



Stockbridge Primary School

BookFest Report

March 2023



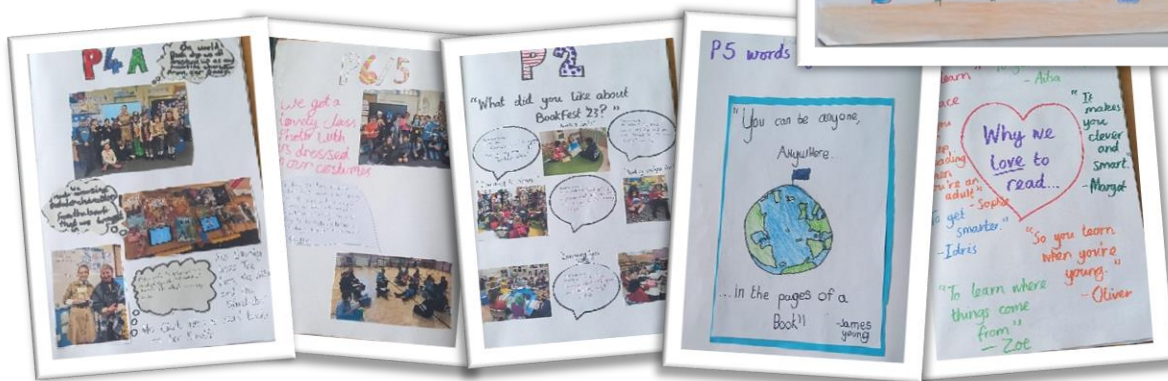
Our fourth annual Stockbridge Primary BookFest in March 2023 explored 'Togetherness', in a wide-ranging celebration of storytelling, community and shared experiences...

BookFest 2023 was bursting with activities, excitement and even a touch of Hollywood glamour! We welcomed award-winning authors, illustrators, comic makers and a young film star on his way to the Oscars. From beautiful bunting to Korean storytelling, from a Dickens-themed parsnip to a talking hotdog, and with storytelling across continents and worlds, it could only be... BOOKFEST!



We... Work Together

Primary 5 led children across the school to make a big scrapbook about Bookfest 2023 for everyone to share. They illustrated it with photographs, quotations, beautiful artwork and their own thoughts on reading.



We... Draw Along Online

Some classes took part in online events, bringing them together not just with top authors and illustrators but with children from across the UK. Primary 5 enjoyed 'The Great World Book Day Draw-Along' with author Swapna Haddow and illustrator Sheena Dempsey, the team behind the *Dave Pigeon* series. Presented by World Book Day and the National Literacy Trust, the event focused on the World Book Day 2023 book *Dave Pigeon: Bookshop Mayhem* and featured writing ideas, top tips and a live draw along!





We... Meet Authors and Illustrators

This year's BookFest brought some top story superstars to Stockbridge Primary! Every class had at least one in-person event this year; it was particularly lovely to bring author/illustrators to the Nursery and the P1, P2/1 and P2 classes for the first time.

"I enjoyed all the author visits because I love hearing how authors write their books."
P6/5

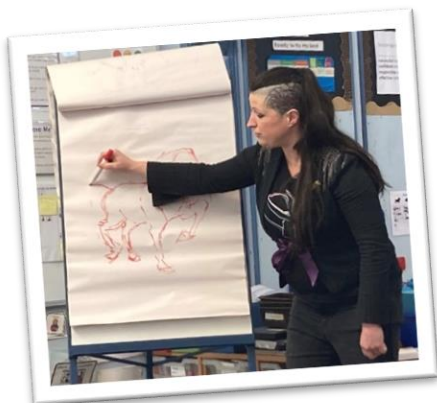
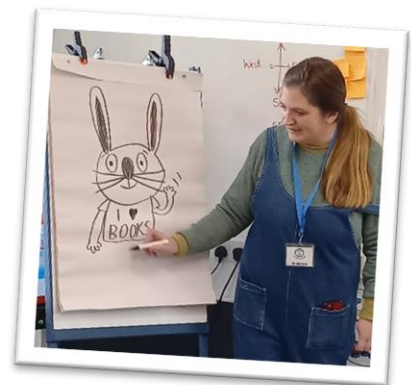
Whether it was roaring with laughter at outlandish comic characters, gaining practical advice on becoming a writer, drawing alongside their heroes or chatting like friends with authors they had studied in class, pupils encountered so many inspiring and stimulating ideas. You can learn more about each session in our dedicated BookFest author/illustrator visit reports on the Stockbridge Primary School website. Thank you to all the phenomenal authors and illustrators who visited us and generously shared their enthusiasm and expertise!



Our Nursery children met picture book superstar **Morag Hood**. Morag read fan-favourite *I Am Bat*, followed by her brand-new book *Dig Dig Digger*. After showing the children how she draws Bat, Morag led a collage activity where they created their own excavators. The children let loose with their own boundless creativity, making an angry digger, a digger with luxuriant hair and a digger entirely hidden by mud, among others!

Children in P1, P2/1 and P2 loved their bunnytastic event with picture book author/illustrator **Emily MacKenzie**, author of the popular *Ralfy Rabbit* series. Emily led the children in a fabulous drawalong of Ralfy Rabbit, chatted about her books and her work, and helped the children create amazing illustrations of their own.

"I liked learning how to draw Ralfy!"
P2



We were thrilled to welcome comic-book illustrator and artist **Tanya Roberts** back to BookFest, where she led rapid-fire live drawing sessions for P1 to P3. Audience requests ranged from SpiderMan to a mountain goat to Mary, Queen of Scots! Many of the children were inspired to have a go at drawing their favourite characters alongside Tanya – or even inventing their own.

The brilliant **Maisie Chan** kickstarted BookFest back in the autumn term with a wonderful in-person visit to our P3 to P6 children. Maisie introduced her books *Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths*, *Keep Dancing*, *Lizzie Chu* and the *Tiger Warrior* series, talked powerfully about representation in children's books, and led a funny comic character drawing session.



A super special event that was a huge hit for our P4 to P7 children was **Neill Cameron**, who travelled all the way up from Oxford to join us! Comic artist and author Neill is a favourite of many of the children through his work in *The Phoenix* comic and his *Mega Robo Bros* graphic novels. His memorable events with us were funny, inspiring, silly and super-creative. What an absolute treat!

"It was a fun and funny workshop!"

P4

Award-winning author **Elle McNicoll** joined P5 to P7 on her whirlwind Scottish tour to celebrate the publication of her brand-new book, *Like A Curse*. Elle is a superstar of children's fiction, especially as her book *A Kind of Spark* has been made into an upcoming BBC TV series! Elle introduced her new book and its characters, talked about writing, reading and the importance of having neurodiverse characters, then generously answered questions before signing a *lot* of books for starstruck readers!



P7 became huge **Tom Palmer** fans after reading several of his historical books in class as part of their War and Conflict topic, so they were super-excited to meet Tom in an online visit. Tom described his research process, showed the children the scrapbooks he makes for each of his books and showed them some of the artefacts he collects, including a wartime shell dug up in France. The session finished with an enthusiastic Q&A.

"I really enjoyed seeing his scrapbooks."

P7

We were also delighted to welcome Tom Palmer back for another virtual visit, this time for P4 to P6 children,

which focused on inspiring reluctant readers. Tom explained his own early struggles with books and how he didn't really like reading, before starting to enjoy reading about football in newspapers and magazines, and building his confidence by writing about it. His honest and approachable discussion gave the children plenty they could relate to.



We... Create a Kindness Ripple

This year, for the first time, Stockbridge Primary was proud to join the Scottish International Storytelling Festival's 'Big Scottish Story Ripple'! The idea was to create "a ripple of stories, a ripple of kindness... Receive a free storytelling session, offer a good deed back in return."



Our P3 and P4 classes were lucky enough to have a visit from phenomenal storyteller Janis Mackay. Janis, who is also an award-winning children's author, entranced the pupils with atmospheric Scottish tales, including *The Trowie Wedding*, a traditional yarn from Shetland, and *The Selkie Girl*, her own version of a Scottish myth. It was wonderful to see the children hanging on every word of her mesmerising tales.

"I liked both stories – could you do more stories like these and come and tell us them?"

P4

After her performance, Janis assured the children that they could do what she does, saying "Can you picture a banana? Can you turn it red? Your imagination is magical!" and exhorting them to get outside and have their own adventures.

Janis' visit was made possible by the Scottish International Storytelling Festival as part of their Big Scottish Story Ripple community programme. Participants receive fully-funded storytelling sessions in return for offering a good deed back to their community – continuing the 'ripple of kindness'!



For their good deed, Stockbridge pupils chose to make 'kindness bunting' bearing messages of respect and goodwill. Their bunting was displayed in businesses and organisations across our local community, including ScotMid, Ginger and Pickles Children's Bookshop, The Write Stuff and the LifeCare Centre. We hope it brightened people's days!

Thank you to the Big Scottish Story Ripple for including us in this wonderful programme.



"I loved when Janis Mackay came."

P4



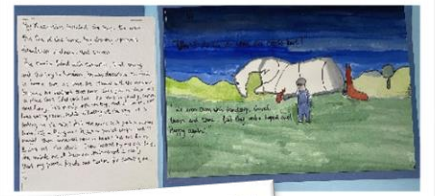
We... Meet A Film Star!

One of the highlights of BookFest for many children was meeting Jude Coward Nicoll, star of the award-winning animated short film *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*!

Jude is a former pupil of Stockbridge Primary, so it was lovely to welcome him back to our school. He and his agent dropped in to say hello to our P5, P6/5 and P7 children between Jude's appearance on stage at a glittering ceremony in London as his film won a BAFTA, and just before he jetted off to Hollywood for the Oscars, where the film would repeat its success!



"It was kinda cool!"
P7

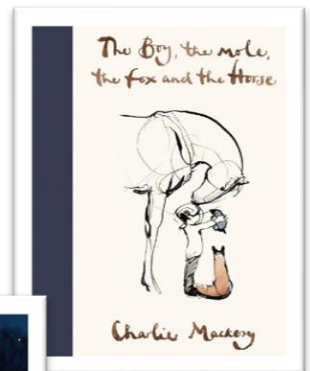


Many of our children had studied Charlie Mackesy's book *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* in class and had watched the animated film. They had produced some beautiful work inspired by the story and illustrations.

Children were completely absorbed as Jude told them about the process of adapting a book into an animated film.



"He said it was filmed in lockdown so most of the time they were doing filming over Zoom and stuff, which was interesting."
P7



Jude starred as The Boy in the film, working alongside mega-famous stars Idris Elba, Gabriel Byrne and Tom Hollander. It was wonderful to learn about his experiences being a voiceover actor – we were fascinated by his stories of meeting so many celebrities!

Thank you to Jude for taking the time out to visit us and give us an insight into filmmaking – we loved meeting you!



“He did some different voices for us. It was interesting to see how much he could change his voice.”
P7



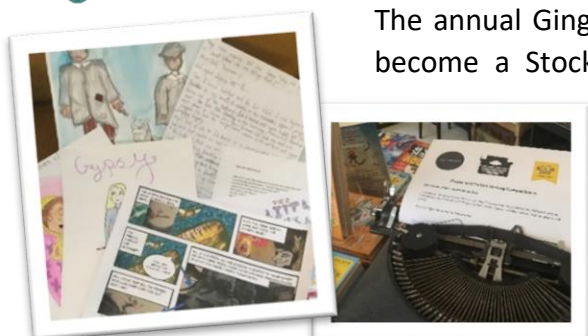
We... Love the Library

We’re so lucky to have the wonderful Stockbridge Library as our neighbours. Class visits during BookFest reminded pupils of everything this fabulous resource has to offer, as they explored the wide range of books available.

“I liked getting a partner and holding hands and going to the library.”
P2



We... Write and Illustrate



The annual Ginger and Pickles World Book Day competition has become a Stockbridge Primary BookFest tradition. This year’s categories encouraged children to show their talents as writers, illustrators, cartoonists, reviewers, interviewers and graphic artists. The winners received some amazing book prizes – congratulations all!



We... Celebrate our Diversity

More than 40 different languages are spoken at home by Stockbridge Primary children and their families! We celebrated our cultural backgrounds by encouraging children, families and staff to share books and stories in their own languages. One of our PSAs read a story in Catalan.



In P5, two children shared a traditional story in Arabic with their classmates. Another child shared a story in Yoruba in the form of a song, as is common in the culture's strong oral storytelling tradition.



We loved being able to welcome parents back into our classrooms to read to children in the language they speak at home. We enjoyed stories in Spanish, French, German, Korean and many more!



"Rona's mum came to our class so that she could read some books to us in German and then we played a fun game with her where we had to guess the fairytale she was reading."

P6



We... Have Fun in Class

Our amazing Stockbridge Primary teachers organised many exciting book-related classroom activities. Children made mini-books, shared their favourite books in presentations and as posters, made beautiful floral bookmarks and designed book covers for fantastic displays around the school.



"We made bookmarks out of flowers and glitter. It was so FUN!!"

P6



In the infants classes, children made fabulous crowns showing characters from stories and drew covers from their favourite books.

"My book has a rainbow!"
P1

The children really enjoyed talking about their favourite books with their teachers as they worked on their book covers. Some children made posters of their favourite books.

Teachers and PSAs shared some of their own favourite books with their classes.

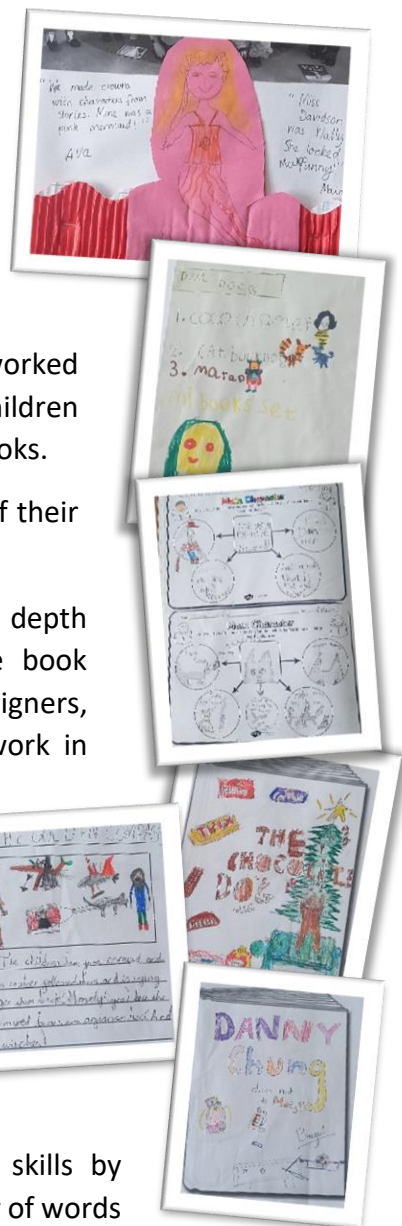
Meanwhile, older children thought in depth about book characters, then became book reviewers and cover designers, producing some beautiful work in class.

"I enjoyed solving maths problems about my book, The Westing Game."
P4

Children even practised their maths skills by answering questions about the number of words and pages in their reading books!

Some children used Puffin book jackets for a philosophy lesson that asked: 'Can you judge a book by its cover?', while others used technology to promote their favourite books.

"We used the app 'Stop Motion' to make a trailer for our favourite book! We used materials to make our characters such as plasticine, lego and paper! Then we added voiceovers at the end!"
P7





We... Transform Fruit and Veg

When is a potato not a potato? When it's the Cat in the Hat! Yes, this year's BookFest saw the return of the fun and funny competition that challenges pupils to turn a vegetable or piece of fruit into a book character, using only their ingenuity, googly eyes and a lot of Sellotape.



"I made Mr Bump from a knobbly gourd. I used real bandages!"

P2/1

Pupils rose to the occasion with gusto – whether it was swashbuckling cucumber Jim Hawkins or sad parsnip Jacob Marley, there was incredible creativity and craftsmanship on display.

"I made Stickman from a parsnip and some matches!"

P1

A winner from each class received a £10 book voucher. Congratulations to everyone who took part!



"I made Batman from an aubergine. I felt proud."
P1

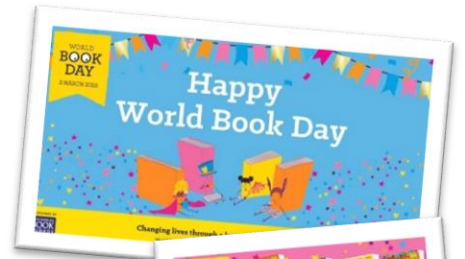


We... Celebrate World Book Day

World Book Day has always been a highlight of the Stockbridge Primary BookFest.

We teamed up for a third successful year with our outstanding local children's bookshop, Ginger and Pickles, to make sure that every

child was able to choose their very own World Book Day book from the selection of exciting titles on offer. A huge thank you to Ginger and Pickles for kindly supplying the World Book Day books!



We... Drop Everything and Read

When the school bell rang at unexpected times on World Book Day, everyone knew what it meant – time to Drop Everything and Read! Whether it was during a maths class or in the middle of a PE lesson, children, teachers and PSAs all seized this awesome opportunity to stop what they were doing and pick up a good book.



"We had to drop everything and read in the middle of maths, which was fun!"
P7



We... Read Together

Our P7 children led a lovely book-sharing House event, bringing children across the school together with older and younger children in other classes to read and talk about their favourite books. Children completed 'leaves' to show which books they had shared with others, which we added to our beautiful 'Reading Together' tree.



"I enjoyed sharing my book with another class."
P2





We... Dress Up

There's always a touch of magic to World Book Day – when else could you be overtaken on the way to school by Origami Girl swathed in newspaper, greeted at the gate by Willy Wonka, bump into a small child dressed as a friendly washing machine, or called 'maggots' by a bellowing Miss Trunchbull (although with a kindly twinkle in her eye!)?

"I loved dressing up as Origami Girl and seeing all the books the other children brought in."

P2



As always, World Book Day meant that many of our favourite fictional characters were brought to life, as children from the Nursery to Primary 7 dressed up.



In the playground, characters from popular series such as *Harry Potter*, *How To Train Your Dragon* and many more mingled happily. Dressing up sparked so many excited chats about favourite books and favourite characters. We enjoyed getting into character!



"We all dressed like we were in books. Mrs Brett was a giraffe. But she can dance!"

P2/1





And, as usual, our amazing teachers and staff fully embraced the fun and were not to be outdone.

“Miss Eckersley was Miss Trunchbull from Matilda. She called us maggots! She had a megaphone and shouted ‘Oi you ‘orrible lot!’ She made all the teachers eat chocolate cake!”
P4



Well done to everyone for their amazing enthusiasm and effort!



We...Love Preloved

Bringing imagination to life was easier this year thanks to our popular Costume Swap, running in the playground every day. We received some fantastic donations from families, and children enjoyed browsing the packed rail to pick up a new costume to wear on World Book Day. It was a great success, and sparked some excited conversations among the visiting children about their WBD plans! From knights to highwaymen, Alice in Wonderland to the Gruffalo, we had a fabulous selection of outfits – free, environmentally friendly and lots of fun!





We... Give Books Away

One of the big events of this brilliant BookFest was our school-wide Big Book Bonanza Giveaway, which was made possible by the generous donations of Stockbridge families and our local independent children's bookshop, Ginger and Pickles.



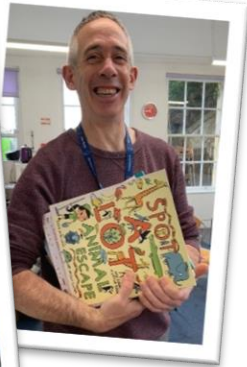
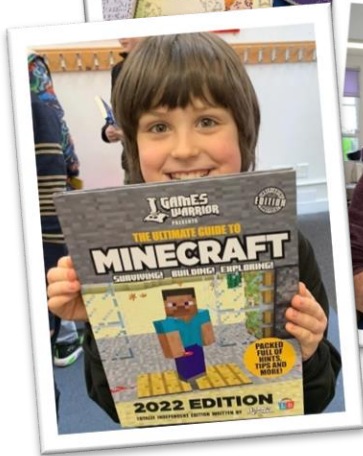
Each child was given a Stockbridge Primary BookFest Giveaway voucher. Every class from Nursery to P7 then

visited the Giveaway, and each child had the opportunity to exchange their voucher for a free book from a fabulously varied selection.

It was wonderful to see the excitement – many children sat down on the spot and started reading! Over 300 books were given away – both to the children themselves, and to teachers for their class libraries.

We followed the Giveaway with a busy and buzzing Book Sale to children and families after school, raising over £200!

This will be used to support book activities and buying books for the school.



We... Turn Bakes into Books

Back at the start of the school year, a BookFest volunteer team organised a Bake Sale to raise funds for author/illustrator visits and books for the school. The sale raised a fabulous £524, money which made a significant impact on the programme of events we were able to offer this year. Many thanks to everyone who baked and everyone who came along to enjoy the scrumptious treats!





The Bigger Picture

Stockbridge Primary School's annual BookFest, coinciding with World Book Day each March, is packed with diverse ways to celebrate reading – whatever the circumstances.



This year we celebrated the end of pandemic restrictions with our theme of Togetherness. We seized the chance to bring children face-to-face with inspiring and encouraging guests, perhaps for the first time, and to hold a huge array of enjoyable in-school activities and events. And we continued our celebration of our school's diversity, but put the spotlight on how we come from many cultural backgrounds but are *together* at Stockbridge Primary, as a united school. Togetherness meant reforging links, bringing families together and reaching out to our local community.

"I rate the whole of Book Week 9.4 out of 10."

P4

BookFest underlined that stories aren't only told through the written word, with events that celebrated oral storytelling, animated films and workshops highlighting the expressive power of illustration, comics and graphic novels. And BookFest also encompassed witches, doughnut people, Selkies and flying diggers, because BookFest is a celebration of imagination; we aim to spark and nurture the incredible creativity of our children, and to give every child the confidence to tell the stories they want to tell, in whatever way they choose.

"BookFest has really been our highlight at school."

Parent



Illustration © Neill Cameron

From the books we championed to the guests we welcomed, BookFest aims to reflect our pupils' own individuality. Representation is important. We want to celebrate our wealth of experiences, languages, cultures and perspectives as we learn from and share with each other. Events featured authors and book characters who are neurodivergent, who are part of the British-Chinese community, and who were reluctant childhood readers. As we build year-on-year, we hope that every child will recognise themselves in BookFest events and activities, and will realise that what they see, they could be.

"There's a group of upper-primary pupils who have, until this point, been reluctant readers. Since exploring Neill Cameron's books at BookFest, they are approaching reading with a completely different mindset. They love the graphic novel format and the content of these books. Parents have also reported how pleased they are seeing their children wanting to read for the very first time. It's just lovely to witness!"

Support for Learning teacher



Thank You...

- ... to Neill Cameron, Maisie Chan, Jude Coward Nicoll, Morag Hood, Janis Mackay, Emily MacKenzie, Elle McNicoll, Tom Palmer and Tanya Roberts
- ... to Kim Nicoll and Ruth Hollyman for the event with Jude Coward Nicoll
- ... to Scottish Book Trust's Live Literature fund for supporting our events with Morag Hood and Emily MacKenzie
- ... to the Scottish International Storytelling Festival and its Big Scottish Story Ripple initiative for the event with Janis Mackay, and to all the local Stockbridge shops and organisations who supported us by displaying the children's Kindness Bunting
- ... to Annabel Wright and EdPR for the event with Elle McNicoll, and the *Like a Curse* sales team for the badges and fantastic free stickers for children
- ... to Meggie Dennis and David Fickling Books for the brilliant free stickers for every child in Neill Cameron's event
- ... to Julie Richardson at Ginger and Pickles Children's Bookshop
- ... to Stockbridge Library
- ... to Stockbridge Primary Parent Council for their funding and solid support
- ... to all the many parents who gave up their time to read stories in their home languages with classes across the school
- ... to Mrs Ashbrook, Ms Fraser and Miss McMillen, and to Mrs Mitchell and Mrs Morgan
- ... to all the authors, illustrators, poets, storytellers, comic-makers and publishers who so generously share resources online, particularly World Book Day UK
- ... to everyone who donated baking, volunteered, bought treats and turned Bakes into Books at our fundraising bake sale, and to Jaimie Buchanan for the amazing poster
- ... to Emily Simpson, Kate Barrett and Phoebe Bois, and Jenny, Meredith and Hazel, for organising the Book Giveaway, and to everyone who donated or bought books
- ... to our P6 Maisie Chan interview team of Violet and Leon, to Kirstie Warren for the flipchart paper, to Hannah at Ginger & Pickles for her Maisie Chan book display, and to Phoebe Bois for the BookFest posters
- ... to the children, teachers, PSAs, office team and parents who embrace BookFest so enthusiastically
- ... to the BookFest volunteer organisers Meredith Jones, Hazel Norris and Jenny Litster, and to Emily Simpson for her original idea

Do you love reading, have professional skills in publishing, librarianship, bookselling or anything literary, or could you help with illustration, writing, reading or storytelling? Do you have ideas for future sessions? Get involved! Please email us [c/o stockbridgeparentcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:c/o_stockbridgeparentcouncil@gmail.com)