

Minutes of the AGM of Friends of Sonning Common Library

held on 23rd November 2017 in Sonning Common Library

1. Welcome

Jill Hutchinson (Chair) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. This was attended by Friends, Volunteers and other members of the local community.

2. Minutes of the 2016 AGM

Jill went through the minutes of last year's AGM and informed the meeting that any matters arising would be discussed during the meeting. There being no objection Jill asked that the minutes should be approved. Robbie Foster proposed that they should be, this was seconded and the minutes were duly approved by the meeting and signed off by Jill.

3. Chairman's Report.

Jill outlined the developments since our meeting last year.

- Charitable status has been achieved this allows us to claim back gift aid on membership and other donations
- A web site - friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk
- Thanks are due to Lyn Smurthwaite for developing our FoSCL logo
- Thanks to Helen Fort for producing our beautiful FoSCL Banner
- Facebook page is under development
- There are links to the County website page
- Regular bulletins in the village magazine
- Volunteers visit the Abbeycrest Care Home twice a month with book selections
- Volunteers regularly visit the elderly in their own homes with books
- Since the closure of the Children's Centre, Rhyme times are now held twice monthly at the library
- A children's clinic is held in the library
- Support is given to several students on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme
- A weekly IT Gadget session supporting those needing help with their problems
- A weekly Scrabble group

In addition the Friends have tried to actively engage with the village community this year with our fund raising activities

- Craft mornings, story times and cake sales have provided much needed funds for the children's crafts
- We ran a tombola and book stall at the School Fair
- We held a Village Quiz night
- An Author's evening was planned
- We held a Story writing competition

These latter three were to celebrate National Libraries week in October. The quiz was a success and we are hoping to run another next year.

The author's evening sadly had to be cancelled, as one of our speakers had a family crisis, but we are hoping to re-organise it next spring.

The writing Competition was a little disappointing, as it did not receive the enthusiastic response we hoped for. However, we have learned a lot and feel that one of the problems was the issue of timing, so providing sponsors can be found for the prizes and we have the co-operation of the local schools, we hope to repeat it next year. We subsequently discovered that our short story competition received as many entries as the County Libraries competition.

We have donated funds to the library for new books, and will give more when the purchasing window opens again. We are also hoping to re-cover the noticeboard in the foyer and to repair or replace some of the chairs.

Membership renewals have been somewhat disappointing as currently only 48 of 69 members have renewed. This number will rise as renewals become due but we need to recognise that membership remains the mainstay of our fund raising and hope that this will be just a blip.

There have been two committee meetings with the County representatives, who report that savings of over £1.6 million from the county library budget have been made, but with the loss of the mobile library service, staff cuts in the central organisation and substantial cuts to the book budget. They have not yet had notification of any further cuts for next year.

Jill thanked the committee for all their hard work during the year, to the Volunteers for their invaluable help and Rosemary and her staff for again putting up with us all during the year. To extend grateful thanks to some of the groups and organisations who have donated so generously to our funds, namely The WI, Peppard School and Nottakwire. Thanks are also due to the local businesses who kindly supported our quiz and writing competitions.

4. Treasurer's Report.

Helen Fort presented the current audited accounts to the Meeting. There was an opening balance of £1177.50. The fund currently stood at £2,947.52. This consisted of monies from subscriptions of £800, donations of £617, sponsorship monies, fund raising of £440.61 from Craft days and the summer fete and £610.64 from the FoSCL quiz. Expenses consisted of £850 given to Mrs Dunstan for the Book fund. Other expenses were for hosting the Website, Hall Hire, drink licences, and the prizes and the costs associated with the Short Story competition and the Quiz.

The Short Story Competition prizes totalled £230 with £125 for a sensory book for Bishopswood Special School. As the majority of the entries for the Special Award come from Bishopswood, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to donate this book to the School. There was just £30 remaining from the sponsorship money.

There were no questions from the floor, so the accounts were duly accepted by the meeting.

5. Librarian's Report.

Rosemary told the meeting that she has spent £769 on book purchases and this order was completed in November. The list of books purchased was available to the meeting and will be displayed on the Library noticeboard, in the Friends Information folder and on the FoSCL website. Rosemary has allocated more money to Junior Books rather than Adult books, as the Library receives many donations of adult books. Rosemary would welcome any suggestions for purchases particularly for Adult non-fiction. Before April she would be

able to make some purchases through Amazon which does prove cost effective. The Library still receives their allocation of new books from Oxfordshire County Libraries County Libraries system, and it is an advantage to have them already prepared. Simon Branch asked about unwanted gifts and if books recommended by various papers could be purchased. Rosemary told the meeting that the Library does receive many donated books after Christmas and that many books on the best seller lists were purchased but consideration would be given other listings.

The Library has helped many Duke of Edinburgh Award students with the Volunteering aspect of the scheme. There are very few opportunities for Volunteering in the Village, only the Library, the Charity Shop and the Guides and Scouts Associations. Students on the Bronze Award need to volunteer for a least an hour once a week for 3 months, Silver Award need to volunteer for a least an hour once a week for 6 months, and Gold Award need to volunteer for a least an hour once a week for 12 months.

The help the students give is varied but naturally the older they are the more useful they are. Rosemary has many applications during the year but would like the students to be interested in books and a member of the Library. Rosemary is willing to take on several students a year but needs to restrict it to one student in the library at any one time, and would like the student to apply themselves not their parent.

Rosemary thanked the Friends and Volunteers for all their help, without which the Library could not function. Annabel was asked to give the latest amusing example of 'mis-shelving' Shelved in the Crime fiction section was "How to Write your Will" and on closer inspection the book did not even belonged to Sonning Common Library but to Wallingford Library ! But Rosemary stated she was sure this was not due to any of the Volunteers.

6. Volunteers.

Jenny Jones told the meeting there were currently 24 Regulars and 12 reserve Volunteers working on a Rota system in the Library. The number has remained fairly constant since the start of Library Volunteering. Two members have left this year, one moved away and the other is now employed at another Oxfordshire Library, but we have welcomed one new member.

The methods of recruiting are in the Library, on Oxfordshire Libraries Website and on the Friends Website, in Newsletters and articles in the local papers. Volunteers now need to apply online and are vetted.

Jenny expressed her thanks to all the Volunteers, who are very helpful and approachable, happy to cover holiday and other sessions, sometimes at very short notice. The reserves have covered 77 sessions during the year and the DoE students have also provided cover on several occasions.

The Library holds an annual refresher training session, although the objective of the evening is to improve the working practises of the Library Volunteers, it also provides an opportunity for the Volunteers to meet socially.

Friends and Volunteers also help with Home visits and at Abbeycrest Home, Rhyme time, story time, gadget advice sessions, cake making, craft days and other fund raising activities.

7. Election of Executive Committee members.

Jill told the meeting that as stated in our constitution the Committee will stand for re-election every year. Jill Hutchinson, Helen Fort, Val Harris, Adele O'Connor and Jenny Jones were willing to stand again and Jill asked the meeting for their approval. The motion to approve the aforementioned was proposed by Robbie Foster and seconded by Gordon Haigh. The motion was passed unanimously. Dan Remenyi and Lyn Smurthwaite have stepped down and Jill thanked them for all their help during the year. This left two vacancies on the Committee. Clare Keen was nominated by Robbie Foster and seconded by Helen Fort, Trish Rockell was nominated by Jill Hutchinson and seconded by Jenny Jones. Clare and Trish were duly elected by the meeting. Jill welcomed them onto the Committee.

Chair	Jill Hutchinson
Treasurer	Helen Fort
Secretary	Jenny Jones
	Adele O'Connor
	Val Harris
	Clare Keen
	Trish Rockell

8. AOB

Jill informed the meeting about the annual Christmas Event in the Library. Everyone is invited to come along for Val's famous Rum Punch, mince pies and other good things to eat on Thursday 21st December from 2pm until 5pm.

The committee propose to produce a information leaflet about the Library to distribute to the Village, particularly to the new houses. Rosemary confirmed that many people were unaware of all the facilities the Library offered. Trish Rockell suggested that this could be distributed with Sonning Common Magazine. Simon Branch told the meeting that Bewley Homes produced a glossy brochure with lots of local information and that might be a good means of spreading information about the Library to the new housing developments.

Simon suggested using Waitrose Green disc scheme to raise money and it was believed that Tesco also run a similar system. All these ideas were welcomed by the meeting and would be investigated.

There being no other business, Jill thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 19.40