

THE FRIENDS OF STREET LIBRARY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FOR THE YEAR 6 APRIL 2022 TO 5 APRIL 2023

WEDNESDAY 24 MAY 2023
5.15 PM IN THE SPC MEETING ROOM

Present: S Ivory, Chair; PJ Fry, Treasurer; A C Southern, Secretary;
M Fletcher, Volunteer Co-ordinator; N Copleston, D Drew, B Fry,
K & S Lawton,.

Apologies: S Bower, J Duval, J Hawker, J Hillman, M & J Lewis, L Markham,
K Midgley, S Monaghan, G Royle, J Sinclair, L Wilson.

1. Welcome and greeting by Sarah, Chair.
2. Chairman's Report – circulated to all members in advance of the meeting and repeated at the end of these minutes for ease of reference.

The year had been a positive one for the Friends of Street Library. There had been a pleasing outcome of the last Community Library Partnership meeting where FoStL's partners, Somerset Council and Street Parish Council had expressed satisfaction and appreciation of the progress of FoStL, our volunteers and efforts with events such as the 2022 Summer Reading Challenge, the regular Children and Families craft events and author talks held in the library. All these enjoyable and successful events had helped to raise the profile of the library in the local community. Sarah thanked everyone for their input and support with these events during the year.

September 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the forming of the Friends of Street Library.

3 September is this year's Merriman Park Fun Day. FoStL involvement would be discussed at the next Members' meeting. Nikki offered to help on the day.

3. Treasurers' Report – A summary had been circulated in advance with the agenda for the meeting. Peter said that the finances of FoStL were in a fairly healthy condition.

Larger issues included the April 2022 Strode Theatre Literary Festival towards which FoStL had offered a contribution of £500. Some months elapsed before Strode Theatre requested payment of the £500, which had now been made.

The other ongoing issue was the cost of providing a daily newspaper in the library after Somerset County Council withdrew funding in October 2022. Letters had been written to local business seeking help and Beveridge's Structural Engineers responded with £50 and LandSec – management of the Clarks Village, had offered a contribution which had been intended to cover the cost for a year. The arrangements for paying the grant to FoStL had led to a step forward in our financial arrangements as it was paid by credit card. The rise in the cost of the paper and the length of time it took for the grant to be received had impacted the amount of time left before we must again seek assistance with the cost. Once we reach November, we shall need to raise further funds. The daily newspaper is popular with readers in the library and the donations box adjacent to the newspaper table raises a small amount (approx.

£2.25 per month whilst the cost of the newspaper comes to over £40 per month). Other grant making organisations have rules around DBS checks that could be a stumbling block when seeking funding.

On a more positive note, Peter paid tribute to 'Liza the Deviser' whose quizzes had raised £320 during the year.

In addition FoStL continued to fulfil its commitment to provide the items the library needs in terms of running costs and raising the profile of the library through public events and author talks in the library.

FoStL currently had £200 more in the bank than at the same time last year.

Membership renewals came to 50 which was slightly down on last year when 64/65 members paid a £10 subscription. Angela would try to encourage Booker Group and Poetry Group attenders to join if they were not already members. Nikki suggested a flyer showing what FoStL had achieved and our contribution to the library and the community.

The accounts were approved on a show of hands. Angela also thanked Peter for his very comprehensive report, continued hard work and commitment to FoStL.

4. **Booker Group** – Julie Sinclair (leader of the Booker Group had provided a report which Angela read out (see attached). Thanks to Julie for her dedication, energy, commitment and enthusiasm were recorded.

Debra suggested making better use of the FoStL Facebook page or Street Library Facebook page to publicise FoStL events and regular group meetings.

5. **Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report** – Marilyn's Report (see attached) had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

There are approximately 12 volunteers, though numbers fluctuate. The two Spanish ladies had now left, Jackie's daughter was currently volunteering and Jenny Lewis is planning to volunteer. The meeting expressed appreciation to Marilyn for her hard work and commitment to this vital part of FoStL's partnership in the CLP. Thanks to all the volunteers was also recorded for their help and reliability in the library.

6. **Trustees**

Jenny Duval had stood down as a trustee during the year. Those present recorded sincere thanks to Jenny for her trusteeship and support for FoStL over the years. Jenny is continuing as a member.

According to the Constitution of FoStL (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation lodged with the Charity Commission), one-third of the trustees must stand down each year and can then be re-appointed. This means that Sharon Lawton, as longest serving trustee stands down.

Sharon agreed to continue as a trustee and is re-appointed.

This means there are 7 trustees:

Sarah Ivory
Peter Fry

Angela Southern
Sharon Lawton
Susan Monaghan
Debra Drew
Marilyn Fletcher

Susan Monaghan would be contacted to check whether she wished to continue as a trustee.

7. **Election of Committee**

Election of Chair of FoStL Marilyn nominated Sarah as and thanked her for her very well-organised first year as Chair of FoStL

Election of Treasurer Sarah nominated Peter as Treasurer of the Friends of Street Library.

Election of Secretary Peter nominated and Marilyn seconded Angela as secretary

8. **Any Other Business** – None

9. **Date of Next Members' Meeting** - Monday 12 June 2023 at 5.15 pm in the SPC Meeting Room.

/ACS
25 May 2023

Friends of Street Library Annual Report for the year ending 5th April 2023

This year has seen a return to 'normal service', although there is still some caution as Covid appears to be here to stay.

The library is fully up and running again and, despite all the challenges, is thriving. A recent meeting of members of the Community Library Partnership revealed that Street Library is performing particularly well amongst Somerset Community Libraries. Across the county numbers are down around 27% compared with pre-pandemic figures, Street has managed to achieve figures only 7% down. This is due to a magnificent effort by our librarians and wonderful volunteers as well as all the work carried out by the Friends.

Throughout the year the Friends have organised several very successful craft events, usually having at least one activity to coincide with each of the school holidays and major events. Thanks go to all those volunteers who gave up their time to help at these events. Prizes have also been provided for all the competitions and treasure hunts organised in the library. We finally managed a return of the Christmas bedtime story event in 2022. We used a professional performer to read the stories which provided great entertainment. We were a little disappointed with the number who failed to attend, despite having been fully booked with several on a waiting list, however those who did manage to join us had a wonderful time and we received some very positive feedback.

The Summer Reading Challenge in 2022 was very popular. Over 200 children signed up to take part in the challenge and 135 medals were handed out to those who completed before the deadline. We were very fortunate to have the services of the library outreach officer who visited all the local schools to introduce the challenge with the theme 'Gadgeteers'. The Friends donated several books to the library to support this theme. For the launch day in July there was a display of interesting and intriguing gadgets, many of which had been donated by members of the Friends. While there was some debate on whether one or two items were technically gadgets or tools, the display stimulated a great deal of interest among visitors, with some very imaginative suggestions for what the gadgets were used for. We are now looking forward to this year's reading challenge.

The Friends organised a number of successful author talks in the library during 2022 and we are just starting out on a new series of talks during 2023. There are also plans for some writing workshops to be held in the library, both for children and adults.

The Friends have taken part in some community events in Street, most notably the Merriman Park Fun Day in September and the Street Parish Council 'Discover Your Community' event in February. Many thanks again to all the volunteers who gave up their time to help man these events. We were given a great opportunity to promote the library and all it has to offer. It was also a chance to remind everyone that the Friends

still need support and are always ready to welcome new members and volunteers to work in the library.

In addition to all of these activities, The Friends have helped to provide items for the library to help with displays and storage. When Somerset Libraries decided they would no longer pay for the provision of newspapers in libraries The Friends agreed that this was a vital service in Street Library and have ensured the continued provision of a paper every day. We were successful in obtaining some generous donations from a couple of local businesses which will ensure funding for most of this year, but, with ever increasing costs, we are searching for further funding from other sources to enable us to continue to provide the newspapers long term.

Somerset Libraries organised a Community Library event in Taunton in September 2022. This was a session which involved community libraries from across Somerset being able to share ideas and information and was a very useful chance to find out how the different community libraries operate. It really highlighted how very fortunate we are in Street to have such a lovely library space, professional and enthusiastic librarians together with dedicated volunteers and the support of the Parish Council, and of course great support from all the members of the Friends.

Towards the end of 2023 The Friends of Street Library will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of our formation, so much has changed in that time. We have moved from supporting a County Library with craft events and fundraising activities to being a part of the Community Library Partnership; narrowly avoiding losing a library in Street altogether, moving from the old building into a very much reduced space and then into the bright, inviting new library following so much building work. We provide volunteers every afternoon to support the library staff and look forward to celebrating how much has been achieved in keeping a vibrant and much used library in Street.

Sarah Ivory

Chair

Financial Report for the Friends of Street Library
for the period 6/4/2022 to 5/4/2023

As treasurer of the Friends of Street Library I have prepared these accounts to give a true and fair view of the way FoStL have raised and spent funds during this period. I would like to thank Julie Hillman who is a member but not a trustee of FoStL for scrutinising these accounts.

A large part of FoStL's spending this past year has been determined by two main activities. The thinking behind both has been to try to raise the profile of the Library in the community.

Early in the year we were invited to participate in Street's first Literature Festival which was being organised by Strode Theatre. We agreed to sponsor their efforts with a £500 donation. Several successful events were held in the library and a FoStL stall featured in the Theatre lobby throughout the period of the festival. The paperwork / payment details for this donation was only received recently and finds itself in the sundries section of our accounts.

Our second initiative was a response to Somerset Library's decision to stop providing the Western Daily Press newspaper. This newspaper has always drawn many people into the library, especially during the colder months. This is quite an expensive commitment (over £40 a month) and so we spent time trying to raise money from local businesses. So far we have raised enough to cover the first year and so we have not had to dig into those resources we usually hope to spend elsewhere - like the Summer Reading Challenge, the craft sessions and the day to day items the library needs.

Our fundraising activities have continued apace and this year a special mention should be made of the £320 raised by the four quizzes produced by Liza Markham – a record. We also raised £80 at the Merriman Park event and £65 through various other donations. These amounts, added to the £870 we received in membership subscriptions, have been able to finance our responsibilities within the Community Library Partnership and to end up with a surplus of £180.

Our financial responsibilities under the terms of the Community Library Partnership for supplying those items the library requires for its day to day running came to £80. We have spent £381 on resources used to put on craft activities and a further £287 to provide items to enhance the library space so that it can operate more efficiently.

Finally then, I would like to say that I believe FoStL have done much this year to both raise funds and spend them wisely.

Peter Fry

Treasurer

Friends of Street Library final accounts for the year 2022 – 2023

Income and expenditure for the year 6/4/2022 – 5/4/2023

Income

<i>Cash in bank (06/04/2022)</i>	
Reserve a/c	0.00
Current a/c	6688.61
Cash in hand	87.01
2023-2024 subs paid early	70.00
Subs since 06/04/2022	800.00
Donations	64.88
Income from stalls	80.35
Quiz sales	302.00
Items sales	70.00
Refreshment sales	0.00
Refunds	0.00
Gift Aid	132.50
Newspaper donations etc	584.66

<i>Total Income</i>	<i>2104.39</i>
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	<i>1922.73</i>
<i>Surplus</i>	<i>181.66</i>

Expenditure

Printing costs	66.30
Hall / facility hire	0.00
Stationery, postage etc	80.35
Reading/writing challenges	381.73
Resources for library	286.94
Website costs	28.78
Quiz prizes	40.00
Insurance 27/05/2022	150.83
Sundries	605.00
Refreshment costs	15.00
Newspaper money to library	267.80

<i>Cash in bank (05/04/2023)</i>	
Reserve a/c	0.00
Current a/c	6900.75
Cash in hand	56.53

Total **8880.01**

Total **8880.01**

Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report

Presented at the FoStL AGM 24th May 2023

At the last AGM in April 2022 I reported that we had 10 regular volunteers. This year numbers have fluctuated and we currently have 12 experienced volunteers with 2 trainees. We also have the help of an IT student who runs a Nintendo Switch session once a month. Volunteers have helped with displays, craft activities, Saturday morning Lego Club (6 sessions), Saturday morning 3D Pens (4 sessions) as well as at Community events and the Summer Reading Challenge

Our plan to give volunteers the opportunity to shadow experienced volunteers is working well and we support all volunteers for as long as they need help.

As reported last year, 'Volunteers' is a regular agenda item for our monthly Members' Meeting where the current number of volunteers is reported as well as the total number of volunteer hours worked. This complies with the Community Library Partnership Agreement between Somerset County Council, Street Parish Council and the Friends of Street Library.

I also report these statistics to Christina Evans every month. Christina is the part time Community Library Manager. The number of volunteer hours ever month has increased and in the first quarter of 2023 averaged 105 hours each month.

We have had 3 coffee and cake/biscuit get togethers for volunteers since last summer and these were well attended. We plan others as Spring turns into Summer but no dates have yet been fixed.

Since last summer, volunteers have been encouraged to work on some eLearning topics. These modules include Safeguarding, Manual Handling, Health and Safety and Data Protection as well as Library Service Specific modules. We are making good progress with these modules.

Thank you to everyone who volunteers - your goodwill, good humour, patience and co-operation makes my job really easy. I love working with you all.

For those of you who aren't already volunteering - we always need more help so if you think you would like to join us, please have a chat with me or the library staff. We would love to welcome you on board.

Marilyn Fletcher

Volunteer Co-ordinator FoStL

May 2023

FRIENDS OF STREET LIBRARY - VOLUNTEER UPDATE

REPORT FOR MAY MEETING

	MARCH	APRIL
Number of 2.50 hour sessions	38	28
Total number of volunteer hours including activities, rota and admin plus preparation time for the craft morning. NOTE - April hours include 15 hours support for new volunteers.	109	106
Number of trained volunteers	12	12
Student - Switch	1	1
Number of volunteers sick or taking time off	2	2
Number of volunteers training	4	2
Activities in February include Lego Club, 3D pens, Switch		
Active volunteers	17	15

April hours appear greater despite fewer sessions because of support given to new volunteers.

Volunteer numbers fluctuate. On April 18th we had 12 trained volunteers + 2 training + 1 student. We gained a new volunteer but another volunteer has stepped back due to family illness.

From April 1st, volunteers have had individual log ons and a few volunteers have opted not to use the computer system. From May, therefore, volunteers who aren't using the computer system (usually the early session when the library can be very busy) will sometimes be supported by a volunteer who can use the systems. This will provide more support for the library staff at busy times and offer some extra sessions to volunteers who want to be in every week.

Marilyn Fletcher 18th April 2023

NB - Numbers and hours change weekly - this is the most accurate data on this date.

THE FRIENDS OF STREET LIBRARY – BOOKER GROUP

Booker Group now has 13 members i cannot fit any more in the room!. There is probably a waiting list with the library staff.

I am pleased to say that our inclusiveness extends to a wheelchair bound member and for some months we had a member who came along accompanied by his guide dog (and his wife). His take on some of the books was inspiring and his input was in no way impaired by his sight loss.

I give members a suggested book list and ask them to select what they would like to read. Then I make sure we don't have similar subjects/settings following one another.

I vary the titles to include classics, winners of literary awards and those that have our members' recommendations. Not all are fiction. They are various genres and from authors around the world. The last list contained about 50 titles.

The next list will go out in September to select books for November/ December/January (only 15 to pick from!). In the new year a far longer list will be circulated to cover selections for the rest of the year

With every list there is a brief synopsis to help selection

Between meetings I advise the group of any TV programme, or film at Strode Theatre which I feel may interest the group – especially if they relate to a book we have already read or plan to read and also of any literary award winners I pass on book recommendation between group members.

It works well If a person has read a book, and cannot make the meeting, I encourage them to send me their views – which are shared with the group and sometimes one of us will write a review for the library's website.

**Julie Sinclair
24/05/2023**