



**Dear All**  
**Welcome to our Spring update**

### **Coaches and Learners**

Quite a few changes with the coach/learner pairs over the Christmas period – some learners have moved on (one has started a college course and a couple of others have reached the end of what FRED can offer) but we have had 2 new referrals so numbers are about the same with 11 working pairs. Some positive comments below from working coaches which make it all worthwhile!

*“My learner is doing very well and we are nearing the end of the book. He is reading various material and books in between my visits with the support of his workmates and that really seems to be helping. He is now able to communicate with his boss on work related matters by texting on his mobile phone.”*

*“My learner is getting on much better than I thought he would at first and his confidence has increased considerably. Both he and I are impressed with his progress. I gave him a small notebook and he writes down the words he finds difficult which seems to work well for us. I must admit when I leave after our reading session I feel like I'm walking on air because he's so positive about his progress. He told me last week he puts on the subtitles when he's watching telly and tries to pick out some words.....then he laughed and said they don't stay on there long enough.”*

*“Working with my learner has been a good experience even though he is not a typical FRED learner as his reading skills are above the norm for FRED. The aim was to help him with his concentration and this improved over the weeks I worked with him. It was apparent that as long as the topic was of interest to him and he was focused then he could then retain what he had read. We progressed to composing emails to people about subjects he was passionate about. We have reached the end of what FRED can offer, but hopefully my learner can be directed to other opportunities open to him, e.g. a college course or Learn Direct.”*

### **Training**

Kris is running an Extension Training session on 16<sup>th</sup> March at the Community Church in Cinderford. We have about 20 coaches and prospective coaches who have said they will be attending. There will be an update on the recorded books project (see below) and hopefully the session will generate some ideas for the activity packs which will accompany the books.

### **Talking Books Project**

The talking books project is going well and several recording sessions have now taken place. Volunteers and members of the Management Team have been helping with the recordings which will enable learners to practise their reading skills at home. Coaches will be trained to help their learners use the USBs effectively and workbooks will be developed to accompany the recorded material. If you have a learner who would like to participate in this project, please let me know.

### **Venues**

Although we have several venues used by our FRED pairs in the main Forest towns, we are always looking for more in some of the outlying villages so if anyone knows of suitable premises I would love to hear about them – particularly in the Ruardean and Drybrook areas.

## Waitrose

FRED received £185 from the Community Matters token scheme at Waitrose so a big thank you to everyone who supported us! Waitrose want to use the occasion for publicity, as do we of course, so we are hoping to take a reading coach and learner along to collect the cheque. A good photo opportunity for FRED and for the website!

## Contacts Team – Update from Megan

A very busy time for Megan and Pleas in the Contacts Team. We would like to welcome Vron who was such an asset at last year's events. Thank you Vron for joining us!

News Articles - short articles appeared in this month's Newent Magazine and in the Gloucester Citizen (published on 25th February and a copy is on the FRED website, [www.forestreadeasydeal.org.uk](http://www.forestreadeasydeal.org.uk))

Megan will write an article for the Gloucestershire VCS Alliance newsletter which will reach charities, organisations and agencies throughout the county.

Future opportunities for articles: Forest Monthly Newsletter, Forest Review and the Forester (again). Parish magazines and local newsletters in your area would be a great way of spreading the word about FRED; let Megan have the contact details of the editor/organiser so that a short article about FRED can be inserted.

Facebook/LinkedIn - we've had a few views and 'likes' on Facebook; LinkedIn is more useful in promoting FRED to the business/community/volunteer sector and I'm gradually increasing my network of potential referral sources. LinkedIn is also useful for finding out about events, workshops etc. Is anyone out there more skilled in Facebook pages than I am? I don't really have the time to devote to this and it would be a useful way of reaching a wider audience. Let me know if you can help.

## Other News

Pleas has been re-stocking leaflets around Cinderford and reports that leaflets need to be replenished wherever she goes, so it is good news that people are picking them up and showing an interest in FRED and she has also had many ideas about how to promote FRED this year.

## Events 2015

Based on discussions with other FRED helpers, we have various suggestions about how to make FRED more visible/engaging at these events. These were discussed further at the MT meeting on 05/03/2015. Good progress made in identifying suitable venues, but happy to hear about more events throughout the year. See table below - any offers of help will be greatly appreciated! Those who took part last year had a great time and we increased FRED's visibility in the area hugely; it also increased our numbers of learners and coaches. So even if you can only help out for a couple of hours, come along and join the fun! Please contact me directly on: [meganjenkins@btinternet.com](mailto:meganjenkins@btinternet.com)

Date/Time Event	Description	Notes
Sunday, 29th March 10am <b>Forest of Dean Spring Trails Half Marathon</b> , Speech House Hotel	Organised by The Rotary Club of the Royal Forest of Dean and supported by the Forestry Commission. Proceeds support local and national charities.	Megan can do this one
Easter Sunday 5th April 10am-4.30pm <b>Antiques and Vintage Fair</b> , Taurus Crafts Lydney	Stalls with antiques, vintage, memorabilia and collectables. Activities for children. Crafts and great food & drink.	
Bank Holiday Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> April <b>Coleford Carnival of Transport</b>	Over 500 vehicles – Autojumble – Art Exhibition Craft Show – Model Railway Exhibition	
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 10am - 4.30pm <b>Forest Activities Festival</b> Speech House Hotel	Activities for both visitors and residents, indoors and out including archery, battle sports, target golf, circus skills, bush craft, cookery & photography to throwing a pot or playing golf etc.	Megan and Pleas can do this one

Saturday/ Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> May <b>Cinderford Music Festival</b> Cinderford RFC		
30 <sup>th</sup> May 2015 09.00 – 4.00 <b>Coleford Busking Festival</b> Various Coleford streets	Coleford Busking Festival 2015, where musicians of all genres and ages are welcome to take the stage and bring the town alive with a vibrant musical vibe.	
Approx 7 <sup>th</sup> August TBC <b>Ruardean Carnival</b>	Ruardean Carnival is run by volunteers in order to bring the community together and raise money for groups within Ruardean. Each year groups within the village can apply for grants up to £250.00	
Bank Holiday Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2015 Parkend Carnival, Dean Forest Railway, Norchard, Lydney	An event with a fun procession and events for all the family.	
Saturday 12 September Starts 10am <b>Newent Onion Fayre</b> All streets in Newent	As the world's only event of its kind dedicated to the onion family, visitors have enjoyed fun-filled fayres of live music, entertainment, street stalls and shows for centuries, and this year is expected to surpass all others.	
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> September <b>Forest Vintage and Steam Fair</b> Speech House Coleford	The Forest Vintage Vehicle and Machinery Club welcome you to their 4th Speech House Vintage Show.	Megan can do this one
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> October 10am-5pm <b>Forest Showcase Food &amp; Drink Festival</b> Speech House Hotel Grounds GL16 7EL	The Forest Showcase boasts an interesting mix of new food producers plus our regulars, with over 100 stalls, themed demonstrations, children's activities and special promotions.	Megan and Pleas can do this one.

**Thanks as always to everyone for their support.**