

**The Library Campaign
Annual General Meeting**
Saturday 24 October 2015 at 2pm
Room 2B, Student Central
University of London
Malet Street
London, WC1E 7HY



Present: Elizabeth Ash (Trustee), Philip Bromberg, Bob Goodrick (Trustee), Luigi Bonfiglio, Laura Collingnon, Guy Daines, Judith Deschamps, Barbara Jacobson, Bob Jacobson, Gaynor Lloyd, Keith Martin, Angela Montague, Laura Swaffield (Chair)

Apologies: Ian Anstice, Barbara Band, Andrew Coburn, Geoffrey Dron (Trustee), Matthew Egan, Pam Gray, Mathew Hulbert, Tom Roper, Martin Wright (Treasurer), Clare West, Alan Wylie, Anna Worthington

Welcome and apologies

The Chair, Laura Swaffield, welcomed everyone and chaired the meeting. The apologies were noted.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the AGM held on 13 June 2014 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2015 was delivered by the Chair and is summarised, as follows:

The previous year was dominated by the production of substantial evidence to inquiries about digital inclusion; the work of Arts Council England; the abolition of the Advisory Council on Libraries; the extension of PLR to audio books and e-books; and the Sieghart inquiry on public libraries. Almost none of these, though reflecting widespread opinion, led to any change for the better.

The exception - provisionally - is the Taskforce set up to ensure action on the Sieghart proposals, published December 2014. This is only now really getting into gear, with a chief executive and a small team in place. Paul Blantern and Kathy Settle will be at the Speak Up for Libraries (SUFL) Conference on November 14.

Elizabeth Ash and Laura Swaffield have attended a meeting with the Taskforce CE and chair, hosted by the Society of Chief Librarians, where we again requested that TLC attend all Taskforce meetings as representatives of library users, not just the subsidiary meetings they plan for 'stakeholders'.

Last year's AGM highlighted the many problems attendant on the creation of volunteer libraries, invariably against the will of the volunteers themselves, who find they have no other way to keep the buildings in public use.

This led to long discussion among the trustees, ending with the creation of a TLC policy statement published in June 2014. This stresses that TLC is against the concept of volunteer libraries - not the volunteers themselves, and deplores the continuing lack of support for them and the total lack of research in England into how these libraries are faring. Research in Wales and Scotland finds that they are not a sufficient or sustainable substitute for professionally-run libraries.

The Speak up for Libraries conference last year was a success. SUFL, of which TLC is a part, are now planning the next, on November 14. As always, busy and high profile speakers are happy to attend SUFL, which is always held on a Saturday. This is in contrast to the libraries minister, Ed Vaizey, who declines to attend any meeting on a Saturday. TLC has for months been trying to arrange the public debate with Alan Gibbons he had promised - which necessarily must be on a Saturday. We appear to have reached deadlock.

The rest of the year has been devoted to 'business as usual'. This is imposing an increasing burden, which simply cannot be sustained on current arrangements. It is also increasingly difficult to arrange regular physical meetings with trustees, although much communication takes place via email and telephone.

Most of the burden falls on EA, who carries out a huge amount of vital work - including handling all membership and meetings admin, dealing with telephone queries, preparing minutes and papers for meetings, banking, handling payments, organising the print run & distribution for the magazine, doing the administration for the SUFL conference, handling the reports required by the Charities Commission, administering & contributing to the website and dealing with social media for the charity.

LS continues to produce the magazine, and thanks to Unison was noted as they subsidise the magazine, without having any influence over the content. LS also handles most of the press work including TV interviews, and maintains a database on library developments to enable her to comment on local issues nationwide. This year her contribution has been limited by the demands of campaigning on her own area, Lambeth, where damaging plans are being pushed through at high speed, necessitating intensive work. The burden has fallen more heavily than ever on EA.

Both EA and LS have attended relevant meetings, conferences and court cases. Both are involved in planning SUFL. Both have given one-to-one advice to individuals on a number of topics, ranging from general information on libraries to advice on campaigning. This can be very time-consuming.

The valued help given by members Shirley Burnham, Alan Wylie & Trevor Craig through collation of daily libraries news, research, technical support and social media was highlighted. Trustee Geof Dron's valuable advice on legal aspects and Freedom of Information requests was also mentioned and thanks were extended to trustee Martin Wright for his meticulous work on the accounts. The valuable input of Guy Daines, of CILIP, was also noted.

In conclusion, it was stressed that much remains to be done, and much more help is needed.

Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2015

The accounts, formally approved by the Trustees at a committee meeting prior to the AGM, and a written report from the Treasurer were received by the meeting. These were discussed and adopted.

Election of Executive Committee (Trustees)

Four of the existing Trustees were willing to stand for re-election. In addition, Mathew Hulbert had indicated a willingness to stand as a general member and Keith Martin had indicated a willingness to stand as Treasurer. The Chair provided a resume of Mathew Hulbert's background and skills offered to the Charity as he had been delayed and was not present to speak to the meeting. Keith Martin gave a short address to outline his background and skills.

The Chair offered the members the option to vote in individuals or to vote all willing to stand, en bloc. All agreed to vote Trustees in, en bloc. The following nominations were duly elected unanimously by a show of hands:

Elizabeth Ash
Geoffrey Dron
Bob Goodrick
Mathew Hulbert
Keith Martin (Treasurer)
Laura Swaffield (Chair)

The position of Secretary remains vacant and members would be contacted to encourage someone to step forward to fill this and to fill the two further general member position allowed under the current constitution.

AGM closed: 2.30pm