

# **FRIENDS OF GREENHILL LIBRARY**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **18 October 2017**

**Present:** Patrick Coghlan, David Wildgoose, Chris Whitehouse, Chris Brown, Vera Dyer, Janet Crowther, Cynthia Russell, Ann Hartley, Lesley Fox, Pat Swindin, Judith Oates, Tony Maskrey, Laurence Coates, Liz Coates, Wendy Crookes, Annie Samuel, Sam Jacobs, Mike Stern, Gill Stern, Richard Shaw, Gill Coghlan, David Cooke, Rob Goodrum, Mike Walters, Shelley Fox, Tony Parker, Liz Parker, Diana Wood, Stephen Wood, Annette Hale, Val Leigh, David Reece, Lorraine Gresham

**Apologies:** Margaret Davis, Roger Stevenson, Linda Stevenson, Linda Whitehead, Lindsay Ladham, Nicky Rivers,

#### **1. Welcome, introduction and apologies**

Chris Brown, vice-chair, deputised for the chair, Patrick Coghlan, who was present but not well enough to chair. Chris welcomed members, introduced the board and announced apologies.

#### **2. Video documentary**

A ten minute documentary on the library, produced by U3A, was greeted with warm applause.

#### **3. Minutes of the last AGM on 25 January 2017**

The minutes were approved.

Matters arising: Vera Dyer asked whether the board had acted on her suggestion to update the FROGL leaflet and offer discounts on library activities in order to encourage people to sign up. Chris Brown said the board had discussed the issue but decided against producing a new one. It was felt that offering discounts would not necessarily lead to a net financial gain.

#### **4. Chair's report**

Chris Brown noted that it was just over three years since local residents took over the running of the library (agreement with the council signed on 29 September 2014; library reopened on 6 October 2014). At that time, library use was declining nationally but we have done well, become more competent and gained in confidence. He highlighted the following points:

- We now have 2,800 donated books available for loan on the Yellow Sticker (YS) system. In the second quarter of 2017, we loaned 5,755 council items and 2,099 YS books, 27% of the total of 8,754. Total loans per year is about 30,000. In addition, we sold 10,000 donated books, raising £3,900, thanks largely to the efforts of the bookshop team. The library has approximately 6,000 visits per month. The YS system is run on a spreadsheet on one computer and this is a major bottleneck in the library's service. However, we plan to change to a web-based system called Koha during the Christmas holidays.
- Children's activities have all been successful: Chatterbox, run by Clive Opie; Story Time for 2-4s, run by Gill Coghlan, Kate Napier, Liz Green, Janet Black; and Fun Time, run by Maz Raj, who took over from Nicky Rivers who had done an excellent job of running that activity for three years. Demand for Fun Time is so high that we have to turn parents and children away on safety grounds. Lynne Browne now runs craft sessions on Friday afternoons. The Summer Reading Challenge registered 195 children with a 55% completion rate, compared to last year's 176 with a completion rate of 64%.
- The library ran a wide range of community events. Evening talks and separate adult and children's cinema clubs met with mixed success. Greenhill Village History Society held three events. The library runs Farmers markets – three a year and this is our single biggest money raising event (approx £1,500 per market). Readathon (see Youtube video). Mad Hatters' Tea Party was the first event we organised specifically to bring the community together rather than to raise funds.
- The library uses a number of publicity channels including posters, website, TV slide-show, social media, Bradway Bugle etc.
- Volunteers – 102 volunteers are on the Three Rings database. These include about 42 library assistants, 12 children's activities, 14 maintenance, garden, cleaning, 17 session leaders, 8 office and admin, plus others. Unfortunately, we have had no permanent volunteer coordinator since Stan Burt left in April, although we hope to fill this very important post soon. Chris thanked all volunteers for their efforts but singled out Ann Hartley for her outstanding service and she received a warm round of applause from all present.
- Building. The council has now completed remedial work on the electrics and we understand the hard wiring is in good repair. Also, the council is about to sign roof repair contracts later this month and we fully expect our roof will be repaired soon. This now means we are happy to sign the lease and expect to do so very soon after one or two last details are ironed out. It is a 5 year lease with an option to extend to 25 years

in the event of a funding body requiring a lease of more than five years to fund us. The library has installed CCTV and hopes to undertake a modest refurbishment of the office corridor and rest room.

- Patrick Coghlan reported that Greenhill Primary School has arranged class visits since September 2016 and every pupil has now visited twice. After some difficulties in establishing contact with Lowedges Primary School, the school has now arranged class visits and we anticipate that these will continue, despite the distance and the physical barrier represented by Greenhill Parkway.
- Looking to the future, we have a five year development plan and a summary was circulated with the AGM documents. The full document is available on Three Rings and a hard copy is in the office. The library has floated the idea of holding a Greenhill Open Gardens event next summer and hopes it will prove to be a good fund raiser.

#### **Questions and comments.**

- Cynthia Russel suggested putting the five year development plan on the website. Chris Brown said the board's feeling was that it was of greater interest to volunteers but would reconsider.
- Rob Goodrum expressed concern about the lighting. Tony pointed out that the light tubes, starters and ballast have been renewed but that the fittings are breaking down with age.
- Shelley Fox suggested advertising the children's cinema in the schools newsletter. She agreed to follow this up.
- Stephen Wood congratulated the board on an impressive verbal and written report.
- Laurence Coates commented that integration of the YS and council stock had been good for both users and "staff".

#### **5. Financial Report**

David Wildgoose, reported that the library's finances are looking healthy.

- He thanked members for all their fundraising efforts and said he had never expected we would be able to cover our running costs with income from our own fundraising. Moreover, we have been successful in diversifying fundraising sources.
- Continued council funding in the period 2017-2020, which we had not anticipated, has been a major boost to our financial position. The council grant is just under £25,000 for 2017-2018. It will taper off in the subsequent two years, but we expect to be allocated 80% of the current grant in 2018-2019.
- We have just heard that we have received a £8,200 grant from the Lottery's Awards For All scheme to fund a feasibility study into expansion of the building and community facilities.
- Gas and electricity expenditure is high, even though the last three winters have been mild. Bills will shoot up if we have a harsh winter. However, the library is investigating insulation. Tony Parker reported that cavity wall insulation looks the best option.
- The meeting accepted the annual accounts.

#### **6. Election of board of trustees**

- Patrick Coghlan (Chair) is continuing in office (1 year remaining of a 3 year term).
- Chris Whitehouse (Secretary) has completed his 2 year term and stood down.
- Chris Brown (ICT & Communications Manager) was re-elected for a further 3 year term.
- David Wildgoose (Treasurer) was re-elected for a 1 year term.
- Laurence Coates, a long-time Greenhill resident and a library volunteer, was elected for a 3 year term and will take up the secretary's post.
- Richard Brown was unable to attend the meeting but was nevertheless elected for a 2 year term.
- It was clarified that the board can co-opt trustees before the next AGM if anyone else was willing to join the board.
- Patrick Coghlan noted that Ann Hartley has attended board meetings on a regular basis to report on library operations and this has been very useful.
- Some members expressed concern that the board continues to be all-male. Some women members said they were glad for anyone to do the job. The board agreed that the gender balance was worrying, pointed out that no women had come forward and urged women members to consider joining the board.
- Members thanked the board for its efforts on behalf of the library.