

# First Minister's Reading Challenge Advisory Group

## Minutes

20 June 2016

10.00am – 12.00pm

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

### Present:

Hugh Andrew – Birlinn Ltd

Madelaine Baker – Education Scotland

Caitlyn Bannatyne – Graphic Novelist

Lindsey Barley – Community reading projects/Musselburgh Burgh Primary School

Angie Crawford – Waterstones

Laura Dougan – Scottish Book Trust

Moira Findlay – Scottish Book Trust (observer)

Lindsey Fraser – Fraser Ross Associates

Lucy Juckes – Chair

Margaret Leitch – National Parent Forum of Scotland

Liza McLean – Scottish Government

James Robertson – Writer

Amina Shah – Scottish Book Trust

Rosie Sim – Scottish Book Trust (note-taker)

Rosemary Ward – Gaelic Books Council

### Apologies:

Kevin Brack – Brunstane Primary School

Derek Brown – Association of Directors of Education

John Doherty – Larbert High School

Pamela Tulloch – Scottish Library and Information Council

### 1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced some of the new members: Liza McLean (Scottish Government), Rosemary Ward (Gaelic Books Council), and Rosie Sim (Attainment Programme Administrator- Scottish Book Trust).

### 2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved by the Advisory Group and no changes were made.

### **3. Update from Scottish Government**

Liza McLean has taken over from Tim Simons at the Scottish Government and will be attending the FMRC Advisory Group meetings in Catriona Mackenzie's absence. Liza updated the Group on the Government's progress in exploring additional sources of funding to support access to books.

The Group discussed possible routes to administer any available additional funding, noting the challenge in targeting funds appropriately. It was agreed that additional funding should focus on supporting the building of reading cultures in a general sense, rather than only supporting the provision of books. Members recommended that work should be done during the first year of the Challenge to identify specific needs and plan to address those with additional funding in future years. The Group recommended that, in year one, Scottish Government should consider supplementing the existing budget for author visits and book supplies.

### **4. Update from Scottish Book Trust**

Scottish Book Trust updated the group on progress on the following:

- '100 places to start your reading challenge'

This is now complete and will be made available on the Reading Challenge website and users will be able to search through the list by various tags including fiction/non-fiction, reading age and formats available. There will also be user-generated reading lists available, and lists for various purposes, such as 'books for reluctant readers'. Public figures and celebrities are also being approached to do lists aimed at inspiring further engagement from children.

The list will be made available to libraries and bookshops in advance to allow them to prepare, with a strict embargo not to share this information prior to the launch.

- Regional events

Events have been confirmed in Inverness, Perth, Edinburgh and Glasgow to introduce the First Ministers' Reading Challenge. These will be in the last week of August. Online versions of the events will be made available for those unable to attend in person.

- Development of resources for teachers

Work in this area is ongoing now the Outreach Coordinator is in post.

- Communications and engagement:

Letters have been sent to Primary School Head Teachers, a mailing list has been implemented and there is an email inbox for enquiries specific to the Reading Challenge.

The National Literacy Forum has been notified of the programme and recently sent an update.

Scottish Book Trust has been in discussions with Teaching Scotland about a potential media partnership, which would allow content about the Challenge to be shared widely with teachers across the academic year.

The National Parent Forum Scotland newsletter will contain information on the Reading Challenge. It was recommended that Parent Council Chairpersons be contacted.

The Group discussed other means of engaging parents in the Reading Challenge. Collaborations with local supermarkets and groups were suggested.

## **5. Evaluation**

The Scottish Book Trust described a potential evaluation framework for the Group to use, recommended by Evaluation Support Scotland. This framework functions with a hierarchical model from Aims, to Outcomes to Indicators.

The group agreed that the overarching aim of the Reading Challenge is to foster reading for pleasure and to make Scotland a place for reading. It was recommended that the specific outcomes for the evaluation should focus on the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of children, parents and communities. A mixed-methods approach should be used to capture the most representative results possible.

## **6. FMRC in secondary schools**

The Group discussed the plan to implement the Reading Challenge in Secondary Schools. It was agreed that this should be rolled out to Secondary Schools in 2018 and planning should start now.

The structural differences between Primary School and Secondary Schools was discussed. Distinct challenges for Secondary Schools include issues with reading for pleasure being limited to English Literature classes and not being easily embedded throughout the curriculum.

The Group recommended that Secondary Schools should be a priority for future expansion as this is when the biggest drop-off in literacy skills has been noted. The Reading Challenge could be used as a transition strategy.

## **7. Future meetings**

The Group agreed that there would be no meeting in July. In August there will be the First Minister's Event at the Edinburgh International Book Festival to which all members are welcome.

The next meetings will be on the **19<sup>th</sup> September, 17<sup>th</sup> October and 21<sup>st</sup> November.**