



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date				Period end date			
From	1	10	2023	To	30	9	2024

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

Friends of Rock Road Library

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any) 1166498

Charity's principal address

Rock Road Library

69 Rock Road

Cambridge

Postcode

CB1 7UG

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Peter Axe	Deputy Chair		
2	James Berry	Treasurer		
3	Nigel Blackmore			
4	Stephanie Boyd	Education lead		
5	Peter Chamberlain	Collection boxes		
6	Iain Cross		Until 20 May 2024	
7	Alec Dyson	Chair		
8	Simon Howarth	Membership Secretary	From 9 December 2023	
9	Brenda Purkiss	Arts & Culture lead		
10	Jill Trend	Meeting Secretary		
10	Jane Wilson - Haworth	Writer-in-Residence	From 9 December 2023	
11				

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Banker	Lloyds Bank	3 Sidney Street, Cambridge, CB2 3HQ
Independent examiner	Adrian Burns	79 Hills Avenue, Cambridge, CB1 7UZ

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees and this is confirmed at the next Annual General Meeting

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

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Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The object of the charity is the advancement of education for the public benefit in the area served by Rock Road Library, in particular but not exclusively by:

- supporting and promoting library services;
- facilitating educational, cultural and community courses, events and exhibitions in both the library and its garden;
- fostering links to educational, cultural and community organisations.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

The trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

The benefits to the public are:

- The availability of a local library which is well cared for and partly staffed by volunteers, and which without financial and practical support from the Friends of Rock Road Library might have been closed by now.
- An attractive community garden in an area without much public open space, which is safe and secure and particularly valued by families and children.
- The provision of a community room and kitchen, which is an ideal space for courses, events and exhibitions.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grant making;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

1) Open+

The new Open+ system was launched at Rock Road Library on 2nd October 2023. This enables registered users to access the library at specific times outside usual opening hours. Open+ sessions are remotely monitored by a CCTV control room and a phone is available to report any emergency situations.

2) Community Room facelift and exhibitions

Our Friday morning team of volunteers painted the walls of the Community Room and gave the much-loved train in the Children's Room a fresh coat of paint. They also arranged for the badly scuffed kitchen floor to be refurbished, stripped and resealed.

In January, the Community Room audio visual equipment was upgraded with the installation of an up-to date **widescreen television**. This may now be connected wirelessly to a laptop or phone, making presentations easier to manage and of higher quality than with the old projector, which is now available to other libraries.

Our first display in the New Year was Pamela Barrell's beautiful artwork from her book '**Locating Anthony Trollope**'.

This was followed by a display about **Tom Karen OBE**, a local resident who died in 2022. Tom was a talented designer whose credits include the Raleigh Chopper bicycle, Bond Bug, Marble Run game and Scimitar car. We distributed his book 'A Little Book of Bottoms!' to local children and are selling the remainder.

Open Studios returned for two weekends in July with an exhibition by local artist Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas. Her semi-abstract, mixed media paintings respond to the haunting mood and atmosphere of places marked by the passage of time and change.

The Community Room now houses a select **collection of original art** by local and recent 'Open Studio' artists.

3 Major fund-raising events

Apple Day in October was a bumper event! Balmy weather, a packed garden, a record volume of apple juice pressed, fun games and activities, and achieved the largest ever sum raised (£617). We may have run out of cake but there were lots of very happy visitors.

Magnificent May Plant Sale! Our best ever: the sun shone, cakes were consumed, plants sold, plants potted, cucumbers calculated, Lego modelled, exhibitions enjoyed, quizzes tackled, garden advice given, stories told, crochet hooked, books bought, members recruited. Most importantly of all - the community came together and had fun! And to 'ice the cake', a total of £1,161 was raised, which was more than any previous event.

4) Children's activities

The Friends attach huge importance to children's activities since this brings young readers and their parents into the library.

Magical Halloween The garden twinkled on 31st October: there were entertaining witches and hordes of little scary monsters enjoyed games, stories, terrible jokes and treats. Great fun was had by all!

Local parents organised a number of **Children's Clubs**: the After-School Scrabble Group for all ages and levels of players; the After-School Reception Lego Club for children aged up to 5; and the Spanish Club for children aged 3-6.

We continued to fund **Rhyme and Story Time**, which is suitable for babies, children, parents and carers. One Saturday morning each month, our experienced and skilful story tellers – Veronica Speirs and occasionally Marion Leeper or Fran Crouch – entertain the smallest of children and our next generation of readers.

During April and May, the Friends and the Library Services team welcomed small groups of 4-year-olds from **Homerton nursery** who arrived by 'walking bus', explored the library and garden, learned a little about what libraries do and enjoyed a story-reading before returning to the nursery in time for lunch. Each child also received a copy of Tom Karen's book 'Bottoms' which they stamped for themselves!

5) Adult groups

Led by artist Veronica Thornton, the **Textile Group** meets on Wednesday mornings. In February their stunning collection of tributes to some favourite children's books went on display in the children's library. The work has been designed to be portable and easily displayed in a variety of locations. Their latest project is a commission by Morley Memorial School Library, who have requested bunting of books enjoyed by children in the school.

Sarah Ingram, formerly a Rock Road Library Community Library Assistant who holds a Masters in Creative Writing, led the **Rock Library Write Club**, a new, monthly, relaxed, drop-in club for people who want to write but need the stimulus of writing buddies, a regular schedule, and a neutral space in which to do it. It is attended by 8 – 10 writers.

In January Anita Tambala launched the **Flock on the Rock Yoga** group, which practices flow yoga every Friday morning in the Community Room

6) Evening events

In October Clare Mulley – an award-winning historian – gave a talk about her latest book: '**The Women Who Flew for Hitler**', the extraordinary story of Hanna Reitsch, a fanatical Nazi who begged Hitler to let her fly him to safety from his Berlin bunker, and her nemesis, Melitta Schiller, who joined the clandestine German resistance to support the most famous attempt on Hitler's life.

In November Mike Levy talked in his book '**Get the Children Out**' which describes the heroes who helped evacuate children from Nazi-occupied Europe. His talk fell on the anniversary of Kristallnacht 1938 – the night of the broken glass.

Christmas Cheer! Our Christmas Social began with a brief Annual General Meeting, followed by seasonal refreshments, some excellent music, singing, humour, and a quiz.

We screened the first film on our new television in February. **'Pure Clean Water'** reported on the chalk streams crisis in greater Cambridge.

In March, Lucy Ward introduced her book **'The Empress and the English Doctor'**, which tells the thrilling story of how Catherine the Great of Russia summoned an English Quaker doctor, Thomas Dimsdale, to St Petersburg to inoculate her and her son against smallpox – the most virulent killer of the age.

Maggie James gave a presentation in April about her book **"No Way Home"**, a novel based on her experiences living for five years in Saudi Arabia. She brought some fascinating props for her talk, including natural pearl necklaces, a geological rock rose and a traditional Saudi (Scottish-inspired) headdress.

In May (and also again in June) we welcomed local author Caroline Biggs, who is on a mission to bring to life the history of Cambridge – the town not the University. She talked about her book **'The Spinning House'**, which reveals the dark history of Cambridge University's private prison for women. We also hosted a talk by visiting American author Mary Kay Zuravleff.

Acoustic Music Evening In May, our members enjoyed excellent performances from Cambridge-based musicians Kelly & Woolley, the John Meed Trio and The String Section. The audience were very enthusiastic – "A lovely warm event. Better than the Cambridge Folk Festival!" – and requested another concert in May 2025

Nigel Blackmore's presentation on **'Adapting to Climate Change'** in July was well attended. He explained, calling on scientific advice, how climate change is inevitable and worsening and how it will have a devastating impact on all aspects of human life, especially food production and associated energy and water sufficiency.

7) Writer-In-Residence Jane Wilson-Howarth

In April we expected a visit from the children's laureate Joseph Coelho on his way to give the Philippa Pearce Lecture at Homerton College so we put on a storytime session for pre-schoolers and Jane ran a writing workshop for school-aged children. The event was well attended, but not by Joseph Coelho.

We hosted a conversation in June between our writer-in residence Jane Wilson-Howarth and the children's author and poet **Ian Whybrow** whose books have sold millions of copies. Their conversation was enlightening and the audience was both amused and moved by Ian's recent poetry.

Jane launched a **Summer Holiday Flash Fiction Competition**, which was open to any Cambridge-based school-age child. The challenge was to write a complete story in no more than 250 words on the subject: 'I didn't expect that to happen in the summer holidays!'

In August, Jane spun some **'Tall tales about Himalayan Wildlife'**, reading from her adventure story books and showing photos of the astonishing animals she encountered during her 12 years living in Nepal.

8) The gardens

Rock Road Library is very fortunate to have its own gardens (front and back). It is probably the only garden in a public library in Cambridgeshire – and one that is so well looked after by volunteers.

This year we welcomed a new volunteer gardener, Alison, who joins Anne, Jane, Sarah and Hilary every Monday to tend the plants. Their expertise in apple tree pruning is particularly welcome: it takes six weeks, starting in early January, to complete the winter pruning of our community garden orchard. The eleven heritage apple trees are all local interest varieties, ranging from Histon Favourite to the New Rock Pippin from Barnwell. Our Monday group is supported by Brian and Luke, who manage our successful composting.

We have now underplanted three of the apple trees with a succession of spring flowering bulbs – crocuses, muscari, narcissi and tulips. We are allowing the grass to grow a little longer under the trees (in 'No Mow May' style) to encourage invertebrates and other wildlife more generally in the garden.

Over the last few years we have participated in the **RSPB Big Garden January Birdwatch**. This is the world's largest garden wildlife survey, with hundreds of thousands of nature lovers taking part. Three intrepid bird enthusiasts spent a chilly hour observing the library garden's wildlife and spotted a grand total of 8 birds! The national average was 29 per birdwatcher.

In May we welcomed a group of volunteer staff and patients from **Addenbrooke's Hospital** who planned to set up their own community garden on the hospital site and were looking for guidance. It is encouraging that our garden was chosen as an example of an inspirational community garden.

9) Membership

We understand that Rock Road is the only public library in Cambridgeshire to have a subscription-based membership scheme and we now have 150 paid-up households. Our members are very important because they contribute to all our activities and demonstrate the breadth of support in the community. During the year, they generously contributed a total of £3,726 most of which attracted a further 25% in Gift Aid. The Trustees welcome all offers of help in organising events, gardening and maintenance work.

In September Simon Howarth succeeded Nigel Blackmore as Membership Secretary. After eight years in the role, Nigel stepped down to focus on organising events such as the plant sale and Christmas social. We are enormously grateful to him for doing a splendid job.

10) Book purchases

Public libraries nationwide are facing year-on-year budget cuts in new book purchases. In addition, there is a chronic lack of investment in school libraries, whilst parents and carers are spending less on books because of the cost-of-living crisis. In response, the Friends of Rock Road Library and Cambridgeshire Libraries jointly agreed a detailed programme of investment in new books, with the Friends setting aside £1,000 in both 2022-23 and 2023-24. The budget was split 50/50 between Adults' and Children's Books and 50/50 between Fiction and Non-Fiction.

For the first 3 months, these books can only be taken out by users coming into Rock Road Library. After that, they can be ordered by all users in Cambridgeshire via the online system but will always return to Rock Road.

In addition, we now buy one or two copies of books by authors who have spoken at the library so that library users may borrow these.

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The charity's policy is to (a) ensure that restricted reserves fully cover future spending commitments and (b) maintain an unrestricted reserve of at least £2,000 in order to meet fluctuations in receipts and payments. At 30 September 2024 we had accumulated £3,953 in our bank accounts, partly because of tight controls over spending and partly because of success in fund raising. The Trustees deliberately accumulated a substantial balance in order to support major works to the library roof.

Details of any funds materially in deficit**Further financial review details (Optional information)**

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

Our principal sources of funds are grants, fundraising, membership subscriptions and donations.

Over the years, much of our expenditure has "seeded" substantial grants which have transformed community facilities in both the library and its garden.

Our day-to day expenditure funds:

- Library events (e.g. author talks, open studios, writing competitions)
- The provision of new books and newspapers
- Equipment for and maintenance of the library and garden

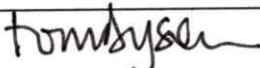
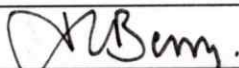
Section F**Other optional information**

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Section G**Declaration**

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Alec William Thomas Dyson	James Robert Berry
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	Treasurer
Date	16.07.25	16-07-25



Friends of Rock Road Library		No 1166498		CC16a
Receipts and payments accounts				
For the period from	1 October 2023	To	30 September 2024	

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £	Last year £
A1 Receipts					
Collection boxes	292			292	325
Donations	2,206			2,206	1,043
Gift aid	987			987	457
Fundraising and events	2,210			2,210	1,795
Membership subscriptions	1,520			1,520	1,093
Miscellaneous income	458			458	36
Total receipts	7,673			7,673	4,749
A3 Payments					
Book collections	1,250			1,250	1,108
Community garden	349			349	1,049
Fundraising and events	1,695			1,695	1,471
Library equipment	1,626			1,626	132
Library interior refurbishment	826			826	495
Library frontage project					
Miscellaneous	110			110	151
Newspapers	590			590	945
Publicity	261			261	246
Rhyme and story time	1,175			1,175	775
Total payments	7,882			7,882	6,372
Net of receipts/(payments)	(209)			(209)	(1,623)
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end	4,162			4,162	5,785
Cash funds this period end	3,953			3,953	4,162

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

Categories

Details

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Lloyds Bank	3,953		
	Total cash funds	3,953		

B2 Other monetary assets

Details

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £

B3 Investment assets

Details

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)

B5 Liabilities

Details


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



Alec William Thomas Dyson
James Robert Berry

16.07.25
16.7.25