



KENT SLA AGM

Thursday, 16th July 2020, 4:30 pm.

GoToMeeting Chair's Report

A warm welcome to all Kent SLA members to the 2020 AGM in its 'virtual' format. This is our 6th year as a branch in Kent and sadly, this year our planned AGM for 18th March at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Faversham with author Sarah Mussi had to be postponed. However, Ros Waltho is keen to still host this author talk when we all return to 'normal' as part of our Kent SLA member events for 2020/21.

Over the last year, since I became Chair of Kent SLA, the committee have been hard at work hosting events and planning for a student librarian day. However, with Covid-19 came a change in the way that we all live and work so school libraries are currently not functioning as normal and many of us have new roles within the school community. Some members have been furloughed, others run the school reception or are being exam invigilators for Year 10 and 12 exams as schools start to reopen, whereas some don't seem to have stopped as virtual reading groups and lessons become the 'new normal'. Instead of meeting we now use Zoom or Team Meet to keep in touch with work, friends and family and we face the technological challenges that these bring (I'm very glad to have a teenager at home who is able to help!).

This time last year we were all very pleased when the SLA chose Ashford as its venue for its annual conference for 2020 and we invited Kent members to apply for a place. Five high quality submissions for the free Weekend Course place were received and Emily Kindregan from The Hayesbrook School was our winner. Instead of being able to attend this year she will now attend in 2021 so we look forward to hearing about her weekend in next year's Summer newsletter. As you are aware we ended up having the SLA Weekend Course 'Digital Education: Opportunities for Reading and Learning' in a virtual format so many of us continued to join in from the comforts of our own homes.

During 2019/20, we have held and planned several events for our members. In November Chantal Kelleher from Herne Bay High School, who was nationally recognised as an exceptional librarian by being one of the top three in the School Librarian of the Year competition last year, organised Advanced Online Research Techniques held in the library at Christ Church University, Canterbury. We then had a main SLA event to be hosted at The Holmesdale School in February on 'Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in School Libraries'. Unfortunately, this event was cancelled by SLA as there were not enough applicants to make the course viable but we hope to reschedule this for 2021.

This summer we were also due to have a student librarian day with a poet and several authors joining the event. Again, this will have to be rescheduled for when we can meet in reality.

As well as Chantal we are in a fortunate position to have our very own past chair, Stephen King as a committee member. Congratulations to Stephen who is now the new Vice Chair of the SLA and has been busy running a scheme for furloughed members (see the recent Summer 2020 info@SLA which comes as an insert in the School Librarian magazine).

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my own personal thanks to all the members of Kent SLA committee. It is hard to dedicate time and effort during these exceptional times and to keep our libraries running virtually. Your dedication, support and encouragement to Kent SLA, is invaluable.

At a recent Kent committee meeting, I indicated that due to plans to go off sailing in 2021 (round Britain to start with and then off to sunnier climes, if we can go anywhere without being quarantined), that I would be willing to continue as Chair at this AGM. However, at next year's AGM in March 2021 I will have to step down. Therefore, if anyone would like to consider taking on the role or to join us in a committee role we would love you to join us.

Emma Foreman

Chair, Kent SLA