

## Morrab Library Newsletter, January 2014

It's been very difficult to assess anything here at the Library due to the gross betrayal of trust suggested by the Police on investigation and arrest of Morrab Library's Hon. Treasurer on 13<sup>th</sup> October and subsequent bail – only a few days after I had been elected Vice-Chair!

Since then each day Annabelle, David and myself have attempted to digest Minutes, Statements etc. on request of the Police, uncovering accounts seriously fraudulently attacked and depleted, over a period of 8 years. The Police have been and continue to be very supportive but it is a serious and extremely complicated case of fraud, involving not only Morrab Library but also St Mary's Church and St Paul's Trust. So what have we done to approach the future?

Certain changes have had to be made at my request and with the Committee's agreement:

New mandatory signatures have had to be put in place for Banks and Portfolios, i.e. Barclays and HSBC where we had a CAF account (Charitable Aid Foundation) as our Deposit Account – which was almost depleted and so a new Deposit Account has been set up at Barclays.

With no Hon. Treasurer we have employed an Accountant, Sarah Skewes from Crane and Johnston, Chartered Accountants in Alverton, to be our Treasurer and present end of year accounts for 2012/13 to the Charity Commission. Sarah now attends our Financial Sub-Committee meetings and will present monthly accounts and future information for annual expenditure, e.g. new heating accounts for the new build etc.

In future our Custodial Trustees will be invited to our monthly Committee meetings and receive minutes from these meetings.

Each Wednesday morning Annabelle presents all monies and cheques received at the desk for me to double check, along with any bills to be paid. All monies are banked by me each Wednesday and each Thursday cheques are signed with appropriate signatures when David and I meet.

No financial recording or official letters are typed by me on my personal laptop but on the Library's new laptop.

All statements and minutes of meetings are available on request to all Library members.

Millie Howells has agreed to become our Voluntary Membership Secretary as she already has a comprehensive database of membership details and Gift Aid.

More members will be encouraged to inform us of email addresses to save on postage expenditure (please pass on any new email addresses to Annabelle or Katie when you pay your subs).

All Committee members will now sign a declaration from the Charity Commission, at my request, as to their personal details along with a short CV. This procedure will be extended in future to all newly elected Committee members, as well as new members who are working on a voluntary capacity within the financial aspects of the Library.

Income for the Library depends on membership fees, donations, rent for rooms for classes and fund-raising. Two Committee members have been elected as Publicity & Events Officers, for which I must thank Mark Penrose and Sue Nebesnuick. So watch all notice boards, our website and press for future details – to include Open Gardens Day, Summer Fête, raffles and book sales within the Library. Our annual Book Fair at St John's Hall may have to be cancelled this year due to renovations at St John's Hall, which may take over a year.

Volunteers are still working very hard, many more than a day a week to transport books and equipment etc. stored during the building work at the Library – for which we are extremely thankful.

Annabelle and Katie are now planning to return to their work as Librarians whilst we continue to work with the Police Officers within the ECU (Economic Crime Unit).

Donations are coming in from members with offers of practical help necessary with moving the new build forward, which we are so grateful for.

The future, although financially depleted, is settling into a routine of determination from everyone, led by our fantastic Librarian, her staff and team of volunteers. We all want the Library to be the place it always has been – a place for research and reading, for friendships and shared joy, in its existence as a place of learning but also as a Library that can be proud of its valued connections, its history and its future with new rooms of excellence.

The Library is now financially stable and accounts are now in credit – thanks to the Myner Trust and other donors we are confident that the Library will continue to flourish.

At the AGM (Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March) there will be a chance to provide nominations for Chair and Committee as the officers and 3 Committee members are up for re-election.

Subs are now due for 2014. £25 is the new reduced rate in accordance with Mr Myner's wishes.

A happy, prosperous and healthy New Year to you all.

Mary Ellery

Chairman

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### **Librarian's Newsletter, January 2014**

I usually summarise the events of the past year in my newsletter but oh what a year this has been! We were all working towards the opening of our marvellous new extension, when one Saturday afternoon in early September David Mann and I were finally made aware of the gross betrayal of trust that changed everything.

Everyone involved in the running of the Library was devastated and initially shell-shocked, but we were determined that we would not go under.

Bob Harrison, Chairman, had had a suspected stroke and resigned and Mary Ellery agreed to be Acting Chairman and thank goodness she did – it was beginning to look like the House of Horrors! John Simmonds, our beloved Archivist, fractured his skull and John Peak was admitted to Treliske. Thankfully all are recovering and we wish them well.

Mary and David Mann are fighters and they have worked and worked ceaselessly, with dignity to keep the Library going for the last three months.

All the decent trustworthy people that make the Library the place it is, felt betrayed. We could not hide away and pretend it never happened – we had to face up to it and not sweep it under the carpet. I have worked in the Library for 28 years during which we have had ups and downs, disappointments and challenges, but nothing of this scale or magnitude – but those of us who work here were not going to allow this event to ruin everything.

In the beginning this meant endless meetings on a daily basis with Detectives from the Fraud Squad, Accountants, Bank Managers – working at weekends and late at night.

We had to channel our anger and we have worked in close co-operation with the Fraud Squad and the other institutions involved in this crime. We have spent hours trawling through bank statements and Library minutes. Every query had to be authorised by 2 or 3 signatories and every bill had to be checked and re-organised.

Stress levels have risen and the normal Library atmosphere has been disrupted for members and workers alike.

We must all thank our lucky stars for Mr Myner and the Myner Trust. The Trust has supported us in the most brilliant way and until we get fund-raising events under-way we shall rely heavily on their financial support for day to day running of the Library.

The Tanner Trust have also been incredibly supportive and understanding and this has helped immeasurably. We have had donations of money and help in many other guises – from hours spent helping in the Library to a wonderful collection of jewellery to sell for funds, to security bars for a cellar window from a member who counts blacksmithing amongst his talents.

As soon as we realised that the Library would not have to close, we were determined to make 2014 a year of celebration.

On the positive side this had made us realise how passionate we all are about the Library and how important it is in the community.

The Committee and volunteers donated the wine and food for the Christmas Party and almost 200 members turned up. We had a marvellous time, members wandered around the new rooms with delight. This amazing turn-out was heart-warming and I hope that everyone who has worked so hard will be able to relax a little and enjoy 2014 with the splendid new building and a revitalised Library, looking forward to a good future. We shall have a super photographic archive, new archive storage and a beautiful new room for our art books.

There is a tremendous amount of library work to be done but we hope soon to have a grand opening and build on all the goodwill that surrounds us and enjoy the Library again.

With all best wishes

Annabelle Read

Librarian