

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

FRIENDS OF WEST BARNES LIBRARY

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This report summarises the Friends' many achievements and activities in this past year. Our events have included the traditional quiz nights and fairs, and a local history talk, but we have also introduced:

- "Bingo with a difference," a variation on the quiz night idea, and we hope to hold another of these in the autumn;
- a photography talk and competition;
- a talk on Indian cuisine;
- regular author talks, organised by Joy Kluver and Sarah McAllister, where a pair of authors have described their work. Attendance at these, so far, has ranged from two to four dozen;
- We have also acquired some additional (small) tables for use in events. And Crossrail 2 have given us a large map of the area around the library, which has been framed and will shortly be hung.
- We remain keen to explore new ways of attracting people into the Library and continue to welcome any additional ideas for this.

As always, the Friends have worked closely with the Library's dedicated and enthusiastic permanent staff: Karren, Roz and our security guard, Jogen. The broad overlap between the Friends' Committee and Library volunteers has continued, to mutual benefit.

I would like to thank all the Friends' committee—Rev Rachel Taylor, Dan Griffiths, Penny Price, Theresa Clarke, Madeleine Maguire, Sarah McAlister, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Brenda Brevitt and Alison Honor, plus our ex officio members Councillors Hina Bokhari, Eloise Bailey and Carl Quilliam—for their continued support and ideas; and Karen Baker for her splendid posters.

When good things happen, it's their hard work which is responsible.

Toby Ewin

Chairman
Friends of West Barnes Library

Friends Membership

Our total membership now stands at 306 life members at the financial year end.

Treasurer's Report

Fund-raising events during the year ending 31st March 2019 (the Spring Fairs, Autumn Fair, Quiz Night, and Author Events) and donations raised £681.62 gross (Year ending 31st March 2018 gross income = £701.95)

Expenditure incurred during the financial year 2018/19 in support of fund-raising activities was £503.98, giving a net fund-raising income of £177.64 (Year ending 31st March 2018 expenditure = £413.38, net income = £288.75). There were no items of extraordinary expenditure during the financial year 2018/19.

Total funds held by the Friends (cash in bank and petty cash) as at 31st March 2019 was £2,092.53 (31st March 2018 £1,914.89).

Publicity

The Friends' monthly email bulletin had 424 subscribers at financial year end. The website continues to keep everyone up-to-date with plans and events. Posters advertising Friends events are regularly produced and displayed in local shop windows, notice boards and the plasma screen at the library. Thanks to Toby, Madeleine, Theresa and Sarah for their hard work in this important area.

Library Manager's Report (Karren Whyte)

Over the past year we have seen a slight decline in visitor figures, and book issues and renewals. School visits have been few and far between due to their staffing levels, but we are continuing to push for these to take place with the help of our volunteer Suzanne Davis, who is in regular contact with the schools. Blossom House are now regular visitors, so this will hopefully help boost numbers.

Staff and Senior Officers have introduced new ideas and events to the library, such as the Health Month, First Aid, 'Talk English Conversation Class, Craft and monthly Ancestry sessions. Local History talks have been popular and have been well attended. Income is up and we exceeded our target, which is largely due to a regular library booking on a Friday evening during term time. The Friends have worked really hard hosting an array of amazing events this year which is helping increase our visitor figures.

Hopefully we can work together to think of new ideas to help increase visitor figures and keep the books moving off the shelves. Many thanks again for all your help and support this year!

Merton Library & Heritage Services (Anthony Hopkins)

Merton's Library & Heritage Service continues to be a high performing and cost-efficient service. All its libraries remain open and opening hours have been extended at all of them over the last 10 years. The main projects delivered over the last year include:

- Installation of the new Library System Platform (LSP) including the launch of a new customer website with enhanced features.
- Further expansion of the cultural offer in libraries through the development of the Merton Arts Spaces.
- Work to make our libraries more dementia and autism friendly and the development of new services to promote prevention to support people to live fuller and healthier lives.

- Development of assisted digital services including universal credit support services.
- Completion of centenary events for World War One and the women's suffrage movement.
- Further development of the schools and libraries membership scheme particularly around the offer for high schools.

Library Redevelopment

Uncertainty surrounding for Crossrail 2 in West Barnes has delayed LBM's long-standing plan for re-developing the library. The Committee was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with Crossrail representatives earlier in the year to discuss their plans. Following this meeting, Crossrail kindly gave us a large map of the West Barnes area and this will shortly be hung in the library.

Following assurances from Crossrail we are encouraged that LBM has now confirmed that the redevelopment planning process will now restart. Anthony Hopkins, Head of Merton Library Services, gave the Committee the following update in May 2019:

"The current situation is that following a recent meeting with Crossrail 2 they have given the strongest indication yet that the West Barnes Library site is unlikely to be required for any Crossrail related works and have given us authority to start progressing the works to develop the site.

As the surveys and preparation work undertaken by the Council was completed over 4 years ago, we are now starting to undertake new surveys to ensure that the scheme is still viable and that there is market interest. We would expect to have more news to cascade in late summer / early autumn."

We have all been frustrated by the delay, so this is very welcome news. Given the time that has elapsed since the preparatory work was last done, this will need re-doing and will restart shortly. We will keep the Friends informed of progress.

Events

There is always a packed calendar of regular events in the library, including Tuesday Rendezvous, Story Time, Kiddirama Tots, Make Move & Melody Time, Reading Out Loud, plus local history coffee mornings and a weekly Knit & Natter. Falun Dafa, yoga and Children's Craft all continue to be popular and other recurring events include weekly IT classes and Talk English classes (for those with English as a second language); a Scrabble group; an Alzheimer's Memory Café and the Colour & Chat session.

The Friends' Events sub-committee of Theresa Clarke, Madeleine Maguire, Alison Honor and Sarah McAllister has organised another full calendar of special events including our Spring and Autumn fairs, local history talks plus regular flower-arranging sessions led by Alison. Our Quiz Nights are consistently among our most popular events. The next one will be in September.

We held a charity "Bingo with a Difference" night in aid of the Royal Marsden Hospital earlier in the year which was a huge success and will be holding another evening in July. Following the "Secret Kingston" talk in 2018 we will be organising a stroll around Kingston finding unusual but interesting points you won't have noticed before...like a treasure hunt without finding the treasure. We are now running two book clubs. We have organised three Author talks in the past year which have proved hugely popular, bringing many new people into the library. Apart from a summer break, we hope such talks will now occur about every couple of months.

Thanks to the sub-Committee, Karren, Roz, Jogen and everyone who gives up their time to promote, organise and otherwise support these many events. More new ideas and volunteers to run these events are always welcome to allow us to offer a wide and varied programme in the coming year.

Conclusion

The Friends Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Nick Draper, Anthony Hopkins and our professional librarians Karren Whyte and Roz Banks of London Borough of Merton for their hard work and continued support of the Friends and West Barnes Library.

Special thanks are due to Karren for her continued hard work, enthusiasm and many achievements in support of the library. We truly appreciate everything you and your team do for West Barnes Library.

Final and special thanks go to all our members and our dedicated Library volunteers, who support the library and the local community in so many ways. If you can spare a few hours each week to volunteer for the library or support the work of the Friends, please let us know.

Redevelopment of the library site is critical to the long-term future of the library. Hopefully with this programme now restarting we will see some progress on this goal. We ask the Friends to please continue with their hard work and support of the library. It remains critical to promote the library and encourage friends and neighbours to use it regularly.

FRIENDS OF WEST BARNES LIBRARY

Financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2019

	Income	Expenses	Net Income
	£	£	£
Membership Subscriptions	5.00	0.00	5.00
Spring Fair 12.05.18	123.40	26.00	97.40
Donations	20.00	0.00	20.00
Autumn Fair 29.09.18	124.99	28.60	96.39
Photography competition prizes		100.00	-100.00
Author Event 29/10/18	26.00	69.83	-43.83
Author Event 10/11/18	20.00	9.00	11.00
Quiz Night Nov 18	150.00	147.72	2.28
Author Event 28/01/19	26.00	44.52	-18.52
Sundry Donations	19.81	0.00	19.81
Spring Fair 30.03.19	112.85	30.51	82.34
Author Event 18.03.19	53.57	47.80	5.77
	681.62	503.98	177.64

Cash at Bank @ 31.03.19	1876.3
Cash in hand @ 31.03.19	216.23
	2,092.53

Cash reserves b/fwd at 01.04.18	1914.89
Net income 2018/19	177.64
Cash reserves @ 31.03.19	2092.53

I have reviewed the financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2019. In my opinion these have been properly prepared and accurately reflect the underlying books and records of the 'Friends of West Barnes Library' for this period.

Brian Lewis-Lavender 17A Blenheim Road, SW20 9BA

 21/5/2019.