

SOMERSHAM COMMUNITY LIBRARY (FOSL)

MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

23rd JULY 2018, 7:35pm

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING ADDRESS

The Chairman of Somersham Community Library, Elsa Evans, welcomed attendees.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were presented on behalf of Barbara Hulme, Vicky Moseley, Cllr S Criswell and Pam Williams. There were no proxy appointments.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Chairman briefly summarised the content of the minutes of the previous AGM, copies of which were presented and available at the meeting for information. The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman. A copy was available in the public folder at the Library.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman picked up the following action from the July 2017 AGM minutes:

Item 7 – Library Opening hours – Thursday evening opening hours had been changed with effect from 1st October 2017, so that the Library now closed at 7pm rather than 8pm, following agreement at the 2017 AGM. The management team had monitored the impact, and it was clear that it had not affected book borrowing rates, which would be covered in detail in the Chairman's report.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman was pleased to report another positive year, with a number of successful projects completed. These included the very successful junior library project, which had great outcomes in terms of the number of books borrowed by children, and the uptake of activities such as the Reading Challenge. Overall book borrowing had increased 10% over the year, which was the third year running that book borrowing had gone up, bucking the national trend. However, in terms of details behind the borrowing figures, there had been a 10% reduction in adult

borrowing, offset by a 35% increase in Junior borrowing. Good working relationships had been established with both Somersham Primary and Whitehall School, with every Somersham Primary pupil visiting the Library at least once a term, and Whitehall pupils visiting once every half term. Both schools expressed a desire to continue these arrangements in the new academic year.

In terms of financing, the Library had received very generous donations, including £200 from Evershed Sutherland, following a nomination by Vicky M, and also over £200 from the Waitrose Community Fund.

Young Adult (YA) book borrowing had increased massively with over 533 items issued in a year. This meant that on average every young person between 10-19 in the village had borrowed a book, which was very encouraging. The YA section had been moved away from the Children's area to make the division clearer.

The Library participated in the Summer Reading Challenge every year. Helen Moss, a Children's author, had presented the medals last year. The Library worked very closely with Somersham Primary School, not just on the Summer Reading Challenge, but also by ensuring all titles in the School's Summer Reading List, both Fiction and Non Fiction, were available.

Visitor numbers had remained quite consistent with previous years. It was stressed that the Library was not just used for borrowing books, but also as a meeting space for community groups e.g. the Timebank. The decision had been made by the management team not to charge for community use of the Library, but many of the community groups that used the Library made a donation. 149 new Members had signed up for a library card in the past year, partly due to school children bringing their parents and carers to the Library.

In terms of fundraising and support, the Library had quite a healthy bank balance. £10,000 had been set aside for a new heating system, and the old system had finally failed in March. Rather than replacing like for like, infrared heating panels had been fitted, at a cost of about £4,000. There had been delays at the time in fitting the panels as the Library was not owned by FOSL, but by the County Council, who have a lease agreement with Somersham Parish Council. Agreement therefore had to be sought from both those parties, and there were numerous complexities, partly due to the lease agreement having expired.

Because the cost of the replacement heating system was less than anticipated, a decision had been taken to make the primary focus promotions and events on raising the profile of the library, with fundraising a secondary consideration.

The management team comprised twelve Directors, and in the past year Lavinia had been appointed as Treasurer, and Julyan and Rob had also been coopted. These appointments would need to be ratified. Joke had resigned as Treasurer

during the year, having undertaken that important role for five years, which was greatly appreciated by the management team.

Debbie Barrott had resigned from the Management Board, and special thanks were paid to Debbie, as a founding member of FOSL, and her outstanding professionalism and dedication. It was hoped that Debbie would join in some activities at the Library.

The Chairman concluded by highlighting that the Library had been run by the community for 15 years, and there would be a big party on Saturday 13th October to celebrate this, to which past members and volunteers would be invited.

6. REPORT FROM TREASURER

The Treasurer presented the audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2018. As explained in the Chairman's report, the cost of the replacement heating system was not as great as anticipated. Money was being put aside for the replacement of windows, which was the next major expenditure that was anticipated, and this would be expensive, given that the Library was in a Conservation Area.

The Treasurer urged members to contact her if they had any questions about the accounts.

7. RETIREMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS

In accordance with the retirement cycle in the Constitution, one-third of directors have to resign. Joke and Debbie had stepped down, and Paul and Denise were retiring this year. In the absence of replacement volunteers, Paul and Denise were unanimously reappointed.

Since the last Annual General Meeting, three members have been co-opted: Rob, Julyan and Lavinia. Paul proposed that the three co-optees were elected to the Committee, giving twelve Members in total, and this was seconded by Lesley. It was noted that there were no minimum or maximum number of Members, but there were four named officer posts (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary). The specific tasks allocated to other Members of the Management Board e.g. Volunteer Liaison (Denise), Fundraising (Glenda), Parish Council links (Paul and Lesley), Junior (Julyan), Building and maintenance (Hal, in addition to being Vice Chair).

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was a discussion about the Summer Reading Challenge, with Members noting that the somewhat lengthy instructions had not been received until the Friday

after the Challenge had started. It was suggested that where children had started the Reading Challenge and nearly finished, they should be encouraged to complete

There was a discussion on space and storage, and also bean bags in the children's area. It was noted that the Reference section had been removed, in line with other County libraries, and Local Studies books had been moved on to one shelf. Dictionaries previously in the Reference section had been moved on to lending shelves.

There were still only a few volunteers willing to do Dewey numbering, which needed to be entered on to the catalogue system for Non Fiction books. Free training was provided for anyone who was interested.

A Member praised the exciting and innovative displays that Carrie does monthly for the Library, and the management board agreed with these comments, saying that Carrie does some great displays. The Library Services Manager and stock manager had commented on how good the displays were, and what an attractive and welcoming library it was.

There were eleven Community Libraries in the county, of which ten were Library Access Points (LAPs). However, LAPs would be renamed "Community Libraries" and signage changed appropriately. It was noted that LAP was originally used as "Libraries" were less likely to secure grants. Somersham had the longest opening hours of any of the Community libraries – some were only open for six hours per week.

Sunday opening was still proving popular, and it was a good opportunity for both volunteers and visitors to sit and chat.

It was noted that Cambridgeshire Libraries were charging for computer use, but Somersham Library were keeping their computer usage free of charge.

Some libraries had just one member of staff or volunteer in attendance when the library was open. The Management Board had discussed this at length, and agreed that there should be two volunteers at a time.

As many members and volunteers were aware, GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) came in to force in May 2018. This means that organisations have to tell individuals if they keep information on them. Information was kept on FOSL Members so that they could be contacted. If FOSL members no longer wanted to be contacted, they could unsubscribe. Information was also retained for volunteers. This was because contact information was needed, including telephone numbers and email addresses, and also safeguarding considerations. Whilst the Library did not ask for DBS checks for volunteers, it did seek written references, which were retained.