Annual General Meeting of Harbury Village Library and Biblio's Cafe

March 25th, 2024

Present: Sharon Hancock (Chairman), Jill Baker (Cafe), Michael Luntley (Library), Rosemary Blackburn (Treasurer), Tim Lockley (Parish Council),Liz McBride (Church representative), Karen Rea (School representative),Ian Credland, Kay Garvey, Gill Holden, Dee Luntley, Janice Montague, Judi Piper, Linda Roe, Paul Roe, Keith Thompson , Mary Thompson, Sue Wurr, Ruth Walton (Minutes)

Apologies: Liz Ball (Library), Nicola Thompson,

Matters Arising: None

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the AGM held on 6th March 2023 were approved.

Chairman's Report (Sharon - circulated prior to meeting):

Sharon noted her thanks to Ed Wilson for his tireless work on planning a replacement boiler and his grant applications. She also thanked Richard Fowler for his previous library leadership, Janice Montague for stepping into the role pending a replacement, and Liz Ball and Michael Luntley for taking on the role of Joint Library Leads.

She felt it was now the right time to step down from her role as Chairman and expressed her gratitude for the recent presentation and gifts from the HVL volunteers which had been a wonderful surprise.

She also thanked the other committee members, volunteers and the village for their support of the library and the cafe.

Treasurer's Report (Rosemary - circulated prior to meeting)

Rosemary drew the meeting's attention to the loss in the accounts and explained the increase in the library's costs due to higher utility costs, hire costs for a temporary heating system and repairs to the existing system, together with a consultancy fee for the heating project. She noted that certain items were now recorded differently from previous years. For example, monies received by the library in respect of ticket sales are now shown net rather than gross. Rosemary thanked Robert Powell for carrying out the audit and Nicola for her support.

It was agreed that, given the significant increase in overheads, the organisation had done well to minimise the level of the loss. Sharon thanked Rosemary for the clarity of the accounts.

Library Report (Michael Luntley and Liz Ball – circulated prior to meeting): Michael noted that it seems footfall is now back to pre-pandemic levels. He highlighted a number of the initiatives such as having dedicated displays for special occasions, a book of the week and volunteers' recommendations.

Michael and Liz had attended the Community Library Network to learn from and share best practice and Michael has joined the working party on digital inclusion.

The range of activities is being extended such as poetry readings and starter sessions on the Find my Past software.

Links with the school have been re-established and Michael had enjoyed a visit to the school on World Book Day.

Michael highlighted various challenges such as the numerous email addresses for the library and the need to ensure the website was fit for purpose. Sharon wondered whether this required professional help.

Biblio's Report (Jill – circulated prior to meeting): Jill said that visits to the cafe were improving albeit not quite at pre-pandemic levels. The cafe faced a number of challenges such as the increase in the cost of commodities (notably coffee) and the predominance of card payments whereas volunteers were paid in cash for cakes. She was grateful to Judi for taking on purchases for the café.

In terms of volunteers, new volunteers tend to be younger members of the community and there are a number of volunteers on the circulation list who do not volunteer but like to be kept informed. Committee members support Jill to maintain standards in the cafe and procedures are updated as necessary. There have been no new capital purchases and existing equipment is regularly maintained. No Health and Safety issues had arisen during the year.

Jill thanked all the volunteers for their support.

Kay wondered how the Thursday morning sessions were working given the need to integrate existing customers and new customers attending the Tunes and Tales session. Judi and Jill confirmed that this had, in fact, been in existence for some time and Judi confirmed it offered a fantastic asset.

Heating Report: (Circulated prior to meeting) Sharon talked through Ed's report in his absence and said he had undertaken a great deal of work in respect of grants. Unfortunately, two major grants had been declined because the premises are sublet from the Parish Council so Ed is looking into smaller grant applications. He is hoping that some work can be undertaken over the summer.

Michael noted that should work be carried out in the autumn, there would be an impact on activities within the building and queried whether it was possible to have an indication of the works' timeline. Sharon confirmed nothing was yet certain in that respect.

Art report: (Martin - Circulated prior to meeting) In Martin's absence, Sharon read from his report. It was agreed that the artwork enhanced the ambience of the building.

Jill highlighted the work David Turner had undertaken on the menu and recorded her thanks.

Election of Officers: Sharon stepped down while Tim oversaw the election of the Chairman and Treasurer.

Chairman –Sharon proposed Kay Garvey as Chairman. Michael Luntley seconded.

Kay was elected unanimously.

Treasurer – Rosemary Blackburn. There were no other proposals. Rosemary was unanimously elected.

AOB:

Kay noted that she had shadowed Sharon for the past year and had found this experience invaluable.

Maintenance - She discussed the issue of maintaining the premises and its complexities and proposed formalising operational leads who could meet regularly and then report back to the steering committee. This was agreed.

IT: It was acknowledged that the IT systems need to be addressed to decide what is historic, what is required and who can maintain systems going forward. Kay highlighted that as a charity, we want our systems to be transparent. Karen observed that having links to the library that were accessible to parents might encourage greater use of its facilities.

Paul noted that he had been unable to view documents to clarify what maintenance work had been approved and what work had actually been undertaken.

The consensus was that the IT system and website require streamlining. Kay acknowledged that this would take time.

Charity Commission: It was agreed that the fact that Sharon had stood down and Kay had been elected as Chairman would need to be registered with the Charity Commission.

Sharon: Tim expressed his thanks on behalf of the village for Sharon's service to the community and specifically to HVL which she had undertaken with care, sensitivity and diligence, facing the challenges of Covid, building maintenance and the Queen's Award for Volunteering.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.