

# **Friends of Sonning Common Library AGM**

**held at 7.00 p.m. on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 via Zoom**

## **1. Welcome**

Jill Hutchinson (Chair of FoSCL) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. This was attended online by the FoSCL Committee (Jill Hutchison, Jenny Jones, Helen Fort, Rosemary Dunstan (Library Manager), Trish Rockell, Gordon Haigh, Alison Smith, Annabel Irwin and Clare Keen) as well as Friends, Volunteers and members of the local community: Jenny Ward, Vera Butler, Fiona Cummins, Teresa Jones, Sue Frayling-Cork, Val Harris, Joan Lamprell, Robin John, David Jones, Lesley Davis, Jill Collinson, Ruth Whitaker, Elaine Govett, Jane Starkey and Helen Lewis.

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from: June Duckworth (Proxy to support Chairman's decision), Jeni Wood (Proxy to support Committee's decision), Robbie Foster (Proxy to support Committee's decision), Diana Pearman, Sandra Brown, Pauline Whitehead, Margaret Moola, Elaine Williams, Simon Branch, Barbara Pilbrow, Sandra Atkinson, Sue Litchfield, Michael Cotton and Bev White.

## **3. Minutes of the 2020 AGM**

As the minutes had been previously distributed, Jill asked for any matters arising. There were no matters arising that would not be covered in The Chairman's Report, so the minutes were duly approved.

## **4. Chairman's Report**

Jill welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending and delivered the following report:

'This past year has been another challenging one, but there have been several milestones, which marked our 21 years in the current building.

At the beginning of the year, we were faced with another lockdown and the closure of all facilities in the library. However, some good did come of this temporary closure as the County, needing to use up unspent monies before the end of the financial year, agreed to decorate the library. Making the most of some leftover materials, the FoSCL committee decided to have the office redecorated, at our expense. We also purchased some new shelving and a table for the office to try and create more space. Some noticeboards and bookshelf end panels were recovered and rehung.

Last year, one of the founder members of the Friends of Sonning Common Library, sadly died. Cecily Hunt worked hard to save the library, when it was in danger of closure in the '90s. We felt that we had to honour her memory in some way and purchased our new clock and had a small plaque made in her memory.

On April 12th we re-opened with restrictions still in place, but with the hope that the successful vaccine rollout would mean we could open fully on June 21st. Many of you will have seen the banners we had made to let the community know we were open again. Our thanks to the Parish Council for allowing us to hang a banner outside the village hall in

April. The summer reading challenge this year was 'Wild World Heroes' and we had a very interesting visit from ZooLab for Primary Age Children. They brought with them some real wild world heroes. During the holidays we had a return visit of the Lego Masters and the Art Lab left us with materials to use on our Saturday craft mornings. We were very aware that we needed to get people back into the library and these events were heavily subsidised. We plan to have another visit from ZooLab in the Christmas holidays, when a seasonal story will again be illustrated with real creatures. Story times have also resumed, as have rhyme times.

Sadly, we had to cancel the author's evening this year, but we can hopefully re-arrange it in the New Year, when Sylvia Vetta and Loraine Fergusson will tell us of their inspirations for writing. We have also run a Creative writing workshop, under the expert guidance of poet, Rachel Piercey. This was well supported, was thoroughly enjoyable and is certainly something to consider repeating in the future.

Our quiz in October was likewise well supported, there were extra restrictions on numbers in the village hall, but nevertheless it was an enjoyable evening. Our grateful thanks to Jenny Jones and her family for organising the bar.

One of our main challenges this year was to purchase 210 new books for the library, based on suggestions from our members, friends and volunteers. I will leave Rosemary to tell you how we are getting on. Thank you for all your suggestions.

As usual we couldn't manage without the support of you our friends, and our volunteers. Our heartfelt thanks to you all.

Also, thanks to Rosemary, Annabel and our relief staff, who have soldiered on through some very trying times. They have supported our events and given freely of their own time. This year Jenny Jones, Helen Fort and I must stand down from the committee, as we have completed our 5 years under the terms of our constitution. We have all agreed to keep in touch and support the committee. I am delighted to say that subject to your approval the other members have all agreed to stay on. But if we are to keep the Friends running, we do need new committee members. Please consider if you could offer some help and nominate yourself.'

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

Helen presented the audited accounts for 2020-2021, which are attached, and explained the Income and Expenditure. As is evident, she said that the numbers looked quite respectable and healthy.

More than 90 Friends renewed their membership – providing Rosemary with nearly £1,000 to buy books. There were also many generous donations – including a single payment of £500 from the estate of Peter Smith. The donations and a substantial gift-aid payment allowed us to carry out some capital improvements. We spent about £200 on a new table and some shelves and also paid to have the office repainted, using up the left over paint from the redecoration of the main Library, which the county funded. The Quiz was again highly profitable, bringing in more £500 in profits. This allowed us to subsidise other events, including visits from Zoolab and Lego Master Builders for young children. So we end the year in a very healthy state, adding a little to our reserves.

Helen thanked the Committee for the beautiful flowers she had received and said that she would be happy to provide help with any future Sonning Common Magazine inserts. She also invited people to email any questions they might have about the numbers.

## **6. Secretary's Report**

'We are slowly returning to normal and have been able to hold events again in the library. We have used email, Facebook, the website, posters and banners to try to ensure that the local community is aware of the events we have organised, changes to opening times and the current situation of the library. Although due to Covid 19 numbers were restricted this year, thanks to our wonderful Quiz masters Jill and John Hutchinson we managed to hold a successful quiz in October.

We are grateful to the local businesses who supported the raffle this year. Thank you to Brambles, Heath and Watkins, the Butchers Arms, Flemings as well as supporters of FoSCL.

Although we have lost a few of the original members of the volunteer group, we have recruited and trained new members thus have sufficient willing volunteers to help Rosemary and Annabel in the library.

Since becoming involved in the library seven years ago, I have been very fortunate to work with Jill and Helen, Rosemary and Annabel throughout this time.

I will be standing down from the committee after 5 years as Secretary, but I shall continue to organise the rota for the time being and help in any way I can to ensure Sonning Common Library continues to be a vibrant part of village life.'

## **7. Library Manager's Report**

'After being open to the public in October and December 2020, 2021 started in lockdown once again, with people being directed to Henley Library to 'click and collect' their library books. It was a very frustrating time – but it meant that the library could be redecorated without disruption to the public, and the office redesigned to give more space. (OCC paid for the painting of the main library, and FoSCL for the office.)

We finally reopened on 12th April, still with reduced opening hours and under Covid restrictions. We had to wait until July for Step 4 on the roadmap out of Covid, when we were allowed to reintroduce more normal activities, and volunteers, into the library. We finally regained our pre-Covid opening hours in September.

The Summer Reading Challenge (Wild World Heroes) was run in person, not online, and we had about half the normal number of children sign up for the challenge. We had 2 children's workshops during the summer (Lego MasterBuilders and ZooLab) which were heavily subsidised by FoSCL – and very well received. We were also able to have stories and crafts every Saturday in August – and homemade cakes for sale. My thanks to all the story readers, craft assistants and cake makers. Rhymetimes have also restarted, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 11am. Our Authors' Evening had to be cancelled, but the poetry workshop led by Rachel Piercey went ahead in September. The people who attended seemed to find it really enjoyable! The quiz evening in October was also well supported.

We hope to be able to restart our Digital Helper sessions soon, and also the

Scrabble Club, but both of these will be dependent on how willing people are to get close to each other, with or without masks.

I've been spending quite a lot of time selecting and ordering the 210 books for our 21st anniversary – thanks to everyone who has made suggestions. The books are only added to the official list when they have arrived in the library and been 'stickered' with the FoSCL sticker. I currently have only 96 books on the list – but do not worry as there are 117 on order, and I will be ordering more before Christmas! Once again, I do not know what next year will bring. Current visitor figures are about half of what they were pre-Covid. People seem to have got out of the habit of visiting the library, or possibly they are still concerned about mixing in public. Use of our public computers is about a quarter of what it was – possibly because so many people, especially children, acquired laptops/tablets/smartphones during lockdown that they have no need of the library computers (until it comes to printing, that is!) OCC library service is facing a wide-ranging review next year, and wants to know what the public wants/needs/expects from libraries in the future. If you have any ideas for attracting people into the library, please let us know.

Meanwhile I'd like to thank all the Friends, volunteers and staff for their continued support of Sonning Common Library during another difficult year, and I look forward optimistically to a better year ahead.'

Rosemary updated the number of books that had arrived and been stickered to 130 and added her heartfelt thanks to Jill, Jenny and Helen for all their hard work and help.

Robin John asked if the above-mentioned review had been imposed on libraries; Rosemary explained that if libraries are classed as essential services, it is important to find out what people want, particularly as user numbers are falling. One idea that had been floated was for libraries to open on Sundays, but this does not seem likely, or certainly not for smaller libraries anyway.

## **7. Election of the Committee**

Jill informed the meeting that the FoSCL constitution stated that the committee should stand for re-election every year and should serve a maximum period of five years. The following Committee members are willing to stand again.

<b>Clare Keen</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Trish Rockell</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>June Duckworth</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Gordon Haigh</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Alison Smith</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Bev White</b>	<b>2020</b>

Alison Smith was proposed as Chairman, Gordon Haigh as Treasurer and Bev White as Secretary. All were seconded and voted in unanimously. Jenny Jones said she was happy to continue organising the rota of volunteers and Clare Keen will continue as Minutes Secretary.

Jill asked if there was anyone willing to join the Committee and Elaine Newman volunteered. She was swiftly proposed, seconded and unanimously voted in.

The re-election of the committee members above, who agreed to continue for a further year, was unopposed.

## **9. AOB**

Sue Frayling-Cork thanked Rosemary for allowing the WI wall hanging to be displayed in the library and asked when it needed to be taken down. Rosemary said she would contact Sue Frayling-Cork as and when necessary but said that the wall-hanging had been much admired.

Alison thanked Jill, Jenny and Helen for all their hard work and wished that it had been possible to have a 'normal' AGM where they could have received their flowers and their deserved applause.

Helen reported that changing the date of renewal for membership to January had been a good idea and that she and Gordon would oversee this together in January 2022.

Jill asked everyone to spread the word to get people back into the library.

## **10. Date of Next AGM**

The next AGM would be in November 2022, the date to be arranged nearer the time.

There being no other business, Jill thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 7.29 p.m.

Accounts 2020/2021  
(last year in brackets)

Income:

Membership:	995.00	(330.00)
Donations:	1074.00	(282.00)
Cakes:	109.50	(120.27)
Events:	925.93	(1510.05)
Giftaid:	380.45	(294.99)
Sponsorship:	00.00	(277.00)
<u>Total Income:</u>	<u>3484.88</u>	<u>(2814.31)</u>

Expenditure:

Books:	971.14	(0.00)
Craft:	57.11	(7.50)
Events:	834.18	(787.43)
Admin:	243.50	(43.48)
Cap Improv':	986.41	(50.00)
<u>Total Exp':</u>	<u>3092.34</u>	<u>(888.51)</u>

To FoSCL funds:	392.54	(1925.80)
Plus Res' br/fwd:	3812.03	(2808.14)
Plus Reserve int:	00.36	(3.89)
Plus Cur' br/fwd:	2492.84	(1567.04)
Plus petty:	45.57	(50.00)
<u>Total Funds:</u>	<u>6743.34</u>	<u>(6354.87)</u>