



Press release

Wool Britannia! Shaun the Sheep and Timmy Time bring English to the world

- **British Council and Aardman Animations partnership to encourage children to learn the English language**
- **Shaun the Sheep and Timmy Time to become faces of learner centre network and unique products for early years English learners across the globe**

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The stars of the globally successful animated TV shows *Shaun the Sheep* and *Timmy Time* will soon be encouraging flocks of children around the world to learn English – thanks to a partnership between the British Council and Aardman Animations.

Combining the British Council's expertise in English Language Teaching with Aardman's creative flair, the animated TV stars are to become the faces of a global network of newly established early years English learner centres, starting in Chile and Singapore later this year.

Through a unique learning approach based around the creativity and fun of the Aardman characters, children at the learner centres will be transported into Shaun and Timmy's world with themed classrooms and learning based on the popular TV series. The new offer draws on the British Council's years of experience in English Language Teaching to provide sound pedagogical curricula addressing the needs of younger learners.

The well-loved characters will also be part of a new range of unique language learning products including stories, activity booklets and digital resources designed to get two to six year olds engaged and excited about taking their first steps into the English language.

In promoting two great UK assets - creativity and the English language - on a global scale, it is hoped that the exciting venture will improve international education and collaboration, as well as showcase the UK as a leader in quality and trusted educational expertise worldwide.

Commenting on the announcement, **British Council Director English, Anna Searle**, said: "The British Council is delighted to be working with Aardman Animations to bring a unique learning experience to

early years or younger English learners around the world. As such a well-loved and well-respected British institution, Aardman's creativity and innovation combined with our expertise in English language teaching is certain to help children across the globe engage with the English language in a whole new way. We look forward to helping Shaun the Sheep and Timmy Time make their mark in the world of English language learning!"

Sean Clarke, Head of Rights and Brand Development, Aardman Animations, added: "We have worked hard over the last five years to build Shaun the Sheep and Timmy Time into global brands entertaining children in over 150 countries around the globe. This is a great foundation to build a partnership with the British Council to create a package of fun and entertaining English Language learning experiences for early years or younger learners all over the world."

In helping more people to learn English from a younger age, the partnership will help meet the global demand for the English language – something which greatly benefits the UK economy, particularly in the fields of business and higher education, as well as providing skills for individuals. This growth also aids the UK's creative industries such as film, music and publishing, to be major competitors on an international scale.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Images are available on request.

Aimed at two to six year olds, the 'Learning Time with Shaun and Timmy' offer will give children the chance to join family favourites Shaun and Timmy in their first steps into the English language. The first two early years learner centres will open in Chile and Singapore in late 2014/early 2015 with additional centres planned in the two countries in 2015. Further centres are also planned in other countries from 2015 onwards.

Shaun the Sheep made his debut in 1995 in the Oscar-winning Wallace & Gromit short film, *A Close Shave*. Since then he's gone on to become a global superstar with his show on TV in 170 territories. His first feature length movie will hit cinemas in February 2015. Shaun was recently voted the nation's best loved BBC children's character of all time in a survey by the Radio Times:

<http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2014-07-15/shaun-the-sheep-voted-the-nations-best-loved-bbc-childrens-tv-character>. Timmy is the littlest lamb in Shaun's flock and the star of *Timmy Time*, the multi-award winning pre-school TV show that debuted on CBeebies in April 2009 and now broadcast in over 150 territories worldwide.

For more information about the British Council, please contact Kristen McNicoll in the British Council Press Office on +44 (0)207 389 4967 / +44 (0) 7731 987 561 or kristen.mcnicoll@britishcouncil.org

For more information about Aardman Animations, please contact Anna Harding on +44 (0)117 3071318 or anna.harding@aardman.com

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 7,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publically-funded grant provides less than 25 per cent of our turnover which last year was £781 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services which customers around the world pay for, through education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally.

For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/britishcouncil> and <http://blog.britishcouncil.org/>.

About Aardman

Aardman, based in Bristol (UK) co-founded and run by Peter Lord and David Sproxton, is a world leader in animation. It produces feature films, television series, advertising and digital entertainment for both the domestic and international market. Their multi-award winning productions are novel, entertaining, brilliantly characterised and full of charm that reflects the unique talent, energy and personal commitment of the very special people who make up the Aardman team. The studio's work is often imitated and yet the company continues to lead the field producing a rare brand of visually stunning and amusing independent and commercial productions www.aardman.com