

Friends of Devon Libraries and Torbay Libraries Guidance Framework

This framework sets out how Friends Groups and Libraries Unlimited, the charity that runs libraries in Devon and Torbay, work together to ensure communities benefit from high quality library services.

Friends Groups have played a vital role in the development of Devon and Torbay Libraries and Libraries Unlimited is keen to maintain a good working relationship with Friends Groups in the years ahead.

Friends Groups are open to any library member who wants to get involved and are a practical way to support your local library.

Friends Groups are entitled to be Members of Libraries Unlimited, and work in agreement with their Library Supervisors to:

- Support and promote their local library and the services it offers.
- Help to raise money and hold events and activities for people of all ages.
- Enhance their local library by providing practical and financial assistance.
- Represent and engage with their local community.

Friends Groups play a key role in helping Libraries Unlimited to fulfil its six core charitable purposes, which are to:

- Promote and encourage a love of reading.
- Provide free access to information to help people in their everyday lives.
- Inspire people of all ages to learn, imagine, create, succeed and realise their potential.
- Guide and support people to explore and connect to the wider world.
- Offer a welcoming space to meet, socialise, learn, read and enjoy new experiences.
- Support the health and wellbeing of individuals and local communities.

Most libraries have an active Friends Group. Please ask your local Library Supervisor for details of how to get involved.

For the purposes of this document the term Library Supervisor will be used to describe the member of staff who has the responsibility for managing the building, staff and volunteers at that library e.g. Centre Manager, Senior Library Supervisor or Library Supervisor.

The Role of Friends Groups

Friends Groups exist to support their local library. Each library will have individual priorities alongside those which are shared by all 54 of Devon and Torbay's libraries. These priorities ensure that the library offers the best possible service to the local community.

Friends Groups will:

Provide assistance to, enhance, and support the library in agreement with the Library Supervisor

Library Supervisors are the main point of contact for Friends Groups. A good collaborative relationship with the local Library Supervisor is key to having a successful group. The Library Supervisor should be an Ex Officio committee member of the Friends Group.

All libraries in Devon and Torbay benefit from the support of their communities. Friends Groups represent those communities and their members bring skills, time and energy which enhance the core library offer.

Friends Groups support specific activities and events for people of all ages such as author visits, the Summer Reading Challenge and other children's events. These may take place in the library or elsewhere in the community.

Friends Groups can decide the focus of their activities, but these activities should support the purposes and priorities of the library service. Library Supervisors will work alongside Friends to give guidance and seek advice from Senior Managers if necessary.

Support and promote their local library and the services it offers

Libraries are greatly appreciated by many members of local communities, but many people are not aware of what a modern library service, run by a charity, offers to them.

Friends Groups are actively involved with promoting their local library and inspiring people of all ages to make use of what it offers. This includes the activities and events that take place, and the resources held within the building such as books, WIFI, and free access to computers, as well as access to online resources, eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines.

Represent and engage with their local community in agreement with the Library Supervisor

Friends Groups help Devon and Torbay Libraries to ensure the library is at the heart of the community and people from all parts of the community are encouraged to be active Friends Group members, fully embracing equality, diversity and inclusion. They ensure that local views are accurately reflected and represent library users of all ages by providing feedback on services, opening hours and on planned improvements.

Help to raise money and hold events and activities for people of all ages

Fundraising events range from small cake sales to large scale literary events depending on the ambitions and abilities of members. Friends Groups are responsible for the publicity, setting up and clearing away associated with events they organise.

Friends Groups cannot use the Libraries Unlimited letterhead or charity number when fundraising or seeking prizes or donations, however Library Supervisors can provide letters of support that are likely to satisfy the needs of funders and confirm Friends charitable purposes.

Members of Friends Groups share their fundraising and professional expertise which has enabled Groups to apply for funds to support their library from a wide range of local and national funders. Friends can apply for grants independently and in partnership with Libraries Unlimited and other organisations for the benefit of the library. When independent applications are made it is expected that Friends will have discussed their ambitions and plans with their Library Supervisor.

Give regular updates to Libraries Unlimited and their local community

Friends Groups use their designated noticeboard in the Library to display information about joining the group, activities they organise, fundraising targets and successes, meeting dates and the members of their committee. These promotional items should meet the library service standards of content and presentation.

A member of Libraries Unlimited Leadership Team should be invited to attend Friends Groups AGMs along with the Library Supervisor, and copies of the annual reports should be shared with Libraries Unlimited.

Membership of Libraries Unlimited

Membership of Libraries Unlimited gives Friends Groups an opportunity to influence how their local library and the organisation as a whole are run as a charity.

All Friends Groups are entitled to be members of Libraries Unlimited once approved by the charity's Board of Trustees. As members of Libraries Unlimited they are encouraged to put forward one of their members to stand for election as one of the two Community Trustees on the Libraries Unlimited Board. They also have one vote in the election of a Community Trustee and may send a representative, with voting rights, to General Meetings. Libraries Unlimited is committed to ensuring that the Board of Trustees is as representative as possible of the communities it serves.

The Governance of Friends Groups.

In order to be a member of Libraries Unlimited, Friends Groups need to be formally constituted bodies. Some Friends Groups are registered as charities with the Charities Commission and will therefore have a constitution which meets the commission's requirements.

New groups setting up should adopt the [Libraries Unlimited model constitution for Friends Groups](#), and others already in existence are encouraged to adopt it when reviewing their governance to standardise support across the organisation. If the model constitution is not adopted the Friends Group constitution should cover all the elements of the model constitution.

The constitutions of groups which are members of Libraries Unlimited should be shared with Libraries Unlimited, together with the names of principal officers (usually Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary).

Libraries Unlimited is keen to work in constructive partnership with Friends Groups. However, if either a Friends Group's aims and objectives are opposed to the purposes laid out in the model constitution, or the group declines to communicate or work positively with their Library Supervisor, then the Friends Group, after dialogue and consideration, may not be recognised by Libraries Unlimited.

Financial transactions

Any donations or income raised by an event solely organised and hosted by the Friends will be retained and managed by the Friends Group.

Items bought for the library using funds raised by Friends Groups will be added to the library inventory, with full ownership, responsibility and title of the item(s) transferring to Libraries Unlimited, the charity that runs Devon and Torbay Libraries, on the date of the donation.

Income and donations arising from events organised by the library will be dealt with by library staff and paid into Libraries Unlimited's charity funds.

Should a Friends Group be wound up, Libraries Unlimited expects that any funds remaining be transferred to Libraries Unlimited as being the organisation with the closest charitable purposes to those of the discontinued Friends Group. Any such funds will be ring-fenced for the use of the library originally supported by the former Friends Group and not used elsewhere.

The Role of Libraries Unlimited

Libraries Unlimited runs Devon and Torbay Libraries, recruits and manages all paid staff and library volunteers, and is responsible for library stock and premises.

Libraries Unlimited is a charity and is committed to supporting Friends Groups and ensuring that all libraries in Devon and Torbay have an active group.

Libraries Unlimited will:

Manage and supervise library staff and library volunteers

Libraries Unlimited is responsible for the management and supervision of library staff and the day to day running of the library.

Library volunteers help Devon and Torbay Libraries to extend and enhance the library offer. With around 30 different roles available, volunteers are recruited, managed and supervised by local library staff. Library volunteers are not required to be members of a Friends Group, although it is hoped they would be.

Ensure the support of the local Library Supervisor

A good collaborative relationship with the local Library Supervisor is the key to having a successful group. The local Library Supervisor is the first point of contact for any enquiries from Friends Groups. They will attend committee meetings and deliver a library report at Friends AGMs. Senior managers will guide and support Library Supervisors to enable this relationship to flourish.

Employees of Libraries Unlimited are not able to act as Chair, Treasurer or Secretary of a Friends Group.

Take responsibility for library premises

Libraries Unlimited is responsible for any repairs or changes to the fabric of library properties, including planning applications and building development. Any such works must be carried out by contractors approved by Libraries Unlimited.

Friends Groups will be consulted and kept up to date on developments regarding building improvements and refurbishments by Library Supervisors and where appropriate members of the Premises Team.

Make library facilities available to Friends Groups

Friends Groups may have use of the library building outside of usual opening hours to hold Friends events and Friends meetings in agreement with Library Supervisors following agreed booking procedures. A member of the Friends Group must be present during these sessions to ensure compliance with insurance, security and safety requirements.

All printing, photocopying, telephone and other sundry expenses incurred while using library facilities are to be recorded and paid for by Friends Groups.

Friends may display their promotional materials in the library on their designated noticeboard and other locations within the library with the agreement of the Library Supervisor.

Give updates and support to Friends Groups

Libraries Unlimited wants to ensure that all Friends Groups are informed and feel connected to each other and to a professional and charitable library service.

In the first instance Friends Groups should seek support from their Library Supervisor, who may discuss the needs of the group and/or seek clarification with the Service Development Manager on how best to offer assistance and guidance. Friends Groups are also invited to contact the Service Development Manager direct if further help is required.

Friends Group members can sign up for Friends eNewsletters compiled by a Libraries Unlimited Service Development Manager which include key messages from the Board of Trustees, information about library developments and news from other Friends Groups.

Information about governance and Libraries Unlimited membership will be disseminated to Friends Groups by the Libraries Unlimited Executive Officer. Occasional updates and guidance notes on specific matters that arise will be sent to Chairs and/or Secretaries by the Service Development Manager.

At the request of Friends Groups, Libraries Unlimited manages a private Facebook group which all Friends can join and contribute to. This channel is used to give updates, gauge views and share ideas and activities between groups.

A representative from the Libraries Unlimited Leadership Team will make themselves available to attend at least one meeting of local Friends Groups per year, usually the AGM, where they will give an update on library developments, answer any questions regarding the library service and hear about the Friends' achievements and plans for the future.

Friends Groups are included in the Libraries Unlimited liability insurance policy, with cover provided for events and activities inside and outside the library that fundraise, promote and encourage use (policy details are available on request). Groups should ensure that a risk assessment is in place to record that they have considered health and safety at activities they organise. Some exclusions apply and may need to be insured separately (for example large scale events, coach trips, sporting or hazardous fundraisers such as fun runs or parachute jumps). If this is the case, please consult your Library Supervisor as Libraries Unlimited may be able to arrange extra cover for you, though any additional costs will need to be met by the Friends Group.

Provide networking opportunities for Friends Groups

Libraries Unlimited organise three sets of regional Friends meetings twice a year. These are opportunities to meet and share good practice with other Friends Groups. In addition, Friends can discuss and work on topics of interest to all, and get updates from the Libraries Unlimited leadership team. Suggestions for agenda items should be sent to the Service Development Manager.

Friends Groups are invited to other events during the year that arise such as Libraries Unlimited birthday celebrations and coffee and mince pies with the board at Christmas time.

Have clear priorities

Libraries Unlimited sets the direction of the library service in Devon and Torbay and has priorities agreed with Devon County Council and Torbay Council commissioners under the regulations of the Charity Commission. These priorities, which support the core purposes of libraries, include the delivery of the

Summer Reading Challenge, Active Life, Active Mind month, Fun Palaces and other campaigns that encourage use, and promote equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as complementing Libraries Unlimited's mission to bring ideas, imagination, knowledge and creativity to people's lives and communities.

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This framework will be updated at regular intervals to reflect the ongoing development of our Friends Groups and Libraries Unlimited. If your questions are not covered in this document please contact Rachel Gee, Service Development Manager, Libraries Unlimited.
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