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| A grey and white logo  AI-generated content may be incorrect. | **Steering Group Member**  **Role description** |

**INTRODUCTION**

**Shared Reading:**

Shared Reading was pioneered by The Reader (www.thereader.org), a Liverpool-based charity and social enterprise, and is described by them as "a unique experience that helps thousands of people to connect, feel good and live well"

To quote further from The Reader:

*"A group of people, one of them a trained Reader Leader, reads a great novel, short story or poem aloud. We stop and talk about what we have read. There is no need for group members to read aloud or speak – it’s fine to just listen. The idea is to create a space where people feel at ease.*

*"Reading the literature aloud in real-time means that everyone is involved in a shared, live experience. Group members are encouraged by the Reader Leader to respond personally, sharing feelings, thoughts and memories provoked by the reading.*

*"Everyone experiences the text in their own way, but the literature provides a shared language that can help us to understand ourselves – and others – better."*

**Shared Reading in Leicestershire:**

Shared Reading first came to Leicestershire libraries in 2014, as a joint project between Leicestershire Libraries and The Reader. When public funding for the project ended in 2016, we set up Leicestershire Shared Reading (LSR), a voluntary organisation, to ensure that the groups could continue. Currently we have nine groups which meet weekly, either in person at public libraries around the county or online via Zoom, and which collectively attract around 60 attendees every week.

**Our vision**

**To improve the wellbeing of as many people as possible in our local communities through the pleasure of shared reading together.**

**Our mission:** ​

* To provide shared reading groups to connect individuals, rebuild social bonds and make people feel better
* To provide more groups in more places
* To explore the potential for shared reading in new settings
* To provide ongoing support and development of the trained volunteers who lead the groups
* To work in partnership with local authorities and other organisations and with The Reader (www.thereader.org.uk)

**The benefits of shared reading**

Research carried out by The Reader over twenty years has consistently proven the value of shared reading. In latest evaluation of group members' views, in which we took part, 95% of respondents agreed that shared reading lifted their mood, and 97% said that they looked forward to the group as an important part of their week. Perhaps most strikingly, 93% agreed with the statement 'in shared reading we have conversations that matter', and 90% agreed that shared reading helped them to connect deeply with others. See www.thereader.org for more information.

**Our current priorities:**

* To strengthen our steering group by recruiting people from outside the organisation, who will be active, and who will bring skills in areas such as marketing and IT
* To build attendance at some of our groups
* To look for opportunities to re-establish or launch new groups
* To recruit new Reader Leader volunteers
* To monitor the implications of local government reorganisation

**Our team**

We have 16 volunteers who are trained Reader Leaders, and one admin volunteer; seven of these people also currently serve as steering group members. The committee has three officer posts (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and can have up to six other members.

Without exception our volunteers are passionate about the power of reading, and their contribution to the community.

**Our funding**

We have no payroll, and have adequate funds for our day-to-day operations. There will be opportunities to raise money for future developments; as a voluntary organisation we can apply for financial support from bodies such as the National Lottery and local charities. We work in close partnership with Culture Leicestershire who meet some of our running costs.

**THE ROLE:**

We are looking for people who are team players, who understand the value of our work, and who will take an active part in the management of LSR. We are keen to involve people from all backgrounds and perspectives. We are especially keen to recruit new members who have financial, IT, marketing, social media or administrative experience, but a willingness to get involved and get things done is paramount.

This role is voluntary, but reimbursement is made for reasonable expenses regarding duties on behalf of LSR.

As a steering group member you will be part of a team working together under the direction of the Chair to ensure the smooth running of the organisation. You will be allocated a portfolio of responsibilities that will be broadly covered by one of these roles:

* Group Secretary
* Volunteer Leader
* Reports and Information Leader
* Publicity and Marketing Leader
* Fundraiser

A willingness to work collaboratively and maintain strong communications with other steering group members and the team of Reader Leaders is important.

In addition all steering group members are expected to attend up to four committee meetings and the AGM each year. Apart from this, your time commitment is negotiable and can be flexible to some degree - but we need people who are keen to become actively involved.

Please contact us for an informal chat to find out more and to discover if this is you. Send us an email to start the ball rolling:  [leicssharedreading@gmail.com](mailto:leicssharedreading@gmail.com?subject=Chairperson%20volunteer%20role%20interest).