

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2023/4

Overview

Friends of Wool Library (FoWL) is a registered charity and we submit our accounts and our annual report to the Charity Commission each year.

Friends of Wool Library has continued the management of Wool Community Library and successfully completed the eleventh year of operation on 15th January 2024. We held a Coffee morning to celebrate our birthday which was attended by 15 volunteers who had an opportunity to get together socially and meet people other than the Duty Coordinators!

The library has continued to open on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and on Thursday and Saturday mornings. The library is open for 8 hours a week across the 4 days. On average, and taken across the year, 12 customers come into the library each session.

We are indebted to the Parish Council for the support they give us in paying our rent and funding our heating costs. That support amounts to approximately £2000 a year so is not insignificant.

We have 80 members and we are extremely grateful for the support they give. Membership fees contribute to the running costs of the library and help to support initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge.

Trustees

The Trustees in the last year were:

Sue Kerr - Chair

Treasurer - Annette Dyke

Committee members - Andrew Kerr, Claire Kingman, Rosa Adams, Lizzie Chilvers, Judy Price and Jennifer Cottam. Judy Price joined us as a new Trustee on 1st June 2023 and Jennifer Cottam joined us as a Trustee and our new Membership Secretary on 19th September. We were sorry to say goodbye to previous Membership Secretary Judith Beeby who left the committee in September when she and her husband Robin moved away from the area. They were both highly valued members of the team.

Jane Pearson stood down as a Trustee at the last AGM but she remains our minute secretary and we are extremely grateful to her for all her hard work on our behalf.

The Trustees have met 5 times since the last AGM.

Under our constitution, the 2 longest serving members of the committee stand down unless they choose re-election or unless they have already been re-

elected 3 times. This year there are some major changes to our committee which I'll outline later.

Every one of our Trustees makes a contribution to our success, and I'd like to thank them all for their support and hard work over the last year.

Activities/Operation

We currently have 24 volunteers, most of whom are active either on shift or organising children's activities. We are very lucky to be able to attract so many willing helpers, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who gives up their time to help us. In particular I'd like to thank our new Storytime team - Esther Farr, Margaret Evered, Tricia Hook and David Pritchard who have been reading to the Bovington Academy reception class on Thursday mornings at the library. Each week they are entertaining half of the class with a story and a chance to choose a book - thus bringing a new group of children into the library to enjoy reading.

We have up to date policies on Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Data Protection which are reviewed annually and which all volunteers sign to say they have read and agreed.

As outlined in last year's strategy report, we have continued to train volunteers on shift rather than in special sessions, and we were very grateful to Annette Dyke for allowing us to have our summer party at her home, so that volunteers could spend some social time together - something else that we decided was important when we were discussing what we wanted to do to retain our most important asset, our volunteers.

We run each shift with a Duty Coordinator and a volunteer. The Duty Coordinators form the Operational Management Group, which submits a written report to Trustees on the day to day running of the library. We currently have 7 Duty Coordinators - myself, Jane Pearson, Annette Dyke, Pauline Diment, Claire Kingman, Ali Burnal and Lizzie Chilvers. After each shift the Duty Coordinator will send a report to the other DCs so that any issues or concerns can be raised and so each shift can be prepared for what will be required. All the DCs have access to the library email and can print off the necessary lists and instructions from Dorset Libraries. This method of running the library has proved invaluable as the lead volunteers have been able to quickly communicate changes in practice required by County, and keep the library running smoothly. It has proved invaluable having 2 more Duty Coordinators this year, in line with the 2023 strategy, making it possible to cope better with inevitable absences through illness or holidays.

The Home Library Service, organised via the RVS using the library services, continues to help those who can't easily get to the library and we pay tribute to Claire Kingman and her team for their hard work to keep this valuable service going.

We are supported by Dorset Council with the help of a Community Library Liaison Officer - Petra Peters - who is on hand for support with the day to day running of the library. We also have support from the Customer Service Manager Nikki Blair who can give advice on operational matters. Dorset Libraries arranges 2 meetings a year where updates and policy are outlined and discussed - these meetings are attended by all the 8 Community Managed Libraries in Dorset.

Achievements

One of our major achievements this year was a new, enhanced approach to the annual Summer Reading Challenge, in line with our declared 2023 strategy. Trustees gave their blessing to increased investment into supporting the challenge by purchasing special book bags with the Summer Reading Challenge logo which were given out to children reading just 2 books. The idea behind this was to encourage more children to at least start the challenge - in the past we've noticed that children register but then don't return to the library having read any books. This new approach bore dividends in that 53 children signed up to take part and of those, 33 finished the challenge with only 7 children not reading any books at all. This is a marked increase in involvement compared to the previous year when 31 children started the challenge and 17 completed it. I would like to pay tribute to all our DCs and volunteers for wholeheartedly supporting the challenge and embracing the added work it brings. It is encouraging and exciting to see children so keen to come into the library and tell you about their reading. A big thank you too to the team that organised 2 free activity sessions in the summer holidays - it's a pity the weather was so hot that on one of the days we had no children to entertain!

We have had a little more involvement with local schools this year but school staffing still often means that an arranged visit will be postponed or even cancelled. I've mentioned the work we are doing on a regular basis with Bovington Academy and this is largely driven by the excellent relationship we have with the reception class teacher there. We attended schools to talk about the Summer Reading Challenge, and we also hosted a visit from Winfrith and Lulworth School in June and from Wool Primary in November. The work we do with local schools and youth organisations is crucial in bringing not just children but also their parents into the library and we are indebted to those who work hard to make these visits successful - in particular Esther Farr, Jane Pearson and Cathy Forbes.

Esther also continues to help us with coordinating the support we get from local businesses. This is a valuable addition to funds as you can see from the balance sheet and we hope to encourage more corporate sponsorship in the future.

We took the opportunity to join the Community Managed Libraries Network this year - this is a national group representing volunteer run libraries across the country and has given us access to advice and support from a wider network than just Dorset, although we have also benefited from meeting up with Dorset Community Managed library colleagues this year too when we attended meetings at Stalbridge and Charmouth.

Our vision for a bigger library hasn't gone away - simply been put on hold while the Parish Council submits plans for approval. The current financial climate is causing a delay in pressing on with the hoped for improvements to the D'Urberville Hall which will include a much larger space for the library, but we are assured that eventually our dream will materialise!

Perhaps one of our most notable achievements this year has been to advertise the library in a more physical sense with new signage. A big shout out to Tim Elliott of Print in the Bag who did all the design work for free on our new window treatment and banner. Members of the public can now see at a glance on our window when we are open and our contact details while our new banner proclaims in no uncertain terms that the library is OPEN.

I say it every year but that's because it's true - the library is dependent on its Friends, its Trustees, but most of all its volunteers. This is my last annual report as Chair of Trustees, but I'm proud to have been part of such a wonderful group and glad to be continuing as Volunteer Coordinator. Thank you - all of you - for doing what you do - and doing it so willingly and so well.

Friends of Wool Library Strategy report 2024

These were the points discussed at the strategy meeting held in January:

On funding - no plans are in place for any fundraising activity this year at the moment but we noted that if the Parish Council decides to press ahead with the extension to the D'Urberville Centre, including the library extension, we would need to approach grant aid providers for financial support. Trustees are keen to explore the possibility of approaching larger businesses in the area for enhanced corporate sponsorship. It was agreed that funding was an important issue for the next year and should be discussed as a regular agenda item.

On marketing - it was agreed that we should continue to promote the library especially to children and young people. We have again agreed to support the Summer Reading Challenge with the purchase of some branded merchandise which will be given to children to encourage them to continue with the challenge once they have signed up. It is felt that more involvement in the community is important so that people are reminded of the existence of the library.

On operational matters - we have updated our signatories to reflect the change in officers of the committee and transferred the management of the Charity Commission website to the new Chair. It was noted that the new Service Level Agreement between Friends of Wool Library and Dorset Council will be forthcoming in 2024 and that the Trustees would be responsible for ensuring its adoption.

On our policies - we reviewed our Health and Safety Policy and checked that our Safeguarding and Data Protection policies were in line with Dorset Council.

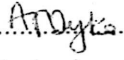
On training - we agreed that we would continue to train new volunteers on the job rather than in out of hours sessions, but we noted that with the new Library Management System planned for installation this year we might need more formal training sessions. Some Duty Coordinators will be trained in Dorchester with a view to cascading their knowledge to the other DCs.

Given that the new committee will be responsible for initiatives in the following year I'd like to invite Judy Price, as Chair designate, to give the meeting some information about ideas for marketing and promotion.

FRIENDS OF WOOL LIBRARY - CHARITY NO 1173556

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 29th February 2024

2022/23	INCOME GROSS	2023/24	
445.00	Membership Fees		385.00
511.40	Donations		305.00
101.37	Half fines returned by Dorset Council		101.09
10.13	Credit from Amazon Smile		18.54
78.97	HMRC Gift Aid Reimbursement		104.89
	total		914.52
	Fund Raising		
10	AGM Raffle		0
175.00	Business Card Display		185.00
		Total	1099.52
	EXPENDITURE GROSS		
102.50.	Hire of Hall		76.00
329.00	Insurance		364.27
46.60	Asset purchase - signage		254.18
80.00.	Annual WCL Website fee		80.00
33.60.	Annual Domain maintenance		33.60
0.00	Annual ICL web design protection		10.00
0	Summer Reading Challenge Gift Bags		57.00
0	Membership of Comm. Libraries Network		37.50
		total	912.55
	Expense Claims		
42.61.	Office expenses		93.25
19.09.	Flowers - thank you gift		15.00
0.00	Membership Cards		25.00
			133.25
	Events		
1173.05	10 year celebration		0
10	Mobile top up		0
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		1045.80
	SURPLUS FOR YEAR		53.72
	NET FUNDS AS AT 28th February 2023	6609.69	
	balance for year	53.72	
	Total as at 29th February 2024	6663.41	
	Cash in Bank	6657.48	
	Cash in Hand	5.93	
		6663.41	

Annette Dyke  Treasurer

I have examined the book and records of Friends of Wool Library and I am satisfied that the above account is a true record for the year ending 29 February 2024

Auditor: Frank Smart. 