

## Report and Financial Statement

For the period 1 May 2024 —30 April 2025

### Registration details

Debenham Library Foundation

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered Number 1154313

School Corner,

Debenham,

Stowmarket,

Suffolk IP14 6PL

### Trustees

Tony Hutt

Chair

Richard Blackwell

Treasurer

Maureen John

Nominee of Suffolk's Libraries IPS

Howard Simpson

Pam Harling-Challis

### Bankers

The Co-operative Bank,

PO Box 240,

Delf House,

Southway,

Skelmersdale,

WWN8 6WT

Main account: 089299 65674112 00

### Contents of report

Introduction	2
Chair's Report	2
Structure, Governance and Management	3
Objectives	3
Performance and Achievements	4
Future plans	4
Financial	5

## Introduction

### Report of the trustees for the year ending April 30, 2025

The trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statement for the year ending April 30, 2025.

### Chair's report

During the year ending April 30, 2025 the most significant event affecting the library was the decision towards the end of that year by Suffolk County Council (SCC) not to renew the contract with Suffolk Libraries IPS for library services but to "insource" the library service back into Suffolk County Council. This followed the public tender for library services after 12 years of outsourcing to Suffolk Libraries IPS (delayed by the Covid Pandemic) failing to result in a successful contract. In principle, based on assurances from SCC, the change would not affect customer service or opening hours, and there would be no cuts to frontline staff. As far as our customers are concerned, at this stage the service has not been affected apart from changes in branding. The governance of the Debenham Library Foundation has not so far been affected by the change, but there may be some changes in future. So far it has been business as usual for the Friends of Debenham Library. The library staff have been transferred to SCC which has affected many of their operating procedures, but this has not yet had significant impact on the Debenham Library Foundation.

During the year ending April 30, 2025 the library continued its usual business, supported by the Friends of Debenham Library and other volunteers.

Pupils from the attached Debenham Primary School started coming into the Library on a weekly basis, supported by a library staff member and a volunteer in addition to the school's staff. Two classes attended each week before the public opening hours. This had taken a long time to arrange and the Friends were very pleased that it was taking place.

The Friends organised a display of books they recommended along with short descriptions. This has proved popular with customers.

Our Heavy Metal Day on Saturday 25th May 2024 raised a considerable sum for the Friends and for the primary school, as well as facilitating the recycling of an enormous quantity of household goods, and reuse of bicycles and tools, and in carbon emissions and no doubt. All in all we collected 10,688 kg of metal and were paid a total of £3,921 – of which a quarter was given to the primary school.

Events during Summer 2024 included the Reading Challenge during the school holidays (just under 20 children finishing the programme, supported by volunteers). In August. *Our Animal World* (a mobile petting zoo) was attended by 128 people while 94 came to see the *Astronomy Roadshow Planetarium*. Both these events were funded by the Friends.

Afternoon Teas were held at the Library on Sundays 4 August and 8 September 2024. These events were partly fundraising but primarily social and community-building by bringing library users and library Friends together. The Friends provided cakes, scones and other edibles.

The Dungeons and Dragons activities using the library for their meetings continued during the year.

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

Publicity of the Library's and Friends' activities continued 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 new, larger premises have allowed greater use - especially by children - as well as room hire and fund-raising activities. This makes for greater sustainability should Suffolk Libraries reduce funding of the library.

Longer-term plans include the provision of all-age education programmes, events for various social groups and access to a wide range of services available to the public. No education classes were held during the period, but we continue to look for openings should the demand be present and suitable tutors available. We are limited by lack of parking spaces while the school is open

(there is one disabled parking space only), so daytime classes cannot effectively be held during the week.

	Balance Sheet at April 30, 2025	
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	£0	
<b>Current Assets</b>	£6952	
<b>Cash at bank</b>		
<b>Creditors</b>	£0	
<b>Net current assets</b>		£6952
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	£0	
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	£6952	
<b>Total Funds</b>		£6952

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. Customer numbers have now returned to pre-pandemic levels.

## Future Plans

Sunday Afternoon Teas and the Summer Reading Challenge were planned to continue in Summer 2025, along with two events for children and families in the summer holidays, funded by the Friends. One is an illustrated talk on marine biology by a local resident and the other a storytelling event.

The future of the library may be affected by the Government's plans for a directly elected Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk (election currently delayed to 2027) and for one or more Unitary Councils which are proposed to replace SCC and other councils.

## Finance

	Income and expenditure 2025		
	Income	Expenditure	
Grant funding	£0		
Local events	£4098		
Interest	£86		
Donations	£0		
Total	£4184		
Expenditure			
Repairs/maint		£0	
Sundries/Garden		£186	
Other		£1875	
Total		£2061	
Net income	£2123		