books, particularly for schools and children in areas of deprivation. She invited SLIC to comment on the status of library service provision for children's books.

SLIC noted that the press coverage in relation to library services in Scotland is often negative but that provision, particularly for children's library services, is not significantly under threat. In fact, the evidence shows that, in general, lending rates of children's books are on the increase and libraries are viewing this project as a real opportunity to continue to promote their services. SLIC are confident that libraries will be able to make a significant contribution to the aim to make books available to all children taking part in the Challenge.

In addition to the provision available from libraries, the Group discussed other funding sources which could be used to support access to books. The Group agreed to make a recommendation to Scottish Government that alternative funding sources are explored and that equity be the primary consideration when targeting funding.

3. Book list

The Group discussed the proposal put forward by Scottish Book Trust for the list of recommended titles, to be described as "places to start a reading journey".

The Group noted that the process undertaken to develop the list has been fully democratic and has resulted in recommendations which are accessible and represent high quality children's publishing. There is also a range of titles suitable for reluctant readers and children with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia. The Group recommended that those engaging in the Challenge and the wider public be encouraged to create their own lists of recommendations and that these be shared on the website.

The Group also advised that the purpose of recommendations is to encourage adults and children to talk about books and recommend titles to each other. To help with this, ambassadors could be appointed and could include well-known public figures.

The Group recommended that the list as constructed represents a sound and democratic development process and meets the aims of the Challenge. The Group recommended that, following a final sense check, it be approved for use in the project.

4. CLPL for primary schools

The Group discussed the proposal for CLPL and support materials for primary schools made by Scottish Book Trust. It was recommended that the focus of the regional events be on partnership opportunities, where school staff, library staff and community members can make connections and co-develop plans for embedding the Challenge in their community.

The Group also recommended that a letter be sent to all primary school Head Teachers before the summer holidays highlighting the Challenge and the CLPL opportunities. In addition, it was advised that ADES shares key information within their networks to highlight the same points and that some communications be developed for Parent Council Chairs.

5. Website development

6. Reading Passport design brief

Scottish Book Trust provided an update on website and design brief development. The Group was pleased to hear that a number of submissions have been received from website development agencies and that final decisions on a supplier will be made this week. Work is also ongoing to develop a look and feel for the Challenge, centred on a theme of journeys and discovery, and Scottish Book Trust agreed to share designs with the Group for comment.

7. Marketing and communications plans

Scottish Book Trust updated the Group on the marketing and communications plan. The Group advised that the long-term nature of this project and its ability to evolve over time be highlighted as a key message. The Group also advised that community organisations should feature in the communications plan and that Scottish Book Trust should explore the idea of ambassadors for the Challenge.

8. AOB

Scottish Government tabled a proposal for an additional member of the Advisory Group to be appointed to represent the Gaelic sector. This proposal was agreed and Scottish Book Trust will approach a representative of the Gaelic Books Council to attend future meetings.

Scottish Book Trust also noted that plans for the launch event in August are being developed and these will be shared with the Group via email once finalised.

The next meeting will be on Monday 20th June at 10 am at Scottish Book Trust's offices at High Street, Edinburgh.