



Spring NEWSLETTER

Issue 44 Jan 2024

Happy New Year!

2024 promises to be an exciting year with much needed expansion of ARCh operations, helped by generous funding from Oxfordshire Community Foundation Step Change.

We have an ambitious target to recruit 90 additional volunteers over the next 18 months! The funding has helped us to create a new post of Recruitment Officer (RO), the first year costs being supported by Step Change. We are pleased to report that the new RO Emma Orton will begin working with ARCh from the end of January. More information in our next newsletter.

In December we welcomed new Field Worker Jen Walker who will support volunteers and schools in the Bicester and Thame areas. Amanda Frank will continue to work with us but concentrate on PR and fundraising.



Message from Jen

I am delighted to be joining ARCh as the new Bicester and Thame Field Worker.

I'm really looking forward to meeting and working with all the ARCh community; the schools, teachers and the ARCh team and supporting the wonderful ARCh volunteers as they encourage, and inspire, children to love reading.

Being new to the ARCh family, I am in awe of the amazing work the ARCh team and the volunteers do to ensure access for children to find a love of books, engage with reading, boost their reading ability and grow in self-confidence. I'm excited to be a part of this!

I volunteer for our local village magazine and have run a community & charity minded coffee shop. My three children are grown and my youngest is in his first year of university.

Funfact: I own a donkey!

Summary of last term

18 volunteers attended ARCh refresher safeguarding training.

We have a zoom refresher running on 25th January for those who were unable to attend the face to face session.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is of course the most important part of ARCh training. Attendance at regular refresher sessions is vital so that we all keep updated.



All volunteers must remember to report any concern (no matter how small or insignificant it may seem) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the school. *Do not simply report to a teacher!*

Older People's Day

This is always celebrated during the first week in October each year.

We attended the usual fair in Oxford Town Hall.

Thanks to volunteers Catherine Roffe, Chris Poad, Maggie Lloyd, Anne Partridge, Elizabeth Kemp, Judith Goldsmith for sharing the joy they gain from ARCh with those considering volunteering!



We also had a busy stall at The Mill Banbury.

Jeremy was helped by ARCh mascot Georgie!



Clare with Oxford Mayor Cllr Lubna Arshad

Volunteer Voice

We received this from volunteer Chris Poad

'Children's Perception of Age'

I don't know about other volunteers, but I find there comes a point where my children want to know how old I am. Well, I don't simply tell them. It's a learning opportunity, so I set them a few simple sums to work out to find my age. When they find out there is usually a long pause, often followed by "That's Old!"

Ok, I do appreciate, from a seven year olds point of view, anything that happened before they were born is simply "Old", and this can be amply demonstrated by this encounter I had recently with one of my seven year old girls:

Girl: "Chris"

Me: "Yes"

Girl: "How old is the Eiffel Tower?"

Me: "Hmmm, lets see. It's nineteenth century. I think it was built around 1880."

Girl: "A long pause"

Girl: "Is that older than you?"

The cheek!



Please do send in your anecdotes – we love to share them!

Spreading the word



Thanks to volunteer Catherine Roffe for organising an ARCh information stall at David Lloyd fitness club in Cowley.

If you would like to suggest a venue for an ARCh display or stall please do get in touch.



Thanks Waterstones Oxford!

We were invited by Waterstones to have a presence at their Oxford store where we offered a gift wrapping service in return for donations at their Christmas shopping event. Staff and trustees had a wonderful time wrapping, listening to the choir and spreading the word of ARCh!



BBC 1 show The Repair Shop stars were there promoting their books and we took the opportunity to explain about ARCh and have this cheeky photo with them!

Phonics Workshop

Thanks to Clare for running another popular Phonics workshop – the roadshow hit Abingdon last term and was very well attended. We will be heading for Witney and Oxford next so do look out!



December volunteer meeting

We all enjoyed a festive and informative meeting just before Christmas.

Thanks to guest speaker Jane Walker from publishers Barrington Stoke – a company started 25 years ago here in Oxfordshire. Late founder Patience Thomson came to one of our meetings many years ago as guest speaker so the company always feels rather special to us.

At our December meeting Jane explained that Barrington Stoke asks popular children's authors to write shorter stories, all published with Barrington Stoke's own font, on heavier tinted paper. On the back of each book are 3 words describing the story. Jane explained that reading/interest age information is there too – but cleverly coded so as not to demotivate the children.

Jane talked about the range of Barrington Stoke books – we have an excellent stock already but are adding to this with some of their new non-fiction titles and dictionaries. Look out for these at the upcoming book exchanges!

Our second guest speaker was Charlotte Miles-Webb, former teacher and ARCh Field Worker, now running her own tutoring business. Charlotte talked about how we can support dyslexic readers, using ARCh resources - games such as pairs, Brainbox. Shopping game (I went to the shops and I bought items beginning with a.b.c etc), and word games like Fix, Swap and Talisman.

Charlotte also explained how volunteers can scan a text before reading – picking out any tricky words for the child and making a game of this.

As always in ARCh, sessions must be fun for the children.

Charlotte will be running a workshop with more ideas to help dyslexic readers soon; if you would be interested in attending please email Marie at marie@archoxfordshire.org.uk

Also at the meeting the new ARCh film premiered! And some of its stars were present!



Thank you to everyone who took part in the film and to trustee Honor Somerset who initiated and worked on the project.

You can view the film on our website <https://archoxfordshire.org.uk/>

We also shared a summary of our Pupil survey results at the meeting; information is also now on our website on the Schools page so do take a look.

Volunteer Rob Sutton very kindly made a short film using some of the figures from the survey results and you can view that on our website too!

Our aim this year in particular is to get more organisations on board with our employer supported volunteer scheme which has benefits to employers and employees too! This will be a key part of our new Recruitment Officer's role.

We have worked with Oxford University Press in this way for 12 years now.

One of the volunteers on the scheme (Emma Clark) recently explained;

"As a company volunteer, my employer allows me to dedicate an hour a week to volunteering. I have a busy job, so the commitment is manageable without being overwhelming. What's more, it's such a nice thing to break up the working day with an ARCh session – if anything, it benefits me just as much as it benefits the children! During stressful moments, the chance to move away from my computer screen for a short period, forget about emails and meetings, and read something silly with a laughing child is really restorative.

Speaking of silliness, a favourite text of mine is a rhyme I found:

No Harm Done – by
Anon.
As I went out
The other day,
My head fell off
And rolled away.
But when I noticed
It was gone,
I picked it up
And put it on.

Accompanied by a funny cartoon of a person chasing after their head, it's a guaranteed giggle from a child! And I love the ridiculousness of the title. Nonsense poems are brilliant icebreakers for more reluctant children, or for a child who might not be having a great day at school.

Who ever said reading was boring?"

ARCh Christmas tree at St Edburgs Bicester festival

Thanks to Michelle for decorating our tree at this event which saw 4500 visitors over the weekend!



Volunteer Victor
Puddick
supporting ARCh

We look forward to seeing you at our events this term

As well as the usual book exchanges and coffee mornings we have:-

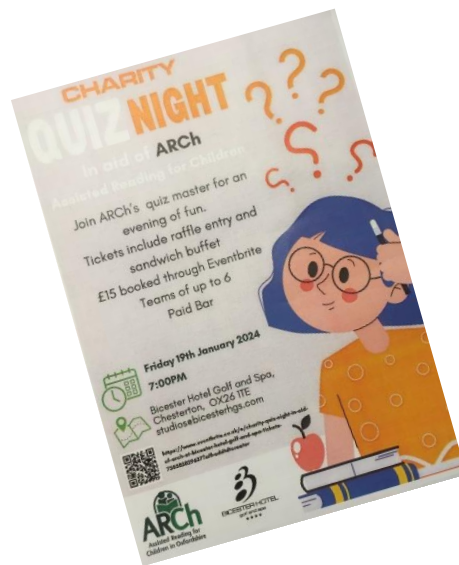
Safeguarding refresher via Zoom 25th January

Phonics and Dyslexia workshops (details will be confirmed in due course)

Volunteer meeting in March (date to be confirmed)

And please come to see us at the Volunteer Fair in the Westgate Oxford, 20th March

Last but not least, our special fundraising event – Quiz Night Friday 19th January 7pm at Bicester Golf & Hotel



Thank you to funders

Girdlers Company Charitable Trust

Mr & Mrs JA Pye's Charitable Settlement

Corpus Christi College JCR

Rupert House Henley

Janet Money

CPF from Councillors Liz Leffman and Bethia Thomas

Thank You

Coffee morning fundraiser

Thanks to two of our trustees Sue Hine and Honor Somerset for hosting a successful coffee morning

