

Friends of Kensal Rise Library

51 Burrows Road NW10 5SJ
www.friendsofkensalriselibrary.org

The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford
c/o Cluttons LLP

7 September 2012

To the Warden and Fellows of All Souls College,

Please find attached our proposal for Kensal Rise Library, which we hope will meet with your approval. As you know, it is a matter of great regret to us that the library, a vital asset for this community, was given away by Brent Council and that the building has now been closed for almost a year.

We consider that the rightful use of the building is that for which it was created and for which the community originally subscribed, namely a thriving library service provided without charge for the benefit of all residents.

In assembling our proposal we have had to weigh up many different possible partnership arrangements and service options. The attached document sets out the structure we think will work best for the library, allowing for the constraints we are under.

The key constraint is clearly financial. You will be aware that other local authorities in Britain have simply handed libraries to community groups to be run on a voluntary basis, often with council support and resources. Brent Council refused us that option, and chose instead to return the building to the College.

We appreciate that this was not what you would have chosen and that you stated expressly at an earlier stage that you would be content for Brent to come to an arrangement with the Friends about the running of the library, without ownership reverting.

In this context, our document sets out how we propose to finance the cost of restoring a dilapidated building in urgent need of repairs, as well as meeting the library's running costs, and in due course the rent and potentially the purchase price of the building.

However, we reiterate that most community libraries in Britain have been provided with premises rent-free, and that all monies paid to All Souls by way of rent and/or purchase price will be diverted either from the repair and improvement of the building or from the running costs of the library.

We continue to believe that because the charitable and educational aims and purposes of All Souls College and the Friends of Kensal Rise Library are clearly aligned, it is not necessary for All Souls College to require the Friends to pay a full market rent or a market purchase price for the building. We hope that an arrangement can be reached on this subject that is agreeable to both parties.

We are seeking the grant of a long lease with an option to purchase. If our proposal is acceptable to you we would be grateful if you would instruct your agents to contact us to discuss the terms of such a lease.

We are pleased to pass on two key developments since our last meeting with the Bursar. First, we are delighted that Mark Fisher, former Minister for the Arts, has agreed to act as Chair of Trustees for FKRL. Mark has a distinguished record in the arts and creative industries and we are sure that his vision and leadership will prove invaluable.

Secondly, we have undertaken a fundraising drive and in the space of three weeks have secured pledges worth over £70,000 from residents and supporters, as well as from figures in the worlds of publishing, literature and the arts. These donations will be collected should this proposal be approved, and are sufficient to guarantee the first year's running costs of the restored library.

If you have questions regarding our proposal, or in the event that further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact us (kensalriselibraryusers@hotmail.co.uk).

Many thanks for your continued attention to this difficult issue. We remain hopeful that it can be resolved in a way that will bring honour to the College and lasting benefit to a part of London with which you have a long association.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,


Margaret Bailey, David Butcher, Rachael Newberry, Paula Gomez Medina
Directors and Trustees of the Friends of Kensal Rise Library