

Annual report 2023 – 2024

Denby Dale Community Project, operating as Denby Dale Community Library



Summary for period April 2023 to March 2024

This year saw the 10 year anniversary of the establishment of DDCP, and the sixth year since we were able to open the new building as the Denby Dale Community Library. The library service continues to be available during part of every day Monday to Saturday, the hours varying between morning, afternoon and early evenings to meet different user lifestyles.

We have a full staffed library service with volunteer support on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with volunteer-only service on Thursday and Saturday mornings. The cafe is now open Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm.

We continue to have strong relationships with our two key partners/tenants - Kirklees Library Services (KLS) and The Kirkwood (TK), the latter being a local hospice who run the cafe and small gift shop in our building.

In May 2023 we were very pleased to receive a visit to our Trustees by the KLS Portfolio holder and Head of Service; and to achieve a Hosting Agreement for the use of our building by Kirklees Library Service, signed in October 2023, for a five year duration.

In February 2024, KLS took a paper to Kirklees Cabinet on the future of the libraries in the borough, in light of the Council's huge budget deficit. The paper proposed removing staffing from 8 smaller libraries, including Denby Dale Community Library. This would then become a 'Community Managed Library', outside Statutory Provision in the Borough. Subsequent to the year end, we met with representatives of KLS to fight this proposal on the grounds that we did not believe our community had the capacity to sustainably run a full library service without any paid staff. We were able to demonstrate the wide range of services we provide to our community at a marginal cost to KLS of one part time member of staff, demonstrating an excellent value for money return.

At the time of approving this annual return, Kirklees Council has withdrawn the proposal to make the smaller libraries into 'Community Managed' ones but will be consulting on the level of paid staff support they provide to each library. We will continue to work constructively with Kirklees Council to find ways to provide a sustainable library service for our community.

We have been able to find a temporary solution to help with pressure on the limited number of parking spaces at the building, and continue to address all-day parking by others.

Financially we are in a healthy position; in year income exceeded expenditure by £3,620. This year, we offered online payment for tickets in our Annual Raffle for the first time, which was used by a modest proportion of participants.

We have also been able to develop use of the Post Office window in the centre of the village to showcase activities in the Library, through a series of attractive displays co-ordinated by a Trustee with help from Kirklees Library Service, The Kirkwood, the post-mistress and other businesses in the village. This provides valuable publicity and improves networking in the village, and an entertaining spectacle in the high street.

Constitution

The Denby Dale Community Project (DDCP) is a charitable incorporated organisation governed by its constitution and registered with the Charity Commission (registration number 1155111). It operates under the name Denby Dale Community Library (DDCL). Its registered address and details of its trustees are included further down this report.

Our mission statement:

We provide a safe, accessible and welcoming building in which we help Kirklees Library Services run a Library and Information Centre; providing space for inclusive and enriching community events for all, and car parking for building users and customers of local businesses.

We do this through the support of our volunteers and partners. We will continue to:

- *Provide volunteers to support library staff*
- *Keep the building safe and well maintained*
- *Raise funds, particularly through the Supporters Club and annual raffle*

Strategy

In March 2023 we agreed that our priorities for the next three years were to:

- Increase the number of people using the library services;
- Improve the amount of local information we provide;
- Build our relationships with The Kirkwood and other targeted groups and institutions within our community.

We have reviewed our progress during the year against the objectives we set ourselves:

Objective	Proposed actions	Progress
Increase the number of people using the library services	Provide additional library hours Increase customers' awareness of all the services the library provides Review the KLS Demographic analysis to see if there are any specific groups we could target	Done - Now open on Thursday mornings with volunteers only Done - A 'Welcome to the Library' checklist has been developed to help volunteers with new library members and encourage more activity with existing members Done – Our current customer base and service provision is consistent with local demographics
Improve the amount of local information we provide	Walking leaflets, local event posters and bus timetables in Library kept up to date	Done – We regularly update noticeboards and leaflet holders with local information and work with the local Walkers are Welcome group to provide a wide range of popular walking route leaflets

Objective	Proposed actions	Progress
Improve the amount of local information we provide (continued)	Support Hands on History Group to produce improved resources Consider having information boards in the car park about what's available inside the building and, potentially, linked to other information boards around the village	Done – The Hands on History Group has produced a large portfolio of local history information Carried forward – We agreed we would do this when we review the layout of the car park
Build our relationships with The Kirkwood and other targeted groups and institutions within our community	Maintain strong links with The Kirkwood Create links with Denby Dale First & Nursery School	Done - Regular meetings have been held with The Kirkwood and we have encouraged their further use of the building for their core community activities Done - Links created with Denby Dale First & Nursery School through the Hands on History project We have also agreed a policy for providing financial support (up to £250) to groups or events in our building

Customer Engagement

We want our building to meet the needs of our community so we ran a survey alongside our annual Christmas raffle in December 2022, as reported in last year's annual report. We followed this up by producing a paper leaflet on the survey results which was delivered to 1,900 homes in Denby Dale and some surrounding villages, and providing an e:version via our Facebook page and website.

We used this leaflet to report back on the results of the survey question '*what do you want from your community building?*', and to explain how our services already meet these aspirations, with information about '*what's on*' in Denby Dale Community Library.

We received many positive comments including that people 'had not realised how much goes on in the Library'. Thanks to continuing support from a local graphic designer, the leaflet and our website and other communications looked very professional and well-presented.

Building Usage

Kirklees Library: KLS statistics show:

	2019/20 (*)		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Book issues	17,000		9,745	19,380	21,840
Active users			522	472	843
Requests for stock from other libraries			775	975	n/a
IT use	572		339	529	620
New members			169	226	237
Events held in the building			93	306	430
Attended by			759	3,000	3,987
Volunteer hours	1,260		1,083	1,761	1,741

** 2019/20 data (where available) is shown for comparison purposes as it was the last full year before any Covid restrictions*

We are very pleased with the increase in library activity and the number of events being held by and for local people.

Activities in our building: We have a range of regular activities in our building, both during the day when the building is open to the public and on some evenings. We simplified our booking and risk assessment processes for events when the building is already open.

We also provide a warm and welcoming space for anyone who needs it - they don't need to be a library member nor to buy anything from the cafe. We have local papers and magazines and have recently started a jigsaw-swap service. There is normally a jigsaw underway in the building for anyone who wants to join in.

We have a number of regular craft and reading groups meeting in our building during the day which are open to anyone in the community to join. The crafters did an excellent job of ensuring the Library put up a worthy offering for the village 'Scarecrow Trail' in July. The weekly Rhyme Time session is always popular with children and their parents/grandparents, and KLS run extra events for children during school holidays.

The 'Hands on History' group continued to meet, with a major project focussing on the development of Denby Dale village since the 1870s. The group obtained a small grant from Denby Dale Parish Council to help with this, facilitated by DDCP. A glass bottle containing local newspapers from 1872 was discovered by the developers of the neighbouring plot when they were converting the old nursery school. As Denby Dale First and Nursery School is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2024, the Hands on History group decided to research what Denby Dale was like in the 1870's and produce local history resources which will be kept in the library for use by individuals and groups, including schools. The resources will also be shared with the KLS Local History Archive. The culmination of the 'Denby Dale 150' project was an exhibition about life in Denby Dale in the 1870s displayed in the Library building in July 2024; we will report on this in detail in next year's annual report.

The 'Later at the Library' group continues to offer a monthly programme of literary events, including author talks, book discussions and poetry readings. There was also a well-attended theatrical performance by local actors.

Our other evening use includes weekly meditation classes, a music group, and groups offering help for parents of ADHD children & for adults with a long-term health issue, and occasional one-off events.

Our partner, The Kirkwood, run the cafe and gift shop. The cafe and shop are open five days a week, with an expanding offer. The Kirkwood also explored using the building to provide support in the community to people who need their services, as part of their wider strategy.

We are grateful to have consistent staffing from KLS and TK. Both Lynne and Molly are friendly and welcoming to visitors, whether library members or not, and offer important continuity of contact for many in the community.

Volunteers

We are also grateful for our volunteers, without whom the library service could not continue.

We have 25 volunteers who work in the library, either with a regular slot or to do occasional cover, with a volunteer always matching the paid staff hours.

Additional volunteer time was spent by:

- Caretakers (weekly inspections, building and car park repair, maintenance and improvement)
- Trustees (regular management meetings)
- Coordination of volunteer rota planning
- Liaison with key stakeholders (regular meetings)
- Marketing (via Facebook, website, noticeboards and leaflets)
- Coordinating bookings and events
- Fundraising (managing our annual raffle and Supporters Club)

We made improvements during the year to our welcome and induction processes for Library and Trustee volunteers. We celebrated National Volunteers' Week by producing a series of profiles of some of our volunteers, to share their experiences and encourage others, posted daily on Facebook and on our website. Nearly 100% of our Library volunteers completed the KLS Annual Survey – much higher than average participation. We continued to hold social events and update meetings for volunteers.

Improvements in and around our building

We know from customer feedback that it is sometimes difficult to find a space in our car park. We have signs explaining that the car park is for customers of the building and local business only and is not to be used for all day parking. We have seen improvement in the situation and are continuing to monitor it.

As a further solution, at least temporarily, we were very pleased to be given permission by the landowner, Kirklees Council, to use part of the former school grounds behind the Library building, whilst it is not in other use. This provides a small area of tarmac suitable for staff and volunteer car parking, for both the Library and the café, which frees up space in the front car park for the general public. Our caretaker volunteers cleared overhanging vegetation and put in place a simple, low-cost security barrier, and additional motion-sensitive lighting was installed by a contractor. This is undoubtedly helping ease pressure on the main parking area.

The volunteer caretaker team has been instrumental in either doing this work or arranging and supervising contractors. We are grateful for their continued support in keeping our building safe and well maintained.

An energy audit showed that heating the building accounts for 50% of the total annual electricity cost. We also reviewed use during summer and winter periods. A fixed price deal and our photovoltaic panels continued to keep cost increases manageable through the year. June 2023 saw our best ever results from the photovoltaic panels.

We were also very pleased to see remedial drainage work done by others to the culvert under the new development next to the Library and in the main road to remove blockages. This appears to have addressed the flooding in our car park which had previously occurred after heavy rainfall.

Governance

We have up to 12 Trustees with a wide mix of skills and experience who meet regularly during the year. Trustees are appointed by resolution, with due regard being paid to skills, knowledge and experience.

Since 2019, Trustees have agreed that the position of Chair will be held for a year at a time, rotating amongst those who are willing to take it on. Trustees can serve a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms.

The following Trustees have served during the year. Where resignations, retirements or appointments have happened after the year end but before the signing of the annual report, these have been included in italics for information.

Janet Johnson	(Chair from 1 April 2023)
Derek Lawrence	(Vice Chair, Bookings Co-ordinator, Caretaking lead)
Kath Kerr	(Chair from 31 May 2022 to 31 March 2023, resigned 12 August 2023)
Neil Denby	(Treasurer)
Tansy Hepton	(Secretary)
Susan Daniels	
Jon Milner	
Linda Kitson	(Max term of 9 years reached in Sep 2023)
Kate Tunstall	(Max term of 9 years reached in Jan 2024, agreed to remain on management committee, but not as Trustee))
Sarah Bennett	(Appointed 19 April 2023)
Jan Goult	(Appointed 25 October 2023)
<i>Lauren Mallinson</i>	<i>(Appointed 23 May 2024)</i>

The partnerships with Kirklees Library Service and The Kirkwood are important to us and we hold regular meetings with their representatives to make sure our building continues to meet their needs and that our purposes are aligned.

Finance

We are in a healthy financial position. We are very grateful to all our supporters, including members of our Supporters Club; people who have bought raffle tickets, attended events or donated into our collecting tins; the Parish Council and local Kirklees councillors who have given us grants; and local people who have donated money and time.

We have a cyclical repairs and major maintenance schedule, produced in February 2022, which estimates both reactive and planned spend for the period 2022 – 2030. In order to manage our risks, we aim to have reserves sufficient to cover two years normal operating costs together with estimated planned spend on the building and a modest emergency fund. We are currently comfortably within this position.

Our detailed accounts are available on the Charity Commission website. In summary for the 2023/24 period:

Income:	£13,589
Expenditure:	£ 9,969
Surplus for the year	£ 3,620

At year end (31 March 2024): £52,639 in bank account

Risks

The major risks to which the Charity is exposed are identified below, together with the key controls in place to mitigate them. The Trustees have given consideration to these and are satisfied that effective systems or procedures are in place. The policies referred to below can be seen on our website ddcp.org.

Risk	Controls and mitigations
Ensuring the safety & welfare of building users and compliance with H&S legislation	Health, safety & welfare policy in place. Health & safety induction for all volunteers. Fire safety policy in place. Weekly checks of the building.
Compliance with law and regulation of community buildings	Review of Charity Commission guidance Liaison with Kirklees Council and Parish Council Member of Community Managed Libraries Network
Protecting the long term future and condition of the building, fixtures and fittings	Reserves policy in place, including funds for future maintenance Weekly checks of the building
Complying with general data protection regulations	Data protection policy in place The only personal data we hold relates to our volunteers and trustees
Financial resilience, especially as financial success is heavily dependent on a single source of income through The Kirkwood	Reserves policy in place, which requires a minimum of a year's worth of rental income in reserve, ideally two.

Risk	Controls and mitigations
Continuing ability to host the library and support KLS, recognising that KLS may have its own funding pressures	Regular meetings with KLS Strategic objective to improve numbers using library services Hosting Agreement in place with KLS
Number and capacity of volunteers available to fill rota to support KLS staff and open the library	Advertising for new volunteers Induction for new volunteers Regular meetings of volunteers, including training
Positive relationships with wider community in local area	Regular surveys to assess community views of the library
Lack of co-ordination and effective joint working between building trustees and major users	Regular building user group meetings between trustees, KLS and TK
Lack of awareness of the library building and all it can offer	Annual flyer delivered to all households in the catchment area Marketing through noticeboards, Facebook and website
New COVID variant means restrictions re-imposed	Lessons learnt from previous restrictions

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit and have approved the trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees

Signature:	<i>Janet Johnson</i>
Full name:	Janet Susan Johnson
Position:	Trustee
Date:	11 December 2024

The Denby Dale Community Project
Denby Dale Community Library
364 Wakefield Road
Denby Dale
Huddersfield HD8 8RX

Denby Dale Community Library

Income & Expenditure Account for year to 31st March 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Rent & room hire		8,395.00		8,497.00
Donations		100.00		
Supporters fund / Fund raising		3,882.71		3,305.76
Solar feed in tariff		528.52		537.58
Bank interest received		682.99		141.91
		13,589.22		12,482.25
EXPENDITURE				
Cleaner		2,190.00		2,080.00
Services & Insurance		3,470.42		2,408.60
Repairs & maintenance		2,775.93		4,784.02
Rates: premises		404.50		204.80
Rates: car park		163.84		
Website costs / domains / IT		377.37		82.47
Supporters Club prizes		225.00		100.00
Bank charges		62.40		62.00
Grants/gifts		254.16		
Extra children's tables		45.50		
Banners / signs				580.41
Land reg fee				29.00
		9,969.12		10,331.30
OVERALL SURPLUS FOR YEAR		3,620.10		2,150.95

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Building			250,000.00	250,000.00
Equipment		500.00		500.00
Sofa		599.99	1,099.99	1,099.99
Prepayments & accrued income		154.20		138.54
Bank current account		11,286.62		10,375.65
Bank deposit account		41,352.53		38,169.54
Cash float				50.01
		52,793.35		48,733.74
Accrued expenses		-586.93	52206.42	-147.42
			303,306.41	299,686.31
Funds b/forward			299,686.31	297,535.36
Surplus for the year			3,620.10	2,150.95
			303,306.41	299,686.31