

## Friends of Honley Library

**Annual General Meeting: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (19:00 to 20:00)**

**At: Honley Library, West Avenue, Honley, Holmfirth, HD9 6HF**



### 1. Welcome:

The meeting was opened by Jenny Lockwood, Chair of Trustees, who extended a warm welcome to all. Although attendance was a little disappointing, those present represented a number of stalwart members who are particularly active in the work of FoHL.

### 2. Attendance and Apologies:

**Present:** Jenny Lockwood (Chair), Ann Brooks, Nick Helm, Malcom Ellis, David Hutchinson, Carolynne Roberts, Lesley Hawthorn, Rosie Hinchliffe, Elaine Edwards, Judy Bowers, Julie Peel, Mandy Cameron, Christine Smith, Terry Savage, Julie Hellawell, Angela Marshall (minutes)

**Apologies:** Sean East, Geoff Winterbottom, Charles Greaves, Bryn Woodworth, Sue Woodworth, Caroline Page, Alison Dean, Carrie Birch, Neelam Randhawa

Jenny asked the Trustees present who were not so well known to the membership to introduce themselves; Nick, Malcolm and David then gave provided a few words to explain their particular areas of expertise. Solicitor Nick has provided all the legal support at no financial cost; Malcolm, a retired surveyor, has overseen the challenging issues relating to the fabric of the building and accountant David has supported with complex financial matters.

### 3. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting; any matters arising being covered by this agenda.

### 4. Kirklees Library Service Update

Julie Peel, Area Manager for Kirklees Library Services (KLS) provided an update on a number of changes to personnel at the top of the management structure as departures have led to roles being filled by new people. Julie has replaced Steph Shaw, who has temporarily taken on the Chief Librarian role from Carol Stump. Steph has been replaced by Mags Rogerson as Head of Local Integrated Partnerships, which includes the library services.

Julie stated that KLS are looking forward to the completion of the Asset Transfer process and the changes that this will bring to the service in Honley.

Current challenges are in addressing the cost-of-living crisis as KLS look for ways to support communities as much as they can. She noted that libraries already provide space that is free, warm and safe so additional support is not expected, although some venues are looking to offer warm refreshments where this is feasible.

### 5. Appointment of Trustees

The Management Committee agreed unanimously at its last meeting to re-elect Ann Brooks as its Chair to serve for a further year.

The Trustees and Management Committee put forward a proposal that, due to the ongoing work towards the Asset Transfer, all current Board members be re-elected to serve a further year. The current Trustees are Jenny Lockwood, Ann Brooks, Sean East, Nick Helm, David Hutchinson, Malcolm Ellis and Geoff Winterbottom.

All Trustees are willing to serve another year and the excellent and invaluable support they have provided was acknowledged.

Re-election of the Board of Trustees was proposed by Rosie Hinchliffe and seconded by Carolynne Roberts. A vote was unanimous.

David Hutchinson proposed Jenny be re-elected as Chair of the Board of Trustees; this was seconded by Terry Savage. Again, a vote was unanimous. However Jenny has made it known that she is staying to see the Asset Transfer through but will stand down next year when a replacement Chairperson will be required.

## **6. Committee Reports**

Reports were provided by different working groups in advance of the meeting, and these had all been read.

**Trustees:** report from Jenny. The Trustees are ready to move forward with works to be done on the building as soon as the Asset Transfer is fully signed. As we move towards a new era, she highlighted the mission statement that forms part of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), that we will work in partnership with other organisations to provide a flexible hub that will meet the needs of the community. FoHL will also continue to work closely with KLS to provide a quality library service.

**Management Committee:** report from Ann. Ann summarised the work done throughout the past year and expressed gratitude to everyone who has supported the committee. She made special mention of those who have left the group, these include Carrie Birch who for several years played a significant part in promoting and progressing the Asset Transfer.

Several policy documents have now been completed and signed off; these include those for Risk Management, Safeguarding and Volunteers. Additionally, a new Strategy Working Group has now been established that will develop an ongoing Mission Statement for the Management Committee that ties in with the Business Plan.

Ann also extended an invitation to anyone interested in joining the Management Committee to make this known.

**Finances:** report from Lesley. This showed that the FoHL bank balances are little changed in the past year. The balance of £16,846, includes £14,500 from the Holme Valley Parish Council (HVPC) for work on the building. Lesley outlined the purpose of the two bank accounts; YBS is for library services and events etc, whilst the Co-op account is for the building and works required on it. The latter account is set up to ensure ongoing accountability to the HVPC. Additional income has come from the successful 'Babies into Books' sessions, which has brought in £115 and other donations to FoHL have totalled £100.

**Volunteers:** report from Carolynne. Carolynne highlighted how much the work of volunteers is essential to the running of the library. At the start of 2022, she and Ann took over recruitment and induction of new volunteers from KLS. This saw a significant increase in numbers and recognition of the value of being with the volunteers on their journey from the outset. Together with ongoing mentoring from Elaine Edwards, a new structure is in place that ensures support from lead volunteers but that also includes input from Rebecca Edwards as the much-valued KLS staff member for Honley.

**Events/Activities for Children:** report from Bridget Crabtree and Carrie Birch. Neither were able to attend the meeting, so the report stands alone.

**Events/Activities for Adults:** report from Jenny. This outlined the numerous events that have taken place in the past year; some have been more successful than others, but all have added to our learning.

It was noted that the Strategy Working Group are currently developing a questionnaire to gather information about library use and to ascertain community expectations / requirements. This will be ready for use by December 3<sup>rd</sup> when the Honley Together Christmas events take place. A request was made for volunteers to support their distribution and completion at the church, the

street fair and within the library. Mandy Cameron also suggested canvassing the views of friends and neighbours as the more responses obtained the more valuable the data will be.

Ann noted that, as expectations have been raised, it is apparent that more families are now looking to the library for events, especially for the children's activities that take place during the school holidays. David Hutchinson asked how these were funded, which was originally from a One Community grant, but that donations are also invited from those attending events.

**Asset Transfer:** the report from Jenny had not been provided in advance of the meeting as last-minute news was hoped for. Jenny began by sharing last year's AGM report which, being identical in so many respects, highlighted the frustrations of a process that has, at times, seemed painfully slow. There have been three separate agreements to consider; the transfer of the building from Kirklees Council to HVPC; the lease from HVPC to FoHL and a hosting agreement between FoHL and HVPC. All are ready to go, two have been signed but the building transfer is awaiting clarity on Freehold status from Kirklees. Nick outlined this process but was confident that the matter was close to resolution.

A £2,800 grant from One Community is to go towards the works on heating and lighting, but it was acknowledged that the delay combined with the current national financial crisis has led to a significant increase in the anticipated costs.

**Communications and Publicity:** report from Angela. Rosie provided an update that included information about a new FoHL logo and a new FoHL website that has been created by Claire Barnett using information provided by Angela and Rosie. In addition to providing information for the public and members, it also includes areas for Volunteers and Trustees, including a new online volunteers rota. Feedback so far has been very positive and, even before full promotion, several new FoHL members have joined after accessing it. At present only Rosie and Angela have admin access, but they can control most of the website content.

Angela has continued to provide a quarterly newsletter, available within the library or via the website and creates the event flyers to a now established and easily recognised 'house style'.

Rosie has maintained a high level of online presence for FoHL via social media. Followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have grown significantly in number in the past year.

Ann thanked all members of the Management Committee for their reports and ongoing work. Julie Peel then echoed this, commenting on the impressive amount of work done to ensure the best service for the Honley community.

## **7. Any Other Business**

Ann reminded the meeting that FoHL are always looking for new members of the management Committee or Board of Trustees. People who can enhance existing skills are particularly needed.

Jenny commented on concerns about anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the library, citing a recent MC meeting that had been troubled by doors being kicked and stones being thrown at windows. The local Police are to attend at the library on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November from 13:00 to 14:00 to discuss possible resources that might help. It is eventually hoped that we may be able to access funds from the West Yorkshire Safer Communities Fund to support this, such as lighting or CCTV. Angela raised the matter of the WiFi being permanently on which may attract youths to the area, but it was noted that it a dark and hidden space will always attract aimless young people.

Angela asked for Julie's thoughts on the continuing unavailability of online training for volunteers. Julie noted that this is a problem across KLS, so Angela is to pursue alternative training provisions.

The meeting closed at 20.00