

FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

Annual Report 2019-2020



Welcome to the 2019-2020 Annual Report for FOLIO Sutton Coldfield.

It will come as no surprise to read that this has been a year like no other for FOLIO as we continue to work to support the public library service in Sutton Coldfield so that it thrives at the heart of our community. Despite the challenges, I'm delighted that FOLIO has been able to make a valuable and creative contribution to the Sutton Coldfield community and develop significantly as an organisation this year.

Between 1 July 2019 and 11 March 2020 we held 105 events in Sutton Coldfield Library with 2,113 people participating directly in those events. On 23 March 2020 Lockdown came into force and libraries across the UK were closed resulting in the suspension of all in-person activity. We continued, however, to operate during the period March - June 2020, offering online activities, including providing telephone support to our Elderberries group, running a virtual code club, the launch of a brand new project called Telling Sutton's Stories, signposting supporters to online book events, and highlighting the online activities by the library service in Sutton Coldfield.

Before Lockdown turned life upside down, alongside regular events such as our Family History Help Desk and Toddler Construction Club, particular highlights of the year included a joyous Harry Potter day where 80 aspiring wizards and witches joined us for a variety of magical crafts and activities, and our fabulous Sutton Coldfield BookFest - our second annual one day children's book festival with multiple authors and illustrators, supported by Bournville BookFest. We also ran a successful flash fiction competition for adults which resulted in some fabulous new short stories set in Sutton Coldfield.



This year saw FOLIO substantially increase the number of events held collaboratively with external partners in Sutton Coldfield Library. From one-off events with local businesses or organisations such as our drop in surgery around family law, or the Q&A session with the police and the local neighbourhood watch team, to new regular events such as the Pokemon club run by the local Pokeclub, or our weekly Parkinsons cafe, supported by the local branch of Parkinsons UK, FOLIO welcomed these new opportunities to support and work alongside different groups in our community. We very much look forward to further developing our community links in the coming year.

2019-2020 saw FOLIO develop considerably as an organisation. In December 2019 we were delighted to welcome four new trustees to our Board and we have capitalised on the Lockdown period to undertake meaningful strategic development that is strengthening the charity and putting it on a very positive and solid foundation going forward. I am particularly grateful to our new trustees for playing such pivotal role in this.

Once again this year I have been truly inspired by all the volunteers who have enabled FOLIO to do what it does. From our Board of Trustees to the volunteers who have helped tidy up glitter or stack chairs at events it is humbling and exciting to be surrounded by people who want to make a difference. I believe FOLIO is incredibly fortunate to be able to play a role in enabling greater community interaction and development and I thank everyone who has worked with us this year to support our libraries and community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zoe Toft'.

Zoe Toft, Chair - FOLIO Sutton Coldfield

Events 2019-2020



July 2020 saw the final library performances of the brand new children's opera we commissioned from B'Opera, *Alice and the Library Tree*. We were particularly delighted to welcome the pupils from Langley Special School to enjoy the show.

"For some of our children [it] was the first time they had ever visited a library and for that to be such an inspirational experience for them was utterly fabulous. You had made a great deal of effort - everything from the tents to the 'fiddle' cushions were pitched perfectly" - feedback from Langley School

You can watch a fabulous short film about Alice and the Library Tree here:
<https://youtu.be/CcyWWpdr3pg>

In August 2019 we held a wonderfully well received Teddy Bear's picnic which saw us start in the library with stories from library staff, before walking to Sutton Park for a picnic and games, all supported by National Citizen Service volunteers.

"Thanks for a fabulous event, myself and my children had a wonderful time and it really made me feel part of the Sutton Coldfield community"



Our hands-on science workshops, *Reaching for the Moon!*, continued to be very popular and successful, right up to the project's conclusion in December 2019.

"My daughter loved these workshops. She enjoyed every one she went to and couldn't wait to tell us about each topic. Would really like to see more next year."

"My kids absolutely loved it when they came this Saturday! They said it's the best workshop they've ever been to."

In October 2019 we held a special dual event combining a photography workshop for adults, with a craft event for children.

The event was aimed at adults with young children, enabling the adults to have a stimulating time on their own terms (developing a skill), whilst knowing their children were happily engaged in another activity, thereby breaking down a barrier to the adults' participation in library events.



We were able to put this event on thanks to a volunteer photographer providing his time to run the workshop for adults, and additional volunteers working with FOLIO to run the craft workshop for children.

At the end of the session, the parents took photos of the children wearing the hats and costumes they had created in the craft workshop.

“Tom was really good and explained really well with practical tips that I started using right away, and it was a great idea to keep the kids entertained while we learned”

“A great event, thank you”





This year we ran our first Harry Potter event - something that has been requested multiple times by our supporters. Initially it was planned as a drop-in activity, but it quickly became clear that it was so popular we had to change it to a booked (but free) event, to ensure we didn't run out of craft materials for everyone who attended.

Families were able to take part in a wide variety of crafts and activities all linked to Harry Potter, from making potions, to nurturing dragon eggs, freeing house elves and making quills.

"The best day of my life."

"It was a once in a life time experience, so much fun."

"This was amazing."



"Thank you for a lovely afternoon, we enjoyed it so much"

"Awesome!"

"Really good activities that got our two boys very excited"

"Great fun, thank you"

"I loved it so much that I want to come here again"

"It was so magical!"

"This was a great experience, thanks"



Sutton Coldfield BookFest 2020, a collaboration between Bournville BookFest and FOLIO Sutton Coldfield, featured 10 events across 2 venues, Sutton Coldfield Library and Sutton Coldfield Town Hall. 98% tickets sold and 98% of our audience rated Sutton Coldfield BookFest 2020 Very Good or Excellent! 79% of our audience had never been to a BookFest event before – and 56% had never been to any children’s book event before.

“Fun and engaging, I really enjoyed it.” Nital, 12

“It was really fun and funny” Ideerat, 10

“So much fun! I enjoyed it so much! I really, really loved it!” Annabelle, 10

“It was a fantastic day which we were looking forward to since LAST YEAR.”

“[The best bit was] Seeing so many happy people loving being in a library - so many people finding corners to read and share stories in, inspired by sessions they had just attended. It was an amazing atmosphere, a brilliant event, bringing people together.”

“It was so lovely to have a fun, buzzy, local book event for my two year old. Seeing her so happy was great!”

“This was inspirational for my 8 year old who loves reading and writing.”

“Thank you ever so much for organising such a fantastic event and inspiring children to read and have a passion for books. It was absolutely brilliant!”

“An amazing inspirational event that has encouraged my FASD child to read.” (FASD = Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder)

“Would really love to see this become an annual event.”

“Loved it! So glad it was in sutton”

“Brilliant event. Please do more!”

“Great to see a festival in the local area! We’ll be back next year :)”

“So lovely to see the library so vibrant! So many smiles everywhere! Well done everyone”.

“It was the best day ever. Thank you. :-)”

“Great to see the library so busy and buzzing!”

“This is such a wonderful community event - it has to come back in 2021! With so much technology around, it’s great to immerse kids in such culture. It’s also really sociable for parents too and great to have events on that bring us all together!”

The BookFest was very effective at raising the profile of Sutton Coldfield Library through the publicity created around the festival, including a drawing competition run jointly with Sutton Coldfield BID (Business Improvement District). 8 families signed up for library membership during BookFest (on a typical Saturday 1 person might join the library). As well as visitors from across Birmingham, audience members came from Hatfield, Leamington Spa, Croydon, Northampton, Oxford, Wolverhampton, Exeter, Ross on Wye, Kidderminster, Bloxwich, Telford and Hebden Bridge.

BookFest enabled FOLIO Sutton Coldfield to grow significantly as an organisation. In the two months run up to BookFest we gained 60 new Twitter followers (normally we gain on average 15 a month), and 78 new Facebook followers (normally we gain 20 a month). Increasing our reach means we can better support and promote Sutton Coldfield Library services. We also increased our pool of volunteers interested in supporting FOLIO Sutton Coldfield, with 24 new people volunteering for FOLIO at BookFest alongside more established volunteers.

Sutton Coldfield BookFest 2020 was a great success on many levels. As evidenced by the feedback, BookFest had a big impact on supporting young readers and writers and inspiring them to read and create more of their own stories. It offered wonderful volunteering opportunities that were greatly enjoyed, helping to build a strong sense of community. It strengthened FOLIO as an organisation through the learning that took place as the event was planned and delivered and through the relationships developed as a result of the different types of collaboration.

SUTTON COLDFIELD TOWN HALL

10.30am-11.45am
Legendary author-illustrator duo Jacqueline Wilson & Nick Sharratt

Jacqueline and Nick have created more than 50 books together selling 40 million copies around the world. And they're coming to Sutton Coldfield BookFest!

Find out how brilliant ideas are turned into books and learn how to draw some favourite characters – including Tracy Beaker and her daughter Jess – at this unmissable BookFest highlight.

This show will be sign language interpreted.
Please note that Jacqueline will not be signing books afterwards.

Recommended 5 to 12 year olds

£7.50 per person



Tracy Beaker



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Book tickets: www.suttoncoldfieldbookfest.com

SUTTON COLDFIELD LIBRARY - MAIN STAGE

10.00am-10.30am
Pocketful of Stories with Anna O'Brien of Face to Face Storytellers

I've got a pocket full, a pocket full of stories on...and in my pocket there is a...bzzzzz is it a bee? Or some treasure? Or could it be a dream?

Come and find out what is in Storyteller Anna's pocket. Join in with songs and actions and some silliness while on a hunt for treasure.

Recommended 2 to 6 year olds
£3.50 per person



11.30am-12.15pm
Meesha Makes Friends with Tom Percival

Tom Percival is a star author whose books – which include Perfectly Norman and Ruby's Worry – have sold in 16 languages worldwide.

His latest story explores the joys and difficulties of making friends. Meet Meesha. She's brilliant at making things, but when it comes to making friends, doesn't know what to do, what to say or when to say it. Then one day Meesha discovers she has a special talent which makes all the difference...

A sweet and uplifting story to spark conversations about social skills in every family.

Recommended 3 to 7 year olds
£3.50 per person





11.30am-1.00pm
Dr Who Script-writing Workshop with William Gallagher
 You're going to write the best ever *Doctor Who* story – and we're all going to perform it. Don't plan anything. Don't bring anything. We're doing it all, from finding ideas to casting your parents as the monsters. You'll have to think fast, think brilliantly – and then it's all about writing in a group with me interrupting you at all the good bits.
 Hello. I'm William Gallagher, and I write *Doctor Who* radio dramas – or rather I did! Today you're the writer and I'm the producer. Come and meet your fellow writers because we've got a *Doctor Who* play to put on and a planet to save!
 Recommended 8 to 12 year olds
 £4 per child



2.30pm-3.30pm
Mystery writing workshop with Serena Patel
 Meet Walsall writer Serena Patel. Her fresh and very funny new book *Anisha the Accidental Detective* about a British-Indian family wedding, a missing groom and a young detective who saves the day, has just been published - and Serena's at Sutton Coldfield BookFest to create new funny stories at this lively interactive workshop.
 Get involved by choosing characters and actions from a heap of choices, until you have all created a completely new story together.
 Then it's over to you as everyone gets the chance to write their own unique plots.
 Recommended 6 to 12 year olds
 £4 per child






FREE FESTIVAL FUN

12.00pm-2.00pm
"Give Me 3 Words" with Festival Poet Matt Windle
 Get your three words ready to give to "Poet with Punch" Matt Windle – and with his lightning-fast mind he'll turn them into verse.

12.00pm-2.00pm
Caricatures from Festival Cartoonist Andy "Doodles" Baker
 Birmingham's most talented cartoonist will be capturing expressions, and the fun of BookFest, with his quick-draw caricature skills!



A selection of other events throughout the year 2019-2020

FOLIO Sutton Coldfield welcomes

Professor Carl Chinn

to talk about his new book
PEAKY BLINDERS: THE REAL STORY
The history of Birmingham's most notorious gangs.

9 October
10.30am
Sutton Coldfield Library


Book sales (cash only) and signing after the talk

Free - No Booking Required

FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

Mapping our Memories

Come and share your memories of places in Sutton now gone



An informal and friendly get-together to start mapping lost Sutton locations and any facts, recollections or stories about them we may have heard over the years.

Thursday 5 December 13.00-14.30
Sutton Coldfield Library

Free - No Booking

A BOLDMERE SPECIAL!

This is a joint event hosted by FOLIO Sutton Coldfield and Sutton Coldfield History Facebook Group
Sutton Coldfield History Group
<https://www.facebook.com/suttoncoldfieldhistory>

FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

SECRET CINEMA SOCIETY

A FREE FAMILY FILM IN THE LIBRARY EVERY MONTH

filmclub@foliosuttoncoldfield.org.uk

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Family History Help Desk

Why not pay a visit to our FREE monthly Family History Help Desk brought to you in conjunction with Nuneaton & North Warwickshire Family History Society

1-3pm Sutton Coldfield Library

8 May • 12 June • 10 July • 11 September
9 October • 13 November • 11 December

Booking not essential, but strongly recommended:
bookwhen.com/foliosuttoncoldfield
Booking opens a month before each help desk

NUNEATON & NORTH WARWICKSHIRE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Elderberries

A friendly and informal reminiscence group for the over 50s

1.30-4pm
in Sutton Coldfield Library

11 September
9 October
13 November
11 December

Free - including a hot drink and a slice of cake!

FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

LEGO club in Sutton Coldfield Library

Accompanied children of all ages are welcome. Parents/carers remain responsible for their children at all times. Lego and Duplo available.

Tickets are free but places MUST be booked.
<https://bookwhen.com/foliosuttoncoldfield/>

Funded by **M6 toll**

FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

Dates for 2019	25 May*
19 January	15 June
9 February*	20 July
16 February	21 September
16 March	19 October
23 March*	16 November
13 April*	21 December
18 May	

*These dates are ONLY for families who have not previously attended lego club (ie booking is restricted to newcomers)

Saturdays 1-2.30pm FREE but donations welcome

Family Law: The Facts

Your chance to find out about everything from pre-nuptial agreements and civil partnerships to changes to divorce laws

Bell Lax, Sutton Coldfield's biggest local legal practice, is hosting a free drop-in advice session to explain the ins and outs of family law.

This event will feature talks on subjects like the coming changes to make divorce easier, as well as the opportunity to ask questions in discreet one-to-one chats.

Sutton Coldfield Library • 25 September • 11am-4pm • FREE • Drop-in
No Booking Required • Talks at 11am and 3pm • Advice available throughout the session

Bell lax
SOLICITORS
FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

Let's play Pokémon

Sutton Coldfield Library
28 September • 26 October
30 November • 7 December
10am-12.30pm

Come and find out more about your local Sutton Coldfield Pokémon League!

Did you know you can now buy Pokémon cards from the Little Green Bookworm cafe? Why not bring your cards and join a game at the meeting of the local league?

Free - No Booking Required
Beginners & seasoned players of any age welcome

SCPI! Sutton Coldfield Pokémon Initiative
FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

Baron Dickinson Webster (1818-1860) of Penns Hall Country Gentleman and Wire Manufacturer

A talk by Hon. Assoc. Prof. Stephen Roberts

Sutton Coldfield Library
Wednesday 2 October 2-3pm

Free but donations welcome

FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD

BARON DICKINSON WEBSTER
1818-1860
WIRE MANUFACTURER
(FIRST ATLANTIC CABLE)
LIVED HERE

End of Life planning you can do today

Would you like to find out more about making a will, sharing your funeral plans, Lasting Power of Attorney or advanced care plans? Come and ask the team from St Giles Hospice any questions you have about planning for the future, with the support of local solicitors.

This free advice and information session will have drop in talks at 11am and 2pm

St Giles
Hospice Care

Sutton Coldfield Library
10th October 10.30am - 3pm

FOLIO FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES IN OUR SUTTON COLDFIELD



Our host of regular activities meant that before Lockdown we were typically hosting 2-3 events every week in Sutton Coldfield Library, with events for all ages and a wide variety of interests.

During 2019-2020 we were very pleased to work with IM Properties on a project exploring the possibility of creating an urban community garden in the courtyard outside Sutton Coldfield

Library. We received tremendous support from IM Properties, and in particular from Thomas Grantham Wright of Bea Landscape Design Ltd, with whom we worked to design the community garden. We hoped to create this outdoor venue to enable us to run different sorts of library-linked activities, to support Sutton Coldfield's entry to Britain in Bloom, and to enhance the town centre and encourage more library visits.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control and despite a marvellous and imaginative garden design we were not able to bring this project to fruition

with the actual building of the garden, but we remain very grateful to IM Properties and Bea Landscape Design for their support.

FOLIO Sutton Coldfield was honoured to be one of the members of the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership (TCRP), a body with representatives from the local public, private and third sectors which has been working throughout 2019-2020 on developing a Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan. The completed Masterplan is due to be published August 2020.

New ways of working - Covid-19

With libraries shut and physical distance the new norm, FOLIO has sought to respond creatively to the challenges of operating without a venue and without being able to meet in person.

In June 2020 we launched a project in collaboration with Sutton Coldfield based Our Place Support, to capture the stories that had made us smile and feel grateful during Lockdown. The aim of *Lockdown Laughter and Covid Kindness* is to highlight the wonderful stories of community cohesion and kindness which are happening all around us as we navigate through the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Around the same time we initiated a small but very exciting pilot project called *Telling Sutton's Stories*, <http://foliosuttoncoldfield.org.uk/telling-suttons-stories/>. This project explores how Sutton Coldfield means different things to different people – even different things at different times – and how all sort of associations, memories and experiences affect how we identify with our town. We are working in collaboration with library staff on the local history aspects of the project, as well as with past and present residents of Sutton Coldfield, and are currently assessing the pilot phase before, subject to funding, developing the project further.



LOCKDOWN LAUGHTER & COVID KINDNESS

- a collaborative record of the good things at this challenging time.

Together we invite you to share your stories! We want to know about the moments that have made you smile and the acts of generosity and thoughtfulness you've experienced so together we can create a record of positivity, to document one aspect of this historic time.

We are also looking for submissions of artwork and photography documenting Lockdown in Sutton Coldfield. Perhaps you have been taking documentary photos you'd like to share. Perhaps your family has been creating artwork as a way of finding calm and joy during these days. We'd love to be able to include these in our broader documentation of how Sutton Coldfield residents responded during Lockdown.

If you would like to be involved or to share a story or image of kindness or laughter, we'd love to hear from you!

Find out more here: foliosuttoncoldfield.org.uk/lockdown-laughter or email enquiries@ourplacesupport.org.



Telling Sutton's Stories - A Deep Map for Sutton Coldfield



SCRATCH CODING CHALLENGES

Age: 9 to 14 years old

Every Monday we will launch a SCRATCH challenge. You can submit your code by Saturday and the winner will be announced the following Wednesday. Look Out For More Details

Our First Challenge will be released on 27 April 2020



During this period, we held our first virtual Code Club for children issuing a series of weekly challenges. A significant difference was made by a FOLIO trustee who kept in close touch with all the members of our reminiscence group, Elderberries, to support their wellbeing. For some members this was their only contact with people outside their home during Lockdown.

Governance

In the Autumn of 2019 FOLIO Sutton Coldfield carried out a major recruitment drive to our Trustee Board. We were delighted that this resulted in appointing four new trustees with a wide range of valuable skills.

Monthly trustee meetings and a series of workshops on strategic development took place throughout the year. With the suspension of in-library activities the Board of Trustees took the opportunity to focus on strategic development of the charity's structures and processes to ensure strong governance of the charity.



John Cooper



Noran Flynn - Lead on
volunteering and
safeguarding



Daksh Gupta



Cassie O'Boyle -
Secretary



Liz Parry



Clare Rumble



Zoe Toft - Chair



Jenny Wilkinson -
Treasurer

Due to family re-location we said goodbye to one Trustee, Jonny Mayner this year. We are very grateful for all his hard work, since the first days of FOLIO's precursor, The Library Lobby, and wish him very well in his new home and job.

Volunteers

FOLIO Sutton Coldfield is an entirely volunteer-run charity. With no staff, we rely on the generosity of volunteers to facilitate all aspects of FOLIO's work, both public facing, such as stewarding or running events, and behind the scenes such as creating publicity materials and writing funding bids.

During 2019-2020 we expanded our volunteer base, primarily through offering unusual and interesting volunteering opportunities linked to our Harry Potter and BookFest activities. A total of 75 volunteers generously donated their time and skills during the year and we are very grateful to each and every one of them. Unfortunately our Volunteer thank you event had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions but we look forward to offering more volunteering opportunities, including online, in the coming year and developing the ways we can support volunteers.

Communications

In 2019-2020 FOLIO funded a second noticeboard in Sutton Coldfield Library as part of our communications strategy. The year also saw FOLIO continue to produce its 'What's On' leaflet, which has proved to be a very successful way of promoting the library, particularly to those who do not follow FOLIO on social media, our primary means of communication.

Engagement on Facebook and Twitter has been excellent (indeed, it is a feature of the charity that many supporters explicitly comment on). We post most days on Facebook, and most weekdays on Twitter. As of the end of June 2020 FOLIO has 1415 followers on Facebook and 918 followers on Twitter. Social media has enabled the charity to have a strong local reach, widening our appeal to a bigger audience. Those who do not use social media are able to communicate with us (and vice versa) via our noticeboard, paper leaflets and FOLIO phone line.

Our Accounts for 2019-2020

Opening balance	£10,522
Income	£6,427
Expenditure	(£11,836)
Closing balance	£5,113
Of which:	
Reserves	£1,250
Restricted funds	£508
Available balance	£3,355

Thank you to our funders 2019-2020

Our activities in the year 2019-2020 were generously supported by grants from the following bodies:

Arts Council England for awarding us a Project Grant enabling us to commission and put on our children's opera, Alice And The Library Tree.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) for an EEGS (Engineering Education **Grant** Scheme) grant to fund our project, Reaching for the Moon!, which ran throughout 2019.



Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council for a grant for our project "Moving FOLIO Forward".



**ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD
TOWN COUNCIL**

We are very grateful to an anonymous private donor, Peddimore Community Fund and Heart of England Community Foundation for their financial support of Sutton Coldfield BookFest.

Our use of Sutton Coldfield Town Hall as a new venue for 2020 was made possible thanks to Sutton Coldfield BID. We are also grateful to Waitrose Mere Green for their support in kind, providing refreshments for a selection of BookFest events and for our volunteers.



We thank IM Properties for their support in kind in relation to our urban garden project.

Plans for 2020-2021

Due to Covid-19 we were unable to carry out our annual public consultation with library users and current non-library users. We look forward to being able to do this as soon as possible as we are keenly committed to planning our activities in response to the local communities needs, ideas and suggestions.

In the meantime in 2020-2021 we aim to:

- Expand our project Telling Sutton's Stories
- Build on our successful Sutton Coldfield BookFest, in conjunction with Bournville BookFest
- Enhance our online presence, particularly in response to Covid-19
- Develop a series of activities linked to the Great Get Together and #MoreinCommon initiatives of the Jo Cox Foundation
- Increase our collaborations with other local organisations
- Further strengthen our governance structures and finalise a new strategic plan

We look forward to promoting Sutton Coldfield's library service as it evolves and responds to Covid-19 and to continuing to offer a range of inspirational and transformational activities for the community to learn, interact and thrive, through engagement with local library services.