

**Notes of a meeting held via Zoom at  
10.00am on Wednesday, 14 April 2021  
To discuss the future of Sunninghill Library**

The meeting was chaired by Mr Mark Robinson, Chair of Sunninghill Reading Rooms Trust

Present: Mr Cliffe Chermside, Sunninghill Reading Rooms Trust  
Cllr Peter Deason, Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council  
Mrs Helen Goodwin, Clerk to Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council  
Ms Angela Huisman, RBWM Library and Resident Contact Lead  
Cllr Samantha Rayner, RBWM  
Mr Mark Robinson, Chair of Sunninghill Reading Rooms Trust  
Cllr Allison Sharpe, Chairman, Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council  
Cllr John Story, Mayor, RBWM  
Cllr Robin Wood, Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council

Mark Robinson confirmed that it has been agreed by the Durning Library Trust to provide £10,000 per annum for two years, following which The Sunninghill Reading Rooms Trust will provide a minimum of £10,000 per annum.

Cllr Allison Sharpe confirmed that Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council has resolved to provide £5,500 per annum for five years.

These sums, totalling £15,500 per annum for five years, give security for Sunninghill Library for that period of time and it is hoped that other local charities, including the Sunninghill Trust and the Ascot Fire Brigade Trust, will make contributions in addition.

Cllr Samantha Rayner will take this proposal forward to Cabinet in June with the recommendation to keep Sunninghill library open on the understanding that there will be a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with RBWM for the £15,500 for five years. Cllr John Story made it clear this arrangement has 100% support from him.

It was agreed by all present that the funding to be provided would begin on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

Cllr Samantha Rayner confirmed that, if approved by cabinet, this level of funding will guarantee the library being open for 20 hours per week over the five year period. RBWM's funds are very tight but if, during that time, they are able to increase their contribution this will be done in order to extend the opening hours.

Mark Robinson asked if organisations such as the Reading Rooms Trust would be able to make use of the room outside library hours at a reduced rate, bearing in mind that RBWM leases the building from the Reading Rooms Trust at a very nominal rate. Angela Huisman explained that most of the libraries in the borough are used by organisations and charities outside library hours and this is important income to enable RBWM to fund the current library service across the borough. In general groups pay £5.20 per hour, so not a high charge, and if this was reduced for one organisation others may also expect a reduced rate, which would significantly impact on RBWM's funding ability. Cllr Samantha Rayner added that hire fees will be considered on a case-by-case basis but that, if it is wished to increase the opening hours, hire income will go towards that. However, they are open to conversation and she suggested regular meetings should be held to keep the conversation going between RBWM, the parish council and the charities involved.

Angela Huisman pointed out that, as RBWM is responsible for the building, it has a responsibility to ensure that groups using the space provide appropriate documentation such as DBS checks and public liability insurance, which is time consuming for RBWM. She went on to comment that a different model which the group may wish to consider in the future would be to have a 'pop-up' library, meaning that RBWM would only be responsible for times when the library was open and, as this would reduce the cost to RBWM, it would then be possible to vary the hire fees.

Cllr Allison Sharpe advised that David Hilton, chair of the Ascot Fire Brigade Trust, has indicated that when the trust next meets, it will be discussing granting funds to the Sunninghill Reading Rooms to increase the library opening hours.

Angela Huisman confirmed that the library, which is currently closed due to Covid restrictions, will re-open on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, for 20 hours per week.

Discussion took place regarding marketing and advertising as it has been noted that library usage was higher in 2017 when there was a significant amount of advertising. Angela Huisman explained that, after 2017, the Outreach team was taken out of the library service. However, a reduced team, now called the 'Reading Development & Promotions Team' has now been brought back into this service and will have responsibility for marketing Sunninghill library. This will be part of the SLA and will use RBWM's extensive range of social media and other advertising avenues.

Cllr Allison Sharpe asked if the contributing charities would be recognised as such. Angela Huisman advised that there will be a board in the library showing 'This library is supported by...' and the organisations will also be shown on promotional material.

Cllr Samantha Rayner thanked the charities and the parish council for coming forward with the funding initiative and for providing the funds to keep the library open.

It was confirmed that all funding will be directed through the Sunninghill Reading Rooms trust.

Cllr Allison Sharpe asked if other parishes in the borough were responding similarly to support their libraries. Cllr Samantha Rayner commented that every case was different but that there have been many offers of help and they were thrilled with the response. She commented that this should make the library system much stronger, making the libraries a community space for social enrichment.

Cllr Allison Sharpe advised that she understands Sunningdale Parish Council is very concerned at the proposed withdrawal of the Container Library. She had told their chairman that a minibus was being considered to ferry school children to Sunninghill library and suggested that Sunningdale parish council may wish to contribute to the service so that it might be extended to ferry Sunningdale residents to Sunninghill library.

Cliffe Chermside asked if a public statement could be released so that people know what has been decided for funding the library, as there is a lot of public concern and discussion on the subject. Cllr Samantha Rayner responded that the consultation is still ongoing and the proposal needs to be brought to cabinet in June to be approved by RBWM, therefore it is not appropriate to make the information public before then. However, a statement may be released saying that the charities and parish council are working with RBWM to find a solution.

The SLA will be finalised after cabinet in June and all the organisations involved in the funding will review it before it is finalised.

The meeting closed at 10.30am.