

Oxford Union Society Library Strategy Committee
Minutes for Meeting TT 2018 Sixth Week
Wednesday 30th May at 10.30am – Morris Room

Present: Amanda Saville (*Nominee of Chairman of Board of Curators*), Fiona Wilkes (*Nominee of Chairman of Board of Curators*), Jamie Jordan (*Library Committee Nominee*), John Whitehead (*Library Committee nominee*), Laura Johnson (*Deputy Librarian, Secretary*), Lindsey Warne (*Bursar*), Ljilja Ristic (*Nominee of Bodleian Director*), Sean Power (*Senior Librarian, Chair*), Thomas Corrick (*Librarian-in-Charge*), William Prescott (*Library Committee nominee*).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Nicholas Field-Johnson (*OLDUT representative*) and Jeremy Worth (*I.T. Officer*).

Gui Cavalcanti (*President*), Genevieve Athis (*Librarian-Elect*), Melissa Hinkley (*Ex-Junior Librarian*), Sabriyah Saeed (*Ex-Junior Librarian*) and Shivani Ananth (*Junior Librarian*) were absent. The Bursar reported that the President had a prior commitment.

2. Membership

The Librarian-in-Charge introduced himself and a new Library Committee Nominee, Jamie Jordan. In their absence, he also introduced the new President, Gui Cavalcanti, the new Junior Librarian, Shivani Ananth and the new Librarian-Elect, Genevieve Athis.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

John Whitehead raised the possibility of the Union providing domestic access to the internet through computer terminals, as the computer terminals in Library reception are restricted to SOLO and the University of Oxford website. This was an issue last raised and discussed at Strategy Committee in Michaelmas Term 2017.

4. Senior Librarian's Report

The Senior Librarian first welcomed the new Librarian-in-Charge, Thomas Corrick, who has been in post for seven weeks. He thanked Amanda Saville and all those involved in the recruitment process for their time and effort.

The new Librarian-in-Charge has spoken with the professional fundraiser, John McCaffrey, in order to discuss the role of the Library in the new fundraising campaign due to be launched by OLDUT in the Autumn. The Librarian-in-Charge will now formulate the Library's strategic priorities for funding. In response to a question by Amanda Saville, the Senior Librarian confirmed that some of the money raised during the fundraising drive would be specifically dedicated to the Library. Whereas OLDUT thinks that the priority for funding should be to improve the fabric of the Union buildings, it is also felt that the Library has an important role to play in fundraising efforts by promoting the institution as a guardian of education and free speech.

5. IT Report

There were no IT matters to report of relevance to the Library.

The Senior Librarian reported on an email received from the IT Officer suggesting that the IT report be removed in future as a standing item from the agenda. The IT Officer had explained that he began attending Strategy Committee at a time when there were a great many strategic IT issues occurring, but as this was no longer the case it would be better to just have an IT report when there was something specifically to report. The IT Officer had iterated that Strategy Committee was not an appropriate forum to ask specific technical questions and that routine IT matters could be dealt with in management meetings. The Librarian-in-Charge confirmed that fortnightly management meetings between himself, the Bursar, the House Manager, Events Manager, Accounts Manager and I.T. Officer now provided a forum for communication regarding operational level I.T. matters.

In response to a comment about the wifi, the Senior Librarian noted that the IT Report had in the past provided a forum for members to find out about the wifi situation. The Bursar responded that the wifi was now as good as it could possibly be in the building and that there had been far fewer complaints since the Union switched to the BT Infinity fibre connection once this became available. Will Prescott noted that the connection still sometimes dropped off in the Old Library. It was suggested that this may be due to a large number of people being connected at once.

It was agreed to remove the IT Report as a standing item from the agenda on the understanding that a report would be included when required. It was felt that the IT Officer should remain a member of Strategy Committee.

6. GDPR Implications

The Librarian-in-Charge thanked the Bursar for her work in overseeing the implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for the Union. He then reported on the specific implications of the regulation for the Library. The members' suggestion form in the Old Library has now been changed so that no personally identifying information is required. The Librarian-in-Charge has asked the Returning Officer that practice of reading out the names of members with seriously overdue books in the debating chamber be suspended due to a concern that members have not consented for their data to be used in this way. The Library will continue to work with the University who host the Library's management system, but the University is already very advanced in their GDPR preparations. The Library only sends out emails relating to overdue books and not for any marketing purposes so this should be unaffected by the new regulation.

7. Library Statistics

The Librarian-in-Charge presented some statistics he had prepared on the Library. The Library currently has just under 10000 registered users and just over 2000 active users, i.e. those who have borrowed from the library in the last 12 months. Undergraduates make up the largest proportion of active users. There has been a steady decline in active users and in the number of books loaned over the past decade, but the numbers of people coming to the Library has remained fairly stable. There are currently about 46000 items on the library catalogue with approximately 5000 historic collection books still to catalogue. Cataloguing of the retrospective collection has been progressing well with a small peak in the year 2016-17. 1272 items have been added to the catalogue in the past year since July 2017. Slightly more books have been withdrawn than have been added to the collection

over the past few years. Overall, although borrowing and registered membership is declining, footfall through the Library has remained steady. This indicates a core group of regular users and suggests that the Library is increasingly being viewed as a place to work or read, rather than as a traditional lending library. The value of the Library thus partly rests in the fabric of the building and in the environment and experience provided.

8. Marketing and User Experience

The Librarian-in-Charge then set out his plans for marketing the Library and improving the Library experience. Whilst not ignoring the importance of the collections, the priority will be to improve the visibility of the Library by becoming more involved with the activities of the rest of the Union. This will be especially important around the time of the Michaelmas term membership drive. At the same time, the Library will be rebranded with new signage and the environment will be improved with the addition of cushions and blankets. Social media is already being used to market the Library and this will take on renewed importance during the membership drive.

The Bursar commented that the Library was obviously doing something right as she had received two phone calls last term from students who were not Union members asking if they could use the Library to study as they had heard it was such a nice place to work. John Whitehead commented that usage of the Goodman Library as a study space had definitely risen over the past few years, having previously been in decline. The Bursar agreed on this point. John Whitehead also agreed with the Librarian-in-Charge that it would be a good idea for the Library to be more involved in the membership drive as Junior members tended to focus their advertising efforts on the famous speakers and cheap alcohol at the expense of the Library.

Jamie Jordan commented that it should also be emphasised that the Library holds specialist academic books to support taught courses and on longer loan periods than many faculty and departmental libraries. This was what had encouraged her to make greater use of the Library. It was emphasised that there was no downside to generous loan periods as books could still be recalled within two weeks if requested by another user. William Prescott also felt that people were not necessarily aware of how useful the libraries collections were and that this should be advertised. The Librarian-in-Charge agreed with these points and suggested that the Library would be borrowing ideas from bookshops in order to make the collections more visible.

Disappointment was expressed that none of the Junior Officers were present at the meeting to hear the Librarian-in-Charge set out his plans for the Library.

Action: *The Senior Librarian will write to the Junior Officers reminding them of the importance of attending Strategy Committee.*

Action: *The Librarian-in-Charge will hold a meeting with the Junior Officers to discuss his vision for the Library and especially the role of the Library during the Michaelmas Term membership drive.*

9. Matters Raised by Library Committee

There were no matters arising from Library Committee.

10. News from the Bodleian Libraries

Ljilja Ristic gave an overview of recent developments within the Bodleian Libraries of interest to the Oxford Union Library. Firstly, the digital reading list project, designed to link departmental reading lists hosted in the VLE with SOLO holdings, is progressing well. Representatives from the different divisions have been chosen and a pilot project is planned for June/July time. Secondly, the Bodleian is working hard on ensuring compliance with GDPR and has been consulting with all affected parties, including students and the public. Thirdly, the SOLO upgrade project is progressing with comments being collected on the new test interface, which is accessible via a link from the current SOLO homepage. Fourthly, a new public interface has been launched for the Oxford Research Archive (ORA). Records from ORA are now fully integrated with SOLO, including those for theses and articles. An integrated search through SOLO will thus retrieve all relevant ORA records. Fifthly, the University is hosting an Open Access Oxford Week from 11-15 June. A programme of talks and events to book is now available: <http://openaccess.ox.ac.uk/home-2/open-access-oxford-week-11-15-june-2018/> Sixthly, the yearly deadline is now approaching for reporting any copying carried out under the terms of the Copyright Licensing Agreement (CLA) licence purchased by the University. The Bodleian has also developed detailed guidance and training on the terms of the University's CLA in order to improve compliance across the University. Seventhly, the Bodleian and Rothermere American Institute have begun subscribing to the Daily Mail Historical Archive, which provides Oxford researchers with facsimile digital access to issues of the newspaper from 1896-2004. Eighthly, a new marketing campaign for the Weston Library will focus on the institution's openness to the public and school groups. Lastly, planning for the refurbishment of the RSL is now at the feasibility stage. It is intended that the refurbishment will open up some of the library space to the public, particularly as a venue for exhibitions. Other areas of the building, particularly the underground reading rooms, will be occupied by GLAM. The new fully operational lift will be used for transferring large exhibits to underground storage areas.

The Senior Librarian thanked Ljilja Ristic for her report.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting: 10.30am, Wednesday 7 November 2018

The next meeting of the Library Strategy Committee will take place on Wednesday 7th November 2018, Michaelmas Term Week 5, at 10:30am in the Morris Room.