

Harbury Village Library (HVL) Annual General Meeting

1st April, 2025

Steering Group Chair's report

The current library steering group comprises of a mix of relatively new and some very experienced trustees. For newer trustees the last year has been a time of learning and trying out new ideas, with much support and organizational memory of long-standing members of the steering group.

The membership of the steering group is evolving. Lessons learnt in relation to the heating project have meant two new roles on the steering group. The first lesson has been how important the maintenance of the building and environment is to the functioning of the charity. To this end a "buildings trustee" has been added to the steering group. Jacqui Temple has taken up this role and is getting to grips with issues relating to the building. The second lesson in relation to the heating project is how important good communication is with the preschool. Sarah Davis (secretary to preschool trustee board) has been co-opted on to the hvl steering group to ensure good liaison with the preschool continues.

The wider hvl volunteer group is large and all its parts contribute to the library's success. Biblio's continue to provide a significant social hub in addition to funds that contribute significantly to the financial stability of the charity. As cost pressures increase and having a strong desire to maintain financial stability, a fund-raising plan is being developed, which is being led by Jacqui Temple and Nicola Thompson. Active fund-raising and donations from individuals mean that this year we have agreed a spend of approximately £6,000 to improving the environment including new furniture and computers.

One of our sad losses this year, was the death of Terry Timms. His death will have been felt by many involved in the library, so it is fitting that the story-telling chair serves as a reminder both of his contribution to the library and his warmth and vitality as a person.

Ed Wilson, not only did such wonderful job in relation to managing the heating project, he also took on many of the maintenance tasks when Terry was no longer available. With the completion of the heating project it was time for Ed to step down. Paul Roe has now taken on the lead maintenance role and is working closely with Jacqui on buildings issues. We are grateful to both for stepping forward.

Moving Forward

Moving forward, the steering group has work to do up-dating its structure and charity commission paperwork. In addition to confirming steering group membership and

roles, the structure of the charity needs to be brought up to date. If agreed by the AGM the charity will look to becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) as opposed to our current Unincorporated Charitable Association (UCA). As well as updating our paperwork, the new structure would be more appropriate for entering into contracts and, as a legal entity, provides limited liability for trustees. One of the other issues for consideration is whether the responsibility re the leasing of the building should change. Hvl currently has a sub-lease with the parish council who have a primary lease from the diocese. However, although streamlining the lease responsibilities would have positives and provide clarity, the process and incurred legal costs may be prohibitive. Current steering group position is to move forward on becoming a CIO and to give the issue of the lease further consideration.

One of the other key areas for the charity is how to improve communication. The operational leads in their roles are considering ways to do this, and the steering group has agreed funds to improve and up-date the website. We are a team and we want everyone involved to feel part of that team. To that end, social connections are important. We had a very-well attended Christmas party in December and are planning to host our second volunteer bbq (after last year's success) on Sunday 8th June. A date for your diary.