

The Reader

'Reading is a form of friendship' – Marcel Proust

Welcome from Jane Davis, Founder and Director

Hello and welcome to The Reader.

We've put together this recruitment pack to provide you with information about our organisation, our mission to change the world through a reading revolution, our values and ambitions, what we offer and what we are looking for from our people.

At The Reader we believe literature is for life and that's why we're working to develop Shared Reading in old people's homes, community centres, hospitals, addiction rehab units, prisons, public libraries, children's services and many other places. We're leading creating a reading revolution to make reading part of the fabric of life. We find it easy to imagine a near future where all people – regardless of background, career or personal situation – bring books to life: opening and sharing the centuries of vital information contained within them. Our purpose is to ensure that this amazingly rich content is available for everyone to enjoy.

We're an organisation with national (and international) reach, based at Calderstones Mansion, in Calderstones Park, Liverpool. Calderstones, our HQ and organisational home, is about to undergo a £4m refurbishment. We've been based here since 2013 and we're building a community built on Shared Reading, which has created 30 plus jobs, hundreds of volunteering opportunities and thousands of visitor experiences.

I hope this pack provides you with everything you need to know about our vision, ethos and values, what you can expect from working at the Reader and the opportunities we will provide to support your career development.

I look forward to meeting you.

Jane Davis, MBE, Ashoka Fellow

About The Reader

The Reader is a dynamic national charity and social enterprise, head quartered in Liverpool. Since 2002, The Reader, has pioneered the use of *Shared Reading* to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build community resilience and connectedness across the UK and beyond. We inspire and support people to read great literature, *aloud*, together. It is a deceptively simple, yet powerful model which is highly replicable as it works for people of all ages, backgrounds and life situations.

We are driven by the ambition of making *Shared Reading* part of the fabric of our communities – in every care home; in every library; in every mental health trust and in every community centre –so, like the Scouts and Guides - wherever you find yourself living, there will be a group nearby.

About Shared Reading

Shared Reading is a simple yet powerful non-medical intervention to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build community. Groups take place in many settings in the community and across the region. Group members often describe Shared Reading as helping them to have insight, to recognise themselves, to build confidence, share things they often could not easily say. Shared Reading creates a safe and calm place in which people feel a sense of community and a connection to self and others. A piece of literature is read aloud and the group stop whenever to discuss their responses whenever someone has something to say. There is never any pressure to read or contribute, and participation is always self-directed.

The Reader's Business Plan: 2017 - 2022

Building a Reading Revolution

This 5-year business plan sits beneath our strategic plan and covers the period 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2022, and it is supported by operational plans for the years it covers. The operational plan for FY 18/19 is included in section 8 of this version.

1. Vision, Mission and Ambition

Since 2002, The Reader has pioneered the use of Shared Reading, as a simple yet powerful intervention to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build community resilience and connectedness across the UK and beyond. We inspire and support people to read great literature aloud together, and our Shared Reading model works for people of all ages, backgrounds and life situations.

1.1 Our Vision is:

A world in which the Shared Reading of great literature means that the complexities of human experience are discussed in reading communities everywhere.

1.2 Our Mission is:

We will bring about a reading revolution, ensuring that Shared Reading groups are widely available, making great literature accessible to everyone.

1.3 We will do this through:

The development of national and international networks of Shared Reading practice, and the building of a large-scale, long-term Shared Reading community radiating from our organisational home at Calderstones, the International Centre for Shared Reading, Liverpool.

1.4 Our Ambition:

Our ambition is to make Shared Reading part of the fabric of life - in every care home, in every library, in every hospital, in every mental health service, in every school and in every community centre – so like the Scouts and Guides - wherever you find yourself living, there will be a group nearby. Like

Scouting and Guiding, our scale will be achieved through tens of thousands of passionately committed, week-in, week-out volunteer group leaders.

Within 5 years we would see success in the following terms:

A successfully launched International Centre at Calderstones - by ‘successfully launched’ we mean a lively and well-used centre which is financially self-supporting and providing a Shared Reading hub for Liverpool City Region and the wider North West as well as the rest of the UK and the wider world.

A support structure in place to inspire and support a growing Shared Reading movement - by ‘support structure’ we mean the necessarily infrastructure (e.g. digital, communications, training and support, Quality control for the Shared Reading movement, and a working financial structure to support its continued growth.

1.5 Our history

This plan posits a new stage in The Reader’s development.

During Phase One, (1997-2008) The Reader’s Founder, Jane Davis, developed the practice and underlying principles of Shared Reading and began experimenting with the taking of great literature out of her University English department. Jane worked with a number of close colleagues and began The Reader with the founding of The Reader magazine in 1997. By 2003 she was employing three colleagues and in 2008, with a turnover of approximately £400,000, span The Reader out of the University.

During Phase Two (2008-2016) The Reader grew its staff base and reach, professionalising its delivery structures, creating markets for Shared Reading, building organisational infrastructure and attracting investment. We also successfully bid for Calderstones Mansion and £1.9m heritage lottery grant to refurbish the building, transforming it into The International Centre for Shared Reading. During this period, we developed a number of large-scale projects which involved volunteers. With the loss of a large commission from a public body, we realised we needed a more sustainable delivery model for the reading revolution and began to develop the community-led model.

Phase Three (2017-2022) will see the further development of and eventual roll out of this community-led model. Like Guiding and Scouting, The Reader will depend on passionate individuals who are willing to give up their own time to run Shared Reading Groups, week in, week out. The Reader’s core staff will exist to ensure (i) Sustainability (ii) Quality of Practice and (iii) Growth. During this phase we will move from being a staff-delivery-based organisation to a teaching-and-support-based organisation.

About The International Centre for Shared Reading at Calderstones, Liverpool

The Reader is at a pivotal moment in its development. With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Liverpool City Council, Arts Council England and additional grant funders The Reader will transform Calderstones’ grade II listed Mansion House into an international flagship project for shared reading – Our International Centre for Shared Reading.

We are creating a community based on reading that will help people reach their full potential through Shared Reading volunteering, training opportunities and employment. The site will include the conservation and display of The Calder Stones in a new location in the heart of the Mansion House grounds. As part of the vision for the site, post refurbishment, The Reader will be launching a number of new social enterprises and building capacity within the catering business that it already operates.

There will be readers and reading rooms, The Storybarn (our existing interactive storytelling experience for children and families), heritage exhibitions and activities, a shop, café and ice cream parlour, wellbeing activities, cultural events and special occasion spaces, the Secret Garden, the Theatre Room – all within a beautiful public park. Our social businesses will generate income for the charity, as well as buzz for the site, jobs and additional volunteering opportunities. Above all, Calderstones will be created by our people – thousands of visitors, hundreds of volunteers and staff. We are hugely ambitious for Calderstones, the development of which is a key part of the Reader's strategic plan, and which we believe will influence the national conversation on sustainable community, health and wellbeing and the value of literature.

The Calderstones International Centre for Shared Reading, Business Plan - A community built on Shared Reading

With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Liverpool City Council (LCC) and grant funders The Reader will transform Calderstones' grade II listed Mansion House into an international flagship project for Shared Reading, a model reading community. We are creating a community based on reading that will help people reach their full potential through employment, volunteering and training opportunities and will include the conservation and display of The Calder Stones in a new location in the heart of the Mansion House grounds. We are hugely ambitious for Calderstones, which we believe will influence the national conversation on sustainable community, health and wellbeing, and we will continue to work to build partnerships to facilitate this. The development of Calderstones is a key part of the Reader's strategic plan.

As part of the vision for the site, post refurbishment The Reader will be launching a number of new social enterprises and building capacity within the catering business that it already operates. These enterprises, alongside our core charitable reading and community activity will generate sustainable income and provide valuable opportunities for people for years to come.

Heritage and social impact are at the heart of this project and have been considered in all elements of the business planning. All proposed enterprises are in line with our strategic aims and have interests of the community at their centre.

Each year we expect Calderstones to: Welcome over 40,000 visitors to site with 30,000 of those visitors experiencing heritage.

- Deliver a targeted strategy across the city to ensure that at least 10% of our visitors (4000) will come from areas of deprivation of which 100 visitors per year who participate in activity will be from our prioritised geographical areas (as outlined in this plan) and 100 visitors from priority target beneficiary groups.
- Operate 30 weekly reading groups and 15 community wellbeing groups providing opportunity for 450 participants to take up community activities such as reading, arts, gardening, yoga,

craft, dance or other activities with significant proportions reporting improved wellbeing or reduced social isolation as a result

- Create or sustain 40 jobs, provide 2 apprenticeship opportunities and provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for over 100 volunteers
- Host 100 school groups and provide a broad range of learning opportunities for both Children and adults

Our beliefs and values

Our beliefs and values shape our culture and guide us in our work both internally and externally. These are principles that we hope will help everyone who works for us, everyone who works with us and everyone with whom we read understand who we are, what we stand for and how we do things.

It's really important to us that we recruit people who feel they can work in accordance with these values:

- Great literature is at our heart
- We read to lead
- We are kind but bold
- We respect individuality but work as a team
- We value innovation and find ways to live with change
- We have strong boundaries and are well supported
- We celebrate success but learn from our mistakes
- We work whole-heartedly and value our wellbeing

Please read more about our purpose, beliefs and values on our website, www.thereader.org.uk

Why this is a unique opportunity

We are building a reading revolution, getting great literature into the hands of people who need it. If you love books and care about people you won't find a more dedicated, inspiring workplace. We're changing the world one page, one poem, one Shakespeare play at a time.

There is broad scope for creative communications – The Reader works in a range of sectors, across arts, health, justice and education and has a strong local base with growing national reach across the UK.

A big part of this role will be refining and developing the language of The Reader. How do we tell our great stories? What language do we use to talk about the intense personal experiences Shared Reading group members value? How can we inspire hundreds more volunteers to grow the Shared Reading Movement?

We are about to make a developmental leap forward and we need great language to help propel us: you will have a unique opportunity to write, talk and think your socks off in service of the reading revolution.

What does The Reader have to offer you?

This is a role in which you will have significant scope and freedom, and the responsibility of using the breadth of your experience to deliver results. Joining The Reader now is a chance to be part of a fast-paced and evolving organisation with lots of new developments in the pipeline. You will become part of making it all happen and you'll be working with team of hard working, committed, passionate and talented people.

We read! All Reader staff have opportunities to read together regularly in the workplace. As your understanding of our key product is vital, we will ask you to run a Shared Reading, so that you know all about Shared Reading from the inside.

The Reader is committed to personal and professional development. Our staff will be supported through an induction period, where procedures and policies are disseminated and expectations and values are shared. New members of staff can expect a thorough introduction to the Reader, from the physical layout, to the staff team, to our reading groups as well as support in identifying training and development opportunities.

Mandatory training to our staff includes: Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity, Dementia Awareness and of course our flagship Read to Lead.

Our Personal and Professional Development process is called 'My Reader Story' and through this you will meet with your manager regularly and have the opportunity to agree your objectives for the year, discuss your learning, your hopes and dreams and the challenges you face.

There are many other benefits to working at the Reader, including:

- Annual Leave – a generous holiday allowance of 30 days per year plus bank holidays.
- Flexible Working policies
- Occupational pension scheme
- Childcare voucher scheme
- Cycle to work scheme
- Occupational Sick Pay scheme
- Free on-site parking
- Walking meetings

Location

We are situated in an excellent location within one of the most beautiful parks in Liverpool. Our location offers a unique blend of city, suburbs and green space allowing you to benefit from the urban and rural surroundings – the best of both worlds.

- Directly situated in a beautiful park - provides the opportunity for walking meetings which generates creativity within our staff
- Liverpool City Centre is just 5 miles away and John Lennon Airport is just 15 minutes away by car.
- The park is easily accessible via the major motorway networks of the M57, M62 and is well served by public transport (bus and train networks). Regular trains run from Liverpool South Parkway to Manchester on a journey that takes just over 30 minutes.

- There is excellent shopping, restaurants, bars and leisure facilities within walking distance of the park
- Liverpool is a culturally diverse city that offers a wide ranging programme of cultural events throughout the year. 2018 is a special year for Liverpool as it commences its European Capital of Culture anniversary celebration. An exciting and ambitious programme of events will place Liverpool at the heart of the UK's cultural scene.
- Within Liverpool and its surrounding area, you can find all of the following; city, countryside, beaches, promenades, rivers & canals, culture and arts and all of the associated activities that you would expect to find in such environments

What our staff say

“The Reader is the most demanding place I’ve ever worked, but also the most rewarding, the most fun, and the most flexible”

“I like that I have a clear route for personal growth, development and progression. My manager works closely with me to identify my skills and passions and we work together to set out a number of strategies to help me reach my goals.”

“The Reader acknowledges that everybody has different styles of working, and we are encouraged to find what is best for us in order to get our job done to the absolute best of our ability.”

I’ve never worked in a place that cares so much about the work they do. From finance to project workers we all are working towards a common aim – to build a reading revolution.