

ANNUAL REPORT

Jun 2022 – Jun 2023

Finham Library Action Group (FLAG)
Reg. Charity No. 1178631

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fifth annual report of FLAG, the registered charity which took over the running of Finham Community Library after it was faced with closure by Coventry City Council.

It operates outside of the statutory framework that is applicable to council-run libraries so has a large measure of independence.

June 2022 saw the end of the third of three one-year leases granted to FLAG and a new five-year lease was negotiated to run from June 2022 until June 2027 now that there were no uncertainties surrounding Covid. Under the terms of the new lease FLAG will be required to make a contribution to running costs which will start at a sum of £1000 rising by £500 each year of the lease.

Finham Community Library continues to serve not only those within the surrounding parish of Finham and continues to welcome many from neighbouring districts and across the border from the county of Warwickshire.

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED

FLAG continues to run a successful book-lending service to the community with both Council owned books and FLAG owned books available to be borrowed. FLAG continues to increase the number of books to be lent and had approximately 2,900 available as of June 2023. FLAG books and jigsaws continue to be issued on a trust basis. We have a selection of books in foreign languages including Punjabi

and Gujarati as well as large print books and a small selection of talking books which are changed from time to time by Coventry City Council.

We continue to offer activities for children in both term-time and school holidays. An introduction to music and interactive play, Rhyme Time runs very successfully twice per week and the sessions are often over subscribed. The science sessions run by academics from Coventry University continue to be popular with school-age children. There is also a regular “Mini-Monday” session which encourages craft activities for pre-schoolers based on a suitable story, song or poem. The costs of these activities range from £1.50-£3.50 depending on the content. Young parents continue to make new friendships with other parents at these sessions and some have now formed independent social media groups to keep in touch. In December 2022 Santa once again made a visit to the library to the delight of many young visitors and he has promised to come again in 2023 although we will need to enlist a new Santa as the old one is retiring!

There are plans in place for us the library to deliver chair exercise sessions to older / less mobile people and to this end three volunteers have been training and will be taking exams shortly. The aim of this session is to encourage greater mobility and fitness among older and less mobile and there will be a social session after the exercises to encourage greater social interaction within this group. It is expected that this will commence in September 2023.

The library volunteers try to commemorate as many relevant occasions as possible through various means including displays or activities. For example there was a wall display to commemorate Diwali and activities relating to Easter and Christmas festivities. With the untimely death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022, the library decided to open a book of condolence for the local community and many local people, both old and young passed on their sympathies to His Majesty King Charles III via this book which was duly sent to Buckingham Palace. We also celebrated the coronation of the new monarch with

appropriate activities for younger members of our community.

VOLUNTEERS

We continue to have a strong, well-trained cohort of volunteers and we recruit new volunteers as necessary. Trustees visit all volunteers during their shifts on a regular basis to ensure good communication and to listen to any comments or suggestions they may have regarding the running of the library.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUTSIDE BODIES

Our relationship with Coventry City Council continues to flourish with both parties being happy with our current arrangements and we are looking forward to continuing to develop the library as a community hub for local citizens. Local ward councillors hold regular surgeries at the library and both the councillors and members of the public who attend have been very pleased with this arrangement. We have also hosted meetings conducted by our local Healthwatch group to help focus on local needs and concerns.

We also enjoy an excellent relationship with the local primary school who regularly bring children to visit.

We post news of our activities and links to useful community information on local social media and we continue to use our own website to provide information.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

We will continue to offer a suitable range of activities for the local community and to develop relationships with outside bodies. We are particularly keen to redefine our contribution to local health initiatives. We will continue to fundraise in the usual manner via booksales, quizzes and hosted activities and we are confident that we can meet our expenses and future plans.

Trustees

Denise Bird (chair)

Susan Vickery

Ina Murphy

Stan MacCarthy

Andrew Gibbons