



Proposal for a New Membership Model

Earlier this week you received an email with a link to our [draft Strategic Plan for 2025-28](#). This year-long planning process included evaluating our current **Membership model**. We're writing today to provide some background information about our membership, outline the proposal for the new model we're recommending, and ask for your response to the proposal.



We discovered during our review of FGPL's membership situation that:

- Membership has declined dramatically over the past several years. We learned from your feedback that most of you think we fulfilled our original mandate a few years ago - i.e., the new central library is under construction, and we've raised \$1 million to support this new library through 14 book sales. The need to advocate for a vital public library system continues, but with the critical debate settled over building the central library, some lapsed members may have turned their attention elsewhere.
- Interest in all of our events and programs remains high, and we plan to continue offering them. However, attendance at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is largely a review of the organization's annual business, has substantially declined - again, since the library construction issue, which first galvanized us to join together to act, was settled a few years ago.
- The current membership base is no longer the main source of supportive revenue for the organization. Income from annual membership fees accounts for less than one half of one percent of our annual income. Record-keeping and processing of fees for membership involves significant volunteer time and some expense to the organization.
- Despite the downturns mentioned above, we've noted and appreciate that volunteer support for the Book Sale remains very high. We want to acknowledge **all** who support the FGPL - whether their contribution takes the form of annual fees, volunteer hours, support of programs and events, donations, or alignment with the goals of FGPL. **We believe that a definition of membership based solely on paid annual fees fails to be inclusive of our much broader community of supporters.**



One of the major goals of the FGPL draft Strategic Plan is assurance of **long-term organizational stability**. We see that the decline in membership renewals, which began with the pandemic, has continued steadily downward. The current membership model is

not sustainable. In response, we propose a **simplified membership model** that we believe will carry the Friends firmly into the future:

- **"Members"** would be re-defined and comprised of elected members of FGPL's Executive Committee (currently 10 people) and Honorary Life Members (currently 10 individuals). This group would set organizational policy and have voting privileges at the Friends' Annual General Meeting (AGM). They would continue to encourage all "Supporters" (described below) to actively participate in programs and events, fundraising, and advocacy initiatives. The composition of the Executive member group is refreshed at minimum every three years, and the size of the group is flexible so as to include more Executive Members, as needed.
- **"Supporters"** would be all those who support and have a close association with FGPL. This group would include: our current fee-paying members (such as yourself), donors, volunteers/participants at any FGPL-sponsored activity (e.g. the annual book sale), and subscribers to our newsletter mailing lists. *Supporters* would be encouraged to continue their vital involvement with the Friends, would be welcome to attend the AGM and all executive meetings as observers, to provide feedback then or at any time, but would not have voting privileges at those meetings.
- The collection of **annual membership fees** would be **discontinued**. All *Members* and *Supporters* would be encouraged to offer financial support, if/when they choose, by donations through the **Canada Helps** link on our website (tax receipts to be issued for donations of \$10 or more).
- All *Members* and *Supporters* will continue to receive regular communications about FGPL events and activities, and will continue to be invited to participate.
- We want everyone to maintain their connection to the Friends. Under this new model of "membership" we hope to engage with and increase our organizational numbers through more and new FGPL programming, and whenever our community of supporters' strong advocacy for the Guelph Public Library is needed.

Our research has shown that this model for membership is commonly and successfully used by organizations like ours. At this point in our history, we think this change would be a proactive step to ensure FGPL grows and thrives well into the future.



How do you feel about the proposed changes, described above? Do you feel such changes would significantly affect your involvement with the Friends of the Guelph Public Library - and in what ways?

We invite you to **send us your feedback** through info@fgpl.ca, where you can email us your thoughts. If you would rather talk with us, please leave your name and phone number through our info@fgpl.ca address, and one of the members of the Executive will call you. We hope to have your responses by **April 9**.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this proposal.