



A Thriving Library

The library is lending about 3,000 books a month, has many group activities running regularly and, recently, has added art displays. The Friends support the work of Lambeth Libraries in providing our library and the days of having to fight the Council to keep the library are past. Lambeth Councillors and senior Council Officers increasingly appreciate the value of libraries. The Council has recently spent nearly a million pounds on repairing the building and authorised the recruitment of 15 additional staff to ease staffing shortages across the borough's network of ten libraries.

At our recent AGM, members expressed their thanks to the Council and especially to Susanna Barnes, who is the head of the library service, and her team of library staff. Susanna has been in post ten years and has transformed the service from one which was barely adequate to one which is first class and makes the most of the available resources.

The committee elected at the AGM consists of Stephen Carlill (Chair), Laura Swaffield (Vice Chair), John Cagan (Secretary), Annie Gelly, Bob Goodrick, Faith Cook, Hazel Watson, Jackie Plumridge, Jeff Doorn, Maude Estwick and Maureen Freeman.

Members' suggestions at the AGM and what your committee has done to follow these up is on the next page.

Stephen Carlill

Reading Groups



The jolly gathering pictured is the Carnegie Library Reading Group, which meets from 6.30 to 8pm on the first Monday of the month (or second Monday if the first is a public holiday). New members are always very welcome. If interested, please ask in the library for the next month's book.

Lambeth also runs two specialised reading groups, Radical Readers and an LGBTQ+ Book Club. For their next meetings, please see <https://tinyurl.com/7cx4sz98> and <https://tinyurl.com/33b8vud2> respectively.

AGM Discussions

Members at the AGM were generally very pleased with the way the library is going, but made a couple of suggestions for improvement which your committee think would be easy to implement. These are to provide some additional subject labels for the shelves and to revert to having all local history non-fiction books on a single shelf. We are taking these up with the library's manager, Zoey Dixon.

The main subject discussed was the overcrowding in the library. Readers who only come to the library for talks when the library is closed for other purposes might be surprised by this. In those circumstances, an audience of 100 or more can be accommodated by moving bookcases. However, during normal opening hours with group and individual use the library becomes uncomfortably crowded. The library really does need more space. Two specific aspects of this are:

- A separate activities room is needed for groups which need some privacy, such as adult literacy clubs.
- The current children's area is too small. The older children and the little ones should have separate spaces and furniture. Eight-year-olds are reluctant to be in with the pre-schoolers.

Members of the Friends are very conscious that the library is surrounded by five rooms that are empty and unused nearly all the time. Those rooms are allocated to the Carnegie Community Trust under a temporary arrangement, to enable the Trust to demonstrate that it can make good use of the rooms to benefit the local community and raise funds to cover the maintenance costs and other outgoings of the building. It is not apparent that the Trust has made any progress towards these goals or could do so in the future. Following the AGM, at the Friends' request Councillor Deepak Sardiwal kindly raised a formal enquiry of the Council asking why the Trust still has the rooms. The Council has replied:

"It is the Council's current view that that the [Trust] should be permitted to continue to develop their business model in the building while lease discussions are taking place. There have been significant changes and disruptions since this partnership started, including closures for basement works to the building, roof repairs, and redecoration of the whole building, the gym opening and being run in-house by Lambeth, and the impact of the Covid lockdown on how the [Trust] could grow its community programmes and engagement.

This has led to the discussions about the lease and its length being ongoing, while providing an opportunity to review the best financial and operational options for the successful delivery of a gym, a library and community space the building."

The Trust has never had any community programmes. Its sole current activity is hiring out rooms for a few hours at a time, in competition with the basement gym and local church halls etc. From time to time since 2012, the Trust and its predecessors have proposed opening a café. The latest version is a licensed café bar to be run by a commercial operator. However, a year has elapsed since the Trust did anything to progress this, except for running a pop-up café which confirmed there is insufficient trade to make daytime opening feasible.

Art Displays

Recent visitors to the library will have seen the excellent paintings by local artist Keith Whitworth. For others, here are some examples.



These displays are a new venture by the Friends and Lambeth Libraries, working together to display high quality art which is not for sale. Keith's paintings will be up until April 30th.

Next up, from May 4th to June 22nd, will be a retrospective: Paintings 1961 to 2023 by the late Louise Victoria Martin. Besides being a great supporter of the Friends, Louise was a very talented artist, librarian and human rights activist. We are very grateful to Louise's family for lending her works.

Lambeth Readers and Writers Festival 2024

Lambeth Libraries, with a little help from Friends groups, has put together a great programme of events and exhibitions running through May and June. There are brochures in the library and on Facebook: Lambeth Readers and Writers Festival.



**Carnegie Library
Herne Hill Road
SE24 0DG
Level access is from
Ferndene Road**

**There is always a
friendly librarian
present to assist
library users.**

Opening Hours

Day	Morning	Afternoon & Evening
Monday	Closed	2 to 7
Tuesday	10 to 1	2 to 7
Wednesday	10 to 1	2 to 6
Thursday	10 to 1	2 to 7
Friday	10 to 1	2 to 6
Saturday	9 to 1	2 to 5

Regular Events in the Library

Bridge Club: for players of any standard on Mondays 2.15 to 5.15.

Chatter Books: Book club for 7- to 11-year-olds on the last Monday of every month 3.30 to 4.30

Reading Group on the first Monday of the month from 6.30 to 8.

Friends' Author Events on the second Tuesday of each month. Refreshments from 6.30pm; presentation from 7.00 to 8.30. In the library and live streamed. Suggestions for future authors and books are always welcome.

May 14th Journalist and broadcaster Rory Cellan-Jones will discuss *Ruskin Park, Sylvia, Me and the BBC*, a memoir drawn from his mother's correspondence.

June 11th Peter Watts will give the history of *Denmark Street: London's Street of Sound*.

July 9th Jolyon Maugham of the Good Law Project presents *Bringing Down Goliath: How Good Law Can Topple the Powerful*.

Wriggle and Rhyme: Rhymes, stories, movement, puppets, scarves, shakers BUT MOST OF ALL FUN for under-5s and their grown-ups on Wednesdays 10.30 to 11.15 and Saturdays 9.30 to 10.30.

Chess Club: for players of all standards, with some tuition for beginners, on Saturdays 2 to 4.30

Friends' Tea Stall on the first Saturday of the month 2.00 to 4.00.

www.friendsofcarnegielibrary.org.uk