

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LIBRARIES: POLICY FOR FRIENDS GROUPS

1) General

Cambridgeshire Libraries will support and facilitate the formation of Friends of Libraries groups.

2) Structure

- Approved Friends Groups have a constitution and written objectives
- Friends Groups have a membership, and membership of groups must be open to anyone interested in the objectives of the group.
- Friends Groups have committees of elected officers, with a chairperson, secretary and treasurer recommended as the minimum requirement. Officers are elected bi-annually, but are eligible for re-election. Established committees may co-opt additional committee members

3) Finances

- It is recommended that membership fees are levied annually
- Level of fees (individual & corporate rates, & concessions) to be determined at the Annual General Meeting, or by the approved committee.
- Friends committees have their own bank accounts. Cheques issued on these accounts bear signatures of two officers. Treasurers may pay agreed expenses incurred on behalf of the Friends
- Auditors are appointed to audit Friends Groups' accounts each year, for presentation to the AGM. Friends Committee members may not be auditors.
- Where a Friends Group exists, Cambridgeshire Libraries give the Friends first option to run and benefit from any income-generating events held, providing that the income raised is only used for the benefit of the library.
- Friends Groups may organise book sales. If they collect books from their communities specifically for them, the takings are their own and they take charge of them. If withdrawn library stock is sold, the money raised must be paid into library tills as Book Sale money, but Groups are entitled to reclaim 10%. (The Budget and Admin. Team will send a cheque). In a Group's first year, they may hold up to two sales when they are entitled to 25% of money raised from withdrawn library stock, to help the group become established.
- Friends Groups may wish to bid for grant funding for projects with the agreement of senior library staff.

4) Library resources

- Friends Committees ideally include an appropriate member of library staff.
- The appropriate Service Managers and/or Customer Service Managers should be invited to attend AGMs.
- Designated local library staff should attend all Friends events in library buildings, or make arrangements for an appropriately trained and supported volunteer.
- Key local staff are paid for attending Friends events in the library; additional pay if outside their normal hours
- Use of library buildings for Friends committee meetings and activities is free of charge
- Cambridgeshire Libraries will not pay for Friends' use of paper, postage or telephones
- Cambridgeshire Libraries may agree that Friends can offer their members annual privileges (*but this may not include concessions on library fees and charges*), on payment of the annual membership fee. Members should attend at least 2 Friends events per year to continue to be eligible for privileges. NB No member of library staff can participate in commercial discounts.
- Friends Groups may discuss the possibility of matched funding, for approved projects

5) Volunteers

Friends Groups' activities bring volunteer helpers into libraries. This is on the clear understanding that they will not replace paid staff, and will provide only additional or expanded services. Use of volunteers has to conform to the principles of Cambridgeshire Libraries' Volunteer Policy and follows its other recommendations as closely as possible.

6) Controls and support

- Cambridgeshire Libraries are able to recommend variations to Friends Groups' constitutions and provide support and advice on any aspect of their activities
- Friends Group projects affecting library fabric, furniture or fittings have to have the approval of a senior library manager
- Friends Group Chairpersons throughout the county are invited to meet each other and the Head of the Library Service at an annual meeting.

This version amended by Lynda Martin, January 2011