

Friends of Sonning Common Library AGM

held on Monday 19th November 2018 in Sonning Common Library

1. Welcome

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

2. Apologies were received from

Clare Keen, Adele O'Connor, Michael Cotton, Kirsti Deacon, Anne Lowder, Lucille Perkins, Ros Varnes, Gordon & Chrissie Haigh, Jeni Wood, Hugh & Eileen Haigh, Marion & Roy Bayliss, Ildiko Toth, Robbie Foster, Lyn Smurthwaite, Graham & Gillian Thomas, Rosemary Geake, Douglas & Yvonne Kedge, Non O'Dell,, Chrissie Godfrey, Barbara Pilbrow, Nick Steele, and Caroline Oldridge.

3. Minutes of the 2017 AGM

As the minutes had been previously distributed Jill asked for any matters arising, There were none from the floor but Jill mentioned two items regarding suggestions for fundraising and publicity. An application to Waitrose to participate in their green disc scheme had been made but was not successful, Helen would approach Waitrose again. We have not yet produced an information leaflet about all the Library Services. This leaflet would be aimed at the new houses in the Village. Any other matters arising would be dealt during the meeting. The minutes were duly approved.

4. Chairman's Report

Our Library continues to be a busy hub within the Village,

Weekly scrabble sessions on a Friday morning,
Rhyme time twice monthly,
Weekly gadget sessions,
Regular story times and craft sessions on Saturday mornings
Lunch time baby clinic for part of this year .

This has also been a very busy year for FoSCL.

In February our second Short Story competition was launched, the number of words was limited and the competition open to adults.

T A Fisher Homes and Stephen Anthony Developments were the generous sponsors.

40 entries were received and the prizes were awarded during National Libraries week in October. The book of stories will be published later this year. It has been decided not to run the competition next year partially due to sponsorship.

In May we re-organised our 'Writer's Life' event, which had been cancelled last year.

Many thanks to Vera Morris and Tom Fort for an informative and entertaining evening, which we hope to repeat with some other authors next year.

In June we had a tombola and second-hand book stall at the School summer fete, our thanks to all those who donated prizes for the tombola.

In response to a request from Friends, that we hold more events for adults, we tried a 'tea and memories chat' one afternoon in August, however a lack of interest means that we have given up on that avenue.

In October- and we held our second village quiz. This is our main fundraising effort of the year and this year was particularly successful, mostly due to the incredible generosity of our local businesses, who donated some amazing prizes. We will use the money raised to improve the library – we have plans for new noticeboards, cloths for the large table, to recover the shelf ends, a small settee, a bookcase and a greater selection of large print books.

Also in October, we booked the drama group ‘Untied Artists’ for a production of “The Library Lion”. We had some 25 children plus their adults in the library and the event was a great success. We made a small charge for the play and the Friends subsidised the balance.

We will hold our annual ‘Christmas celebration thank you’ in the Library for friends and volunteers on the afternoon of 21st December. We hope you will all attend.

As usual, we are greatly in the debt of all the Friends, who continue to support us with subscriptions and allow us to make up the deficit of the manager’s book fund. People have also donated gifts very generously – a particular thank you to the WI for their support again this year.

Adele O’Connor is stepping down from the Committee and we are very grateful to her for her valuable contribution to FoSCL.

Many thanks to our staff and to all our volunteers who turn up so reliably rain or shine to support the staff, run our gadget sessions, visit Abbeycrest or support those at home, we couldn’t manage without you.

5. Treasurer’s Report

Helen presented the audited accounts for 2017-2018 and explained the Income and Expenditure.

Income £3718.99

£840 Membership subscriptions. Unfortunately not everyone of the 114 members has renewed during the year but it is still a creditable renewal rate.

£620 Donations. Helen expressed her gratitude for all these generous donations.

£301.07 Cake sales and scrabble mornings. The cake sales help to pay for the craft mornings and produce a profit.

£250 Sponsorship from T A Fisher and Stephen Anthony Properties for the Short Story competition

£1304.52 Events (Quiz .Writers Life, Summer Fair) Very successful quiz this year with increased profits. Mainly due to the Raffle and less wine required due to surplus supply left from the Writer’ Life evening.

£403.40 Gift Aid. A valuable source of income and well worth collecting. The next claim will be submitted shortly.

Expenditure £1955.18

£1081 Books £950 for the Library Book Fund and £121.20 for a sensory book for Bishopswood School, the school entered the most stories for last year’s competition and the committee agreed it was an appropriate use of the remainder of the sponsorship money.

£783 expenditure for events. Costs are for the Art Pod Event , Library Lion, Temporary Licences, bar costs, Short Story competition, publishing and printing etc

£120 prizes for the Short Story Competition

To FoSCL funds £1763.81

Total funds now stand at £4713

Jill West asked about the FoSCL year end, Helen informed the meeting year end was October 31st There being no further questions the accounts were duly accepted.

6. Librarian's Report

Rosemary told the meeting that she had spent £400 on books now in the Library, £350 pending delivery and a further £200 to be spent. She would welcome ideas for suitable purchases. She was conscious that the majority of the fund was spent on children's books, the reasons being that she wished to encourage children to read and that we also serve as a school library. There will be a list of books purchased on the noticeboard in the Library, in the FoSCL information folder and on the FoSCL website.

Rhyme times on Monday mornings are very popular, these are advertised on the Village facebook page, in the Library and on the Library website.

Rosemary appealed for volunteers for Rhyme time on Monday morning, Storytimes on Saturdays and Digital Help sessions on Thursdays. At these sessions there is always a member of staff present, and any potential volunteer is welcome to observe a session before committing themselves. Digital helpers need reasonable IT skills to enable them to help with the use of smart phones and tablets, setting up and using email accounts etc. The Scrabble club on Friday morning always welcome new members. Rosemary would also welcome new cake makers and "pushy" sellers for craft days.

The Tuesday school sessions are not always sufficiently utilized, it depends on the individual teacher and the pressures of the school curriculum.

There is a issue about the supply of suitable large print books mainly for the housebound and Abbeycrest. Although it is appreciated that large print books are not just for the older generations most of the published titles are not attractive to older people.

It is regrettable the children's clinic is no longer held in the Library as it brought in visitors and encouraged new library members.

Although Rosemary no longer receives the figures to support it, she assured the meeting that Sonning Common Library was not in decline and numbers of attendance have risen. Jillian Southwell, Oxfordshire Library Service Manager has left and her replacement will start early next year. This appointment may have a great influence on the future of Oxfordshire Libraries. At present most of the smaller libraries in Oxfordshire are kept open by the use of Volunteers, a different view is held in Reading – where regrettably library hours are being cut and libraries closed.

Robin Johns asked if Rosemary would buy adult interest books and she replied that if there was sufficient interest, she would. Oxfordshire Libraries do not permit the purchase of new titles and these may only be purchased after a period of three to six months. This is to ensure there is a continuing interest in the title. Annabel pointed out the paperback editions would then be a better buy.

June Duckworth asked where the money for requested books went, Rosemary informed us the charges went towards transport and distribution.

The current DoE volunteers, all boys this time, vary greatly in enthusiasm. Most importantly Rosemary needs to make sure they can all make tea!

7. Volunteers

Jenny told the meeting the number of volunteers had increased slightly this year. All the sessions are covered by 26 regular volunteers and the number of reserves would soon be 12. The number of sessions requiring cover due to holidays etc, has increased from 77 last year to 110 sessions this year. These duties were covered by the wonderful reserves and the willingness of the regular volunteers to do extra sessions. She expressed her gratitude to all the Volunteers.

8. Election of the Committee

Jill informed the meeting that the FoSCL constitution stated the committee should stand for re-election every year and should serve a maximum period of five years. The following Committee members are willing to stand again.

Chair Jill Hutchinson	2016
Treasurer Helen Fort	2016
Secretary Jenny Jones	2016
Val Harries	2016
Clare Keen	2017
Trish Rockell	2017

Adele O'Connor has stepped down this year, so proposals were invited from the floor to join the committee. Jill thanked June Duckworth for kindly offering to stand. Robin John proposed that the committee be re-elected including the election of our new member June, Jenny Ward seconded the proposal, the committee was duly elected.

9. AOB

Alison Smith asked if FoSCL membership applications leaflets could be more widely distributed throughout the Village and during the events we hold, thus creating greater interest from the general public. Helen said there would be an article in the Sonning Common Magazine next month. Jill said that perhaps an inset of the membership application form should be placed in the Magazine next year along with our usual article and consideration would be given to other avenues of publicity and attempts to increase our membership.

The next AGM would be in November 2019.

There being no other business, Jill thanked everyone for coming and the meeting closed at 7.50pm