

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD

APRIL 2015 TO MARCH 2016

BACKGROUND

Friends of Little Chalfont Library, a registered charity, was formed in 2006 to save Little Chalfont Library from closure and then to run it as a Community Library for the benefit of the local community and those living in the surrounding area.

Friends of Little Chalfont Library was replaced by a new charity, Little Chalfont Community Library, in 2014. Little Chalfont Community Library is entirely funded by donations, grants and fundraising activities. The library is managed and run by unpaid volunteers.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

We have now been in operation for 9 years since the success, in 2007, of the Friends of Little Chalfont Library's campaign to save our library from closure.

Since the library re-opened it has flourished as a community facility. Our success is due to a number of factors including: our volunteer staff and committee members, an increased range of services, investment in new stock and the physical improvements we have made to the Library including an extension to the building to house a dedicated computer suite.

Our volunteers, led by our excellent Library and Volunteer Manager David Wolstenholme, assisted by Paul Doherty, are very popular with our visitors. They are friendly and helpful which in turn makes the atmosphere of our library warm and welcoming. Many of our volunteers have worked in the Library for a number of years and gained valuable experience that contributes to the professional approach they take when assisting our visitors.

We offer a range of services above and beyond our core service as a public lending library. These include public access PCs providing free Internet access and a range of software, wireless broadband access, computer classes, book reading groups, a Knit and Knatter Group, a Play Cantonese children's session run entirely in Cantonese and very popular film shows. Thanks to George May for running the computer classes, Jane Darbyshire and Sarah Jameson for organising the book reading groups, Christine Crease for organising the Knit and Knatter Group, various ladies for running the Play Cantonese sessions and David Wolstenholme, Helen Matheson, Laura Andrews and Roger Martin for running the film shows.

The film shows are held regularly in the evening but there are also matinee performances and occasional shows for children. The films on show include latest releases and also classic films from times gone by. Although the film shows are free many of those attending make voluntary donations and this provides a good source of revenue.

The library is available as a low cost meeting venue for local community groups and other organisations. For example, in the last year, it has been regularly used by the U3A, Little Chalfont Community Association and others. None of this would be possible without the work put in by Mike Rosemeyer in terms of taking and managing bookings. Our thanks to Mike for all his hard work.

Our book stock is very up to date and comprehensive. When the library re-opened in February 2007 all of our stock consisted of selected donated items. Over the last 9 years we have worked hard to build on that base and now spend around £7,000 every year on new stock. Thanks to Rohan Dale, Jane Darbyshire and Ruth Penn for their hard work on book selection and procurement.

Behind the scenes many people put in a lot of work to make our Library successful. One is Keiron Brown who is the webmaster for our excellent new website. Our thanks to Keiron for the many hours of work he put into building the site. Why not take a look at the results of his excellent work by visiting <http://www.littlechalfontlibrary.org.uk/>

Other people behind the scenes I would like to mention are Ruth Penn and Gill Hudgell. Ruth does a great job of maintaining our Facebook page with not only Library-related information but also links to literary articles and other interesting material. Gill keeps an eye on Library supplies and makes sure we do not run out of a long list of consumables.

Since taking over the library we have made a number of improvements both inside and outside the building. The counter has been replaced and an additional counter built, new carpet tiles were fitted in 2007 and 2014, the kitchen/workroom has been refurbished, the library redecorated, repairs made to the exterior, a range of new equipment has been purchased from mobile bookshelves to book carousels, a digital display monitor has been installed to advertise library events and information, blinds have been fitted to all the windows, audio visual equipment has been installed, the windows and front door have been replaced, the toilet area refurbished and the frontage landscaped.

One major improvement in the last year is the extension to the Library that has been built to house a dedicated computer suite with an increased number of public access PCs. The project took about 2 years from the original concept to being opened with a lot of hard work particularly by George May and Rowland Buck. I would like to record my thanks to them for work above and beyond expectations. They really did a good and professional job.

In view of the amount we intended to spend on the extension the Trustees decided it would be prudent to negotiate a new underlease with a 25 year term. This was achieved with legal support from Jane Graham of Shepherd and Wedderburn a legal firm based in the City. Given that this was the third time Jane and her firm had provided legal advice on a pro bono basis I would like to say a very big thank you to them for their professionalism and generosity.

Our positive progress would not have been possible without the support we have received from individuals and organisations. I would like to record my thanks to everyone who has provided support to make our Community Library an established success.

In particular, I would like to thank our hard working volunteers and committee. Their enthusiastic commitment, creativity and the time they invest makes the difference between an ordinary library and a great library.

ACTIVITIES

Fund Raising Events

In the last year we have taken part in Village Day with a book sale and we have also run a Quiz Night to raise funds. We have also derived income from voluntary donations made at Film Shows and at Knit and Knatter Group sessions.

Summer Reading Challenge

Last year's summer reading challenge was themed "Record Breakers" and was linked to the Guinness World of Records. We had 107 children registered in total with 74 completing their six books to receive medals and certificates. A big vote of thanks to Ruth Penn for her organisation of the event.

School Visits

Over 2 days in June 2015 a number of classes from Chalfont Valley Primary Academy visited the Library for "Library Lessons". This is a great way to let children discover what the Community Library has to offer. My thanks to David Wolstenholme and Andy Wise for planning and hosting the visits.

Author Presentation

In July 2015 Antonia Honeywell, a local author, gave a talk about her recently published book entitled *The Ship*.

Knitting Sessions for Children

In August 2015 sessions were run during the school holidays to teach children to knit. These proved to be very popular and my thanks to Christine Crease for coming up with the idea and running the sessions.

Polling Station

In May 2015 we agreed to allow Chiltern District Council to use the Library, in conjunction with the Village Hall, as a polling station. Apart from being a public service this new venture generates revenue from the rent we are paid by the Council.

VOLUNTEERS

We have a large number of experienced volunteers and also new volunteers have joined us in the last year. At the end of March 2016 we had around 50 active volunteers including 9 Committee members.

We still wish to recruit new volunteers and they can be sure of a warm welcome to an established and friendly team.

FINANCES

We would not be in this position without the support of our generous sponsors and I particularly thank the Parish Council who have supported us with a grant for every year since 2007 and Chiltern District Council for granting 100% relief from Business Rates.

Our income and expenditure budget for 2016/17 depends heavily on proposed grant applications, donations and fund raising activity. In particular we are very vulnerable in the event that any of our regular sponsors reduce or stop their support. In the circumstances it is essential that we continue to seek ways to bolster our finances.

COMMITTEE

At the end of March 2016 the Committee, all of whom are also Trustees of the Charity, consisted of:

Jim Brooks - Chairman
Jon Fantes – Secretary
George May – Treasurer
Rowland Buck
Rohan Dale
Julia Hughes-Morgan
David Wolstenhome
Christine Crease
Paul Doherty

FUTURE REPORTS

Reports will be issued every 12 months.

Jim Brooks MBE
Chairman
Little Chalfont Community Library
An Award Winning Registered Charity Number 1154802
June 2016