

## **Report and Financial Statement**

For the period 1 May 2023 —30 April 2024

### Registration details

Debenham Library Foundation  
A Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
Registered Number 1154313  
School Corner,  
Debenham,  
Stowmarket,  
Suffolk IP14 6PL

### **Trustees**

Tony Hutt	Chair
Maureen John	Nominee of Suffolk's Libraries IPS
Howard Simpson	
Pam Harling-Challis	
Richard Blackwell	Treasurer

### **Bankers**

The Co-operative Bank,  
PO Box 240,  
Delf House,  
Southway,  
Skelmersdale,  
WWN8 6WT  
Main account: 089299 65674112 00

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## Introduction

### Report of the trustees for the year ending April 30, 2024

The trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statement for the year ending April 30, 2024

### Chair's report

During the year ending April 30, 2024 the library continued its usual business, supported by the Friends of Debenham Library and other volunteers.

The library continued to take part in Suffolk Libraries' Warm Spaces initiative, offering free hot drinks on a self service basis.

A Hedgehog Discovery Day 17th March went very well with 28 adults and 21 children attending.

The Suffolk Libraries Peoples' Champions' Awards took place on Thursday 8th June in Woodbridge Library. The library manager and one of the Trustees were nominated; the latter, Howard Simpson, won the Innovation Award for raising considerable funds for Debenham Library and the Primary School from the Heavy Metal Day, collecting and sorting scrap metal and domestic appliances. This also had a worthwhile environmental benefit, of course.

Suffolk Libraries Day on Saturday 16th March was celebrated with a quiz, raising £236 for Suffolk Libraries. Also the library manager was sponsored to read her height in books; she read 74 books and raised £375 for Suffolk Libraries.

Sadly no swifts visited our swift boxes in the library garden during the year. However the garden was kept in good order and appreciated by the school and by library visitors.

Afternoon Teas were held on June 11<sup>th</sup>, July 9<sup>th</sup> and September 10<sup>th</sup>. These events were partly fundraising but primarily social and community-building by bringing library users and library Friends together.

87 children signed up to the Reading Challenge from July to September and about 45 completed the Challenge. Volunteers supported the children.

On Wednesday 9th August a Brickology afternoon was held for children and accompanying adults. This was organised by a local representative of Get Suffolk Reading.

The library took part in a Debenham Story Trail, organised by Get Suffolk reading (part of the National Literacy Trust). This and the events run at the Library have had a positive effect on Library usage.

The Friends sponsored the Suffolk Libraries Pawsitivity scheme by paying £380 for a dog called *Leapardor*, a Labrador puppy which was painted by a local artist Lily Hammond. It is now proudly on display in the Library. The 2024 main fundraiser for Suffolk Libraries was 'Making a Difference with a Daisy'; Debenham Library agreed to contribute £150.

Two Dungeons and Dragons groups used the library for their meetings once a month, one group for adults and one for children.

Craft workshops were also held for adults in the library, run by a craft shop in the village.

A number of Community Group Meetings were attended by the Chair by Zoom or in person.

The Home Library Service was supported by volunteers to deliver and collect books for a small number of housebound customers.

After protracted negotiations with the Primary School, plans were made for the school to have an induction period over two weeks followed by class visits. Each class would need a class card and Suffolk Libraries agreed to waive the charge for this. However it was not possible to start the scheme in the period for this report.

Publicity of the Library's and Friends' activities continues in Parish Magazines and websites in Debenham and a number of nearby villages, as well as our Facebook page and occasional posts in local Facebook groups.

### Structure, Governance and Management

The DLF was initiated by a local library campaign group, and three of its members were asked to become the founding trustees. In order to ensure continued representation of other bodies, there are also nominated trustees. Three nominating bodies are named in the constitution: Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School, Suffolk's Libraries IPS and Debenham parish council.

The DLF is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and its rules are laid down in the constitution which was approved by the Charity Commission in October 2013. This permits the trustees to appoint additional trustees or ask other community organisations to nominate trustees. These powers have not been used.

The Debenham Library Working Group was dissolved after the successful completion of the move of the library to its new premises in September 2016.

The trustees delegate work to a 'Debenham Library Friends Group' who are a group of volunteers who bring enthusiasm and support to the library whenever a fundraising event is being organized. The group are a Member Group of Suffolk Libraries and have a vote in the election of Suffolk Libraries board members and voting on motions.

The trustees oversee the Friends Group and review decisions, to ensure they meet the objectives of the foundation.

### Objectives

These are stated in the constitution to be: (and remain unchanged from last year)

- (1) To advance the education of the general public in Debenham, Suffolk, and the surrounding area, in particular but not exclusively by the provision of a lending library.
- (2) To further or benefit the residents of Debenham, Suffolk, and the neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other options by associating together the said residents and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the quality of life for residents.

The trustees endeavour to ensure that there is a continuing free public library service in Debenham regardless of any further cuts in local authority spending. The larger premises make for greater sustainability should Suffolk Libraries reduce funding of the library.

The library can also support economic development both with information and as a meeting place with full access to online and traditional sources.

The primary test for additional services will be community benefit but the trustees will also seek to establish income streams which help ensure a continuing library service.

### Performance and Achievements

Normal opening hours were maintained throughout the year. We encourage customers to make use of the online ebooks and audiobooks, films and music. Local publicity has been maintained

during the period, including posters and monthly editorial articles sent to a number of local magazines and websites.

Currently there were just over 2,000 customers registered at Debenham Library, whose catchment area includes a number of nearby villages.

### Future Plans

Another metal collection day would be held on Saturday 25th May 2024 to raise money for the Primary School and the library.

On 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025, despite widespread popular protests, Suffolk County Council's cabinet made the decision to "insource" Suffolk's libraries, taking control and operation away from Suffolk Libraries IPS who have run them on an increasingly tight budget for twelve years. We are assured that there are no current plans to change opening hours or reduce front-line staff. We are assured that at least for the time being, Debenham Library's hours and service will not be changing. As a member group of Suffolk Libraries IPS this change will have some impact on Debenham Library Foundation but at present it is unclear what they will be. The Foundation and the Friends of Debenham Library will be working to ensure that the services to customers do not worsen.

### Finance

	Balance Sheet at April 30, 2024	
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	£0	
<b>Current Assets</b>	£4829	
<b>Cash at bank</b>		
<b>Creditors</b>	£0	
<b>Net current assets</b>		£4829
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	£0	
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	£4829	
<b>Total Funds</b>		£4829

	Income and expenditure 2024		
	Income	Expenditure	
Grant funding	£0		
Local events	£120		
Interest	£6		
Donations	£0		
Total	£126		
Expenditure			
Repairs/maint		£0	
Sundries/Garden		£147	
Other		£380	
Total		£527	
Net income	-£401		