

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

14 March 2019

Through our third year we have remained determined and ready to take control of Carnegie Library if asset transfer is to be the way forward. As you know, Lambeth Council decided to name Carnegie Community Trust as 'preferred bidder', though it has never been clear what the Trust's plans are. Having seen the sketch plan they published in January 2018, we offered to revise and update our plan; Lambeth declined to consider it while discussions with the Trust continue.

Nevertheless, we have been working on a revision, which we continued to update in light of developments. We are still prepared to work with Lambeth if the Trust pulls out or negotiations with them break down. They still have no lease. We have already seen two of their trustees resign, citing Lambeth's actions installing a gym which will not pay rent, thus rendering their plan unworkable. Our plan is flexible enough to work with or without a gym.

The difference between our plan and what we know of the Trust's is that we take a holistic view of the library. Anything that comes into the building, whether short, medium or long-term, must link with and support the core function of the library. We would build on the successful, thriving library in the years before it was closed, capitalising on the flexibility of our large building, which was designed for interconnection of functions. This, and the furniture on casters, would allow a wide variety of uses, for community groups and compatible income generation. The Trust/Lambeth approach, hiving off disparate functions into separate areas, will fail. The gym, now installed and open, also appears to be failing, despite copious promotion and advertising.

Apart from trustees meetings, our activities over the past year included joining the Friends at Herne Hill Market on 22 April and 29 July and sharing their stall at the Ruskin Park Fete, 23 June. We also held a joint public meeting in Brixton on 8 September and supported the Winter Fair here in St Saviour's Hall, 24 November. We attended a Lambeth First Partnership Conference on 3 October. The theme was 'strong and sustainable neighbourhoods'; and in a workshop I emphasised the need for safe welcoming spaces like libraries where local people can gather and develop community activities. Former cabinet member responsible for libraries and now council leader Jack Hopkins sat next to me. Lambeth's Chief Executive Andrew Travers looked in; I later told him the Association was revising our business plan and would like to present it to him. His non-committal reply was "It's good to talk".

We have continued to liaise with members of the **Carnegie Library Users Consultative Group**. With the exception of Wiggle & Rhyme, none of the other groups have been able to return. We do not have a current representative among the parents; please let me know if you are interested. Ruskin Readers, having settled in St Faith's for about a year, then moved to Bell House in Dulwich and are very happy there. The monthly Book Group continues to meet here in St Saviour's; it is hoped they can come back to the library before long. The Chess Club remains in abeyance. There is no current provision for Silver Surfers; I intend to press for this, and assurances about access. The Carnegie Creatives have dispersed; and their former representative has moved out of London. We will continue to support the Residents in the library flats in Haredale Road. The Book at Breakfast group fizzled out at Tudor Stacks, but one of the members would like to start a new group in the library. I have mentioned this to a librarian and it is being pursued with the Head of Libraries.

We posted brief financial details on the website. Bob Goodrick has continued to act as Treasurer, providing useful input to our business plan. He will present the Annual Accounts following this report.

As required by our Constitution, one third of the trustees in rotation, Hazel Watson, Frances Alderson and Danny Friedman retire at the AGM; Hazel and Danny are willing to stand again, but Frances has decided to step down. She has been a very valuable member of the board, and we're sorry to see her go, though happily she remains an Association member. Nicholas Edwards, Stephen Carlill, Jeffrey Doorn and Robert Goodrick are continuing trustees. Sadly, Katie Angermeir has resigned with effect from January 2019 as she and her family were relocating to America. As we step up our activities, we would look to recruiting additional trustees; interested members are welcome to get in touch to discuss what is involved and how they could contribute. Membership remains steady at over 300; I hope the discussions after the break tonight will provide fresh impetus, inspire new direction and thus attract increased membership. Many thanks.

Jeff Doorn

[Following Bob's report, proposals for acceptance; then trustees retire: ask for members to propose & second election. Afterwards, take AOB.]