

## Friends of Honley Library

**Annual General Meeting: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (19:00 to 20:15)**

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



### **1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies:**

In the absence of Jenny Lockwood, Chair of Trustees, the meeting was chaired by Ann Brooks who extended a warm welcome to all. She introduced the meeting by noting that it was happening at a key stage in the post Asset Transfer development of Honley Library as we reach 'the end of the first phase'. She also reminded everyone of our new FoHL strapline, '*Your Village, Your Library, Your Future*'.

**Present:** Ann Brooks (Chair), Judy Bowers, Mandy Cameron, Pat Colling, Bridget Crabtree, Carrie Birch, Alison Dean, Elaine Edwards, Malcom Ellis, Elaine Fenton, Charles Greaves, Lesley Hawthorne, David Hutchinson, Angela Marshall (minutes), Caroline Page, Christine Smith Joan Vevers.

**Apologies:** Jenny Bagworth, Sue Coomber, Pam Kelly Jan Gilligan, Jenny Lockwood, Julie Peel, Carolynne Roberts, Neelam Randhawa, Emma Sutton, Pat Thompson, Geoff Winterbottom, , Bryn Woodworth, Sue Woodworth.

### **2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

There being no matters arising, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

### **3. Trustees' Report 2022-2023**

A report from Jenny Lockwood was shared in advance of the meeting.

Ann highlighted the Board of Trustees' Mission Statement, and the primary Aims and Objectives noting that these are continually backed up by strategy implementation through the various policy documents. All are continually monitored to ensure constant relevance.

Since the last AGM, the long-awaited Asset Transfer has been implemented, and Ann expressed gratitude to the Holme Valley Parish Council (HVPC), not just for the considerable financial support but also for support that has been much broader in what was a challenging and long drawn out process.

Jenny's report also notes future plans including the case for more space and the need for increased community engagement. The report was accepted and approved.

### **4. Finance Report 2022-2023**

Reports from Lesley Hawthorne were shared in advance of the meeting.

Lesley summarised the substantive grants from HVPC, as well as those from a number of other organisations. Reports are for the financial year to the end of March 2023, but more recent accounts are available if anyone wishes to see them.

Following his considerable work on producing the Financial Procedures report, David confirmed that the FoHL finances are independently reviewed by Langricks Accountants. He read out a positive report from them that confirmed that they have no concerns at this time.

It was noted that FoHL are now managing greater funds than previously, always within the need to fulfil our obligations to the Charity Commission. Lesley and David were thanked for their considerable work in this matter. The reports were accepted and approved by Charles Greaves and Mandy Cameron.

### **5. Business Plan**

Mandy Cameron presented the Business Plan, a work that has been in progress in several forms for a number of years. We now have a concise document that is 'fit for purpose', that contains all relevant reports, and which can be used in support of additional funding bids. A more detailed

report may be necessary to accompany a bid for funding to enable the building of the extension. A copy was available for the meeting attendees to view.

Mandy noted that a new Extension Working Group is being formed to address all issues relating to the future development of the building. This purposeful and focused group needs volunteers so a request for help was made. Pat Colling suggested that liaison with the HVPC Planning Committee would be beneficial; Malcolm Ellis agreed to discuss this further with Pat.

## **6. Appointment of Trustees**

There are nine existing Trustees who between them have a significant range of relevant and highly valued experience and skills. They are Jenny Lockwood, Ann Brooks, David Hutchinson, Malcolm Ellis, Geoff Winterbottom, Nick Helm, Pat Colling, Sean East, and Glenn Kirkby.

Approval of the current Board of Trustees was proposed by Bridget Crabtree, seconded by Mandy Cameron.

- **Appointment of Chair of Trustees**

Following Jenny's decision to step down, the appointment of a new Chair of Trustees has been deferred. It may be that a 'rolling chair' system is adopted as the group is thought to be strong enough to accommodate this.

## **7. Management Committee**

A report from Ann Brooks was shared in advance of the meeting.

There are now comprehensive Terms of Reference covering the aims and the responsibilities of the Management Committee. These are available to view by FoHL members. FoHL policies are in place, kept up to date and can be matched to funding bids.

Meeting minutes are available to all; they are displayed on the office noticeboard, along with those of Trustees' meetings.

As she handed over the role of Chair of the Management Committee to Mandy, Ann thanked everyone for the support she has been given since her appointment in 2018.

## **8. Reports on events and activities:**

- **Volunteer Coordinators**

A report from Elaine Edwards was shared in advance of the meeting.

Elaine outlined the current volunteer numbers which are good, but more are always needed. Inductions and additional support are provided by Ann Brooks and Carolynne Roberts. Elaine provides ongoing mentoring and support, using a skills checklist which she has developed and that has proved effective. Angela Marshall manages the online rota and has also established a very useful WhatsApp group that ensures sessions are covered, even when difficulties are encountered.

Whilst training from Kirklees Library Services (KLS) has stalled in recent years, we have developed our own systems to ensure that the latest information is always available to volunteers. In a recent meeting with KLS managers, they expressed their admiration of our methods and are now seeking to share our practices with other libraries across Kirklees. Elaine noted that this success is down to the loyalty, dedication and commitment of amazing individuals who work so well together as a team.

A business meeting and social event in August was well attended and very successful. In summary, the aims and objectives of the Volunteer Coordinators to support volunteers, and to offer the best library service possible, are being met.

- **Activities for children, their families and friends**

A report from Bridget Crabtree was shared in advance of the meeting.

Bridget noted that we are in our fifth year of running activities for children; her report provided comprehensive details of many of these and their undoubted success. She made special mention of the 'Babies into Books' sessions, established by Helen Harrison, which have proven extremely popular. The benefits to children of the development of their learning, as well as social skills, cannot be understated. The school transitions sessions during the summer were especially appreciated by those attending them.

Future activities are always in the planning, some driven by ideas that come from the children. Suggestions are many and varied, including the possible recruitment of children's ambassadors, and we look forward to seeing what future events and activities programmes are in store.

Bridget thanked the HVPC for grant funding that ensured good quality resources and also the many people involved in ensuring the success of the activities. She noted that what we provide is unique to Honley and the envy of those in other geographical areas.

- **Adult Events**

A report from Elaine Edwards was shared in advance of the meeting.

Elaine outlined the various events that have taken place in the past year. There are regular activities taking place weekly or monthly, as well as a quarterly poetry evening that has proved particularly popular. There have also been several events led by published authors. FoHL have also supported activities in the wider community such as the Open Gardens weekend, and we look forward to another of Ian Pollitt's Lego displays this Halloween. The calendar is already filling up into 2024.

Sue Woodworth has now taken on the role of Events Coordinator, ably supported by Elaine, Bryn, Jenny, Judy and Christine. Angela has continued to provide our distinctive flyers and Rosie to publicise events on social media.

A number of ideas were put forward within the meeting, such as a visit from Read Books and presentations on the environment from the Wildlife Trust and/or River Holme Connections. The latter might also be useful for young people, thereby providing a less depressing view of the future of our living world.

- **Publicity, Promotions and Marketing**

A report from Rosie Hinchliffe was shared in advance of the meeting.

In Rosie's absence, Angela Marshall outlined the many ways in which information is shared within the FoHL membership and with the wider Honley community.

A significant development has been the creation of a new website, designed by Claire Barnett with information provided by Rosie and Angela. In addition to news and information, it also accommodates a closed forum for volunteers to access the online rota and volunteer information.

Angela continues to produce a brief quarterly newsletter, 'Library Matters' as well as flyers for the many events for adults and children. She has also produced a display on the many aspects of library life for the forthcoming Open Afternoon.

Rosie has continued to manage the FoHL social media profile, with activity on Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). These are useful in promoting events, providing updates on developments and communicating with other local organisations, whose support is much appreciated. We have seen a significant increase in the numbers accessing the social media platforms.

The publicity 'team' is very small, and we would welcome interest from anyone wishing to become more involved in this aspect of FoHL.

- **Building Group**

A report from Jenny Lockwood was shared in advance of the meeting.

It was noted by various people that the sight of the list of building work done in less than twelve months is very impressive. Malcolm Ellis confirmed that most of the 'essential tasks' identified at the time of the Asset Transfer have been completed. This means that we are now able to move towards the next stages and the proposal for an extension to the building to create more space and therefore more opportunities for community activities. The open event on 21<sup>st</sup> October will be an opportunity to share what has been achieved, as well as future plans, with the local community.

Malcolm acknowledged the ongoing support of Charles Coombes of MJC in managing the building and also Jenny's excellent skills in securing grants for works to be completed. Jenny's personal 'Yellow Pages' of skilled people who are willing to provide services for the library without charge, should also be noted.

In respect of the proposal for an extension, in addition to Mandy's request above (Item 5) Malcolm asked for volunteers to become involved in developing the plans. It is hoped that a formal planning application may be ready to go to the Council by the end of the year.

Pat Colling, as a member, noted that the HVPC have been very impressed with the time and effort that FoHL members have given to getting us so far, so soon. Ann added that work on some aspect of FoHL, whether development, maintenance and improvement is taking place by someone every day.

## **9. Kirklees Library Services update**

Elaine Fenton introduced herself as the newly appointed CSO for Honley Library. Her commitment began when she joined the library aged three, and she is especially pleased to be spending her last years before retirement with us.

Elaine shared some notes from Neelam, thanking us for supporting the summer reading challenge, putting on events and generally doing a good job. KLS continue to support the many changes being made and the welcome and support new volunteers. Although we are all aware of the financial situation of the Council, at the present time, there is no clarity on how the difficulties will impact on library services, and subsequently on FoHL.

Ann noted that recent liaison with KLS has been very positive with recent meetings with Area Manager Julie Peel and Volunteer Coordinator Stefan Cichockyj highlighting how much we can gain from working together.

## **10. Any Other Business**

- As both Jenny and Ann step down from their respective Chairing roles, David Hutchinson thanked them both for their hard work in getting FoHL to where it is. He also commended those responsible for the quality of the reports that are presented to the Board of Trustees and the Annual General Meeting.

18/10/2023  
*Angela Marshall*