

## Friends of Stirchley Library AGM

16<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 7.30pm.

**Attendees:** Matt Andrews (MA), Laura Killeen (LK), Theresa Summerfield (TS), Jessie Cape (JC), Rebecca Shales (RS), Stirchley Art Room (SAR), Stirchley History Group (SHG).

**Apologies:** Phil Banting (PB), Andrew Brocklehurst (AB), Mark Summerfield (MS).

### Chairs Report

TS directed attendees to the minutes from the previous AGM on the Friends of Stirchley (FOSL) website.

TS informed attendees the FOSL Committee had grown from 4 members to 7 members and FOSL is currently looking for a Secretary.

It was noted the electronic kiosk had been well received by library users. A brief update on the library building works conveyed works are ongoing, the boiler will be installed first before other building works can be completed. There is the opportunity to renovate the upstairs area and use this in partnership with SAR and SHG. SAR had held Summer and evening workshops at Stirchley library and SHG had conducted tours in the upstairs area of the library for Heritage Weekend. This is positive as FOSL and Stirchley library hope to work more collaboratively with community groups and develop partnerships. Selly Oak Art Forum had been beneficial in sharing contacts for artists and creatives who may wish to use the library for events and workshops.

Kings Heath Action for Refugees attends the library monthly to take part in craft sessions and use the library as temporary members. JC has initiated the process of Stirchley library becoming the first sanctuary library in Birmingham, Liz the library manager is now leading on this process.

### Events

Throughout 2018 and 2019 FOSL has expanded the number of events held in the library space. Events included a Christmas Silent Disco by Untied Artists, Summer Bash with SAR and Stirchley Neighbourhood Forum, Fun Palace with Stirchley Baths, Lego Club and Scratch Club.

FOSL is keen to hold more events aimed at adults and have begun to do this with talks from Sustainable Stirchley, Moseley Plastic Free and Extinction Rebellion. FOSL are launching 'Library Lates' with monthly author events of the first Tuesday of every month. The first will be on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019 with local author Liam Brown. Tindal Street Writing Group will be in December.

### Volunteers

MA gave an update in relation to his role and the library volunteers. MA has currently been in post for 15 months and has set up a volunteer recruitment process, creation of policies, volunteer inductions and the monthly volunteer rota. There is currently funding until April 2020 for MA role. There are currently in excess of 25 volunteers. The hours volunteers commit to varies. MA has not yet had to cancel shifts due to lack of volunteers.

The library is now open on Fridays between 10am to 2pm thanks to volunteers extending the opening times, this has allowed for a co-working space and creative events to happen on a Friday. On average there are between 30 to 40 visitors to the library on a Friday

during the extended opening hours. Friday opening times are now advertised on the Birmingham City Council website. The extended opening hours provided by volunteers equates to an extra 8 hours a week compared to this time last year.

A question was asked if people find the opening hours confusing. MA said it was difficult to know, people seem surprised when they see the library open at different hours. MA explained we try to be as consistent as possible with the same opening hours.

The question was asked about longer term plans for MA role. MA explained FOSL was looking to apply for further funding to maintain this role, with the consideration of applying for longer term funding opportunities.

MA is producing a report of volunteer hours and further data to be used by the library to demonstrate increased footfall and usage.

### **Library Ambassadors**

TS talked about the Library Ambassadors set-up by AB, which is a book club for local school children. The idea came from AB's daughter. For the 2019 Library Reading Challenge there was a significant increase of children taking part because of the Library Ambassadors, numbers have doubled compared to last year.

FOSL's aims are to increase library usage and demonstrate there is a need to increase librarian hours to maintain opening hours and increase events.

### **Website and Social Media**

RS gave an update on the FOSL website, it now has a URL, reduced number of adverts on the site. FOSL has invested money in the branding and the creation of the website in word press. Attendees commented on the improvement of the website and RS's great work.

LK gave an update on social media activity across the FOSL platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. How the social media has advertised library events and tried to convey to Birmingham City Council the activity that is happening in the library. Attendees commented that Friends of Northfield Library had noted an increased online presence from FOSL.

### **New Language Books**

JC explained FOSL is trying to source a range of language books to have a wider choice for library members who may have English as a second language or who do not speak English. An attendee suggested contacting the Brass House for any old books they may have.

### **Finances**

TS said not all the FOSL funds had been committed and there was £10,000 remaining. The question arose of requiring a Treasurer from another organisation to sign off the annual accounts. This will be followed up.

### **Officers Election**

FOSL currently has a vacancy for a Secretary. Adam Collins (AC), a library volunteer, has put himself forward for the role of Secretary. TS read AC's statement to attendees and proposed AC as the Secretary; this proposal was seconded by MA.

AB has stepped down from FOSL but will continue to hold Lego Club.

### **AOB**

SHG talked of the 1906 Stirchley Library plans donated to Stirchley library. The original plans will be kept at Birmingham Central Library but have been gifted to Stirchley library and there are copies on display at Stirchley.

SHG conducted tours of the upstairs for Heritage Weekend. People who hadn't visited the library before attended, there were 25 people in total. It would be beneficial to hold a tour for volunteers of the library.

Nicky Allen talked about SAR and the enjoyment of holding arts projects in the community and Stirchley library provided the perfect space for this, including talks and workshops. Currently SAR has an Arts Council funding bid in place for a Book Arts project. There will be discussion with FOSL and the library staff about appropriate scheduling for the Book Arts project.

SAR have liaised with the National Lottery Community Fund about a feasibility study in developing the upstairs space as an arts space, currently there are access issues which are being investigated. APEC Architects are working on a feasibility study in relation to this.

The AGM was concluded, and thanks was given to all attendees.