

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

FRIENDS OF WEST BARNES LIBRARY

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

1. The following report summarises the Friends' activities this past year. Our events have included Quiz Nights, fairs, a Board Games evening, and an evening local history talk (the latter to complement the monthly Tuesday morning talks organised by the library service). Next month there will be a talk on photography and the start of a photography competition; and later this year there will be several other events, including another fair, a further Quiz Night, at least one evening history talk and a talk on Indian cuisine. The pace of Friends' activity, having picked up over this past year, is thus set to continue to increase.

2. The Friends have also acquired equipment for use in the Library: five tables and a sandwich board. And we have contacted the only other Friends group in a nearby library—that at Worcester Park—and shared our respective experiences. Among the ideas for future practical ways the Friends can help is the painting of the Children's section of the Library. We remain keen to explore new ways of attracting people into the Library and would welcome any additional ideas for this. The delay occasioned by Crossrail 2 planning, in taking forward library redevelopment plans, means we need to focus on things we can do to enhance what is possible in the present building, while ideally providing things which will also be useful in a new one.

3. As always, the Friends have worked closely with the Library's dedicated and enthusiastic permanent staff: Karren, Roz and our security guard, Jogen. The broad overlap between the Friends' committee and Library volunteers has continued, to mutual benefit. I would like to thank all the Friends' committee—Rev Rachel Taylor, Dan Griffiths, Penny Price, Theresa Clarke, Madeleine Maguire, Alison Honor, Brenda and Jeremy Brevitt, Charles Barraball—for their continued support and ideas; and to Sarah McAlister and Simon Kay for their work on publicity and Board Games Evenings respectively, and Karen Baker for her splendid posters. When good things happen, it's their hard work which is responsible; for instance, Madeleine has organised our successful Quiz Nights, while Theresa has re-established the events sub-committee and organised our fairs.

The Friends have particularly benefitted from our *ex officio* members: Karren Whyte (our, and Raynes Park's, Library Manager) and Anthony Hopkins (Head of Library Services) have kept us up to date with developments in the wider Merton Library world, and helped ensure that our ideas can dovetail with what's practicable; Gilli and Brian Lewis-Lavender and Mary-Jane Jeanes, our Councillors until the recent election, not only stood ready to fight the Library's corner when required, but played a vital role in establishing and maintaining both the Friends and Monday Volunteering work. They've made a fantastic contribution to the Library; and we know they will remain involved and supportive. We look forward to maintaining this close and productive relationship with West Barnes' new Councillors: Hina Bokhari, Eloise Bailey and Carl Quilliam.

4. I would also like to single out the library's Knit & Natter group for their unfailing enthusiasm and support for our activities.

Toby Ewin

Chairman
Friends of West Barnes Library

Friends Membership

During the year ending 31st March 2018 five new members subscribed to the Friends; our total membership now stands at 306 at the financial year end.

Treasurer's Report

Fundraising events during the year ending 31st March 2018 (the Spring Fair, Autumn Fair, Quiz Night, Board Games Evening and *Secret Kingston* History Talk) and donations raised £701.95 gross (year ending 31st March 2017, £334.53)

Expenditure incurred during the year 2017/18 in support of fund raising activities was £413.38, giving a net fund-raising income of £288.57 (year ending 31st March 2017, £175.43). During the year the committee agreed to the purchase of 5 folding tables at a cost of £150.00 to facilitate the events and activities in the library. We also acquired a new 'sandwich board,' to replace two withdrawn by Merton as too tatty.

The total net income for the year ending 31st March 2018 was £163.57 (31st March 2017, £1.43).

Total funds held by the Friends, cash in bank and petty cash, as at 31st March 2018 was £1,914.89 (31st March 2017, £1,751.32).

Publicity (Dan)

The Friends' monthly email bulletin currently goes to 423 subscribers. Almost 40% of recipients (170 people) are regularly opening the email. Thanks to Jeremy Brevitt for his hard work managing this important promotional activity until earlier this year – he has since transitioned that to Toby.

The website continues to keep everyone up to date with plans and events. Posters advertising the Friends events are regularly produced and displayed generally in the area including in shop windows and the notice boards and plasma screen at the library.

Library Manager's Report

Over the past year the library has not performed as well as the previous years. Visitor figures have declined and book issues and renewals are down by -6%. School visits have been few and far between which could be a contributing factor. However, our Senior Service Development Officers are working hard with the schools to encourage visits moving forward. The Friends are also working hard to increase visitor figures and have already held several events this year.

Staff have introduced new ideas and events to the library, such as the Table Top Sale, which brought in extra visitors and income—another sale is scheduled for late June. Yoga for adults & children will be starting soon, as well as French classes for children. We have held several Ancestry support sessions which have proved to be popular with the local community – Roz will be planning further events.

We are planning on holding quarterly meetings with the Friends and Blossom House School to create a culture of sharing best practice and working collaboratively to solve problems and explore new ideas for events and activities. So, watch this space!

Roz has recently completed her probationary period, so we are fully staffed and confident that we can make improvements. Our team motto for the year is "Alone we can do little, together we can do much more" so we will look forward to working with you all over the next year to increase usage. Many thanks for your continued support :)

Merton Library & Heritage Services

The Library & Heritage Service has gone through a significant remodelling exercise over the last year to deliver financial savings. Savings have been achieved whilst maintaining all libraries and keeping the current opening hours offer in place. We are extremely grateful to the staff and volunteers who have supported the service in adapting to these changes whilst continuing to make improvements to the service offer.

In terms of key projects, a new library in Colliers Wood opened in February 2018 and has received a high level of positive customer feedback and has been used in government case studies. The model, a successful partnership with a property developer, is one that it is hoped to be similarly achieved when moving forward with the redevelopment of West Barnes Library. The West Barnes redevelopment is awaiting decisions regarding Crossrail 2 implementation in summer 2019 before progressing further.

Other service wide projects include the successful completion of our World War One project 'Carved in Stone' that includes an online archive of all of Merton's combatants and the completion of the 'My Library' project. 'My Library' was an Arts Council funded project that has extended the cultural offer for young people through libraries and included the development of the second Merton Arts Space in Mitcham Library.

Looking forward further work will be undertaken to develop our offer to young people. To support financial savings and to provide new services through libraries we will also be looking to provide coffee shop facilities in libraries and will also be overhauling our online services.

Thank you once again for the support of the Friends Group and we look forward to working with you over the next year to drive up usage of the library.

Library Re-Development (Dan)

The delay caused by the Crossrail 2 consultation, while not surprising, is frustrating. (Crossrail had hoped to have public consultation on its plans this year; but this has now been postponed to 2019.) The Committee is encouraged that London Borough of Merton remains committed to redeveloping the library and site and hope that this support continues.

As a Committee we believe the successful redevelopment of the current library is critical to secure the future of West Barnes Library. It is essential that we continue to promote and use the library and do everything we can to ensure these exciting plans come to fruition.

Events

Regular Events

There continues to be a full calendar of regular events in the library, including Tuesday Rendezvous, Story Time, Rhyme Time, Reading Out Loud, local history coffee mornings, the weekly Knit & Natter and the Sparkle Club which encourages children with creative writing. Falun Dafa and yoga classes are well attended and Children's Craft continues to be popular running on a Saturday once every month.

Other regular events include weekly IT classes and ESOL classes (for those with English as a second language); a Scrabble group; an Alzheimer's Memory Café and the Colour & Chat session. The Police Surgery takes place in the library at 3pm every Friday.

Special Events

The Events sub-committee was resurrected this year comprising Theresa Clarke, Madeleine Maguire, Alison Honor and Sarah McAllister. The past year has seen another a full calendar of special events, some notable highlights below.

- Last month nearly 40 people attended an inter-faith meal at the Library organised by the Muslim Women of Merton group. Food came from Ecklee and attendees included the new Mayor of Merton and all three of West Barnes' new councillors.
- The Spring Fair was also held in May featuring a tombola, raffle, guess weight of cake, book stall, children's activities, tea and cakes. Another fair is planned for the Autumn.
- Spring Flower arranging took place in late March, organised and led by Alison and another Board Games Evening was also held—another popular event that brings new people into the library.
- In February Julian McCarthy of the Maldens & Coombe Heritage Society, delivered a well-attended *Secret Kingston* history talk. A follow-up talk is planned in the Autumn with a Remembrance theme.
- West Barnes Library Quiz Nights remain hugely popular and our last event in January had 60 attendees—the maximum the library can accommodate. Another is planned for November.

Looking further ahead we are planning:

- A photography talk from Mitcham Camera Club on 13th July. Following the talk a photography competition will be run over the summer. Entries displayed in the library a couple of weeks before the Autumn fair when the winners and prizes will be announced.
- An Indian cookery talk from Shermin in October – the last one over 3 years ago was very popular
- The launch of a second Book Club – focused on Whodunnits. All being well, the first meeting will have taken place by the time of this AGM.

Thanks are due to the sub-Committee, Karren, Roz, Jogen and everyone who gives up their time to promote, organise, staff and otherwise support these many events. More new ideas and volunteers to run these events would be most welcome if we are to sustain a wide and varied programme in the coming year.

Conclusion (Dan)

The Friends Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Nick Draper, Anthony Hopkins and Karren Whyte of London Borough of Merton for their continued support of the Friends and West Barnes Library.

Particular thanks are due to Karren for her continued hard work, enthusiasm and many achievements in support of the library. The Friends truly appreciate everything you and your staff do for West Barnes Library.

Final and special thanks go to all our members and our dedicated band of Library volunteers, who support the library and the local community in so many ways. If you can spare a few hours each week to volunteer for the library or support the work of the Friends, please speak to the Committee or pop into the library.

While Crossrail 2 continues to delay the long-awaited redevelopment of the library we remain optimistic about the long-term future. We ask the Friends to please continue with their hard work in support of the library. It remains critical to promote the library and encourage friends and neighbours to use it regularly.

FRIENDS OF WEST BARNES LIBRARY (FOWBL)

Financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2018

<u>Income statement</u>	<u>Year ended 31 March 2018</u>	<u>Year ended 31 March 2017</u>
	£	£
Income		
Subscriptions	25.00	45.00
Fund raising and donations	701.95	334.53
Total	726.95	379.53

Expenditure		
Expenses	413.38	159.10
Purchase of portable PA system	-	219.00
Purchase of 5 folding tables	150.00	-
Total	563.38	378.10

Net income	163.57	1.43
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Balance sheet

Cash at bank ^(note)	1,766.30	1,674.92
Petty cash ^(note)	148.59	76.40
Liabilities	-	-
Net assets	1,914.89	1,751.32

Note: No bank transactions have taken place since 18 September 2017. All transactions for the PWBL since that date have been undertaken via petty cash.

Reserves

Net income	163.57	1.43
Balance at beginning of year	1,751.32	1,749.89
Balance at end of year	1,914.89	1,751.32

Report of the auditor

I have reviewed the financial statements shown above for the year ended 31 March 2018. In my opinion these statements have been properly prepared and accurately reflect the underlying books and records of the FWBL for this period.

David Martin A.C.A, 26 Marina Avenue, New Malden



5 June 2018