

4. CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT. SK addressed the meeting as follows:

“Overview

The Friends of Wool Library (FOWL) has continued the management and running of Wool Community Library and successfully completed the ninth year of operation on 15 January 2022. Friends of Wool Library is a registered charity and we submit our accounts and our annual report to the Charity Commission each year.

The Library has continued to open for 3 sessions per week on Tuesday afternoons, and Thursday and Saturday mornings. But that's only since April 2021, because until 13th April we were in lockdown and providing an order and collect service which had proved very popular and successful. When we reopened the library it was on a one in, one out basis, and the shifts were run by a Duty Coordinator with one volunteer. We also reduced our opening hours on Tuesdays and we are still only opening between 3 and 5 on those afternoons instead of from 3 to 6. Our agreement with Dorset Council is for us to open a minimum of 6 hours a week, so we are not contravening our agreement with them. However, the Trustees are considering the possibility of opening additionally between 3 and 5 on Wednesday afternoons, and we're monitoring the number of customers attending each day to test the viability of this.

Trustees

The Trustees are:

Chair - Sue Kerr

Secretary - Jane Pearson

Treasurer - Annette Dyke

Committee members - Judith Beeby, Andrew Kerr, Claire Kingman

At the last (virtual) AGM, Sue Kerr and Jane Pearson were re-elected as per our constitution - being the longest serving members of the Committee.

The Trustees have met 6 times since the last AGM.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Trustees for all their support over the last year. They all do much more than you see, and they are the reason that Trustee meetings are both useful and thoughtful. All of our Trustees are also volunteers, which gives them an insight into the day to day issues. However, under our constitution, this will be my last year as a Trustee and therefore as

Chair - I'll need to stand down next March - so we are appealing once again for people to come forward as Trustees.

Activities/Operation

We currently have 23 volunteers on our list, 18 of whom are rostered on shift in the library. Of the rest, 3 help with either children's activities or Home Library Service and 2 are taking a break. This is a remarkable number of active helpers for a small charity to have and we are extremely grateful to everyone who gives up their time for us. Perhaps more importantly, that number continues to grow - we welcomed 2 new volunteers this year - Judy Price and Frank Snart - and we hope to welcome Irene Thorne to our ranks very soon. All of our new volunteers are trained by Pauline Diment, and every volunteer has to confirm annually that they have read both the Health and Safety and the Safeguarding Policies.

As you'll see in the Financial Report, the bulk of our revenue is from subscriptions by Friends. We have 85 Friends and their support has been even more important over the last 2 years when we have been unable to raise funds in other ways. But we also have a number of very generous donations - many from individuals - but including this year from the Scarecrow Competition in Wool. Thank you to all our Friends and benefactors.

We run each library shift now with just one volunteer and a Duty Coordinator - this has proved extremely efficient in that it ensures that only a few designated individuals are required to keep abreast of - and implement - any operational changes required by Dorset Libraries and it means that shifts are busier which makes for a more fulfilling session. In a recent meeting with the new Service Manager for Dorset Libraries, Liz Crocker, this system was applauded for enabling Wool to quickly react to the many changes that arose because of the pandemic, and I'd like to thank the Duty Coordinators for all the effort they have put in over the last year. We said goodbye to one of our DCs this year - Chris Corteen - while we welcomed back Pauline Diment. Recently, we were joined by new DC, Claire Kingman, who will be helping to spread the load this summer.

We work with Dorset Libraries to ensure that the service we provide is wherever possible a mirror of that which can be experienced at any library in Dorset and we continue to receive excellent support from our Community Library Liaison Officer, Petra Peters. We are also able to exchange views with our Community Managed Library colleagues across Dorset - albeit this year online. We have also utilised the Dorset Libraries risk assessments to help us run the library safely.

Sadly this year we lost one of the founding members of the library. Christine Reber died very suddenly in January and we were all reminded just how influential and crucial she was to the library - establishing procedures and helping to train not just our volunteers but those across Dorset. I don't think we will ever match her enthusiasm and energy, but she left us a great legacy.

Achievements

This time last year we were conducting our Trustee meetings on Zoom, and the pandemic certainly made it more difficult to do some of the things that we would normally like to achieve. We tried several times through the Autumn and Winter months to organise school visits, but each time the school had to cancel. This was a great shame, especially given the enormous amount of work several volunteers had undertaken in order to design activities for the event. We were also unable to run our activity sessions to support the Summer Reading Challenge but we did take part as usual in the Challenge itself and of the 33 children who joined at Wool, 22 completed it. This was completely in line with the Dorset completion rate. We were able to support the promotion of the Challenge with a Zoom assembly for Bovington Academy.

Radio Solent ran an interview last April about how we had coped with the pandemic and our plans for reopening and in July we were thrilled to win Volunteer Group of the Year Award for 2021. We had some lovely messages following that award - it was nice to know we'd made a difference.

Our website has been updated again and now has an electronic version of the business cards in the lobby and list of the latest books received at the library.

Our Facebook page is well used and has proved a useful way for some customers to contact us.

We were very involved during the winter with the Dorset Libraries public consultation. Many of our volunteers and Friends completed online surveys to give feedback on what the library service might look like over the next 10 years. As Chair, I was invited to also attend 2 online workshops involving many possible partners across Dorset including Citizens Advice and Age UK. The sessions were run by research group Shared Intelligence and the clear theme that emerged was that libraries should be places where people can be "alone but not lonely" - a safe space. There will be a further public consultation in the summer when the proposed new library strategy will be presented.

This year we have worked hard to keep the Parish Council informed of our activities, and we were able to supply some useful information about the current benchmark figures for the size of libraries according to the population they serve which will be used in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Our biggest achievement has been to keep the library open and safe for customers. We continued to supply customers who couldn't get to the library via the brilliant Home Library Service, with help for some of the year from Wareham Library. It has been incredibly rewarding to see how well used the library is most sessions - we're averaging 160 customers a month - and while occasionally there are very quiet shifts, equally there are shifts when the library is bursting at the seams - 33 customers in one session seems to be the current record.

Finally, although it can't be regarded as our achievement, we were able to bask in the reflected glory of our first Chair, David Smith, when he was awarded an MBE for services to libraries in the New Year's Honours list. It was David's hard work that secured us the fantastic contract we have with Dorset Libraries and since he left us, he has gone on to lead the Community Managed Libraries National Peer Network, which has just secured National Lottery funding to support Community Managed Libraries. In recognition of his many achievements we offered - and he accepted - Life membership for him and Margaret of the Friends of Wool Library. Thank you, David, for all your support."

FRIENDS OF WOOL LIBRARY - CHARITY NO. 1173556

income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 28th February 2022

2020 -21	INCOME GROSS	2021-22	
£		£	£
410.00	MEMBERSHIP FEES		430.00
146.05	DONATIONS		393.08
128.78	1/2 fines return from Dorset Council		104.75
17.45	Credit from Amazon Smile		12.47
76.48	HMRC Gift Aid Reimbursement		56.34
	FUND RAISING:		
0		0	
0.00	AGM RAFFLE	0.00	
0.00	QUIZ EVENING & RAFFLE	0.00	
20.64	CARNIVAL	0.00	
0.00	DONATED BOOK SALES	0.00	
10.00	BUSINESS CARDS DISPLAY	110.00	
20.64	Misc Mob Cash	0.00	
	SUB TOTAL	110.00	110.00
809.40	TOTAL INCOME		1106.64
	EXPENDITURE GROSS		
0	HIRE OF HALL	0	
299.37	INSURANCE	309.44	
114.98	Asset purchase - 2 x heaters	0	
32	Asset purchase -Quarantine boxes	0	
234	Asset purchase - Covid screens	0	
200	Contribution to Paris Council for insulation	0	
230	WCL WEB Site fee	60	
0	Donation in memory of C. Reber	25	
1110.35	SUB TOTAL	394.44	394.44
	EXPENSE CLAIMS -		
155.57	(a) LIBRARY - Office expenses	107.69	
0.00	(b) EVENTS:	0	
0.00	(c) SUNDRY EXPENSES - flowers as a leaving gift and children's books	48.51	
0.00	(d) Office mobile top up	20	
155.57	SUB TOTAL	176.20	176.20
1265.92	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		570.64
-456.52	SURPLUS FOR YEAR		536.00
6578.27	NET FUNDS AS AT 28 FEB 21	6578.27	
	SURPLUS FOR YEAR	536.00	
	TOTAL AT 28 FEB 22	7114.27	
	CASH IN BANK	7084.13	
	CASH IN HAND	30.14	
		7114.27	

Annette Dyke
Treasurer

I have examined the book and records of Friends of Wool Library and am satisfied that the above account are a true record for the year ending 28 February 2022

auditor -

(SJ Smith)