



Friends of Greenhill Library

Registered Charity Number 1158656

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE 2020 AGM

Rev. Patrick Coghlan

On April 20th Patrick tragically died of Covid-19. He had led us in establishing FROGL, worked tirelessly for the library and been a continuing source of wisdom and support. The board members feel a deep sense of loss and in due course wish to commemorate him at the library. Our thoughts continue to be with Gill, who herself has contributed greatly to activities with children and much else as a library volunteer.

Main Achievements During the Year.

Until the national lockdown in March, library activities continued successfully. The Trustees continued to work to their 10 Year Plan in partnership with an excellent group of other volunteers. The object of the charity is to advance and promote lifelong education for all, particularly locally. The trustees believe that the activities described in this report do deliver public benefit; they have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

In respect of all activities other than elections, the automatic people counter at the front door recorded an average of 6,455 visitors per month (all statistics in this report are for 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020) compared to 5,974 p.m. the previous year.

A) Library Service.

Our **strategic objective** is to provide a high-quality library service.

We continued to keep the library **open for 26 hours per week** except at bank holidays until the national lockdown in March. In the light of answers to a survey question on opening hours, they were extended on Saturdays for one hour from June 2019 for a trial period, but few extra people came so this was discontinued.

An estimated 400 new users were registered in 2019-20 on the Council LMS system (386 in 18-19). They comprised 220 adults and 180 children. We continue to see a significant spike in child registrations in the summer months due to the summer

reading challenge. We also registered 636 people on our local Koha system (604 in 18-19).

Book Loans.

		2018-19	2019-20
Adult			
	Council	10,922	10,092
	Own books	5,919	7,687
	Total	16,841	17,779
Children			
	Council	5,851	5,111
	Own books	4,474	5,575
	Total	10,325	10,686

The Board reviews the loan statistics regularly. In the context of nationally declining library usage, we are encouraged to note a modest (4.8%) rise in loans compared to last year. There is also a significant increase in the proportion of loans coming from our own books (46.6% this year compared to 38.3% last year). Special efforts were made during the year to boost reading. In January and February Bookstart ran sessions for 1-2 year olds and their parents. Imaginative plans for Youth Outreach using social media and “book battles” were developed, led by our Youth Outreach volunteer, Laura Alston. They await the end of lockdown for implementation as does participation in the Council plans for a Sheffield Year of Reading. We continue to publicise new books, bought from Council grants and our fundraising. We are very grateful to all who donate books, some of which are available on loan and others in our bookshop. Visitors have welcomed the two new bookcases there. Sales of about 700 per month, if they were to be included in book loan figures, would increase the total by around 30%.

Our biggest library development during the year was the opening of a sub-branch library in the Lowedges Community Centre on 12th February 2020. The Board entered into a Partnership Agreement with the LBJ Forum for the hire of a room, now suitably furnished. Funding was obtained by Patrick Coghlan, who led the project, and by Margaret Davis from the Community Fund for a 2 year Outreach Project from Sept. 2019 with a part-time paid post. Lucy Booth was appointed and she has recruited local volunteers. 900 books have been funded from the Freshgate Fund, the Ward Pot and library reserves. Initial opening hours were Wed. from 2-5 and Thurs. from 10-1; an encouraging start was made, with a number of new library registrations.

We are indebted to Clive Opie for his sterling work with Lowedges Academy and for again leading our Summer Reading Challenge. In 2019 190 children took part (161 in 2018) with 19 from Lowedges Academy (13 in 2018). Sadly, we are not aware of any progress in the campaign for a light-controlled crossing on Greenhill Parkway to facilitate passage between Lowedges and Greenhill.

Until lockdown children's reading continued to be encouraged by **Chatterbooks** sessions for 7-11 year olds on Mondays from 3.30 to 4.30 in term-time. **Story Time and Fun Time** sessions flourished for Pre-school children. The former was for 2-4 year olds in term-time on alternate Fridays between 10.00 and 10.45. Fun Time was for 0-4 year olds and their carers on the second Monday of the month in term-time. The phonics session for pre-school children operated from Sept. 2019. We were fortunate in having excellent volunteers for these activities.

The library computers continued to be popular with users, particularly adults.

All our provision of library services is led by Ann Hartley, who works tirelessly with session leaders and library assistants. A Year 12 pupil on Work Experience has also assisted. Ann with Chris Brown has maintained contact with other Associate Libraries to share thinking and city-wide developments. They will lead the careful re-opening of our library services.

The Trustees have held 3-weekly on-line meetings since March and planned carefully for safe restart of limited activities. In respect of the library service, book-drop sessions have been held in the library lobby since early July to allow the return of books on loan and for donated books. Subsequently a Click and Collect service to order books held at Greenhill and collect them from the lobby has successfully started. From 7th Sept. limited browsing to return and take out books has started on 3 days per week and some public computers made available for essential work. A one-way system operates and all precautions taken to reduce risk following a comprehensive risk assessment. Further consideration needs to be given to the possibility of safely re-opening the library at Lowedges.

B) Community Outreach & New Activities.

Our **strategic objective** is to grow outreach into our community and new activities. These would be to fulfil our mission "to work with local residents, groups and organisations to promote other educational, cultural, recreational and social activities that respond to their needs and contribute to community cohesion and development".

Our 10 Year Plan details many very valuable outreach activities, which continued until the lockdown:

- A Friday coffee morning.
- Employment Advice sessions weekly.
- A Yoga group.
- Monthly evening talks.
- A weekly computer advice session.
- A weekly Code Club for children.
- Classes in Spanish, Architecture and Maths.
- Monthly film shows, one for adults, one for children.
- Friday afternoon craft sessions for children in term-time.
- Knit & Natter groups twice a month.

- A weekly play-reading group, which has continued on-line.

The following customers have regularly booked for either weekly, monthly or alternate dates at the library:

- Greenhill Village History Society
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Retired Secretaries
- Beauchief and Greenhill Labour Party
- Sheffield Liberal Democrat Party

In addition to the above we have had the following groups represented at the library:- U3A Introduction to Maths; Poetry Line; Beauchief Environment Group; Tech Set Go; Morrisons Petrol Station; U3A Walking Group; Phonics Bear; Edge of Care Services; Gill Millard Birthday Party; Sheffield GO Tournament; Lowedges Cinema Group; PHIT Meeting; Macmillan coffee afternoon; Lindsey Latham Coaching event; Greenhill Sing; Parkinson Disease event; Relax, Breathe and Birth workshops; Drinkwise Agewell; All In One Language School; Creative Writing Group.

Our last report included accounts of a very successful **Open Gardens** event in June 2019 and a **Harry Potter Day** in August. This year's Open Gardens event, originally scheduled for June, did not go ahead. Instead we produced a 40-minute video tour of seven local gardens. Subsequently, however, we were able to run a (slightly smaller scale) real event with 16 gardens opening at the beginning of September. This August we were planning a Wizard of Oz Day, which is postponed, probably until 2021

Sadly, the Council's Estate Office would not permit the use of facilities within Greenhill School, forcing the cancellation of a Ceilidh planned jointly with the school in September 2019 but other events have been held since summer 2019:

A **Music Appreciation Day** for primary school children on a Saturday in October. This included story-telling with violin and cello accompaniment and a chance to try out instruments. We are indebted to musicians Lucy Phillips and Jonny Ingall, narrator Margaret Davis, and to the Sheffield Town Trust and Dr. John Dunkley for funding this; new funding has been obtained for a repeat.

Another very enjoyable **Christmas in the Library** organised by Cynthia Russell; there was seasonal singing by local schoolchildren and the library Songsters, led by Linda Whitehead, along with seasonal refreshments and a surprise visit by Father Christmas.

The monthly **Book Club** started in July 2019 was so popular that a second was set up just before the lockdown. A cinema surround sound system was installed,

We continue posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; our Facebook page has over 800 followers. The monthly e-newsletter goes out to about 260 people and the

tri-annual printed newsletter, which continues to be the main source of publicity for many, reaches about 4,000 people.

In February 2020 the library was registered as a Safe Place for vulnerable people under a project run by Heeley City Farm.

At the end of March all core and non-core services were suspended, with our last day of opening being 21 March. During the first 3 months of lockdown we maintained an occasional presence on Facebook, and one volunteer ran zoom-based coffee mornings and play readings (the latter still continue). From mid-July we have introduced other events including:

- A Story-Walk in Greenhill then in Lowedges with laminated pages of a children's book in 13 locations.
- A very successful Scarecrow Competition with 33 entries and 250 voters.
- The Friday talks in July and August as Zoom meetings, which were well received.
- Story-telling sessions in the school holidays with socially distanced family groups on the library grass, which have been very well attended.
- A virtual tour of 7 gardens (a 40 minute YouTube video).
- An Open Gardens event with 16 gardens open on 5th and/or 6th Sept.

C) Organisation & People.

Our **strategic objective** is to maintain a workforce of volunteers with the skills, capacity and motivation to operate the library to the same standard as those operated professionally, and to provide a high-quality offering of community events. During the year a Safeguarding video was produced by Lynne Raven, our Safeguarding Co-ordinator and used for volunteer training. We welcomed Stella Crookes and David Billington, volunteers qualified in finance, as assistant treasurers.

At the end of March 2020 we had 172 members, of whom 138 were registered as volunteers, 1 an employee, 1 on work Experience and 32 were Friends contributing at least £20 p.a. In Sept. 2019 we had 162 members, 132 being volunteers. Well over 10,000 hours of service a year are given, which equates to about 6 full time staff. Details of the organisation and support of volunteers are in the 10 Year Plan. In October 2019 we celebrated the 5th anniversary of our opening as a volunteer-run library.

Governance. Friends of Greenhill Library was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 24th Sept. 2014 with a model constitution, which was amended on 15th May 2019 in order to clarify the process for electing trustees and to remove destabilising clauses requiring a rapid turnover of trustees. A further amendment was passed on 23rd Oct. 2019 at the AGM – “Normally no trustee may hold the same officer post (i.e. as Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer) for more than 6 years consecutively. Where no suitable replacement can be found for an officer post, one additional year may be allowed.”

Trustees

Chris Brown:	Chair
David Wildgoose:	Treasurer
Patrick Coghlan:	(To April 2020)
Laurence Coates:	Secretary
David Billington:	(Appointed March 2020)
Mick Black:	Volunteer Coordinator
Ann Hartley:	Operations Manager
Richard Brown, Wendy Crookes, Janet Crowther, Shelley Walsh (Shelley resigned March 2020).	

Trustees are elected, usually for a period of 3 years, by the membership of the Friends of Greenhill Library. They meet monthly (every 3 weeks during lockdown) and review FROGL's policies and procedures on a regular basis. Volunteers can access the minutes, policies and procedures on the Three Rings website. Members and library users may also consult them in the library on request.

D) Finance.

Our **strategic objective** is to maintain financial sustainability with multiple diverse funding streams.

This objective is being achieved; details are in our Plan and in the annual accounts. Receipts in 2019-20 were £71,599 (2018-19 £52,654) and Payments £49,269 (2018-19 £42,662) giving a surplus on the year of £22,330 (2018-19 £9,992). We are grateful to Sheffield City Council for their annual grant, understandably at a reduced level, as well as for the support of their libraries staff. Since the lockdown fundraising has been limited to book sales on the grass, sales of some donated books to World of Books, and the Open Gardens event, whilst premises bills continued and there have been new costs for equipment and sanitiser to reduce infection risks. To assist in maintaining services, a government business support grant of £25,000 has been paid in the new financial year through Sheffield City Council. Along with all other Sheffield libraries, we have also been promised a £10,000 grant for capital spending. This was announced prior to the Covid-19 pandemic but has not yet been received.

The trustees consider that our **fundraising** is compliant with the standards set out in the Code of Fundraising Practice required by the Charity Commission. Our fundraising is overseen by a Fundraising Team, which meets regularly; meetings are attended by two trustees. Most fundraising is run by volunteers through the bookshop and events, such as Farmers & Artisan Markets. Keith Wilson continues to lead on contacting and organising vendors for the Markets, but more volunteers to assist at them would be helpful. The Fundraising Team has also successfully made grant applications, notably for the Lowedges Outreach Project, for which we are particularly indebted to Margaret Davis and Phil Petty. We do not usually use professional fundraisers, but part of an Awards for All grant is funding a consultant to apply for the capital funds to develop the library building.

Reserves Policy. The trustees' policy is to keep unrestricted reserves of between 3 to 6 months of normal unrestricted expenditure (i.e. between about £7,000 and £14,000) and have a designated building fund for major repairs. Financial projections are in Annex 2 of the Plan. Funds carried forward on 31st March 2020 were £5,232 restricted funds and £124,997 unrestricted. The latter includes a designated building fund, which is currently £18,300; a minimum of £3,000 is added each year. There is a large surplus available to match-fund capital grants for building developments over the sum required by the Reserves Policy. During the year reserves were invested in two interest-bearing accounts with the Charity Bank and one with the Hampshire Trust Bank.

E) Building.

Our **strategic objective** is to have a fit for purpose and developing building.

We continue to be indebted to Rob Goodrum, buildings manager, and his team of handypersons and to Linda Stevenson and team of cleaners for their constant attention to maintenance, painting, cleaning and health and safety in the library. Repair of a skylight broken by youths on the roof was covered by insurance.

Graffiti continues to be a difficult problem; we hope to remove it as part of our building development plans. Asbestos and Drains surveys have identified some other work to be undertaken during re-development; immediate risks have been dealt with.

We continue to move forward slowly with our plans for building development and our architects, Burnell Briercliffe, helped us gain Planning Permission in June 2020 for improvements to toilet and kitchen facilities, a new community room, lettable offices, an extended area for very young children and a storage room. The ancient gas burner will be replaced by air-source heat pumps. All the changes are important to create a financially sustainable community resource. We hope to obtain grants to start work in 2021 but will undertake another community survey to see if our plans need any amendment. Funding requires a long lease and we are grateful to Sheffield City Council for agreeing a new 25-year lease to 2048.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C. R. Brown".

Chris Brown (Chair of Trustees)

Date: 7th October 2020
[Final]

Appendix: Measuring Social Impact

During the year, the trustees considered how to assess the social impact of the library but are unsure how to develop numeric metrics for this beyond the obvious ones of book issues, footfall and public computer usage. We do, however, have a wealth of anecdotal evidence, of the library's benefit to the community. In response to the "SOS Sheffield Libraries" petition which sought to have the council take back control of the volunteer-run libraries, we asked our Facebook followers "*Has the library improved or deteriorated since the volunteers took over? Do you think things would improve if the council took them back? What is your view of the value of Greenhill library in the community?*" We received an overwhelmingly positive response; we quote here just three of many.

Greenhill library is a successfully run library run by local volunteers. I am really impressed with what is achieved by this super group and the services that the library provides. When the original decision [to close the library] was made I thought that it would be the end of Greenhill Library but how wrong I was! This is definitely one library that does NOT need to go back to being council run.

It's much more than a library. The volunteers are amazing. The amount of activities provided is outstanding with both adults and children. To all that dedicate themselves to libraries as volunteers 'Thank you'. Keep doing what your doing!

I appreciate all the hard work done by volunteers. They have vastly improved the library services/activities and have some very well thought out and innovative ideas . I think Greenhill library is much better now than when council run. The volunteers seem to be very enthusiastic about the running of the library. Long may it continue and thank you to them all.