

SOMERSHAM COMMUNITY LIBRARY (FOSL)

MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 27th SEPTEMBER 2021, 7.00pm

Present: Elsa Evans (Chair), Dawn Cave (Secretary), Glenda Meakin, Denise Calvert, Lesley Minter, Monica Scobey, Judith Bullard, Jean Stanton, Eddie Howlett and Sarah Howlett

1. CHAIR'S OPENING ADDRESS

The Chairman of Somersham Community Library, Elsa Evans, welcomed attendees. She remarked that unfortunately it had not been possible to have an AGM in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, so the Chair's report had been circulated in lieu of a meeting. Therefore the minutes for approval by this AGM were those of the previous AGM, which had been held in July 2019.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were presented on behalf of Anne Pawson, Barbara Hulme, Jenny Smith, Julyan Hunter, Pru Leah, Lorraine O'Brien, Elaine Buckridge, Denise Grey, Margaret Barfoot and Yvonne Cooper.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Chairman briefly summarised the content of the minutes of the previous AGM, copies of which were circulated at the meeting. The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Elsa advised that 2020-2021 had been an unusual year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Library's financial year ran from 1st June 2020 to 31st May 2021, and from March 2020 onwards, the library had been required to close as part of the national lockdown. A delivery service had been offered to deliver books to library users, and in addition a small number of volunteers had carried out essential tasks for the library. However, many volunteers had been shielding, during lockdown and thereafter. The take-up of the delivery service had not been significant but it had been appreciated by those who had used it.

The Library had followed the subsequent national lockdowns, and had reopened when it was safe to do so. Government and Library Service guidance had been closely followed during openings e.g. in August 2020 a one-way system was

introduced in the library, along with hand sanitizer, posters, etc. The library had had to close again for a month in line with national arrangements, reopening in December 2020, but closing again for the third lockdown at Christmas, until 13th April 2021, and had been open continuously since then, albeit on reduced hours, due to the availability of volunteers. The current three day opening would increase to four days with effect from 1st October 2021, and the library would hopefully revert to its original opening hours by Spring 2022, assuming the Covid-19 situation did not become worse.

All events, including fund raising events and activities for both children and adults had to be cancelled over the Covid period. A few events had taken place over the summer months this year, including a plant sale, book sale and school yard sale. A Coffee Morning at the Rose & Crown was being planned for November. The Reading Challenge had been held this summer but take-up and completion was not as good as previous years. More positively, the weekly school visits would be recommencing soon, and also the regular Sunday social sessions, where full library services are offered. The overriding concern was to ensure all services and events were Covid-safe for clients and volunteers alike. The measures taken to improve ventilation were outlined, which had been undertaken in compliance with the County Council's requirement as a landlord, and the Parish Council as Leasee of building. Jonney Gates had kindly undertaken railing work required completely free of charge, which was hugely appreciated.

Regrettably, the Treasurer was not available to attend the AGM to present the new accounts. Generally, the Library's financial status was not bad, because although income had been lost due to lack of fund raising, charges and fines being suspended, etc, there had been income from FOSL membership and generous donations, and also grant income. The library was very grateful to Feoffees who had provided grants for the screen and hand sanitizer so that the Library could open safely, and a grant had also been secured for the Junior Library prior to Lockdown, for over £1000. The Library had also, as a limited company with charity status, qualified for a Business Rates, so no Business Rates had to be paid in 2020-21. The Library had also been invited by Huntingdonshire District Council to apply for Coronavirus grant funding, which was a nationally funded programme to support small and medium sized businesses, and this had resulted in a grant of £10,000. Therefore, for the financial year ended May 2020, there was a net movement of £-383, which was comparable to previous years, but for the year ended May 2021, income was £12574, and expenditure £3052. So whilst the Library had a surplus, the income, particularly the £10,000 grant, had been vital, as otherwise there would have been a deficit.

In terms of books and items borrowed, those figures had reduced markedly during the periods the Library had been open since August 2020, which was to be expected.

The County Council had installed new computers, and a new system which meant that only library members could use the computers. Whilst computer usage had previously been monitored, this would not be monitored going forward. This did make things more difficult for casual users of the library, who now had to sign up to use the computers, and this issue had been raised with Library Services. It was noted that this had been introduced as an internet safety measure, so they can trace back any illegal activities.

The Library actively welcomed community groups to use the library space for meetings. A Reading Group had started, and there had been some requests from Age UK and Care Together to use meeting facilities. It was also anticipated that the Library could be used again for fundraising events going forward.

In terms of volunteers, the Library had experienced a reduction in volunteers over the previous 18 months, and some volunteers with underlying health issues were understandably reticent about being in a public-facing role given the ongoing Covid-19 situation. For this reason, the Library was actively seeking more volunteers to enable it to increase opening hours.

The Chairman paid special tribute to those volunteers who had still come into the library when it was closed during Lockdown, to undertake essential duties such as checking the building, post, etc. She gave a special thank you to Jean D, Yvonne, Monica and Denise for undertaking these duties.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the financial report was not available but would be circulated to FOSL Members as soon as it was available.

6. REPORT FROM TREASURER

Unfortunately the Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting. The accounts for 2020/2021 were not available as there had been a delay by the Auditor: there was no problem with the Accounts, it was just that they had not been fully signed off by the Auditor yet. Those present were requested to agree that as soon as they were available, the Management Committee had a mandate to sign them off. **All present agreed.**

The Chairman was pleased to report that the Board had a new Treasurer, Denise Grey. She passed on thanks to Lavinia Blackwood, who had stepped down as Treasurer after a number of years. The new Treasurer was actively reviewing a number of areas such as appointing a new accountant, and banking arrangements.

A budget had been drafted for the year, which included a project to install more energy efficient lighting, with some grant support including Feoffees confirmed. Other projects such as assessing the energy efficiency and insulation of the building were being reviewed. Judith B thanked the Board for providing such an exemplary

grant application to Feoffees, and Elsa paid tribute to Lesley who had organised the quotations.

7. RETIREMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS

In accordance with the retirement cycle in the Constitution, one-third of directors have to resign each year. This year there were 11 Members of the Management Board. Lavinia, Julyan, Barbara and Pat had resigned during the year, and they were thanked for their contributions. Glenda would retire, being the longest serving Member. Glenda confirmed that she was happy to be re-elected. Denise Grey and Monica had been co-opted by the Board, and were therefore proposed as Directors, with Denise Grey also being Treasurer. The Board was short of Directors, and welcomed proposals or expressions of interest. Elsa indicated that she would be resigning as a Director and Chairman in 2022.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance, and the meeting closed at 7.43pm.