

## LIBRARY REPORT AGM 2017

The Library Trust provides an excellent library service to the local community, a service that is run from a building that was raised by the local Piha community.

We have an annual report on the library because of the unfortunate dispute with the Library Trust over ownership of the building in which the library service is located. This disagreement has blighted what should be – and could be – a mutually supportive relationship between community and the Library Trust.

I do not propose to spend time talking about that dispute which is well known to most. But for those who are new, I will briefly mention that the problem concerns ownership of the library building. For some years the librarians have tried to establish a claim to ownership of the building. The librarians claim that they personally raised the funds to build it, and therefore should own it, and that the Piha community has had no part in it.

This claim has been vigorously opposed by the community through this Committee on your behalf. There is no dispute that the community has legal ownership of the building, and this is also verified by a land lease between the R & R and the Auckland Council for the land on which the building is located.

This dispute has run for a number of years, and from a practical point of view it is relevant mainly because the Trust refuses to meet the important outgoings associated with the building, namely the insurance. The cost of insurance still falls on the community through the R & R. It's a financial burden that the community cannot- and should not- continue to bear.

Throughout this year the R & R has continued to engage with the trustees in their efforts to persuade the Trust of the need and fairness to make some contribution towards the costs or their occupation of the community building.

In the course of this we have also undertaken a review of the history of the building, particularly on the issue of fund raising, and a summary will be published in the near future on our website. It is absolutely clear from all the documents and evidence that major funding applications were all made by this organisation, the Piha Ratepayers and Residents Association. The documents also show that in respect of these applications, they were made and signed by officer bearers of the R & R, some of whom were also librarians. They signed or supported all funding applications ***in their capacity as R & R office bearers. This means that they were acting on behalf of the Piha community.*** It is important to understand that acting in such a role does not support the personal claims that have been made.

The view of the Committee, and the Piha community, is that the building is a valuable asset to the local community, and should remain in the ownership of the community.

It is also worth keeping in mind that when funding was sought, our funding applications envisaged multiple uses for the building into the future, and we consider it important that all options remain open so that the building remains available for community needs into the future.

In previous years we have outlined the various actions taken by the R & R Committee to try and resolve the situation with the trustees. These have included offering the Trust a lease on most generous terms, which would provide the Trust with a security of tenure that they claim to need, and also assistance with fundraising for costs associated with the building. So far these efforts have been refused.

However, recently in early December, the trustees agreed to meet with the R & R Committee, and we all had a full and frank discussion about various matters. Our efforts are always diligently aimed towards finding a healthy working relationship with the trustees, and for the good of the community.

These talks are now in progress, and as always we hope for a positive outcome. We believe there is a reason for cautious optimism with the recent appointment of a number of new trustees on the Library Trust who are likely to be distanced from the history and demands of their predecessors.

We looking to get some finality of matter in this year.