

1 March 2018

Cricklewood Library PUBLIC MEETING REPORT



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Introduction

The second public meeting of Cricklewood Library was held on Wednesday 28 February, 2018, at Ashford Place. This turned out to be the night of Storm Emma, otherwise known as #TheBeastFromTheEast - a snowstorm of epic (for London) proportions which made us fear a low turnout, but we needn't have worried. Library supporters were out in force, as usual, and in good spirits despite the weather.

We were lucky to have the warm space provided by Danny Maher and his team, and clients at Ashford Place who were very welcoming and forgiving of our taking over their dining hall, at dinner time, for which we're very grateful.

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was two-fold:

on two sheets on the wall. They set to this task with enthusiasm.

Most of the hopes and concerns fell into one (or more) of four categories:

- Logistics of library **opening**
- Wish for a **community** hub
- Desire for the library to be **relevant** to the community, and in particular, children
- **Sustainability**

Hopes

Of all the hopes shared, the most (38%) were around the importance of the library creating a sense of community and welcome for its users.

People said they wanted:

- A catalyst for shared neighbourhood goodness, surrounded by literacy and a warm welcome;
- New place for the lovely community of Cricklewood to meet;
- A café, or at least coffee;
- Community fun and focal point.

Relevance was the next most frequently expressed hope. People want us to provide activities that are relevant to them, to their community and particularly to children.

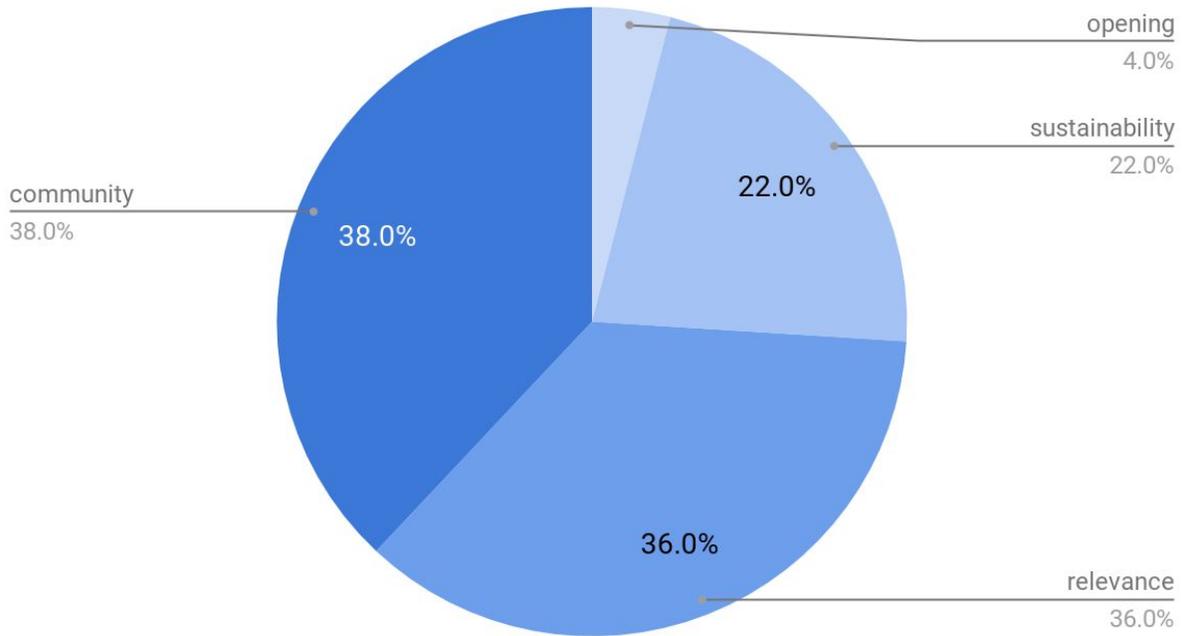
They hoped for:

- Interesting talks, perhaps even courses;
- A place where children can come to enjoy books, study, play games;
- That Cricklewood Library becomes a vibrant community hub for everyone.

People are also concerned that the library be sustainable, particularly that we would be able to recruit enough volunteers to run it properly, that it would be used regularly, and that we would be able to attract funding

Interestingly, few hopes focused on the opening date of the library. These people are extremely patient!

Hopes for Cricklewood Library

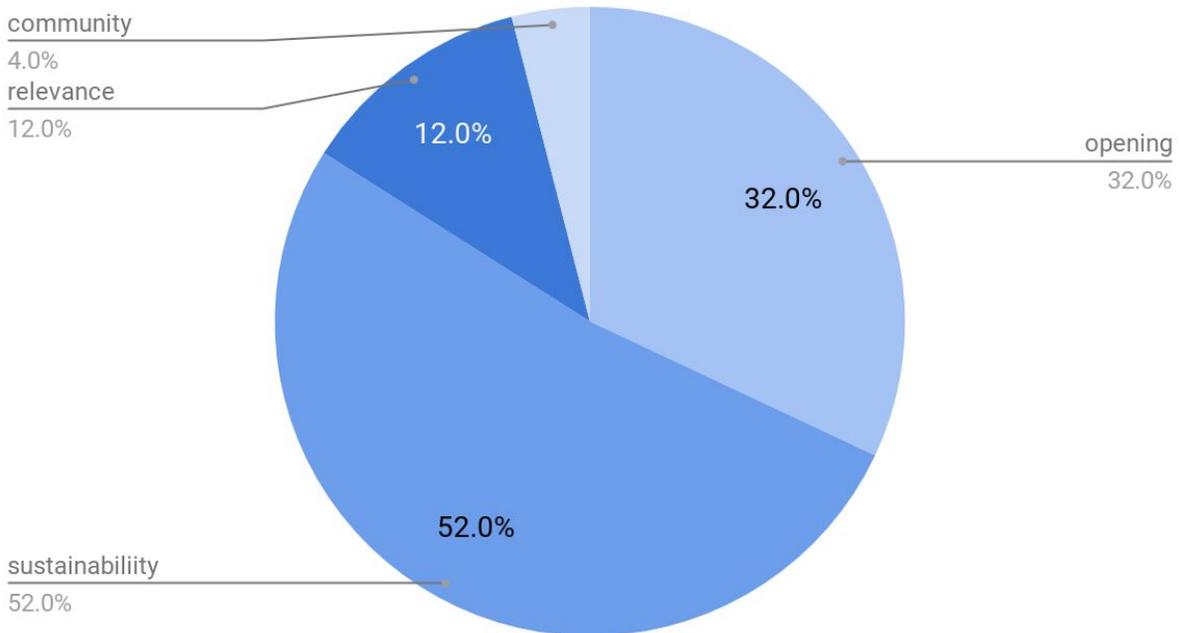


Concerns

People shared fewer concerns than hopes. Almost all of the concerns were around **sustainability** and keeping the library going once opened. People are concerned about:

- Lack of reliable volunteers, lack of ongoing organisation;
- We won't be able to make it pay its way;
- Finding enough people who can sustain commitment.

Concerns for Cricklewood Library



There was also some concern around the delays in opening the library, but not as much as we had anticipated. The fact that the project architects were on hand at the meeting was reassuring, and Sally's comprehensive update on the state of the building works may have gone some way towards reducing concern in this area.

A full list of the hopes and concerns raised is in [Appendix 2](#) at the end of this document.

Update on Building Works

Sally Long, Chair of Friends of Cricklewood Library, gave a presentation on the status of the library building. Her notes for this are in [Appendix 3](#).

In November 2017, we commissioned two survey reports on the building and drains on the advice of our architects, and both showed a wide range of problems that needed addressing before building works could start.

Octavia Housing are the freeholders of the development that includes the library space. In December Octavia said they would refer to the company that built the development for necessary remedial the works (Old Street Homes Ltd). On 2 January we discovered Old St Homes had been dissolved, and shared the information with Octavia. On 15 February Octavia offered to fund some of the remedial works recommended in the survey report. The proposed work was scheduled to start the following week. It is not yet clear whether this work has started. Both Cluttons (agents for All Souls College, the leaseholder) and FoCL representatives asked if the work would be inspected to ensure it was completed to building regulations standard. Octavia have not yet confirmed that it would be.

Cluttons will not sign a lease without the work being inspected and certificated in some way. They will continue to discuss this with Octavia.

The timescale of building works, remedial and otherwise is not clear at the moment. The architects will prepare drawings to allow builders to submit bids for works.

FoCL are asking the solicitors to progress the lease in the meantime.

Sally explained that we cannot take up occupancy of the building until all defects are made good and the head lease is signed.

The presentation was followed by a Q & A session, with people understandably asking for clarification around when the library will be opening. Our best guess and hope at the moment is the second half of 2018.

Cricklewood Coming Together

The second half of the meeting was all about the Cricklewood Coming Together project. Late last year we applied for funding to undertake some consultation on what the community wants from the library when it's open. We were granted £10k for this piece of work.

The original plan was to run a variety of activities, suitable for different sections of the community, over a six-week period, to try to determine which are the most popular and therefore which we should focus on when applying for future funding once the library is up and running.

The purpose of the focus groups during the public meeting was to try to identify the most popular areas to focus on, to identify possible alternative venues (since the library premises are not currently available after all), to encourage volunteers to offer their services to run these activities, and to think about what potential barriers to taking part might be, and how the library might help overcome these.

We divided up the room into four groups, with attendees moving between them. Each group focused on a different topic:

- Culture (arty stuff)
- Social cohesion (fun stuff)
- Educational opportunities
- Access to information

Inevitably there was overlap between all of the groups, and certain themes came up a lot (mostly involving food and drink!).

Each group was given a list of possible activities which had been suggested by people who took our online survey at the end of last year, and asked to rate them for popularity. They were also asked to add any others that came up during their discussions round the table.

The results, in descending order of popularity are below:

choir	13
wine tasting	11
beginners art for adults	10
lectures	9
storytelling group	8
foreign language conversation	7
play reading groups	7
annual music event	5

Bingo nights (with Beacon Bingo)	5
book clubs	5
ceilidh	5
creative writing group	5
local history group	5
silent disco	5
singalongs around the piano	5
theatre group	5
homework club	4
learn to uke	4
music appreciation	4
parent and toddler stay and play	4
pilates	4
teen music group run by teens	4
calligraphy	3
cocktail making	3
cocktails and colouring	3
coding club	3
cooking classes	3
dance classes	3
ESOL	3
film club	3
food and nutrition	3
genealogy	3
learn to use your mobile/tablet	3
yoga	3
baking classes at local venues	2
black history events	2
board games	2
board games for kids	2
Board games for singles	2

Bridge nights	2
chess club	2
children's reading clubs	2
drawing for people who think they can't draw	2
history of local houses	2
life drawing	2
local heritage group	2
mah jong group	2
movie nights	2
nature club and walks	2
photography	2
poetry slam	2
public concerts in St Gabriels and park	2
study skills	2
themed conversation nights	2
belly dance	1
community fair	1
Cricklewood Welcome groups	1
financial literacy/budgeting	1
FoCL culture vultures (lectures, outings around town)	1
jigsaw puzzling	1
karaoke	1
keep fit	1
knitting club	1
library street party	1
managing your diet	1
MP and councillor surgery	1
poetry and spoken word events	1
printing class	1

support groups for mental health etc	1
ucas application support	1
university admission/Oxbridge help	1
money saving expert	1
disability advice	1
Brent Housing advice	1
how to access brent services	1

We had volunteers for various activities as follows:

- Running a beginners' art for adults class
- Running a genealogy class
- Organising money-making public concerts for the library
- Running an interactive story-telling class (two people)
- Running an arts and crafts class
- Running a film benefit night
- Managing volunteers and organising events
- Teaching art and life-drawing

Possible Barriers to Participation

The focus groups were also asked to look at possible barriers to taking part in activities and how we might overcome them.

The barriers identified were:

- Timing of activities
- Childcare (or lack of)
- Resources (eg not having a Ukulele)
- Parking or other transport issues
- Not knowing about the activities
- Financial barriers and costs
- Lack of facilitators to run activities
- Keeping volunteers long term

-
- Not having someone to go with

We will have to ensure that we build solutions to these issues into our activity programme so that these obstacles to participation are reduced.

Conclusion

Despite the continuing delays in opening the library due to issues over the state of the building and problems with the developer, there is still a huge amount of enthusiasm in the local community for this library. As well as leaving their warm homes on one of the coldest nights of the year in a near blizzard, the meeting attendees worked hard and good humouredly on building the framework for our launch programme, Cricklewood Coming Together. In addition, a quarter of the people who attended on the night offered their time and skills to help run activities and put on fundraising events to support the library.

This was our third public meeting and offered useful feedback in terms of gauging the strength of local support, developing the launch programme and planning for the services the library will offer once open.

- 25% of attendees offered their time and skills to run activities, fundraise and support the library - BUT - we still need more - see below.
- Creative Ideas and offers to develop courses offered outside the library included group meetings in Gladstone Park, use of private spaces such as in architects office and Ashford Place, and investigation of additional venues such as pubs and halls
- Future fundraising activities were also discussed including a community ceilidh

We need volunteers to help run our upcoming events - the Ceilidh, our Cricklewood Coming Together programme, our Table Days (resuming end March), the Olive Road Street Party, and much, much more! Please email if you have time or skills to offer.

If you have any further suggestions or questions, please get in touch. We can be reached on info@cricklewoodlibrary.org.uk.

For further information, visit our website at www.cricklewoodlibrary.org.uk.

Thanks as ever go to Ashford Place, and our two great residents' associations, NW2RA and MapRA for sharing our updates with residents. Your help is much appreciated.

Appendix 1

Trustees



Working Groups

WORKING GROUPS

Working Groups consider and research matters relating to the services that the Friends of Cricklewood Library provide, and are preparing to provide. This includes

- Finance
- Buildings
- Volunteers
- Programmes
- Resources
- Fundraising
- Communications

Working Groups (WGs)

- report to the Trustee Committee
- have at least one Trustee in the group
- work to an agreed terms of reference document

REGISTERED OFFICE

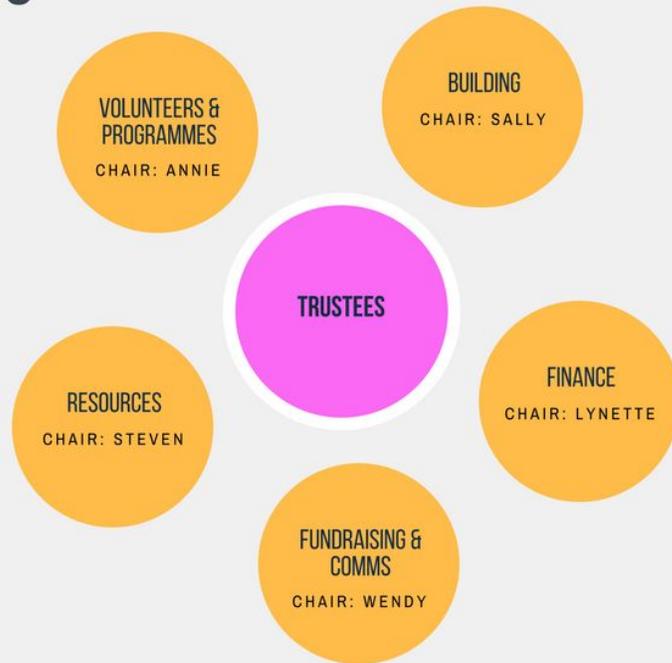
116 OLIVE ROAD
LONDON NW2 6UU

WWW.CRICKLEWOODLIBRARY.ORG.UK

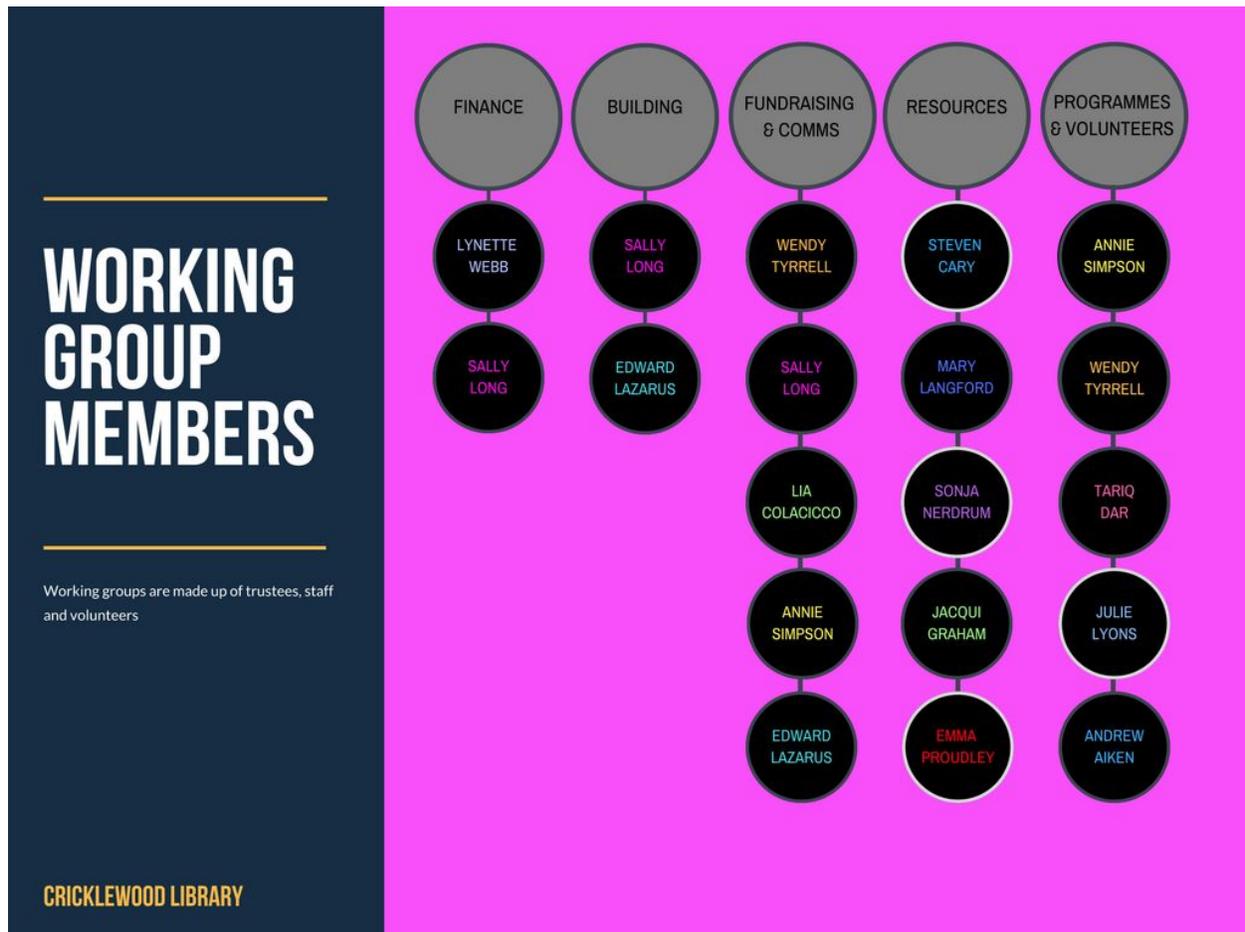
@CRKLWDLIBRARY

LIBRARY ADDRESS

152 OLIVE ROAD
LONDON NW2 6UY



Working Group Members



Appendix 2

We asked participants to share their hopes and concerns for the library. This is what they said.

Hopes	Concerns
Hooray for books, libraries, communities! We need lots of activities!	We won't be able to make it pay its way
A place that welcomes everyone	Space
Cafe	Movement between rooms
Somewhere for kids to learn to read!	It will be a white elephant
Interesting talks, perhaps even courses. Access to computers etc.	Delay in opening
Maybe a quiet place to read with a cuppa coffee/tea	Sustainability
We will get reliable volunteers and flourish as a library and place to go. Hope the library will be run efficiently and happily for years to come and continue to receive funding and books.	Lack of reliable volunteers, lack of ongoing organisation. Dropping off of financial support. Lack of interest in books and reading.
Abundant community support.	That struggles with physical fit out delay the opening.
Good coffee and a place to read.	Won't be used much.

A thriving library and community space.	A major challenge! To create and develop a library centre and enable it to continue to exist to survive.
All structural defects will be rectified.	Maintaining funding.
Computer availability	Will activities all be run by volunteers?
Kids' activities	Finding enough people who can sustain commitment.
A catalyst for shared neighbourhood goodness, surrounded by literacy and a warm welcome.	The challenges of delivering an environment that will meet expectations and can be funded for the long term.
Homework group	Sufficient volunteers!
A really warm, welcoming space where people in the community can come together for a variety of activities (as well as reading of course!)	Sufficient volunteers!
A place where children can come to enjoy books, study, play games.	How to keep it going, maintain interest and finance.
A few classes maybe - keep fit, yoga, etc E2L etc	People don't visit it.
Community fun and focal point.	I'm concerned that we won't be opening this summer.
Exciting community activities at the library	I'm (also) concerned that we won't be opening this summer.
That it will be open in summer 2018	That it will be open and be a hub for the community and community issues.
It will put on lots of family-friendly activities	Will internet facilities be available?

New place for the lovely community of Cricklewood to meet	Spreading the workload and keeping it sustainable (on all levels).
Great books!	It will never happen.
We have lots of exciting books and programmes in library.	
Activities for all ages.	
Study areas for students.	
The community will get together more. Storytelling, book club + MORE!	
A safe learning environment for everyone.	
The whole diverse community can benefit from it in the same way.	
A hub for cultural activities. To lead Brent 2018 London Borough of Culture.	
A place for stories to be read to youngsters.	
That Cricklewood Library becomes a vibrant community hub for everyone.	
Friendly community	
I'd like to see some art displays.	

I'd also like to see some art displays.	
Hope that activities will flourish and bring people together.	
Hope that children will continue to use the library and to borrow books.	

Appendix 3

Opening Remarks by Sally Long, Chair of Friends of Cricklewood Library

Who are we

We are the Friends of Cricklewood Library.

We're a group of local residents who work to keep the local library - campaigning and fundraising to do that. The library was closed in 2011 by the council, although we weren't able to take over the old building, we did negotiated a 2000ft² premises in a new mixed development on a peppercorn rent in perpetuity.

We've managed to get the council on side, with great support from our local councillors and local organisations, including Ashford Place.

We are a group of people who've come together with a common interest: the library
So what do we do? In real terms we support three pop-up libraries in local stations, and we take part in community events.

Core Purpose

We are a charity, and our core purpose is to
advance education for the public benefit
providing a library and reading room and facilities for educational and cultural activities
Offer a space for activities that bring people together and make life better in Cricklewood

That is all people, whatever their age, background or financial standing

Building

So we have a space on Olive Road, newly built, it's being provided as an empty shell. So why aren't we in it?

Do you know it? Opposite Gladstone Park - road improvements are underway at the moment

As you know last year we raised over £100k through crowdfunding, and thanks to everyone who helped with this. So we started the process of getting the internal building work underway with a complete survey of the interior and the drains - and unfortunately the report from both surveys shows that there is some work to be done before we can starting fitting out the interior.

We are taking on the building on a full repair lease for 999 years - so we can't just paper over problems and hope everything will be ok. Next week we've got a meeting to talk about getting the work done, and we hope to have a timescale soon, an indication of when we might get the building open to the public.

Fundraising

We have around £100k including £40k coming from the Mayor of London as part of our crowdfunding. Brent Council have agreed to give us around £90k, and estimated building works will cost over £200k.

We're still fundraising, via the website - preparing events and more. You can help with this...