



Friends of Church Stretton Library

Supporting the library in the heart of the community

Annual Report April 2021-March 2022

The Covid pandemic, with changing restrictions and further lockdowns, continued to make planning and fundraising problematic. Despite this we continued working very effectively throughout this period to support the library.

A significant development was the recruitment and training of a team of volunteers to enable the opening of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) on Mondays and Wednesdays when the library does not open. The team went into action in August and continued until December, taking a break until resuming from the February 2022 half-term holiday. This initiative has proved extremely successful, being enjoyed by the volunteers and appreciated by clients. Maintaining and developing the Visitor Information Service was one of the objectives of the original Library Support Group set up in 2014, and it is pleasing to see this now taking place. Our thanks to everyone who has helped to make this possible. We also developed the Stretton Planning Diary, to help organisers plan their events to avoid diary clashes.



Brian Stone & Ed Drury entertain our volunteers

Events



Our events team successfully ran events covering a broad range of interests. By moving our talks online we were able to continue generating income from excellent contributions by Isabel Carter, Peter Toghill (twice!), John Arnfield and Aiden Foster. In the Autumn when live events became viable we presented a wonderful piano and violin concert by Richard and Thomas McMahon, and an enjoyable evening quizzed by Ben Warren. Tony Crowe delivered two talks on "Old Church Stretton", in October and then in March and in January Janet Longstaff presented her stimulating talk about Syria. Joanna Clark organised another of her poetry workshops and readings sessions with the added talent and inspiration of Jean Atkin.

Thank you to all the people who helped with this.



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How we helped the library



We funded new display units for the Visitor information Centre with help from a grant from Focus. The library can now display more material which has enhanced its income from sales. We also provided twelve framed photos of the local landscape also used in our calendar to hang on the walls when there is no exhibition taking place. Volunteers also tested out various short walks around Church Stretton to help in providing additional information for the VIC.

We also subsidised Ruth Kirkpatrick, one of Scotland's leading storytellers, to give two sessions in the library to children from St Lawrences Primary school and home-schooled children.

Looking forward



Shropshire Council is currently holding a public consultation about their new Library Strategy which runs until August 3rd. The new library strategy wants libraries to develop as community hubs by providing additional services to the community in the library, while increasing their income and reducing public subsidy.

We are already helping the library achieve this by opening the Visitor Information Centre on days the library is closed. Supporting the library to further develop as a community hub will help secure the library's long-term future.

We will discuss what else the library might do to develop as a community hub at our AGM. You may prefer to wait until after hearing other people's thoughts on this before responding to the consultation.

We have also allocated £10,000 to spend on the library this year and will be discussing how this money could be spent.

Please come to our AGM on Wed 22nd June at 7pm in the URC hall.



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Accounts Summary 2021 to 2022

Accounts 2021/22	
Net Income	
Events (not including zoom events)	1,454.36
Calendar	1,279.03
Book/charity market sales	326.13
Donations - regular by S/O	3,711.00
Donations -one off inc events)	1,448.64
Gift Aid	997.62
Focus Grant	951.00
Total	£10,167.78
Expenditure	
Library: VIC improvements/childrens event	2,865.77
Charity Admin (includes stationery, insurance)	457.51
Total	£3,323.28
Balance Brought forward from 2020/21	16,314.94
Balance 2021/22	6,844.50
Total at 31st March 2022	£23,519.44
Made up of	
FoCSL Charity reserves	5,000.00
Earmarked for Library spend 2022	10,000.00
Balance available	8,519.44

Future Library Funding

We have allocated £10,000 to spend on the library this year. We will decide how to spend this money after we have heard your thoughts at the AGM as well as consulted with library staff.

In light of Shropshire Council's current financial difficulties, we want to keep some money back in case there is a sudden demand on our reserves in the next financial year.



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How you can help the library

You are helping to secure the library's long term future simply by using it. Please make use of the many services on offer including:

Books, newspapers, magazines - including large print, audio and digital and service for people who are housebound

Computers and WiFi - available for free for public use

Local history section - advice to help you research local history and family trees

Exhibitions - a percentage of any purchase you make goes to the library

Photocopying and digital printing - this service provides additional income to the library

Activities/meetings - many activities take place in the library: yoga, knit and natter, Toddler Rhyming, reading and creative writing groups. Contact library for more information

Visitor Information Centre - purchases made at the Visitor information Centre increase the library's income

How you can help us

Attend our events - this helps us raise funds for the library

Become a member - membership is free and you will be kept informed of our events and activities

Make a donation - you can make a one off or monthly donation

Shop with Amazon Smile - nominate Friends of Church Stretton Library to receive 0.5% of the net purchase price of your purchases



Volunteer in the Visitor Information Centre - volunteers help once a month on either Mondays or Wednesday, morning or afternoon, training provided

Become a committee member or Trustee - we are a friendly group who meet once a month and each person helps in different ways. Some prefer to help either with running events or admin. Those interested can go on to become trustees. If you want to find out more then please get in touch

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