

FRIENDS OF WOOL LIBRARY
MINUTES OF 14TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN
MAIN HALL, D'URBERVILLE CENTRE
ON
SATURDAY 31ST MAY 2025

Trustees: Judy PRICE (JP - Chair), Rosa ADAMS (RA - Treasurer), Claire KINGMAN (CK – Home Library Service), Jennifer COTTAM (JC - Membership Secretary), Andrew KERR (AK), Heather FLETCHER (HF)

Also present were: Annabelle GLASSPOOL, Sue KERR, Sharon PALMER, Eileen OSGOOD, Annette DYKE, Ali BURNELL.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Danzella TRASK, Simon KINGMAN, Esther FARR, Frank SNART (Trustee), David and Margaret SMITH (Honorary Members), Jane PEARSON, Pat STANLEY, Val PANTER.

2. Minutes of AGM held on 19th March 2024.

These were approved as a correct record. Proposed by Rosa ADAMS, seconded by Claire KINGMAN.

3. Annual Report of the Trustees Chair.

JP gave the following report, focusing on the events of the 2024-25 financial year:

Overview

JP reminded the meeting of the objectives of the CIO:

- to advance the education of the general public in Wool and the surrounding area, in particular, though not exclusively, by the provision of a lending library;
- to further benefit the residents of Wool and the surrounding neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by bringing together said residents, local authorities, voluntary and other organisations, in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare and with the aim of improving the conditions of life for the residents in particular in relation to leisure time occupation.

A big thank you went to the Parish Council, FoWL members and business partners for their continuing generosity and to library volunteers without whom the library couldn't continue its work.

It was decided to hold the AGM on a Saturday afternoon to enable those who work during the week to attend and to encourage attendance by those who prefer not to venture out in the dark in the winter. The choice of room was made to increase accessibility. The limited attendance might indicate the decision was not entirely successful and will be reviewed for future events.

The year will certainly be remembered by volunteers, particularly those who take the lead in managing the library, as the 'Year of the New System'. After nearly a year, there remain some hiccups with the New System, as with all complex new systems. All public and community Dorset Libraries experienced similar frustrations, and the Dorset Community Libraries Group were helpful and supportive, meeting more frequently than would normally be the case to share anxieties, advice and some solutions. Throughout this time problems experienced were reported to Dorset Libraries to raise awareness of the specific issues met with by community libraries. Ongoing is the lack of email notifications for reserved books and return dates. The roll-out to Libraries West of improvements has been announced but no timescale has been given as yet.

Despite these difficulties, the number of new customers has increased and, although Wool is the smallest community library, it didn't have the smallest increase. We don't have a breakdown of numbers of adult and children's books borrowed but the total number of books issued has gone down. Perhaps of relevance is that we sometimes hear people ask, 'Is there a library in Wool?'. However, in the last eight months, there was an average of 190 visitors to the library each month, the highest number (197) being in November. We started recording the numbers of children and adults in February and of 182 visitors that month, 25 were children. Very few sessions were recorded with no visitors. There is still a need to advertise and promote the library and its services more and to help this, we have a new flag at the corner of the library when open, and a new sign on the outside wall with our new logo. It will be interesting to see how things develop over the next year, with the extension now submitted to the planning authority.

Our volunteers and their activities

Each January a coffee morning is held for all the volunteers to celebrate the library's birthday. Currently, there are 20 volunteers and 7 lead volunteers, so it is quite a celebration and is hosted by the lead volunteers.

Children are important customers, and special thanks go to all those dedicating time to encouraging children's interest in books, stories, information - everything we can gain from the printed word. Historically, school visits to the library start in the January term. Sadly, Bovington Academy sometimes experiences staffing problems which prevent the children visiting. To overcome this problem, the library is being Taken Out to schools as well. Storytime sessions at Wool Church of England School started as planned and are much enjoyed.

The Summer Reading Challenge took place over the children's summer holidays with 49 children registering to take part. The volunteers encouraged the children by listening to their reports on the books they had read, and putting a star chart up in the library to show the numbers of books read. 26 children completed the challenge by reading six books, two children read 1 book, 5 children read 2 books and two children read 3 books. Prizes were awarded for each stage achieved. An activity session was held by the volunteers in August and enjoyed by 17 children. This was free for all the children and financed by FoWL contributions. We look forward to this

year's challenge - the theme being 'Story Garden - adventures in nature and the great outdoors'. A big thank you to Esther Farr and her team for all their hard work in making this annual event such a success for Wool Community Library and the children.

Plans to start a Lego Club in the school holidays have also been developed, with a successful trial run in the Easter holidays, organised by the busy children's team.

The library is also Taken Out by the Home Library Service team who have had a mixed year in terms of numbers of readers. This is a great free service, delivering books and audio books to anyone unable to get to the library. There were six readers for some time but we are now down to three. The team are always on the lookout for new users of this national service which, as reported in our newsletter, has received much praise in the past months.

The advertising space for local businesses in the entrance lobby is now full to overflowing, with 25 businesses taking the opportunity to have their business cards and some pamphlets on view. It is hoped we can ask the businesses to advertise the library in return with a sticker or library leaflet on display.

The Library website has been updated in line with ICL. This includes the new books list which it is hoped can be expanded to include some recommendations and reviews. This can then be linked to our Facebook page which may also have a teenager/children's section. So, watch that space!

FoWL Membership

Membership happily retained member numbers during the year. We continue to be in a nicely balanced situation of the membership renewals together with donations giving an adequate income to cover our bills. It is always helpful if you make sure you have a receipt or a membership card as proof of your renewal payment.

Sadly, two volunteers, founding trustees and longstanding members of the library died this year – Chris Whish and Alasdair Berrie.

The Events Team - Taking the Library Out

As a new venture, the Events Team 'Took the Library Out' to the Wool Charter Fair and to a very windy Carnival last year. These were successful opportunities for increasing awareness of the existence of a library in Wool.

We took the opportunity to collect information by way of a survey at each event. A total of 35 surveys were completed. For the majority, the library was *important* or *very important* with borrowing materials, use of photocopier/scanner/printer, on-line services and inter-library services being most important. 24 respondents considered customer service to be *good* or *excellent*, with 20 assessing online services, inter-library services, reserving books and opening hours to be *good* or *excellent*. In all categories, the majority of responses not falling into the *good* or *excellent* category were rated as *don't know/not applicable*. For a full overview of the survey responses, please see the Summary of the WCL Survey 2024 on our display boards or request a copy directly.

These outings, together with the survey, enabled us to engage in conversations with people of all ages, walks of life and interests about their view of libraries and their place in the community today. We are always looking for additional places to Take the Library Out. Whilst at these events, we realised we had little knowledge of who many of our members are so, an enjoyable Tea & Cake afternoon was held in September to 'get to know you' and provide an opportunity for you to get to know each other. Another similar event is planned for later this year.

A quarterly newsletter has been shared with all members – by email or delivered by hand, keeping you up to date with our activities, plans and invitations. We hope you enjoy reading them.

Policies and Agreements

Our Service Level Agreement has been duly signed and submitted to Dorset. All policies have been reviewed as required and kept in line with Dorset Libraries.

4. Treasurer's Report

RA explained that, due to an unforeseen and long period in hospital, she has focused her attention on bringing all available information and documentation together. The accounts suggest a slight discrepancy of an extra, unexplained £2.50 compared to the actual bank balance. At the end of our financial year our bank assets were £6913.48 whereas the accounts showed £6915.98. As the paperwork needed to be able to check the discrepancy was not available to RA, it was agreed that the extra should be written off to enable this year's accounting to start with the correct balance.

The table below shows a general overview of the accounts (a more detailed version can be provided on request).

MEMBERSHIP INCOME	ADVERTISING INCOME	DONATIONS INCOME	FUNDRAISING	MISC. INCOME	TOTAL INCOME
£430.00	£165.00	£226.50	£102.00	£130.97	£1,054.47

TOTAL EXPENDITURE
£757.21

BANK ASSETS	PETTY CASH BOX	TOTAL ASSETS
£6,915.98	£0.00	£6,915.98

Due to LC stepping down as Trustee, HF will be approved by LC to replace her as bank signatory.

5. Election of Trustees

We started the year as a team of seven Trustees. We recently happily gained another one, Heather Fletcher having been successfully co-opted, but sadly will lose three today as Andrew, Claire and Lizzie are all stepping down. We are fortunate to have been approached by others wishing to join us so, hopefully, we will be back up

to a fuller number soon. We will still be delighted if others show an interest in joining us and with the new team we hope to continue to address the FoWL objectives successfully.

6. To approve the appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts

External auditing was agreed as a useful element for transparency, even though not a requirement for the Charity Commission. Once the paperwork and the accounts have been checked by the Treasurer, they will be submitted for independent examination. An examiner will be sought in the meantime.

7. Future Development Strategy - Fundraising

The Trustees feel that, as our annual income from membership fees and donations balances with our expenditure and there is a large fundraising project on the horizon with our involvement in the D'Urberville extension project, we should save our energies and collect all available information regarding donors, and funding opportunities in preparation for this large task. The planning application has been submitted! With Dorset finances continually shrinking, Dorset Library is now sharing many funding opportunities. The Community Managed Libraries Network, of which we are a member, recently devoted their monthly meeting to Fundraising, sharing many links and potential sources of funding – a very useful meeting.

8. Matters arising not on the Agenda

It was highlighted that for ten days at the beginning of September, the D'Urberville Centre will be closed due to scheduled works being undertaken on the surrounding parking area.

Immense gratitude was expressed towards the Trustees who are standing down for all their work over the past years.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS AT A GLANCE

PERIOD 1 MARCH 2024 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025

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LIBRARY ACCOUNT 1 MARCH 24 TO 28 FEBRUARY 25

INCOME

[illegible]

LIBRARY ACCOUNT 1 MARCH 24 TO 28 FEBRUARY 25

EXPENDITURE

VOUCHER	DATE	ITEM	HALL HIRE		INSURANCE		EXPENSES		TOTAL EXPENDITURE		
			CASH	CHQ/FPI	CASH	CHQ/FPI	CASH	CHQ/FPI	CASH	CHQ/FPI	TOTAL
EX1	19.3.24	AGM		13.13					0.00	13.13	13.13
EX2	20.3.24	SIM					1.99		1.99	0.00	1.99
EX3	23.04.24	ICL WEB						80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00
EX4	23.04.25	OFFICE					8.99		8.99	0.00	8.99
EX5	07.05.24	ICL WEB						10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00
EX6	02.07.24	ICL WEB						31.20	0.00	31.20	31.20
EX7	02.07.24	STAMPS					6.80		6.80	0.00	6.80
EX8	02.07.24	GIFT TOKEN					50.00		50.00	0.00	50.00
EX9	02.07.24	BOOK TOKEN					20.00		20.00	0.00	20.00
EX10	02.07.24	LEBARA					5.97		5.97	0.00	5.97
EX11	03.07.24	BOOK TOKEN					40.00		40.00	0.00	40.00
EX12	03.07.24	BOOK TOKEN					20.00		20.00	0.00	20.00
EX13	15.09.24			30.00					0.00	30.00	30.00
EX14	07.10.24	OFFICE					7.99		7.99	0.00	7.99
EX15	10.10.24	BOOK TOKEN						25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00
EX16	10.01.25	INS				368.64			0.00	368.64	368.64
EX17	02.02.25	CML MEMB						37.50	0.00	37.50	37.50
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			0.00	43.13	0.00	368.64	161.74	183.70	161.74	595.47	757.21

[illegible]

BALANCE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR ACCOUNTS

CARRIED FORWARD AS OF:		01.03.2024
BANK BALANCE	PETTY CASH BALANCE	TOTAL BALANCE
£6,657.48	£95.12	£6,752.60

BANK ASSETS	PETTY CASH BOX	TOTAL ASSETS
£6,915.98	£0.00	£6,915.98

		IN	OUT	5.93
01.03.24				5.93
04.03.24				5.93
04.03.24				5.93
05.03.24				5.93
11.03.24				5.93
18.3.24	DONATION	0.90		6.83
18.3.24	DONATION	1.00		7.83
	LEBARA			1.99
21.03.24				5.84
03.04.24				5.84
05.04.24				5.84
08.04.24				5.84
08.04.04	ANNETTE		8.99	-3.15
25.04.24	DONATION	10.00		6.85
25.04.24	STAMPS		6.80	0.05
25.04.24	TRANSFER	25.00		25.05
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08.05.24				25.05
11.05.24				25.05
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11.05.24	RAFFLE	76.00		101.05
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