



Friends and Library Management

Clear Structure and Intent

A Friends group Constitution needs to clearly set out the goals of Friends, and express what Friends will and won't be involved in.

Delineation between Friends and general volunteering roles. All Friends are volunteers with the Friends group and some are also volunteers in other roles (eg general library volunteers), but there needs to be clear definition of which volunteer capacity they are working in.

Guidance

Friends groups need to acknowledge that Library management has the task of determine appropriate directions for the Library.

Friends then ensure that programs of Friends support these directions.

Friends are a source of innovative and interesting ideas then work with the library to sanction ideas in light of the library's directions, and help them to fruition.

Support

Support by library management for the concept of Friends and the value of Friends.

Support by Friends for functions of library – this may take a variety of forms (financial, political, promotional).

Support provided by library staff eg administrative support, staff on front desk promoting Friends, and understanding from management that this is legitimate time spent by staff.

Trust

Establish a rapport and trust that the Library and Friends are working in the same direction.

Trust that Friends will make judgements which are appropriate and support the objectives of the library.

Communication

Keep library staff informed of Friends activities.

Keep library management involved in Friends.

Keeping Friends informed of library activities, political dimensions, staffing changes or issues, library goals and future directions.

Team Work

Recognise that Friends are part of the library team.

Library management and Friends working together to achieve aims rather than working at odds with each other.

Recognise the different strengths and abilities of Friends team members and harnessing those energies and strengths appropriately.

Recognise that Friends membership means different things to different members, and that this impacts on how and when different members will contribute to the team.

Involvement

Commitment from Friends Committee Members – time, energy and enthusiasm.

Commitment from Library Management – time and support for value of Friends.

Mutual Benefit

Ensuring a balance between the effort of supporting a Friends group and the \benefits which an active and healthy Friends group returns to the library.

Facilitation

Friends can facilitate discussion on a political and community level which staff cannot. The role of Friends in this area can be vital as Friends form a link to the community and can represent the needs of the library users, both to staff, and also to funding bodies.

(Sarah Philpott, former Library Manager, Unley Public Library & Patricia Chigwidden, President, Friends of Unley Library, South Australia)

“Recognise the different strengths and abilities of Friends team members.”

“Support by library management for the concept of Friends and the value of Friends.”



Six Basics *of Working with Volunteers*

1

Planning

Define your project clearly and always seek the approval of your librarian. Divide your event into 'chunks' to make planning less formidable, who will do what: what committees are needed; you have to ask for participation and know what you're going to do.

*"Say thank you
in person and
in writing."*

2

Recruiting

Don't recruit volunteers until you know what you need! Identify specific tasks and skills, and put your needs on paper. Advertise in a variety of ways. Some libraries have a volunteer interest sheet.

3

Orientation and Training

Remember the home basics: contact people in advance and follow up with reminders; make the event fun and welcoming for your volunteers; assign greeters, have a sign-in sheet, and provide a place for volunteers to put their coats and bags.

4

Supervision

Coaching, cheerleading, how do Friends handle money? One example: Two Friends members might be in charge of money at a book sale. Supervisors (or the Friends President) can serve as a support system.

5

Recognition

Say thank you in person and in writing. Inform all of your volunteers of the results of your project. Consider providing treats or pizza during a full day of service – or offering perks and benefits to volunteers who come in regularly. Do give thought to what sources of funding for recognition events are appropriate and ethical for Friends.

6

Evaluation

What went well? What didn't? Note what did and didn't go well – and correct for the next event. It's easy to forget the simplest, most tiny details.

(FOLUSA and the Minnesota Association of Library Friends – USA)

"Remember the home basics: contact people in advance and follow up with reminders"



Membership Drive

MAKE NEW FRIENDS, BUT KEEP THE OLD.

► **Celebrate the past**

Begin with a thank you for the past support, and be sure to mention all the great things that the members past support has made possible for the library.

► **Look to the future**

Give a hint of plans for the new year, stressing that "your support will make it happen!"

► **Make it easy**

Use a mail merge program to preprint membership forms so that members don't need to write all their address information again.

► **Return envelopes**

Include a preaddressed return envelope. If all they have to do is write the cheque and find a stamp, its more likely to get done!

► **Follow-up**

After a month or two, follow up with the non-renewing members, perhaps with a postcard, second mailing, phone call or even a handwritten note.

► **Renewals**

Follow up with those who do renew, too, by sending a thank-you or a membership card (easy to print on business card stock).

► **Appealing**

Make membership appealing and fun. Be sure your members know how much you and the library appreciate their help and support.

► **Looking for new members too. A few quick tips.**

- People join because they are asked, and the more direct the asking, the greater the response.
- Some places to find prospects: friends of Friends (ask your members to suggest names), library supports (staff may be able to identify possibilities), in other community organisations, and at the library (set up a table in the entrance and staff it with welcoming Friends).
- Show off! Be sure that your print materials are good looking and that your mailings and other solicitations are done in an attractive manner.
- Brag a little, be sure prospective members get to know your group's activities and accomplishments. People like to be part of a success story.
- "What's in it for ME?" may be the unspoken question when you ask people to join. Have your answers ready. Benefits of membership may include such things as a newsletter, invitations to special events, shop early at the book sale. Some groups offer premiums, a calendar, a coffee mug, or a bookmark. Of course, one benefit is always the opportunity to help support and enhance the library.
- Don't let depositing the cheque be your last contact. Send membership card, an information letter, a personal welcome or thank you. It's the Friendly thing to do!

"Brag a little, be sure prospective members get to know your group's activities and accomplishments."

"After a month or two, follow up with the non-renewing members."

(Jane Rutledge with Friends of Indiana Libraries – USA)

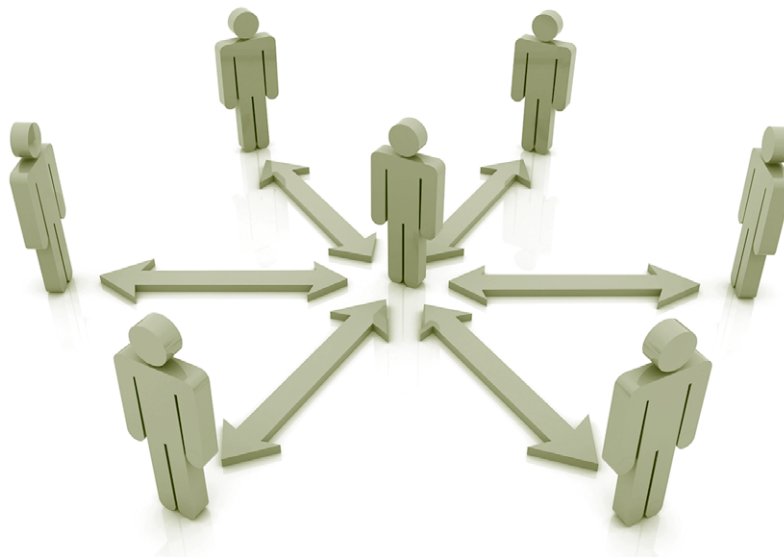




Moving into the Community

Friends of Library groups have to become visible players in the life of the community to have equal footing with other, perhaps, more socially involved groups.

"Make an inventory of notable organisations and associations in the community."



- Make an inventory of notable organisations and associations in the community. Create a partnership of 'interest'.
- Members of your group should participate in other community organisations and be aware of the necessity of being ambassadors for the library.
- Take advantage of any opportunity or venue to bring up the library. The Friends should provide a Speaker's List, with information from the library.
- The Friends should set up a correspondence committee to write a periodic column in local newspapers and other local publications, Letters to the editor are important.
- Nurture media contacts to receive notices ahead of time when there is a special Friends' activity. Don't abuse this, as space is limited.
- Local elected officials should be on the Friends regular mailing list. They should receive invitations to library events. They should be invited to become members.
- City or municipal celebrations should list the library as one of their sponsors.
- Conduct regular meetings with the Library Manager.
- Join Friends of Libraries Australia and learn about other groups in Australia.

"City or municipal celebrations should list the library as one of their sponsors."



Incorporation

What is incorporation?

Incorporation is a voluntary process whereby a not-for-profit organisation (FOL group) can apply to become its own 'legal person' (i.e. the association becomes a distinct legal entity that continues regardless of changes of its membership).

Some of the advantages of incorporation include:

"Greater eligibility to apply for grants."

- Protection of the members and office holders against personal liability for debts and other legal obligations of the organisation.
- The ability to sue and be sued in the name of the association.
- The ability to invest and borrow money.
- Greater eligibility to apply for grants.

Friends should consult the following agencies in your State:

NSW	Office of Fair Trading www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au
VIC	Consumer Affairs Victoria www.consumer.vic.gov.au
QLD	Office of Fair Trading www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au
SA	Office of Consumer & Business Affairs www.ocba.sa.gov.au
WA	Dept of Consumer & Employment Protection www.docep.wa.gov.au
TAS	Office of Consumer Affairs & Fair Trading www.justice.tas.gov.au
ACT	Office of Regulatory Services www.ors.act.gov.au
NT	Department of Justice www.nt.gov.au/justice/licenreg/

Public Liability

What does public liability insurance cover?

This is insurance indemnifying the Not-for-Profit Organisation against legal liability for personal injury and/or property damage claims made by third parties as a result of negligence occurring in connection with the not-for-profit organisation's activities and/or their products (goods sold).

The Municipal Association of Victoria, through its insurance broker, Jardine Lloyd Thompson has negotiated the inclusion of Victoria Not-for-Profit groups within a new national community insurance facility, known as Local Community Insurance Services (LCIS).

- Email communityinsurance@jlta.com.au
- Or www.communityinsurance.com.au for background information.
- Or Local Community Insurance Services on 1300 853 800

On 12 December 2006, Local Community Insurance Services commenced its operations, which, via a strategic alliance with one of Australia's leading insurers, QBE Insurance, can deliver:

- A specialist focus on the insurance needs of community groups and associations.
- Insurance products and services that are specifically tailored for community groups.

Local Community Insurance Services can deliver to groups located in New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, Queensland, Northern Territory, Victoria and Western Australia.

"The Municipal Association of Victoria has negotiated the inclusion of Victoria Not-for-Profit groups within a new national community insurance facility."





Growing Friends in the next decade

Library help
available from
the Friends

Use of technology

Friends should develop with their library a 'Friends' web site. Younger library users see the modern public library as being not merely within a building, but connecting to in a variety of ways. Technology is a key to their use of the modern public library. Check out some overseas sites – highly commended is that of the Friends of the Minneapolis Public Library (USA), see also Great Lakes (NSW).

"Friends should develop with their library a 'Friends' web site."

Becoming more politically savvy

As local government is changing, so Friends need to reflect the new dynamics of such local environments. Friends of Hastings (NSW), Great Lakes (NSW), Waverley (NSW) – display partnership building with council.

Regional groupings

Initiating the growth of Friends groups within a regional context can add exposure, and help weaker groups in an area by harnessing ideas and expertise. Also, it can provide a more effective voice within the management structure – West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation (Vic), and state wide gatherings in South Australia, held each year at the State Library of SA.

Quality and training

Provide a clear direction and guidelines for effective operations – Friends of Cooloola (Qld), State Library of South Australia (SA) and Unley.

Code of operations (conduct)

Provides a written policy for all Friends. Issues such as OH&S and Child Protection are important issues in all areas of volunteering today – Friends of Cooloola (Qld).

Publicity

High quality newsletters and well developed strategies with local media outlets provide effective communication – Friends of the State Library South Australia (SA), Balmain (NSW), Toowoomba (Qld)

"High quality newsletters and well developed strategies with local media outlets provide effective communication."

Library management

Co-ordinating with library management on goals and visions of service development – Friends of Altona (Vic) and Unley (SA).

Dollars \$\$\$

Greater success and partnering through funding raising – Friends of the State Library of South Australia (SA), Toowoomba (Qld), Launceston (Tas).

