



December 2015



Dear All

Welcome to our Christmas update

Learners

We have 15 working pairs at the moment. No new referrals over the past 2 or 3 weeks but things usually pick up again after the festive season!

Coaches

The training for potential coaches finally took place at Yorkley Community Centre on 7th November with 11 people attending. Katrina came along to chat about her experience as a coach and Megan talked about the work of the Contacts Team (see below). The venue was excellent and lunch was kindly provided by Jennifer from the Management Team. The feedback from everyone was very positive. Several of the trainees offered to help out at events and with distributing leaflets, so I have now passed this information on to Megan.

Facebook

One of our coaches, Helen, has set up a Facebook page for FRED learners, which she is keen for people to try out. If anybody has a learner who has expressed an interest or could be encouraged to dip their toe into the Facebook world, please get in touch or search for **FREDlearners** when logged in to Facebook. This could be a good opportunity for learners (and coaches?!), who find social media a bit of a mystery, to make contact with other learners whilst practising their literacy skills.

Contacts Team – Update from Megan (meganjenkins@btinternet.com)

Leaflets

- We are continuing our replenishment programme and are re-stocking existing outlets with leaflets. We have identified new outlets in Lydney and the distribution is on-going at these venues. I intend to distribute leaflets in Chepstow after Christmas, including the Job Centre.

Events

- The final event of the year – Forest Food Showcase – was a great success. There were several helpers on the pitch during the day, so thank you to those who helped out; also to coaches and learners who stopped by to say 'hello'. It was a very productive day with plenty of interest from potential learners and coaches. We made contact with several groups, including Blakeney Scouts (who will mention FRED in their newsletter), the Advocate Service, Chepstow Town Hall, Forest Routes, Forest of Dean Social Services, the Green Party, a local councillor and others.
- The Contacts Team met to discuss future events and decided that the most worthwhile events are those at the Speech House, as they are well organised and attract large crowds. They often provide good networking opportunities with other organisations. Though we welcomed suggestions about other venues, there was limited interest. Also, we struggled to cover some events, so fewer, more high profile ones seem to be a more effective use of our resources. Other useful events were the Coleford Busking Festival and events similar to the one organised by the Forest Citizens Advice Bureau which Jennifer attended at Yorkley Village Hall.

Talking Books Project

As many of you know, we have been involved in a project recording our reading books for learners to listen to on mini MP3 players. There has been a bit of a delay with this as Forest Talk, which provides the technical equipment and expertise, has just moved into new premises. We are back on track now and hope to set up more sessions after Christmas. Thanks to those of you who have helped out so far - everyone I've spoken to seems to have enjoyed the experience. I'll be in touch with you all in the New Year with some new dates.

Venues

We have a few more venues now available for our FRED pairs. Artspace in Cinderford is very happy for us to use their premises. They are open some evenings and Saturdays, which could be handy for any learners who work in the daytime. The new café in Coleford 'Sixteen' is another possibility. The British Legion in Lydney also has a small room available in their Hill Street premises. However, although we are able to use the Town Hall and Community Centre in Lydney, there are some caretaker issues so we are still on the look-out for other venues in the town. Please let me know if you know of anywhere suitable.

Resources

- Steph Richards, who recently retired from the college, has been working hard on producing a range of worksheets to go with some of our audio books. She has done a brilliant job so far and is happy to do more for which we are very grateful.
- Mitcheldean Library – they were clearing out some of their stock and I have acquired 25 Quick Reads for £1! Isobel is the main librarian there and has been very supportive.
- There is a list of all our books on the website (www.forestreadeasydeal.org.uk) and the books themselves are kept in a filing cabinet at the Forest Road Centre in Cinderford. If anyone would like to have a look at any of our resources, just let me know and I would be happy to meet you at Forest Road.

**A BIG thank you to everyone for your support this year.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!**



**Very Best Wishes
Sheila
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