Meeting of the Darwin College Library Committee
Wednesday, 17 February 2016, Newnham Grange Seminar Room

Minutes

Attendees:
John Dix (College Bursar, CB)
Elaine Gray (Deputy Student Librarian, DSL)
Espen Koht (IT Officer, ITO)
Elisabeth Leedham-Green (College Archivist, CA)
Girish Nivarti (Student Librarian, SL)
Giles Shaw (DCSA Representative, DCSAR)
Dacia Viejo-Rose (Fellow Librarian, FL)
Paul Anderson (University Lecturer, UL)

1. Apologies were received from Katheryn James (Munby Visiting Fellow, MVF) and Ben D Raynor (Moses Finley Fellow, MFF).

2. No declarations of interest were raised.

3. The draft minutes of the meeting of 1 October 2015 were approved.

4. The Fellow Librarian, subsequent to the Computer Officer bringing it to her attention earlier in the month, tabled the issue of the proposed designs currently being assessed for the John Bradfield building. As they stand the plans relegate the Librarian’s Office to an insubstantial corner tucked behind additional toilets. This was deemed unrealistic in terms of the space required for this office. All the more so as this space is not only used as the Student Librarian’s office but also as a secure location in which to store more valuable volumes in our collection and other items not available for general circulation. Over the years the Library Committee has expressed a desire to have additional space for this purpose, certainly no to reduce it. The Fellow Librarian had submitted a comment to that effect and encouraged other Committee members to do the same. The College Bursar assured the Committee that this issue would be addressed and more advanced plans resubmitted for consideration.

5. The Archivist’s report was received. The possibility of housing student records off site was proposed as a way of freeing up a considerable amount of space in the office formerly designated for the Archivist. The Vesalius was due for a visit on 4 April.
6. The Student Librarian’s report was received. The Q&A board that has been put up in the Study Centre asking for suggestions for improving the facility has been a success. The replacement of the light bulbs in the ground floor study rooms was also deemed a success and the DCSA Representative requested that a similar up-grading of lighting fixtures be considered for the gallery area.

The culling of books had proceeded, the Law sections had been up-dated under the guidance of the College Bursar and an assessment of the Mathematics section was underway.

Exercise balls had been requested by students as an alternative to the current, aged, chairs available. These had been subsequently withdrawn due to health and safety concerns; the Student Librarian will take up the issue with Buildings and Grounds and Health and Safety.

The state of the gallery windows was raised. Their cleaning has now become a critical issue after several years in which the practicalities of accessing them from the river have remained unresolved. The College Bursar said that Housekeeping was aware of the problem and that with the calendar of annual river draining, or lack thereof, now further clarified it looked like this would happen over the summer if not before.

A great part of the CUP budget had been used with only approximately £300 remaining. Dr Anderson remarked that last year’s acquisition of the Cambridge History of Islam through the CUP scheme had been highly valued and proved a very useful addition to the collection. Any non-CUP books could be purchased through the Amazon scheme.

The Student Librarian raised the issue of the toilets in the Study Centre getting a lot of use over the weekend when they are not cleaned. It was suggested that he liaise with the Bar Committee over sharing the expense of the weekend cleaning for which they already contract.

New donations had been catalogued. Issue regarding shelving and the catalogue that remained were 1) selecting the books that would be moved to the Reading room, 2) evaluating the utility of books not in English (it was decided that they should be kept in their original language but that translations should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

7. The Computer officer’s report was received. Due to delays seeming inevitable in the UL’s Voyager replacement programme, it was proposed we still go ahead and test the new Koha software for the catalogue and checkout system independently of what UL decides on. A proposal to install an adjustable standing collaboration desk in the last ground-floor room in the Study Centre is being considered. Due the £6K cost of such a piece of furniture this would be taken up with the Development office as proposed opportunity for a donation of £10K for a dedicated purpose, though there was some debate about its utility.

8. Under any other business the DCSA Representative expressed the need to
improve the quality of the chairs available in the Study Centre as well as the lighting in the upper gallery area.

9. The next meeting is scheduled for 25 May 2016.