

Marilyn Dickson,  
Sharon Pegelo,

Dear Mayor Kevin Eccles and Councillors, West Grey

**Proposal**

We request that the West Grey Council donate most of the remaining band instruments to the Durham branch of the West Grey library in order for the library to lend musical instruments to patrons, as some other libraries do. If brass instruments aren't played for a time, the valves and slides "seize up". It is no longer possible to play a range of notes. Drum heads can stretch if left with tension on them. The best treatment for instruments is to play them regularly.

Since 1948 until 1984, and again from 2012 until 2020, the Durham Girls' Band, by various names, has brought much acclaim to the town. Many of us who have been part of the group during, and in the most recent iteration, would very much like to see the instruments remain in Durham. These instruments represent a long legacy in Durham for hundreds of former members. Library staff are interested in setting up a program.

Following a donation of instruments to the library, could any remaining instruments be offered for sale to earlier previous members?

**Background Information**

In the spring of 2012, with another Durham Homecoming approaching, Marilyn Dickson proposed to a few former band members the possibility of briefly reactivating a version of the Durham Girls Band to which we had belonged during much earlier, younger years, to march in the homecoming parade. Sharon Pegelo contacted former members re Marilyn's proposal. When several responded positively we borrowed instruments from the Preston Scout House band and began practising weekly, preparing to march in the 2012 Durham Homecoming parade. The youngest in our group hadn't marched with the earlier Band for 35 years. For the oldest, it had been 50 years. A few younger women also joined us. Marilyn helped them learn to play the music as Sharon worked on their marching skills. Filled with optimism, we named ourselves the Durham Girls Alumnae Band and planned to relearn 3 or 4 pieces from our earlier days, believing that after we had played them, we could repeat those few pieces until we reached the end of the route.

Practices went well. By the 2012 August parade we could play 10 pieces, including a few new ones. Besides the warm welcome that greeted us in the

Homecoming parade, we received several invitations to more parades. We extended our instrument loan period and learned Christmas music.

Several members wanted to continue on into 2013. With the support of the West Grey Council we applied for a Trillium grant and received \$29,400 to purchase instruments and flags, as well as to create uniforms.

Occasionally a member dropped out, and eventually the band invited others to join them, including a few young lads.

In mid-March, 2020 COVID struck, abruptly ending group gatherings, practices, parades and the revived 2012 band. Equipment went into storage at the West Grey office.

### **Dealing with Instruments**

In 2023, we requested the West Grey Council's permission for former members of the band to purchase instruments. The Council agreed and Kodey Hewlett organized that process. Sales for these instruments were sold for half the original price and raised over \$4000. We believe the council decided that income from instrument sales be dedicated for a Durham Girls trophy case and refurbishing old trophies. At that time Kodey mentioned that there was almost enough money to complete the arena display.

At one point Marilyn discussed with Kodey the possibility of investigating interest of the Durham library in setting up a lending section of musical instruments, as they now do with skis or snowshoes. When Marilyn recently checked with Kathleen Goodwin, Adult Services librarian, Kathleen didn't recall any such discussion, but she confirmed that the library is interested in some of the remaining band instruments. Attached is Kathleen's response to Marilyn's recent inquiry.

Uniforms were purchased with parade proceeds. We believe have some have been donated to other groups or local teams. We suggest that uniform samples be included in the display and that remaining clothing be donated to a thrift shop.

### **Further Question**

We understand that during Carol Lawrence's time as a West Grey Councillor, that a memorandum of understanding was put in place for 'storage of Durham Girls assets/memorabilia 'in perpetuity'? Could you confirm please?

Thank you for your support for the Durham Girls Band in our various iterations. We support the interest from the Durham Library in setting up an instrument lending component to the library. We hope that you will consider it.

Sincerely, Marilyn Dickson and Sharon Pegelo, Members Durham Girls Alumnae Band

## Library reply re a Donation of Durham Girls' Band Instruments

Thank you for your email listing all of the instruments.

I had a meeting with my boss and we decided on the following instruments; Kathleen Goodwin, Adult Services librarian's reply re possible donation of instruments;

- 1 Yamaha Trumpet
- 1 Yamaha Marching Baritone
- 2 Yamaha Snare Drums with sticks
- 1 Glockenspiel
- 1 remo Thin Snare Drum and sticks
- Pair of Cymbals

It would be great if we could take more instruments. We unfortunately just do not have the room.

Let me know how things turn out with council and their approval.

Have a great week.

Kind regards,

Kathleen Goodwin (she/her)  
Adult Services Librarian