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Cambridgeshire Libraries registered their best ever summer with an impressive 26% increase in the number of young readers signing up and completing the Summer Reading Challenge.

This year in Cambridgeshire over 7,000 children signed up to the challenge with over 4,000 children reading all six books and gaining their 'completer' status. Promoted by libraries across the country, including our community run libraries, the Summer Reading Challenge is a national scheme that helps prevent children's reading taking a dip over the long summer holidays by encouraging young readers aged 4-11 to read six books in six weeks.

During the summer Cambridgeshire libraries issued 292,625 items to children including books, DVDs and CDs. An extra 546 children joined the library to take part in the challenge which this year had the theme of Animal Agents.

Leading libraries in 2017 were Milton Road in Cambridge, who improved on their 'starters' by an amazing 117% and Burwell with a 112% increase on 'completers'.

With some support from Parish Councils, the library service hosted or organised over 150 reading challenge events over the summer, including craft events and visits from all sorts of wonderful animals such as meerkats, lizards and puppies. A team of 153 volunteers helped run the events, accumulating an impressive 1,500 hours of volunteering over the six weeks.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Chair of the Highways and Infrastructure Committee, Councillor Mathew Shuter said "We know that if we keep children reading through the long holidays, their performance at school does not dip over the summer. These fantastic numbers are showing that Cambridgeshire Libraries are playing a vital part in achieving this, thanks to their staff and volunteers who accompany all children on their reading journey. Huge congratulations to all those who signed up for the challenge and to all medallists."

Children who took part in the Summer Reading Challenge 2017 said:

- "It was really lovely reading fantastic books...I got so much better at reading and I loved the challenge. I loved it all and I loved finding the clues."
- "It was my first and favourite challenge....I didn't like it, I *loved* it!!"

- “I loved the reading challenge because you are allowed to choose your own books every week.”

Parents of young participants also said:

- “Fab for the children and nice to see so many children in the library getting involved.”
- “Great way to keep the children reading whilst away from school. Lovely to see them picking up their medals and certificate when they’ve completed.”

To complete the challenge, children had from the start of the holiday until 8 September to read six books of their choice borrowed from the library. All ‘completers’ were rewarded with a medal and certificate at a ceremony organised in their local library in September.



Summer Reading Challenge medal ceremony in Chatteris Library