

Dear Friendly St Poets members and friends,

It is a good time to let you all know just how much the Friendly St Poets management committee has achieved over the last five years. There has been an enormous amount of behind the scenes work which has gone into keeping Friendly St running over that time while concentrating on maintaining the monthly meetings, and publishing the annual anthology.

The biggest challenge was being totally defunded by Arts SA. The funding model that kept Friendly St and its publications running for almost forty years was cut dead, without warning.

We had to change to a self-funding model.

- We had to find out how to self publish the anthology including layout, formatting and typesetting, plus the associated legalities. We had to find a printer. Previously, Friendly St had just handed over a file of poems and most of the Arts SA grant to a publishing company, and received back boxes of books.

- We had to deal with a massive stockpile of past publications and improve future printing quotas

- Our constitution needed updating and our record management improved.

- We had to rigorously review priorities, while we stabilised the finances and the governance

The task was huge and unknown to the majority of members attending Friendly St and enjoying the poetry which was our objective - In the face of all these challenges the committee has chalked up impressive achievements for the members during five, hardworking years.

Since 2013, the Friendly St Poets management committee has:

- Overseen the revision and modernisation of the Constitution and associated documents with thanks enormously to Mike Hopkins and Sue Reece's initiatives.

- Worked on the funding model so that Friendly St is self funding without taking the easy route of just massively increasing membership and door charges. Thanks to Mike Hopkins, John Brydon, David Harris and Ian Gibbins.

- Membership records are now kept and continually updated, thanks to David Harris.

- Banking was re-organised to make best use of financial accounts, thanks to Mike Hopkins and David Harris. Paul Wilkins is organising EFTPOS transactions to be available soon.

- The website has been updated, and is continually maintained thanks to Ian Gibbins.

- The huge backlog of books has been gone through and dealt with as needed. Damaged books have been recycled. New Poets and Single Poets have been remaindered to the authors. Surplus anthologies have been given away as prizes and sold to the public at sale prices. Thanks to Mike Hopkins, Pam Maitland and Louise Nicholas.

- The many boxes of unknown paperwork were sorted, and the surplus removed. Thanks to Sue Reece, David and Veronica Cookson.

- The anthology was made print ready thanks to Ian Gibbins. Further refinement of this process has been undertaken by Margaret Clark. A good printer has been found thanks to Nigel Ford.

As well as stabilising the foundations of Friendly St, the management committee has also:

- Created the Goolwa Poetry Cup which has become the biggest and best SA Poetry Slam Competition ever, raising the profile of Friendly St and attracting new poets to our monthly meetings, thanks to Nigel Ford.

- Transitioned the Words at the Wall event into the highly successful Halifax Cafe Poetry Readings, thanks to Ian Gibbins and Jelena Dinic.

- Constantly growing facebook and online presence maintained thanks to Ian Gibbins.

- Created the successful Poetry On The Fleurieu monthly readings, thanks to Nigel Ford.

- Revitalised the relationship with SAETA and the Spring Poetry Festival, bringing young people into contact with Friendly St, thanks to Nigel Ford.

- Revitalised the relationship with Salisbury Writers Festival thanks to Nigel Ford.

- Run successful city anthology launches thanks to Sue Reece.

- Streamlined the format of the regular Open Mic meetings to be more efficient and accommodate large numbers of readers in a reasonable time thanks to Sue Reece.

- Organised library readings and additional launches and sales thanks to Edie Eicas.

- Held highly successful weekend readings in suburban libraries with both open mic and guest poets thanks to Jules Leigh Koch,

- Managed the successful transition from the Writer's Centre to the Box Factory through a working group convened by Paul Wilkins.

In 2018 we have relaunched the New Poets competition, thanks to Nigel Ford, Margaret Clark and Thom Sullivan.

The committee proposes to re-launch the Mentoring program in 2018. Watch this space.

In 2018 we are hoping to put together workshops on formatting for self publishing. This will help poets format their own works, as well as be able to work on the Friendly St anthology. Watch this space.

The committee hopes to relaunch the Single Poets competition in 2019. Watch this space.

None of this could have been achieved without the hard work, dedication and good will of the above named people who either served on, or worked with, the management committee across those five years. Friendly St is now in a good position to capitalise on all this hard work as a launching pad for the next five years.