Report from Friends Of Glemsford Library to Parish Council Meeting 2023

There will be a report from Sue Baker on the work and developments in the library, so I would like to concentrate on the amazing work of our many volunteers.

Suffolk Libraries was a new charity formed in 2012 to run Suffolk's libraries, when the spectre of closures loomed large. Whilst we await the delayed awarding of a new contract, finances are under huge strain as costs increase yearly whereas the money awarded to Suffolk Libraries does not. Suffolk Libraries work hard to seek other sources of revenue. Every pound raised, goes to pay for the libraries and the amazing services they offer. It is an efficient and forward looking charity focussed totally on providing the best service it can, to communities across Suffolk.

Staff play a huge role in this, as do the volunteers who work for the charity, from board members to someone giving up an hour once a week to sort the books in their local library.

In August last year we celebrated ten years of Suffolk Libraries with a “Thank You Tea” for our Glemsford Volunteers.

I was thrilled to receive the Exceptional Contribution Award last June from Suffolk Libraries. Thank you to all those who nominated me, but I am one of seven trustees who fundraise and host events. Our events have been curtailed, without the use of the village hall, but we have run quizzes and raffles and last year hosted a live music show in St Mary's Church. Thank you to everyone involved especially Stephen Perkins. Award winning author, Harry Sidebottom, gave a well attended talk earlier this year.

Trustees are there to support library events and fundraise so that we can pay for hall hire, craft materials, and fund library activities. We decided to support the move to Bells Lane with a donation toward the rent. It has been a revelation as to what a library can provide. We hold regular, minuted meetings, an open annual general meeting and keep proper accounts. [3rd July will be date of our AGM this year].

To all Trustees Thank you.

There are several volunteers working every week in the library, sorting books and supporting group activities. Thank you.

There are over 40 Friends, who opt to receive information from trustees and will lend a hand when called upon and attend events when they can. Thank you. Your interest is appreciated.

There is a team who are part of the Friday Café group who run the Tot Rock singing sessions on behalf of the library service. A big thank you for this, 49 weeks a year, service for parents and young children. Learning songs and rhymes is an important building block for the development of language skills.

Thank you to the storytellers who volunteer to read stories with young children in the library.

Last on my list are the 11 volunteers who last summer, despite all the moving difficulties and uncertainties, managed to run a hugely successful Summer Reading Challenge, which was supported by a locality award. These volunteers clocked up 95 hours hearing children read, discuss books and engaging them in various craft activities. Thank you all. [ I will be in touch about this coming summer, before too long]. We thank district councillors for the recently granted locality award, which will make this possible again this summer.

This has been the most exhausting and testing year for everyone involved with Glemsford Library. So I want to end with my thanks to the staff, who throughout the many trials and tribulations, this year have kept smiling, welcoming customers, initiating and developing new group activities, which have made the library so successful, especially over the last few months. After every trial and tribulation, they get back up and carry on with grit and determination.

We do not know what the coming year will bring, but we will try to provide more of the same, along with the new, helping the library staff and fundraising. We can see, every day, the difference that not only a warm space, but a warm welcome can make to many of our residents. You only have to read the comments book in the library to see this.

Our thanks to all those who keep using the library.

Keep supporting a truly important asset in whatever way you can. Glemsford needs its library and all that it can offer when given the space and opportunity. Staff and volunteers will keep working to ensure we provide the best service we can manage, despite the difficulties and whatever the circumstances.