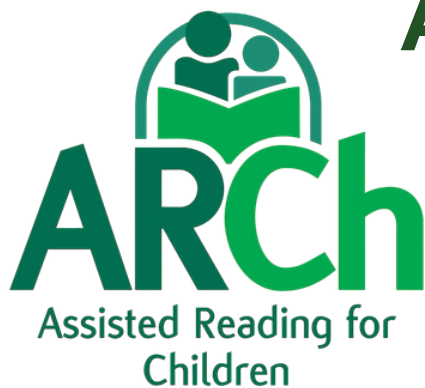




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ARCh Summer Newsletter

Issue 51

April 2026



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Welcome to the Summer Term!

The National Year of Reading got off to a flying start in January as we welcomed Amanda Spinks as our new Administration Assistant!



“Hi everyone, my name is Amanda and I’ve just started my new role as the Administration Assistant. I have come from a banking and a business/management background. I was a military child and moved around every two years growing up. I have two children (ages 7 and 11) and reading has always been crucial part of their home and school lives. We have read so many wonderful books together. I love baking with my children and all things Disney! I am allergic to apple including Airbourne (the smell), which has been a tricky allergy to navigate. I love the work ARCh do, the positive impact on children, schools, and staff. I am so excited to start a career here in ARCh, with all the amazing work everyone does, I am so proud to be a part of the team.”

So far during the National Year of Reading we have trained 28 new Reading Helpers ready to go into schools to start their reading sessions. We are looking forward to welcoming more people to ARCh over the coming year!

Spring Volunteer Meeting

Our spring volunteer meeting was held on St Patricks Day 17th March ahead of our forthcoming 18th birthday on 1st April!

We welcomed the Deputy Lord Mayor of Oxford Councillor Mike Rowley who gave a topical speech about lessons learned from St Patrick on the importance of confidence – something children we support very often lack when they begin with ARCh.



Our patron Will Gompertz told us about Sir John Soane's Museum in London where he is Director and Soane's humble beginnings as a son of a bricklayer who was always to be seen with a book in hand. His love of reading led him to a career in architecture and he was awarded the Royal Academy's prestigious Gold Medal for Architecture. As a result, King George III funded his bursary to undertake a Grand Tour of Europe. For John it all started with a book! As it can for all the children we work with!



And then came some storytelling magic with our guest presenter Lucy Walters who entertained and involved us all with her story of 2 Young Dragons. We enjoyed joining her in using some "warm up words", played a game of Story Guess Who and shared in the reading of nonsense poetry and even a magic potion recipe! Lucy gave us all ideas to use in ARCh sessions, including a character development template to try with the children. For some children this could lead to storytelling involving the character; for others it could just be some dialogue.

Please log into Volunteer Resources on our website to access the template and Lucy's tips.

We are delighted to report that Lucy Walters has agreed to become a patron of ARCh – we are very much looking forward to working with her and all our wonderful patrons as we celebrate the National Year of Reading and beyond!

Shaun Reynolds from Fortitude Communications captured a flavour of proceedings and the thoughts of some attendees on video. He was thanked for the wonderful donation of books Fortitude collected for ARCh to mark National Storytelling Week. Over 1000 books were donated- an incredible effort!

This picture shows just a small fraction of the books that we have received!



Thanks go to our official photographer Rose Somerset who took some wonderful photos.

Thanks also to volunteers Sally Moncrieff and Marilyn Driver-Davidson who helped serve refreshments enjoyed by us all!

Our Volunteer Meeting was featured in the Banbury Guardian [here](#)

Staff News

After 11 incredible years with ARCh, our Administration Manager, Marie Booth, is moving on to new adventures at the end of the summer to pursue full time work now that her children are moving into Further and Higher Education.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Marie for the transformative impact she has had, particularly through her work streamlining many systems in the smooth running of the office over the years.

Marie's dedication and meticulous attention to detail have helped us build on the work of ARCh and enabled it to grow efficiently and smoothly. She will be hugely missed by all our staff team members, trustees and the hundreds of ARCh volunteers we have welcomed on board during those 11 years!

We will be bidding farewell, sadly but fondly, to Marie publicly at our summer meeting on 14th July.



We look forward to welcoming a new colleague in due course and would be pleased to talk with anyone interested in the upcoming vacancy which will be advertised soon.

Please do spread the word.

Brand The Bus Competition!

We have entered this year's Brand the Bus Competition from the Oxford Bus Company. The winning organisation will receive a prize package worth £100,000, including:

- A year-long, full-wrap advertisement on a double-decker bus, elevating the organisation's brand visibility across Oxfordshire.
- Free advertising onboard Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel vehicles.
- Radio advertising on Get Radio, Oxfordshire's local radio station.
- The honour of being named Oxford City Football Club's charity of choice for the 2026 season.
- One runner-up will receive digital onboard bus advertising worth £5,000.

This would be an incredible prize for ARCh and for helping us to spread the word about our work!

Please vote for us here: <https://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/vote-now>

We are entry number 5!

We would be so grateful if you could ask your friends and family to vote for us, too!

It takes less than 30 seconds.

Voting closes: 30th April 2026!



ARCh Volunteer Ambassadors

We are looking for a small group of ARCh Volunteers to become our "Ambassadors" in each area of the county!

An ARCh Volunteer Ambassador would help raise awareness of ARCh's within their community. Working alongside staff, ARCh Ambassadors would act as a friendly and knowledgeable representative of the charity. ARCh Ambassadors might attend volunteer fairs, community events, and local group meetings to talk about ARCh's work, encourage new volunteers to get involved, and build connections with schools and organisations.



If you are interested in becoming an ARCh Ambassador for your area, please get in touch with us by emailing info@archoxfordshire.org.uk.

Charity of the Year

VN Accountancy and Bookkeeping LTD

We were delighted to be approached by VN Accounting and Bookkeeping to ask if we would like to be their Charity of the Year for 2026/2027- thank you!

Author visit to an ARCh school

Former ARCh Reader Fern Tolley who now works for David Fickling Publishing recently offered a workshop for our schools with best selling author Philip Reeve and award winning illustrator Sarah McIntyre.

West Kidlington Primary jumped at the chance! Deputy Head Jo Simpson told us “I just wanted to say a MASSIVE thank you ... they read us an extract from their new book - Adventuremice: Of Mice and Mummies and told us about how the Adventuremice series was created. I think the highlight of the assembly was when Sarah demonstrated to the children how to draw their own Adventure Mouse, the children then went on to create their own version.”



Oxford Independent Authors (OxIA) Short Story Collections and WolvLitFest!

WolvLitFest is back for 2026 and ARCh is delighted to be involved once again- please do come along to Wolvercote Village Hall on **Sunday 28th June**.



This year, OxIA are launching the Short Story Collection, open to writers of all ages who would like to see their work in print. Entries are invited in 3 age related categories, and the theme is “Threads”. OxIA will read every story received and The 2026 Wolvercote Short Story Collection will be published for all to read and enjoy on the OxIA web site on Sunday 28th June 2026. Each age group’s collection will be available as a PDF download, and a limited number of printed copies will be available for browsing on the stage in Wolvercote Village Hall on that date.

Closing date for story submissions is 6pm on 5th June.

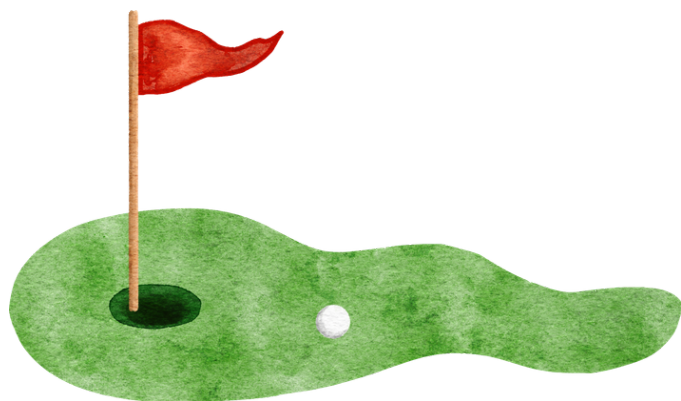
Please visit their website [here](#) for more information.

The National Literacy Trust have launched their “**Be a Reading Champion**” initiative to support the National Year of Reading. In their words, “*This role is all about sharing the joy of reading with others, especially people who might not read often or haven’t yet discovered what they love.*”

You’ll receive a handbook and ideas of activities you can do to help spread a love of reading with you friends, family and local communities.

You can sign up and find out more information [here](#).

**Become a National
Year of Reading
Champion**



Whitley Stimpson Charity Golf Day

We were delighted to be contacted by Whitley Stimpson to tell us that ARCh has been chosen as the charity that will be supported by their upcoming Charity Golf Day! **The event will take place at Frilford Heath Golf Club on September 1st.** There are 2 golf places available to ARCh Volunteers- first come first served! If you are interested in golfing on the day, please email info@archoxfordshire.org.uk.

St John's College Literary Festival

We have been working closely with St John's College at Oxford University as we make plans to collaborate to celebrate the National Year of Reading. ARCh will be a part of their upcoming **Literary Festival- we'll be there Saturday 23rd May** and it would be great to see some ARCh volunteers there!

Please see information about the event below.



"On the weekend of 23–24 May 2026, St John's College is hosting a family-oriented literary festival in support of the National Year of Reading.

The programme offers a wide range of free activities for children – including puppet theatre, live storytelling, and a junior book club – as well as events for adults. Guest speakers include Professor Lady Sue Black, Simon Mason, Mona Arshi, and the Revd Fergus Butler-Gallie.

Full details of the programme can be found at the St John's website: <https://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/discover/events/st-johns-literary-festival>

All events are free to attend, but we ask that you sign up for tickets in advance. Tickets can be reserved via the College website."



Volunteers Week!

We are busy putting together plans for this year's Volunteers' Week- keep an eye out for more information from us soon!



Westgate Shopping Centre

We are going to be running an ARCh information stall at Westgate shopping centre on the **17th of June from 12.30pm-2.30pm** so please do come and say hello!



[Facebook](#)



[LinkedIn](#)

Please do have a look at our social media and interact with our posts with “likes” and “comments” or by sharing the post. This will help us to reach more people!

Social Media Policy - Update

Please take a moment to revisit our Social Media policy. It can be found on our website in the volunteer resources area, or ask your Field Worker for a copy.

An important reminder - you must not post anything about the children you work at ARCh with on your personal social media accounts.



Blenheim Fun Run

ARCh staff are taking part in the Blenheim 7K Fun Run on Sunday 17 May!

If you'd like to sponsor us or join in and help raise funds, we'd love to hear from you at info@archoxfordshire.org.uk

Thank you to Tracey Woods for helping to organise ARCh taking part!

More volunteers needed please!

To celebrate the National Year of Reading, please help us by spreading the word about ARCh – our volunteers are always our best ambassadors!

Please let us know if you would like any posters or leaflets to display or share.

We are also looking for advertising opportunities such as in local newspapers, noticeboards and community groups - if you know somewhere you could recommend to us, please let us know!

**Proud to support
The National Year
of Reading 2026.**

**GO
ALL
IN.**

We are especially looking for volunteers in Oxford, Didcot, and Berinsfield currently!

Calum Miller MP Visit to ARCh

We welcomed MP Calum Miller, accompanied by Bicester Councillor Sean Gaul, to our office. We are arranging a school visit so that they can see ARCh in action! We would love to share the work with ARCh with all Members of Parliament across Oxfordshire and hope to meet more Oxfordshire MPs during the year.



Funding thank yous

Abingdon Lions
SummerFields Prep School
Wallingford Town Council
Cash for Kids
Old Possums
The Pye Trust
Well Together Funding
Carol Quinton
Oxfordshire County Council
The Shanly Foundation
Foresters Hall
Didcot Powerhouse Fund
Stanton Ballard Charity Trust
BBLPC
Old Marston Parish Council
Kidlington Parish Council
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Andrew Coles
Bicester Lions
Standlake Teacake Tuesday group
Garfield Weston Foundation
The Velvet Tones Jazz show at Oxford Golf Club

THANK YOU!



Localgiving

Thank you to those who have donated to ARCh via our LocalGiving Page.

Remember you can give a one off donation, or set up a monthly donation, at <https://localgiving.org/charity/arch>

Thank you to SummerFields Prep School for their donation of games to ARCh - a fantastic selection that will go straight into our sessions in school!

Thank you to Fred Penny!

Fred Penny, son of our North and West Oxford Field Worker Cathy, did a presentation to his School's charity committee talking about ARCh and asking for some of the money raised at their Christmas Fair to be donated to ARCh. Fred's presentation went so well that ARCh was selected as a charity to receive money from the fund! Well done Fred and thank you for your hard work!

