

Friends of Highgate Library Charitable Foundation

Report of the Trustees for the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

The trustees present their annual report and income and expenditure statement for the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and confirm they comply with the Charities Act 2011. The AGM for the year 2024/25 was held on 29 April 2025.

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Friends of Highgate Library Charitable Foundation
Charity Registration Number: 1161601

Trustees:

Caroline Anstiss
Sarah Carrier (resigned 18 June 2024)
Michele Cohen
Paul Harris (Treasurer)
Sarah Harrison
Margot Kafno
Virginia Kerridge (Secretary)
Linda Lefevre (Chair)
Patrick Lefevre
Agnes Stewart
Fabian Watkinson (resigned 18 June 2024)

Structure, governance, and management

Governing document

Friends of Highgate Library Charitable Foundation ("FOHLCF") is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission in May 2015 under charity number 1161601. It is governed by a constitution filed with the Commission.

Organisational structure

The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits. The trustees meet together as a body four times a year and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to the running of Highgate Library and the running of the Highgate Library Hall (previously known as the Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre ("HLCCC")).

The charity works in partnership with the London Borough of Camden ("Camden") Library Services to run Highgate Library. Details of the partnership are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding dated 1 June 2015. To assist in the smooth running of Highgate Library the trustees have delegated responsibility to a management group who meet regularly with officers and staff from Camden in a Highgate Library Management Group ("HLMG"). The operation of letting the Highgate Library Hall has similarly been delegated to a small group "the Hall group." Each group reports to the full trustees at meetings.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

As at 31 March 2025 there were nine trustees. Sarah Carrier and Fabian Watkinson resigned as trustees on 18 June 2024. Paul Harris was reappointed as a trustee on 28 November 2024 and reappointed as treasurer. Virginia Kerridge was reappointed as a trustee on 29 April 2025 and reappointed as secretary. Toby Faber continued as President.

Objectives and activities

The objects of the charity are set out in the charity's constitution as follows:

- 1 To advance the education of the public in Highgate by providing, or assisting in the provision of, a public library and associated services, including but not limited to, information and study facilities, educational programmes, courses, classes, and lectures.
- 2 To provide or assist in the provision of facilities at the Highgate Library and the Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre for meetings, classes, lectures and recreation or other leisure time occupation for those individuals living and or working in the London Borough of Camden and the surrounding area in the interests of social welfare and with the objective of improving the conditions of life of the said individuals.
- 3 Such charitable purposes for the public benefit as are exclusively charitable according to the laws of England and Wales as the trustees may from time to time determine.

All the activities of the charity are carried out by volunteers. All our trustees and volunteers give of their time freely. HLMG recruit and arrange for training of new volunteers to the Library. All volunteers working in Highgate Library are DBS checked. FOHLCF also arranges use of Highgate Library Hall with the organisation and opening and closing of the Hall done entirely by volunteers. The Hall is a much-needed community space in the area.

Activities and achievements

The charity carries out core activities in pursuance of its charitable aims. The trustees consider that these activities, summarised in this report, provide benefit to the community surrounding Highgate Library which includes Highgate Newtown, Dartmouth Park, and Highgate.

Governance is reviewed annually. Policies approved/reviewed included Conflict of Interest Policy, Due Diligence Policy, Financial Controls Policy, Reserves Policy.

HIGHGATE LIBRARY

Compliance with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding and development of Highgate Library are monitored by the quarterly meetings of a committee comprising Fiona Tarn (Camden Head of Libraries), Linda Lefevre, Sarah Harrison, and Thanos Morphitis. The Library is managed by the Highgate Library Management Group "HLMG." The FOHLCF members are trustees Sarah Harrison (Chair), Paul Harris and Michele

Cohen and Library volunteers Reg Herring and Cathy Richins. Camden Libraries is represented by Abdul Kashim and Iqbal Hussain.

Report on Highgate Library for the year April 2024-March 2025

Report from Sarah Harrison, Chair of Highgate Library Management Group

Highgate Library was closed to the public from the beginning of 2024 until November 2024 for major building works to be undertaken. The key principles guiding the work were decarbonisation and restoration. Details of this work were set out in last year's report.

FoHLCF, whilst not formally involved in the project, played a significant part in ensuring the success of the work including: providing an alternative design for the entrance lobbies; ensuring the improvement of the hall facilities by replacing a defunct computer frame with a small kitchen and a disabled WC; and, ensuring the restoration of the original parquet floors throughout the Library and the Library Hall.

The Charity also funded and managed: the restoration of the original iron railings; new storage units designed and built within the Library Hall; and sourced and part funded new notice boards for the whole Library.

The Charity's contribution to the success of the building works was recognised by all those involved including the Camden Property Manager, the Building Project manager and Camden Libraries.

The refurbishment of Highgate Library was essentially completed by mid-November 2024, so on 19 November 2024 there was a "soft opening". This allowed the public access to the Library and use of its services. Over 100 people came in every day, and the refurbished building was greeted with delight.

On 4 December 2024 FoHLCF organised and funded an event at which the Charity's President, Toby Faber of the publishers Faber and Faber, and Councillor Samata Khaton, the Mayor of Camden, formally re-opened Highgate Library. It was a joyous occasion, which provided the opportunity to pay tribute to all those who had made key contributions to the refurbishment including Anna Wright, our ward councillor; the building team and its Project Manager Gary Watson; and Camden Council who principally had funded the work. FoHLCF invited the supporting neighbourhood organisations such as the Highgate Newtown Community Partnership, Highgate Cemetery and Brookfield School. Following the formal reopening FoHLCF organised tours of the Library on several dates for local people and FoHL members to see the refurbishment and highlight its decarbonisation elements.

When Highgate Library was closed in January 2024 Camden Libraries made a major effort to find alternative temporary location. However as this was not successful Camden Libraries organised a pop-up library from April to November 2024 to ensure that there was at least some library service in the area. A bus, stocked with some children's books and books reserved by adults, parked near the library three afternoons a week. While this was not heavily used it did lead to two major positive initiatives.

Firstly, at the initiative of the Library volunteers, the Library developed closer relations with Highgate Cemetery. They requested permission for the pop-up bus to park outside the

Chester Road Cemetery gates which was granted. It provided a convenient, visible and consistent place for the bus. A wonderful tour of the Cemetery for library volunteers was organised, focusing on FOHL members and key authors buried there. FOHLCF initiated discussion with the Cemetery about the disconnection of people living around the Library from the Cemetery. From this was developed a project to allow the Library to run art and photography classes in the Cemetery for library users, with free access for those involved. The first art class is to be held in summer 2025.

Secondly, Brookfield School, the adjacent primary school, invited the pop-up library bus into their playground every week. Each class was brought by their teacher to the bus to borrow a book and to enrol for the Summer Reading Challenge if they wished to do so. It was clear that the children, many of whom had never been to Highgate Library before, even though it is almost next door, really loved their visits to the bus. From this grew the determination to make school visits to the Library a regular part of the school programme. Since January 2025 each week a class comes to the Library for an hour. The children learn about libraries and can borrow books. We have initiated a system that allows all children to participate even if they do not have a library card, by having a class library card which the teacher holds. The Brookfield visits are arranged and managed by the Library volunteers.

From January 2025 one focus of the Charity's work has been, with library staff, to provide adequate space for the books. Once achieved, all the books have been re-shelved, improved labelling created and the children's library facilities improved with a new carpet and bean bags. For the first time in a long while there is now sufficient shelving for all the books in the library except for the picture books for young children. This problem is being addressed by ordering another unit for these books. Designed to maintain the style of the current red book train and funded by the charity, this will be installed in 2025.

Another focus has been to re-establish activities that stopped during the refurbishment. The Toy Library, which is entirely funded by the FOHLCF, re-started its weekly sessions in January 2025. A local nursery has begun bringing its children every week, and it is planned to establish a borrowing system like that set up for Brookfield School so that the nursery can borrow toys. As it remains the only Toy Library in Camden Libraries and is clearly valued by its users, the Charity has decided to extend its funding for another 3 years.

Camden Council's policy for its libraries is to extend the range of activities they offer becoming an important part of its public facing work. The Charity is working with Camden Library staff to develop a programme of activities for adults and children which makes use of the three spaces that now exist in the library, spaces where activities can take place without disturbing the quiet environment cherished by many library users. A very successful 'Fun with Science' short course has been developed and run by the Charity's Library volunteers. A short art course involving time in the Cemetery will be starting shortly. Working with the Highgate Newtown Community Partnership, FOHLCF is currently seeking funding for those activities which require specialist tutors and/or equipment and materials.

Throughout the year FOHLCF Library volunteers have, with Camden library staff, continued to manage and staff the Highgate Library service. Volunteers regularly joined staff on the pop-up bus, and since the Library re-opened volunteers have been working with staff every day the Library was open. The FOHL members of the Highgate Library

Management Group have met regularly with the Camden Library staff members to shape the development of the Library and resolve any issues. They also joined Camden Libraries staff on major training days. The FOHL members of the team that, with the Head of Camden Libraries, monitor the legal agreement between the parties (the Memorandum of Understanding) have also met regularly to discuss the overarching issues currently concerning libraries in general and Highgate Library in particular. The working relationship between the Charity's Library volunteers and Camden Libraries has, at all levels, been positive and productive, and is seen as such by all involved.

Aware that the expanding activities at Highgate Library will require more volunteers to support the service, FOHLCF has this year been actively recruiting and training new volunteers. We currently have 30 active Library volunteers including four trainees who have almost completed their training. We have a further six new volunteers who are about to start their training, and another two who have expressed a firm desire to become a library volunteer. The widespread interest in becoming a volunteer and the fact that many volunteers have been involved for over a decade is a very positive indication of the health of the Charity. It provides an important service to the community as well as providing interesting and rewarding occupation for its volunteers. We have had no negative incidents with the volunteers.

In the year from April 2024 to March 2025 FOHLCF has again made major contributions to Highgate Library. These included providing trained volunteers to staff the Library throughout its opening hours, introducing and funding new initiatives and facilities and playing an important role in work of refurbishing the building. The arrangement for FOHLCF to jointly and equally manage and staff Highgate Library with Camden Libraries has been shown to bring major benefits to this public service.

HIGHGATE LIBRARY HALL

Report from Linda Lefevre, Chair of FOHLCF and the Hall Group

The Hall is now known as Highgate Library Hall following the change from FOHLCF having a licence and a new agreement has been drafted with Camden Library Service. This has yet to be signed. A formal document on the current arrangement with Camden Council is also awaited.

From March 2024 to January 2025 the Hall was out of use due to the refurbishment works. Public talks have been held in the Hall monthly since January 2025. The Hall is now being hired out by the Charity during the day on Sundays, Mondays and Fridays and after 6pm on other evenings. Occasional daytime use on other days is negotiated with the Library service.

Since February 2025 regular groups for Pilates, Dance and Yoga have used the Hall plus an under-fives activity group monthly on Sunday mornings. A book group uses the Hall monthly at no charge. In addition there have been two birthday parties, a residents' meeting and a Council hire to consult local residents.

A team of four volunteers manages the Hall as caretakers for the private hire.

FINANCE REPORT

Report from Paul Harris, FOHLCF Treasurer

1. Accounts for 2024-25

Current Account b/f	18,580.96	
Deposit Account b/f		30,719.52 ¹

Income

Interest received	740.29	
Book Sales	54.56	
Donations	350.00	
Decarbonisation Funding	1855.28	
Hall Rentals	1895.00	
Insurance Refund	52.57	
Total	4207.41	

Expenditure

Decarbonisation Project*	10187.93 ²	
IT Support	370.87	
Toy Library Service	570.00	
Library Supplies	170.23	
Insurance	338.63	
Subscription (CHS)	15.00	
Children's Xmas Gifts	33.99	
Brookfield School Prizes	90.31	
Volunteer Events	264.01	
Total	12,040.97	

Closing balance (Current a/c)	10,747.40	
Deficit	(7,833.56)	

Deposit Account c/f		31459.81
Charity total funds		42207.21

1. The Charity placed £30,000 of funds in a short term deposit account with Lloyd's Bank in May 2023. This yields interest currently at 2.04% pa. Interest received to date is £1459.81.

2. The Charity's contribution of funds towards this project included refurbishment and repainting of the perimeter railings, installation of additional shelving and cork noticeboards, and custom building of hall storage spaces for regular library and hirer activities.

General Finances and Outlook for 2025-26

Following closure of the Library in December 2023, income from the Hall and other sources was paused. The Library reopened officially in December 2024 following the successful completion of the decarbonisation project. As agreed with Trustees the Charity made a significant contribution of funds towards the project – this included refurbishment and repainting of the perimeter railings, installation of additional shelving and cork noticeboards, and custom built storage spaces in the Hall for regular library and hirer activities. The Charity's contribution to the project exceeded £10k. The remainder of our expenses remain in line with inflation.

It is also important to note the significant professional and technical contributions made by HLMG members to the Camden team over the 15 months of planning and implementation of the decarbonisation project. This enabled inclusion of many additional improvements not initially within the project scope e.g. provision of the disabled toilet and a new kitchen space in the Hall, and the refurbishment and re-laying of the original oak flooring throughout the Library and the Hall. Over the project life a conservative estimate of HLMG's contribution would reveal an excess of 1,000 hours provided to the project, which in professional terms represents over £100k in consultancy fees pro bono.

Following the Library's reopening we have seen a resumption of Hall lettings. However, as the Hall is now considered part of the Library itself, our revenue expectations must be set against the Library's need to use the Hall space for an expanding range of popular activities during opening times. HLMG's plans are to submit a major application for grant support to fund existing and new activities for all age groups within the community in keeping with Camden's vision for the Library to become a community hub. It is commendable to note that Camden are one of the few boroughs across the UK that are investing seriously in the future of libraries, having completed West Hampstead, Holborn and Swiss Cottage following Highgate's completion.

In summary, after significant contribution to the decarbonisation project the Charity's financial position remains strong. Our current account has sufficient funds, with contingency, to cover our expected costs over the 2025-26 financial year, whilst the deposit account continues to accrue interest.

This Annual Report of the Trustees for the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Linda Lefevre (Chair)



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2024

To

31/03/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Bank Interest	760	-	-	760	720
Book Sales	55	-	-	55	95
Decarbonisation Project Funding	1,855	-	-	1,855	-
Donations	350	-	-	350	665
Hall Rentals	1,895	-	-	1,895	6,796
Insurance Refund	53	-	-	53	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	4,968	-	-	4,968	8,276
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	4,968	-	-	4,968	8,276
A3 Payments					
Borookfield School Prizegiving	90	-	-	90	143
Decarbonisation Project Costs	10,188	-	-	10,188	-
Insurance	339	-	-	339	296
IT Support & Equipment	371	-	-	371	1,064
Library Expenses	170	-	-	170	1,901
Toy Library	570	-	-	570	2,732
Subscription	15	-	-	15	15
Volunteer Events	264	-	-	264	572
Xmas Event	34	-	-	34	103
Sub total	12,041	-	-	12,041	6,826
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	12,041	-	-	12,041	6,826
Net of receipts/(payments)	(7,073)	-	-	- 7,073	1,450
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	49,280	-	-	49,280	47,830
Cash funds this year end	42,207	-	-	42,207	49,280

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at bank	42,207	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Total cash funds

42,207

-

-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

Unrestricted
funds
to nearest £

Restricted funds
to nearest £

Endowment
funds
to nearest £

B2 Other monetary assets

Details

	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details

Fund to which asset
belongs

Cost (optional)

Current value
(optional)

		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the
charity's own use

Details

Fund to which asset
belongs

Cost (optional)

Current value
(optional)

		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details

Fund to which
liability relates

Amount due
(optional)

When due
(optional)



		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on
behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

	Paul Harris, Treasurer	29/04/2025
	Virginia Kerridge, Secretary	29/04/2025