



Friends of Greenhill Library

Registered Charity Number 1158656

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE 2022 AGM

This report covers activities from October 2021 to September 2022 and the finances for the year ending 31st March 2022. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to disrupt library activities over the last year but we are largely back to business as usual pre-pandemic.

Main Achievements During the Year.

A) Library Service.

We have worked hard to resume our library service to pre-pandemic levels and as a result have seen a steady increase in both people attending the library (averaging around 3000 per month) and via the lending of books. Pleasingly the last year has seen our highest number of yellow sticker book loans (10586) compared to any of the last four years, which includes the year prior to the pandemic. At present we are open for 19 hours per week, whilst this is not a full return to our previous opening of 26 hours per week is in line with demand for the library service and current capacity amongst volunteers.

Our sub-branch library, Lowedges, which shares a space with the Terminus Initiative in the Meeting Place has gone from strength to strength. The successful appointment of Catherine Samengo-Turner as our Engagement and Events Coordinator has provided the much needed resource, impetus and passion to embed Lowedges library into the local community and our successful application to "Reaching Communities" for circa £50,000 means the project is funded for a further 3 years. Special thanks to Margaret Davis and the rest of the fundraising team for their work on this application. Lowedges library is open 12.5 hours per week. Footfall, library membership, book loans and book 'give aways' at Lowedges library have all grown steadily since 2021; on average we now have nearly 3 times as many visitors each month as we did last year.

Our Summer Reading Challenge for children in 2022 was a success, led by Clive Opie a total of 122 children (72 girls, 50 boys) registered and 38% completed the challenge. These figures are similar to 2021, although still well down on the 2019 figures but obviously a continuing improvement from 2020. Encouragingly, the Lowedges library registered 15 children (9 girls, 6 boys) with a 20% completion rate.

All our provision of library services is led by Ann Hartley, who works tirelessly with session leaders, library assistants and volunteers handling book donations. We are keen to provide Ann with greater support via the recruitment of Duty Managers/Day Leads, we hope if successful this will reduce Ann's considerable workload but also mitigate the risk of library services suffering if Ann was unable to fulfill her duties.

Donations continue to be added to our shelves and Ann has continued to buy new books; for this we are grateful for a £1,500 book grant from Sheffield City Council. We are continuing to sell the books we cannot add to the library catalogue via the library bookshop and online via World of Books. All the other books which are not fit for use go to a company called Revival books, who try to find a second life for as many books as possible; they also work with a recycling partner to recycle any books they cannot use, and these books are pulped for ongoing use. Collectively these outlets bring us in a steady income.

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".

Activities have largely resumed over the last year and long awaited events, such as the Wizard of Oz day have taken place.

- Our events program began to restart in earnest from August 2021 onwards, beginning with a cinema showing of "My Fair Lady" and a subsequent **monthly film program** for both adults and children.
- Two professional entertainment groups were brought in (Sophia Hatfield of Stute Theatre, and Polly Ives of Concerteenies) and a flower arranging demo by Elizabeth Bishop at the end of November 2021 marked the resumption of **evening talks**. We have had regular talks through 2022, notably including a visit from the Duke of Devonshire.
- Our **Wizard of Oz Day** was a huge success and special thanks to Lynne Brown for her tireless work in organizing the event and fundraising to ensure it had no cost to the library. In total the event raised in excess of £2,500! Lynne also spearheaded the creation of an incredible Wizard of Oz themed quilt that was the 1st prize in the raffle drawn on the day
- Our weekly **coffee mornings** continue to be well attended and much enjoyed and have even involved two visits from the Lord Mayor of Sheffield
- The **book club** goes from strength to strength and is so popular it now operates a waiting list!
- **Storytime** has resumed and particular thanks to Laura Alston for her years of service in this regard. Laura is sadly relocating but has successfully recruited new volunteers to keep Storytime going and possibly see a return of **Chatterbooks**.

- 2022 has seen the arrival of our **Adventure Story Walk**, a community wide endeavor promoting literacy, local green spaces and some amazing local organisations.
- **Story walks** have been set up on the lawn in front of Greenhill in the past year
- Our **open Gardens event** in July 2022 was successful; we are very grateful to all opening their gardens and to the visitors, whose contributions are highly appreciated.
- The **Scarecrow Competition** in August 2022 has slightly less entries than previous years, likely linked to many flocking abroad for the first time in years but nonetheless was a success.
- We were successful in our application to Sheffield City Council for 7 tablets which we are planning to use as part of a new **Digital Inclusion** offer, we have also secured sim cards to go with these devices to ensure users have access to internet
- The library has provided space at Greenhill for the newly formed **Greener Greenhill group** to run environmentally focused activities, this includes energy saving tips and a popular bicycle maintenance workshop. On the 24th September the library is supporting Greener Greenhill in a similar vein for the National Big Green week
- December 2021 saw a local group of mums organize a community wide Christmas event. Now more commonly recognized as the **Greenhill Events Group**, they asked and have been incorporated into Friends of Greenhill library as volunteers and oversaw another community celebration for the Queens Jubilee
- We held **producers and artisan market** in April and we are hosting a refocused market event in September prioritising Art, Crafts and Collectibles
- March saw the long awaited return of our **Music Day** which was enjoyed by all who attended.
- Our **Coder Dojo** (essentially an afternoon coding club for 8-13 year olds) began in mid April 2022 and meets weekly, offering opportunities to program in scratch, and build some simple hardware projects using the BBC Micro:bit. We have a regular attendance of 6 children.
- Other notable events include "**readathons**" in February and May noted above.
- Our **Knit and Natter** group continues to be both popular and productive.
- Our expanded events program has also seen a return to our four-monthly cycle of 8-page printed **newsletter** with editions in January and June 2022.
- In October 2021 the board agreed to fund a new partnership with the national adult literacy charity, **Read Easy**. We have recently recruited a volunteer coordinator and already have a small pool of potential volunteer tutors and

students, whilst primarily aimed at Lowedges volunteer tutors and learners are welcome from Greenhill as well. Very generously Gavin Leverett, Managing Director at Fletchers Waste Management, has offered to fully fund this activity for its first year.

- We jointly delivered a **Lowedges Jubilee Celebration Event** with over 300 attendees, this was the first big community event in the area for a long time
- Our **Lowedges school holiday activities** are now established and include crafts, story telling sessions and STEM activities.
- The offer at our Lowedges site continues to develop and now includes a **Breakfast Club, Storytime, Coffee Mornings** and a hugely successful **Board Game Club**

We continue to maintain a significant presence on Facebook, and now have 1,400 followers. We also distribute a monthly E-newsletter with news of upcoming events; it currently goes to almost 400 recipients.

Our Lowedges presence on Facebook has grown significantly, from 52 followers to 132 in the last year. We recently registered the domain lowedges-library.org so Lowedges can have its own website and we are planning our first leaflet drop specifically for Lowedges for the Autumn.

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.

At present we have 166 members, of whom 135 are registered as volunteers, 1 is an employee, Catherine Samengo-Turner, and 30 are Friends contributing at least £20 p.a. In practice only Catherine and around 50 volunteers, including the trustees, are active. Loss of volunteers, particularly session leaders (either due to concerns over covid risks or simply due to “moving on”) continues to be a challenge.

Trustees

Michael Corbishley
Chris Brown
Lyndon Henard
Laurence Coates

Chair
Vice-Chair
Secretary (from Oct.21)
Secretary and Acting Treasurer from
March 2021 until Oct. 21, Treasurer
from Oct. 21
Operations Manager
Volunteer Coordinator

Ann Hartley
Mick Black
Richard Brown, Wendy Crookes, Janet
Crowther, Kirsty Atkin

Ex-Trustees: Peter Atkin (October 2020 to March 2022)

Trustees are elected, usually for a period of 3 years, by the membership of the Friends of Greenhill Library. They meet monthly and review FROGL’s policies and procedures on a regular basis. Special thanks to Chris Brown who has stepped

down as chair, but not as a trustee, after several years of dedicated service. Also to Peter Atkin, who remains a committed volunteer with the library.

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 for the year ending 31/3/2021.

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

This objective is being achieved; details are in the annual accounts. Receipts in 2021-22 were £62,501 (2020-21 £104,361) and Payments £40,410 (2020-21 £30,854) giving a surplus on the year of £22,091 (2020-21 £73,507). We are grateful to Sheffield City Council for their annual grant as well as for the support of their libraries staff. Fundraising and earned income have increased to £10,283 from £2,410 the previous year but are still much lower than pre-pandemic. However, we received a government business support grant of £12,000 through Sheffield City Council.

Reserves Policy. On 31/3/22 we carried forward funds of £225,828, of which most are unrestricted reserves. 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) but also to designate funds for significant matters. The fund for major repairs is now £25,000. £50,000 has been designated for our Building Development plans (see E below). £18,835 is designated to fund community events over the years. During the year some reserves were invested in interest-bearing accounts with the Charity Bank and 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 during this most difficult of years.

The board came to an agreement in April 2022 to revise our building development plans. This decision was taken so that some of the long-awaited works could commence, and hopefully complete, before our current planning permission expired in June 2023. Our financial reserves allows us to fund part of this work and the board wanted to avoid likely further delays to commencing the work linked to grant funding applications in which there were no guarantees funds would be received.

We continue to work with Burnell Briercliffe who have helped us tender out the revised building development works and secure a reputable contractor, Sandersons. The building improvements now include works to the toilets and kitchen facilities, an extended area for very young children and a storage room. The previous plans for lettable offices and a community room have been put on hold for the time being.

Our gas burner has been replaced by air-source heat pumps; with the work entirely funded by an award of £27,000 from Viridor. Again, special thanks to Margaret and the fundraising team for their work on this application. This change has allowed us to create a cool environment during the unusually hot summer period (although this weather is likely to become more commonplace) and helped the library largely avoid the financial perils of the current global energy crisis. The board are in discussions on how we can utilise the space at Greenhill as a 'warm bank' during the coming winter months and in this regard the change to a heat pump system has been vital in maintaining the library as a financially sustainable community resource.

Written on behalf of the charity's trustees

Michael Corbishley (Chair of Trustees) Date: Sept. 2022