

Minutes of the AGM of Friends of Sonning Common Library

held on 7th November 2016 in Sonning Common Village Hall

1. Introduction

Jill Hutchinson (acting Chair) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. This was well attended by 38 Friends, Volunteers and other members of the local community. The rest of the Steering Committee was introduced:

Helen Fort, Brian Watkins, Val Harris, Adele O'Connor and Jenny Jones.

2. Objectives of FoSCL

Jill outlined the history of the Friends Group and the current reasons for its revival.

The Friends of Sonning Common Library was established in 1998, when the Library was first threatened with closure. FoSCL promoted awareness and raised funds by subscription and other means to support the Library and to purchase books and other resources.

In 2010/2011 the Friends fought another campaign to save Sonning Common Library.

In 2014 it was agreed with Oxfordshire County Libraries to keep the Library open, by a reduction in Staff and with the help of Volunteers. Indeed Oxfordshire has kept open all of the 43 Libraries. At present there are 38 Volunteers working shift patterns in the Library alongside the professional staff.

Sonning Common Library has now lost the Manager's Book Fund and further cuts of £1.6 million to Oxfordshire County Libraries funding will impact on the supply of books and Central Library staffing. These factors have made it necessary to revive FoSCL and to seek funds from subscriptions, donations and other means to support our Library. This measure was agreed at a meeting of the Library Volunteers held on 4th July 2016. We are fortunate that Jo Hunt the previous treasurer of FoSCL, kindly agreed to act as interim Treasurer and that the FoSCL NatWest Bank account was still openavailable. The present Steering Committee agreed to act as members of the committee of FoSCL until this AGM and the formal election of an executive committee. We have produced a written Constitution based on a format from HMRC regarding small charities i.e. those with annual income of less than £5000. FoSCL will register as an unincorporated Charity with HMRC to enable us to receive further donations only given to charities and to claim back gift aid monies.

Jill invited questions and was asked for information about the Library and outlined the following:-

The Library is funded by Oxfordshire County Libraries. The building is owned by Sonning Common Primary School who also pay for the care-taking, heating, lighting and cleaning of the premises. The School has exclusive use of the Library on Tuesdays.

Books are allocated to Sonning Common Library and a group of three other Libraries and then passed in a set pattern between those Libraries. Books are purchased mainly through the Central Library purchasing system, where they are catalogued, tagged, and covered.

Rosemary added that although books are purchased from other sources they must be on the Oxfordshire County Libraries catalogue.

Jill was asked about a year end date, as it was not noted in the Constitution. A year end date of 31st October was considered and it was agreed that a year end date would be included in the FoSCL bye laws.

A question from the floor asked why we had not agreed a set date for renewal of all subscriptions. Jill stated that we had previously agreed to renew each membership annually on the last day of the month in which the member joined. A fixed date might be difficult as new members would be asked for a further subscription within a short time of joining. The fund was healthy at the moment, so a fixed annual renewal date of 1st November (2017) might be appropriate and would be considered.

After further discussion it was agreed unanimously by the meeting that the proposed Constitution would be formally adopted.

3. Treasurer's Report.

Jo Hunt presented the current accounts. The fund currently stood at £1,177.50. This consisted of subscriptions and donations. There was an opening balance of £262.50 from raffles and sales carried out earlier in the year. £400 had been given to Mrs Dunstan to purchase books. Jo has had the accounts audited on the advice of County, as the other signatory on the bank account is a family member. Helen stated that there were currently 82 subscribers and therefore £820 was from subscriptions and £495 from donations.

Dan Remenyi proposed that the accounts were accepted, this was seconded by Douglas Kedge and the accounts were duly accepted.

4. Librarian's Report.

The books Rosemary has purchased are displayed in the Hall. The cut off point for books purchases has recently been extended to Christmas Eve. Books are purchased mainly through the Oxfordshire County Libraries system, as it is an advantage to have them already prepared. Rosemary does purchase books from Amazon and other sources, as long as they are listed on the OCL catalogue. Rosemary was asked about donated books i.e. unwanted presents. She is happy to accept donated books in good condition, provided that it is agreed that she should be able to decide what to do with them. For example, to incorporate the books into the library stock, to sell them or to pass them to organisations such as Better World Books who may sell, donate to third world countries or recycle them. The library service receives a small % of any profit made. Rosemary pointed out how important it is that books in the Library should be in excellent condition and the shelves need to have a good, attractive appearance. "No tatty books in the Library!" Rosemary was asked if she required more money for book purchases, as the dead line had been extended. She stated she would welcome more funds and suggestions for book purchases. There is a demand for best sellers and a large proportion of funding is spent on children's books.

5. Approval of the Constitution.

Jill apologised for taking this matter out of order but deemed it appropriate to have done so.

6. Election of Executive Committee members.

Brian and Jo were stepping down from the Committee, Jill thanked them for their most valuable contribution to the support of the Library. Jill stated the remainder of the present committee were willing to stand for election. There were also offers from Lyn Smurthwaite and Dan Remenyi to stand for election. These nominations were proposed for acceptance by Robbie Foster and seconded by Jill West and when put to a vote the Committee was duly elected.

The Executive Committee:

Chair	Jill Hutchinson
Treasurer	Helen Fort
Secretary	Jenny Jones
	Adele O'Connor
	Val Harris
	Lyn Smurthwaite
	Dan Remenyi

7. AOB

Douglas Kedge thanked all the Volunteers and the past Steering Group for their hard work over the past four years in rescuing Sonning Common Library from the abyss of closure.

Jill answered a question from the floor regarding the possibility of the Library being moved elsewhere. She stated that there have been rumours about setting up a combined resource centre in another area on the school site. The Parish Council had no information at present on the matter. FoSCL is not in a position to approach the school, but the County would investigate the matter at an appropriate time. In future there may be funds available from the developers for community projects such as the School and the Library.

Jill was asked whether, when a donation is made to the library could it be stipulated that the money would only be spent on books, Jill answered that it could. Organisations may join as members of FoSCL and may nominate a member to attend meetings.

Jo Hunt presented a cheque for £250 to Rosemary for the further purchase of books.

There being no other business, Jill thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 19.42