

ANGUS COUNCIL

**RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 JANUARY 2002**

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
22 JANUARY 2002**

ANGUS BOOK AWARD

JOINT REPORT BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF CULTURAL SERVICES

AND

THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report details the continuing development of the Angus Book Award and the proposed arrangements for the Angus Book Award 2002.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committees are asked to note the contents of this report for their interest.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Angus Book Award was launched in 1996 as an Angus Council initiative to encourage pupils to read and enjoy quality teenage fiction. The Award was the first of its kind in Scotland.

The key factor in its success is the empowering and exciting nature of the award process based on pupils voting for the winner. This, combined with the local nature of the award allowing all eight secondary schools to participate and contribute to decisions about the continuing evolution of the award, has resulted in a partnership initiative which promotes an ethos of achievement and realises the potential of participants.

The numbers of pupils involved continues to grow as schools recognise the contribution it makes to raising standards by creating an environment in which pupils are enthused about books. The reputation of the award amongst authors and publishers as a significant event in the teenage book world is now well established and its success has prompted other authorities to set up similar schemes across the UK.

3. BACKGROUND

The award involves 3rd year pupils from all eight secondary schools in Angus in reading five shortlisted titles. The titles are selected from books written by authors living in the UK and published in paperback in the preceding 12 months. The shortlist is drawn up by local teachers and librarians whilst pupils are given the opportunity to feed in their opinions. Titles are chosen which reflect the range of themes which interest teenagers whilst challenging and interesting both committed and less enthusiastic readers.

The books are read and discussed in detail within each school. Pupils have the opportunity to access the Angus Book Award web-site which gives information about the authors and their books. They are able to send in reviews by e-mail and can see whether their views are shared by pupils from other schools. Finally the pupils vote in a secret ballot for their winner.

As part of the shortlisting process authors agree to visit schools and attend the Award ceremony. This is an important element of the award; meeting authors motivates pupils to read and helps them to develop their own potential as writers. Each school is visited by one of the shortlisted authors on the day of the Award Ceremony helping to build a sense of anticipation as authors, pupils, teachers and librarians wait to hear who has won. The evening ceremony gives pupils the chance to hear from all the authors and is staged to highlight the high profile status of the award.

The role played by pupils during the ceremony has increased each year and this involvement has led to a real sense of ownership. Pupils now act as "masters of ceremonies" for the evening as well as talking about their favourite books. Links have been made with the Angus Youth Congress and the winner is announced by the chairperson. All shortlisted authors receive a cheque for £50 and the winner is presented with a miniature replica of the Aberlemno Serpent stone and £250.

Each year the reaction of pupils to the announcement of the winner demonstrates the impact that the award has; in giving pupils responsibility and emphasising the exciting nature of the initiative, the Angus Book Award helps pupils to see reading as both stimulating and fun and raises the profile of books, reading and writing.

4. ANGUS BOOK AWARD 2002

This year's award will be officially launched by Scottish writer Theresa Breslin, a previous Angus Book Award shortlisted author, at Carnoustie High School on 24th January 2002.

The shortlisted titles are:

Georgie by Malachy Doyle (Bloomsbury)
Jigsaw by Carol Hedges (OUP)
Stormbreaker by Anthony Horowitz (Walker)
The kite rider by Geraldine McCaughrean (OUP)
(Un)arranged marriage by Bali Rai (Corgi)

This year after consultation with schools about the timing of the award, the Award Day is taking place in the summer term. The five authors, participating pupils, teachers and members of the wider school community as well as representatives of the Youth Congress and members and officers of the Council will gather to hear the name of the winner at the Award Ceremony on Tuesday 21 May in the Carnoustie High School theatre.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The net costs of the scheme of some £5000 are met from within the existing Cultural Services and Education Services budgets. A contribution towards the costs of books is also made by participating schools and publishers meet half the authors' expenses.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights Implications associated with this report

7. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Law & Administration, Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

NORMAN ATKINSON
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No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.