

The Friends of Tate South Lambeth Library (FTSLL) in the co-production era

Our aims and vision

Friends of Tate South Lambeth Library are not proposing to take over the management of Tate South Lambeth Library, but we want to deepen and expand the cooperation with the public library that has characterised our group since its inception in 1999. To this end we are proposing to maintain and develop our programme of activities at the library, working with the current management - Lambeth Libraries – or any successor managing body. In addition we would be happy to provide advice and feedback on management decisions on library service, such as spending allocations and the timing of opening hours, and to cooperate in pursuing other sources of funding.

Our long-term vision remains the development of our local library as a centre for activities that enhance the life experience and life chances of the local community. . The library has always been a hub for the surrounding community, providing a unique source of local identification and strengthening social cohesion.

In this development we will not be the only local participants, since our aim is to encourage other groups to participate. A current example of a community partner running a programme at the library in cooperation with the library service is the monthly Digital Bazaar organised by Christina Burnett. We hope for and welcome more such initiatives, which will enhance both usage of and satisfaction with the library and could be the source of income to support mainstream library operations.

In maintaining and expanding our current programme of activities (as listed below) we hope to deepen local involvement, both directly and by example. We already have a history of partnership – with Tate South Lambeth Library library staff in putting on events and activities, with local schools in our art exhibition programme, and with local businesses and corporations in raising cash and in-kind support. .

The lists below set out:

- what is already in place and our plans for expansion
- what new activities are immediately realisable with the existing capacity and resources of the library
- what is possible with investment in an upgrading and expansion of facilities which would attract more community partners (this might include the reversion to library use of the rented flats on the first and second floors)

Friends of TSL programme of activities

All these activities are organised by Friends of TSL, who have the capacity to maintain and expand them.

1. Evening talks

This year so far we have put on the following talks:

The History of Brunswick House: A talk by Lassco about the Georgian house in Vauxhall

Container food growing by the London Borough of Lambeth Sustainability Unit and South London Master Gardeners

Readings by local authors (in conjunction with Lambeth Libraries).

All talks are free. Attendance averages 30+ at each event and feedback for the May event (the first we have monitored) was uniformly positive.

Future plans

We propose to maintain this programme, with a monthly frequency. In the near future the following talks are planned:

The Sugar Girls. The two authors and women featured in the book talk about life at the Tate & Lyle factory. (18th June)

The Urban Kitchen Gardener. The author provides gardening tips and tasters. (4th July)

The Interplanetary Society, based in Vauxhall. Talk about the organisation and its projects.

Trailing Henry. In association with Tate Modern, talk about the 2011 South London library arts project

Slum clearance Stockwell and Oval. A personal account

Portugal Day. In cooperation with organisers of the, Kennington park festival , a talk aimed at Portuguese communities.)

Local craft skills. A talk and showcase.

2. Gardening club

The gardening club was launched in May 2012 with an objective to share local skills; seeds; cuttings and produce. Some members of the club also volunteer by tending the gardening in Tradescant's Retreat –the library's back courtyard which was developed with Oval Ward Purse funding and contributions from Friends.

The club meets every second and fourth Saturday of the month, in the afternoon. As well as tending Tradescant's Retreat, the club members hope to assist each other with their own garden planting concerns and to support the local vicinity community / street gardening initiatives. The club has a dedicated page on the Friends' website (www.tatesouthlambethfriends.org) with a bulletin board section for anyone to donate plants, tools, or leave comments and ask questions.

Cooperation with other partners

The LBL Sustainability unit has recently approached the club to support a food growing initiative located at Wilcox Road in partnership with nearby Mawbey Brough / Wyvil Estate.

Funds have been donated by the New Covent Garden Market for acquisitions from the list of plants collected and brought to England by the Tradescants.

The Garden Museum, has supplied compost and will provide gardening classes.

Tradescant Area Residents Association has helped with transport logistics.

South London Master Gardeners will provide on going garden coaching support.

Future plans

Friends of TSL want to make this area more easily accessible to the public and manageable by the library authority. It has initiated talks with CLS Holdings, which is

considering the provision of a CCTV installation as well as a new garden door and gate (both operable from either side).

3. Monthly film night

On May 16th Friends began a programme of screening films every 3rd Wednesday of the month. The film projection and screening equipment which Friends of TSL obtained through the Oval Ward Purse in 2010 (and donated to the library) is used. Friends bought a 12 month, Public Video Screening Licence, which allow us to screen recently released DVDs within a core list of film distribution companies. The strict licence agreement terms and conditions prohibit any entrance charging or advertising the films outside the library and Friends membership. However anybody within the film age rating is permitted to attend.

The inaugural monthly film night attracted an audience of 28. Despite technical sound problems the feedback showed that 55% thought the event was excellent, and comments ranged from “good idea would definitely come back” to “could the funds raised be used to keep the library going”.

Future plans.

Friends of TSL plan to maintain this programme of monthly free showings, but also bringing in films from non-commercial sources. If numbers build up sufficiently, and we can obtain some funding support from local cafes and restaurants in South Lambeth Road who would benefit from this development, we would buy a licence that permits promotion to the general public.

4. Art exhibitions

Friends of TSL has for over 11 years run a programme of permanent art exhibitions in the Tate Local gallery area which it installed in 2000, The artwork is primarily from local schools, with Stockwell Park High School the major source in recent years. But the schedule accommodates the display of art work by local artists – both professional and amateur (for example older persons’ art clubs in Stockwell and Oval). On occasion professional artist have given talks on their work.

Future plans

This programme will be continued and maintain its essential local community character, but with provision for the sale of artwork, with a fee to cover mounting costs etc and any excess going to the library. Participating secondary-level schools will be encouraged to do presentations on their work.

New co-production activities immediately realisable

All the activities listed below could be funded/run/put together by other community partners, although Friends of TSL might be able to offer some volunteer back up in some cases. They will require overall management by the library management.

It is assumed that plans that have now been in place for some months – to provide chairs, flexible shelving and a functioning public lavatory – will be implemented and the scheduled extension of WiFi to all libraries within the next 12 months will be effected.

The feasibility and scope of these activities cannot be determined until the availability of library premises and the terms of use (including, crucially, cost) have been decided by the library service.

1. Adult education classes

Negotiations – instigated by Friends of TSL- are now at an advanced stage for the Stockwell Community Resource Centre to put on classes outside library hours, beginning in the next academic year. Initially these will be for half a day each week, but there is clearly scope for expansion both in the SCRC programme and by other partners– particularly if library hours are reduced.

Tate South Lambeth Library is in an ideal location for this activity because of its exceptionally good transport links. We consider adult education – in the widest sense – to be germane to the character of a public library.

2. Study facilities

One evening a week ((say 6pm to 9pm) the building would be opened – with access to the PCs – for quiet study only. The library staff input would be minimal since this would be out of hours - i.e. no provision for borrowing, no information/advice capacity. There might be a role for volunteers as back up. This is one area where it should be possible to raise outside funding. If sufficient funding came in it could be extended to more evenings each week, meeting a very real local need.

3. Greater use of the courtyard

Given favourable weather the Courtyard Garden could be used by the NHS / related organisations for gardening therapy, and by local associations and groups for meetings.

4. Venue for group meetings

In the evening the main rooms in the library could be offered for Physical and Health evenings organised by the NHS and for sessions of Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous etc. In the daytime, out of hours, it could be offered to the National Child Birth Trust and similar bodies.

5. Rehearsal space for actors and musicians

Other co-production programmes by community partners requiring an upgrading or modification of facilities

At this stage this is essentially a wish list. The feasibility and desirability of the proposed activities have yet to be determined – and will crucially depend on the terms and facilities offered by the library service and the willingness and capacity of community partners to take them on. Upgrading would be needed for the lavatory facilities and some renovation of walls (including treatment for damp penetration) and doors, to raise visual quality.

Friends of TSL consider that, in any modification of the building and its facilities, its core purpose as a library should not be compromised.

- 1. Training sessions for business**
- 2. Business presentations and conferences**
- 3. Evening programmes for young people**
- 4. Drama and music performances**