

## AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

**Name of Committee**                      **Adult & Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of Committee**                      **22 November 2005**

**Report Title**                                **Warwickshire Library & Information Service: Reading Challenge - Compton Verney**

**Summary**                                      For the past seven years Warwickshire Library & Information Service has taken part in a National Campaign, the Summer Reading Challenge, to encourage children to read as widely as possible and to access the full range of resources and services on offer. This report details the success of our activities programme for 2005, looking in detail at the constituent parts.

**For further information please contact:**

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?**                      No

**Background papers**                      Reading Voyage Evaluation 2005,  
Compton Verney Report to Arts Council 2005

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**                      Details to be specified

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Other Committees      | <input type="checkbox"/> .....  |
| Local Member(s)       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  |
| Other Elected Members | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councillor S Tooth – “A positive response to the challenge.”<br>Councillor R Dodd, Councillor Mrs M Haywood |
| Cabinet Member        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councillor C Hayfield   |
| Chief Executive       | <input type="checkbox"/> .....  |

- |                          |                                     |   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Legal                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ian Marriott – no comments                        |
| Finance                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Paul Walsh, Financial Services Manager - approved |
| Other Chief Officers     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |
| District Councils        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |
| Health Authority         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |
| Police                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |
| Other Bodies/Individuals | <input type="checkbox"/>            | .....   |

**FINAL DECISION YES**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- |   |                          |       |
|---|--------------------------|-------|
| Further consideration by this Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| To Council                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| To Cabinet                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| To an O & S Committee                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| To an Area Committee                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |
| Further Consultation                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |

## **Agenda No**

# **Adult & Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 22 November 2005**

## **Warwickshire Library & Information Service: Reading Challenge - Compton Verney**

### **Report of the Director, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards**

#### **Recommendation**

That Committee notes the Summer Reading Challenge activities programme.

## **1 Introduction and Background**

For the past seven years Warwickshire Library and Information Service has taken part in a National Campaign, the Summer Reading Challenge, to encourage children to read as widely as possible and to access the full range of resources and services on offer. Each year we have increased the variety of activities available and seen an increase in participation. In 2004 Warwickshire extended the campaign to include Family participation. In 2005 we held our first Family Readers and Writers weekend to complement this programme. This report details the success of our activities programme for 2005 looking in detail at the constituent parts:

## **2 The Summer Reading Challenge 2005 'The Reading Voyage'**

Aims:

- To support children's learning and literacy during the summer holidays through creative reading activities.
- To encourage families and children to join the library, and to take part in the challenge alongside other families in the community, recognising and celebrating cultural diversity.
- To encourage children to choose new books and record their reading during the summer holidays; to encourage children to try new authors and new types of reading; to provide special collections of books, complementary to the challenge.
- To encourage new library membership, and a positive relationship with library staff, so that children are supported and stimulated with their reading.

- To give children increased confidence in reading through their enjoyment of the books and the reader development activities, and their sense of achievement through taking part.

These aims support the five outcomes in 'Every Child Matters' and the 'Shared Priorities' agreed between central and local government.

### **3 The Reading Voyage – the children's challenge**

*"The work that libraries do with readers is of great value to schools. It helps to raise standards in schools and it encourages creativity... There are public libraries in every community, with a vast range of materials, expert staff, links with the creative community and imaginative ways of encouraging children to read. These are precious assets."*

*Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills  
Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport*

The Challenge involves children reading a target of six books over the course of the school holidays. There were various incentives to encourage them including log books, pencils and stickers, with certificates and medals for those who were successful. There was no prescriptive list of books but librarians were on hand to offer advice and suggestions. This was not a competition, but a personal challenge, open to all. The success was outstanding. Despite two libraries being closed (for refurbishment) for the duration of the summer we had nearly 5,000 children sign up, including 194 new members who joined the library service in order to take part, and over 2,000 completed the challenge.

There were 96 quality, targeted events organised by libraries across the county and attended by 2,011 children. These included performances by storytellers and artists (Clive Cole, Susie Mendelsson), creative writing events, a Games Workshop event, Arts and Crafts activities and Award ceremonies. There were a number of local competitions including 'Dig for a story' in Warwick District which encouraged children to discover stories from the past by interviewing Grandparents and recording their memories. Partnerships were developed with the County Museum and Heritage Education resulting in exciting and popular craft events and Shipston Library joined forces with the local museum/ historical society to celebrate 'Shipston on Sea'!

In addition libraries provided access to the Reading Voyage website which featured animated characters giving tips on books readers might like, quizzes, interactive activities based on the work of popular authors and a poll of children's favourite authors. This was an excellent example of how computers can complement books in children's lives and encourage further reading.

Pre school children and their parents were not left out! Throughout the summer babies were invited to take part in the Bookstart Book Crawl, with babies being awarded colourful certificates when they had read five picture books. There were also 'Bounce and Rhyme' sessions, which, apart from being great fun, are also recognised as contributing to early speech and language development in young children.

## **4 Adult Summer Reading Challenge**

Parental support is key to a child developing as a successful reader. In order to encourage children to read we identified the importance of actively involving parents and adults in the reading challenge.

The promotion involved developing eye-catching publicity and creating special displays of summer reads for adults linked to the 'Reading Voyage' theme. These included relaxing beach reads and books on a sea theme linking to the national 'Sea Britain' promotion. Parents were encouraged to take part by entering a prize draw to win a family ticket to a popular visitor attraction including the National Maritime Museum, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the SeaLife centre, Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum and the Black County Living Museum. We also ran a book quiz with Trafalgar commemorative tokens as prizes.

**We succeeded in attracting 734 adult participants, compared with 710 participants last year.**

## **5 Family Readers & Writers Weekend at Compton Verney**

This weekend event, September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, was held in partnership with Compton Verney with £5,000 funding from the Arts Council England and was the culmination of our Summer Reading Challenge activities. The event consisted of two special days of events and activities for families across the county, and included writers, illustrators, poets and storytellers.

### **5.1 Aims of the event**

- To expand the audience for books and reading to families across Warwickshire
- To provide an amazing reading and writing experience for existing and potential library users
- To provide an opportunity to showcase the range of services available in Warwickshire's libraries
- To invite foster families from across the county, and fund their admission and transport using Paul Hamlyn Foundation funds (as part of our 2-year project with looked after children, entitled 'Switched on to Reading')
- To target families from Surestart areas in Leamington and Nuneaton
- To develop good practice though giving staff an opportunity to work in partnership with an excellent cultural organisation

## **5.2 Description of the activities**

Guests performers included acclaimed novelist David Lodge, children's author Shoo Rayner (creator of the Ginger Ninja!) and storyteller Katrice Horsley, and there was a special performance by poet and comedian John Hegley on Saturday evening. There were plenty of activities including bounce and rhyme sessions for the Under 3s, storytelling and even papermaking.

Staff from Warwickshire Libraries were on hand to answer any questions about the library service. Families visited the Mobile Library, and there were special 'BBC People's War' and 'Stories from the Web' sessions. The Book Doctor was also on hand to help people with suggestions for new titles to try.

## **5.3 Key achievements**

- Activities attracted 1,156 participants, and over 500 adults and children attended over the weekend. The most popular activities were the family activities, the live performance poetry event with John Hegley and the talk by David Lodge.
- Feedback from the public was extremely positive. Comments indicated that the activities were inspiring, challenging and enjoyable, as well as being well managed. One girl commented: 'This is the best day ever'.
- All Warwickshire's 290 foster families were invited, and we were pleased that 14 participants from foster families attended. Postcode analysis of ticket data also showed that some families from Surestart areas attended.
- The event was successful in promoting library services. The Mobile Library proved popular, as were the various drop-in sessions (eg, Book Doctor, BBC People's War sessions) and Bounce and Rhyme for Under 3s.
- Compton Verney benefited from promotion through the library network and the Warwickshire County Council website, attracting a wider audience as a result.

## **5.4 Lessons Learned**

There were some lessons, as this was the first time we had run such a large-scale family learning event. The main points arising were:

- We would separate events aimed at adults or older children within the overall programme (eg, 4.00 pm onwards and evenings), as parents want to be with their children.
- The programme was packed with activities starting at different times, so we would make the programme simpler for participants.

## 6 Impact and Outcomes of Summer Reading Challenge

*"I liked it because it encourages you to read books and it's fun to do too" (Isla, aged 8)*

*"An excellent project – my children love doing this every year. It gives them a real focus for reading" (parent)*

The Summer Reading Challenge programme is our biggest library based family reading activity. The promotion involves children and families in a range of cultural events and activities – celebrating reading, inspiring creativity, and recognising children's achievements.

- 33 libraries and 3 mobile libraries involved
- 702 events
- 7,204 adults participating
- 12,646 children participating
- 194 new members

The addition this year of the Family Readers and Writers Weekend, in partnership with Compton Verney Art Gallery, has enabled Warwickshire Libraries to further extend its impact, raise its profile and reach new audiences. We have been able to focus on hard to reach groups including looked after children and families in Surestart areas. In order to continue with this development over the next two years we will be seeking external funding from the Arts Council.

NOEL HUNTER  
Director, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards

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27 October 2005