

# Newsletter

07746 371353   
**Forest Read Easy Deal**



## December 2022

Welcome to our latest newsletter. As always, our small team of volunteers has been busy out and about, raising awareness at local events and networking with support teams and schools. There is an interesting update on one of our Ukrainian learners on page 3. If you have an interest in IT and feel you could help to develop the role of IT supporter, there is more information on page 4. Please note the information about the AGM below.

If you have any comments or queries: email me: [sheilapriest49@gmail.com](mailto:sheilapriest49@gmail.com)



**A very Happy Christmas to you all and best wishes for 2023!**

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### Malcom Vine – Team Leader

Since the last Lockdown we have been concentrating on reminding Forest organisations and residents of FRED's presence and the help we can give. We have refreshed our leaflets and posters, set up our display at several local events, attended meetings with support teams and kept our internet presence relevant and topical.



I am pleased to say that we have retained most of our trained coaches and have attracted several new volunteers whom we hope will soon join them. Most importantly we have been able to continue to support our learners to improve their reading and writing and there continue to be good examples of individuals progressing.

### Annual General Meeting

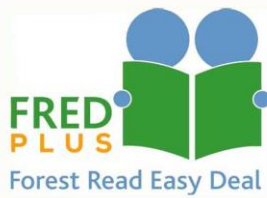
This will be held on **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm at the Yorkley Community Centre**. We have invited a well-known, successful author to come and tell us about his experience of learning to read as a child and the books that have made the greatest impact on him. Andy Seed is best known in the Forest for his beautifully illustrated children's books: "The story of the Forest" and "The Wildlife of the Forest". All coaches will be invited and the event will be advertised on our social media site.

### Nataline - FRED Promotion



A second bout of Covid for me meant lying low for a while but once up and running, I was able to get out and about promoting FRED!

I attended a Phonics introductory session at Woolaston School where I gave a talk about FRED and left flyers for the parents, grandparents and carers who were present. I also trotted along to promote FRED to the Happy Crafters group in Sedbury, Chepstow. They use Sedbury Space for their fortnightly craft activities, which is also of course a setting for FRED sessions. A few ladies commented that the free literacy service that FRED provides is such a unique opportunity these days. I wholeheartedly agreed!



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## FRED Out and About - Did You See Us?

During Covid restrictions, we were unable to spread the word in person, about how FRED gives free help to people who have difficulty with reading and writing, so we were delighted to take part in the first Parkend Carnival for three years. We were especially pleased that the weather was kind for the August Bank Holiday, and there was a great attendance.

We were also at the Bathurst Park Community Event on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, handing out leaflets, despite the poor weather!

We were able to tell people about how we are expanding the area covered by FRED, and how we would like more volunteers to help with this. If you would like to know more about the Team and how you could help, please see the article on Page 4.

## Forest Showcase - What a Difference a Day Makes!



By way of contrast to last year's wind and rain, this year the weather was glorious and our volunteers were able to talk to many people about how they could help or be helped by FRED. Several people have expressed an interest in becoming reading coaches so all very positive.

Visitors to the Showcase came from far and wide, so we also directed some people to similar groups in other parts of the country, through Read Easy UK.

## Coach Meeting - Kris, Coach Trainer

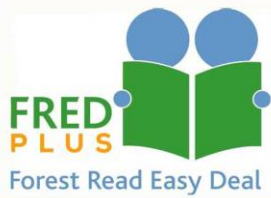
FRED held a coach meeting on Friday 25th November at Yorkley Community Centre.

This was an opportunity for existing volunteers and those interested in becoming reading coaches to get together informally. Everyone said a little about their roles/experiences with FRED with some lovely anecdotes, affirming why we all do what we do. The potential new volunteers talked about what had led them to FRED, as well as talking a little about their previous experiences. There were some resources to look at and Claire took one of our laptops along to show how they can be used with our learners.



The members of the team explained a bit more about how FRED worked locally and Kris spoke a little about the coach training. Malcom let everyone know about the AGM in January and invited everyone to get involved with events and awareness raising.

We were all treated to a spectacular lunch from Jennifer and it was a successful session enjoyed by a wonderful group of like-minded volunteers. Hopefully, I will run some remote training for new reading coaches early next year. We will organise another coach meeting in the spring.



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## A Ukrainian Story by Claire Peach



Viktoriya fled Ukraine with almost nothing, after the Russian invasion. Leaving the rest of her family behind, she escaped first to Poland, where she spent three uncertain weeks with her two young children, a toddler and a 7 year old, waiting for a visa. In April she arrived in the UK and was given accommodation by a young couple who helped her in many ways. But she was determined to get a job as soon as possible, so she can support her children. She is a qualified dentist and already spoke fairly good English, but discovered that she needs to reach a high standard in the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) an academic English test, to get a job that will enable her to be self-sufficient.

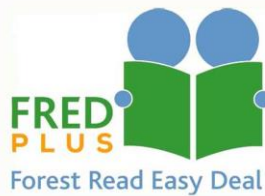
In July, she heard about FRED and asked if we could help. Although her needs were not within the usual remit of FRED, I offered to help her with preparation for the demanding IELTS exam. The 1 to 1 sessions had to be done remotely as Viktoriya had no child care so a lively toddler and poor signal strength on her phone were just two of the challenges!

Happily, in August, FRED received more refurbished laptops from IT Schools Africa, and this made things a lot easier for her to study on line and Viktoriya sat the IELTS exam in late September. Despite registering to take the exam in hand-written format, when Viktoriya got to the test centre, she found she had to take the test on-line, which put her at a disadvantage. She managed to get a good overall grade, but unfortunately not good enough for the job she is aiming for, so she has rebooked for December.

Despite now having to move into rental accommodation and transfer her daughter to another school, Viktoriya does not complain, and simply says 'I have to do it - I am the lucky one, being able to live in the UK'.

**Claire Peach**  
**November 2022**





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## FOREST LOTTERY

This year it has raised £159 so far and another 'special' is coming up soon. In addition to the weekly cash draws, anyone with a ticket will be eligible for the £1000 John Lewis voucher draw on Dec 17th

Tickets only £1



To support FRED through the lottery, click on:

<https://www.forestlottery.co.uk/support/forest-read-easy-deal>

## Would You Like To Join Our Team?



From Left: Claire Peach, Kris Ventris Field, Nataline Bennett Coleman, Jennifer Lewis, Malcom Vine, Sheila Priest, Chris Warren, John Izzard

If you understand the challenge modern life presents for people who are not fluent readers, and you are comfortable with IT, could you help us 'spread the word' about FRED and help our coaches/learners who are working remotely?

## Why do we need help?

It is a new era for FRED. We are now offering our free reading and writing help to adults beyond the boundary of the Forest. Also, since prompted by Covid, we are offering remote coaching as well as face to face.

It is still early days and we need someone to work with us to develop the role of 'IT Supporter'. We have drafted a role description as a guide to what we need, but this will be a shared role to start with, and task allocation will depend on the interests/ability of who we recruit.

**If you think that person could be you, we would be delighted to hear from you.**

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