



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	1	10	2024		30	9	2025

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	Until 1 April 2025	
6	Alec Dyson	Chair		
7	Simon Howarth	Membership Secretary		
8	Brenda Purkiss	Arts & Culture lead		
9	Jill Trend	Meeting Secretary		
10	Jane Wilson - Haworth	Writer-in-Residence		

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

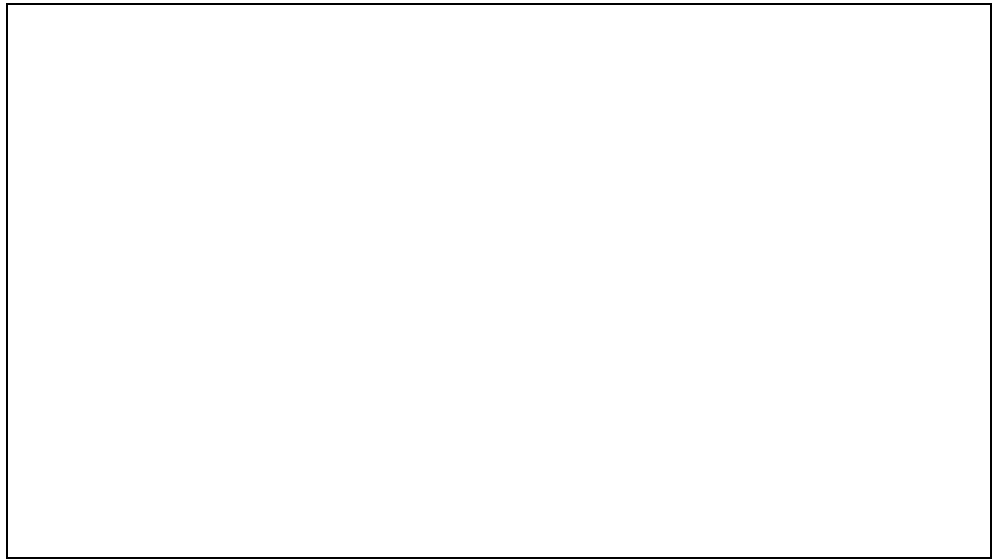
Additional governance issues (Optional information)

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;

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- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.



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) Library building refurbishment

Rock Road Library was closed from early May to the end of September for major refurbishment. The work included:

- A new lining for the roof, added insulation and the installation of very attractive roof lights.
- A new carpet in the main Library
- Redecoration of the main and Children's Library spaces
- Replacement of fire doors with doors more sympathetic to the architecture
- New and additional shelving in the Children's Library.
- An impressive front desk for the librarian, back in its former location at the centre of the Library.
- Overall, a fresh, clean look with less clutter.

The Friends were very grateful to the contractors and the Library team led by Andrew Stoter. We were pleased to contribute £2,000 to the project, which funded the roof lights in the Community Room, and bought two rugs for the Children's Library.

Although the Library was closed for the second half of our financial year, we still held events in the rear garden and the nearby Quaker Meeting House.

2 Major fund-raising events

Apple Day in October is an annual event promoting the Library, bringing together friends and families and raising £430. Joan Paterson and three generations of her family were essential to the success with their apple crushing and pressing skills and equipment.

Magnificent May Plant Sale! Despite the Library being closed for building work, the Plant Sale still took place in the back garden. There were loads of plants, refreshments and things for children to do, generating £795. Most importantly of all - the community came together and had fun!

Acoustic Music Evening In May, our members enjoyed excellent performances from Cambridge-based musicians The String Section with Dave Olney, The John Meed Trio and The Nick Barraclough Trio. All tickets were sold in advance, raising £418 towards Library improvements.

3) 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 31 October: there were entertaining witches and hordes of little scary monsters enjoyed games, stories, magic, terrible jokes and treats. Great fun was had by all!

We continued to fund **Rhyme and Story Time**, which is suitable for babies, toddlers and under-fives, together with their parents and carers. One Saturday morning each month, our experienced and skilful story tellers – Veronica Speirs and occasionally Marion Leeper or Francis Crouch – entertain the smallest of children and our next generation of readers. Weather permitting, sessions take place in the garden.

In May we were again delighted to host a series of 6 visits by **Homerton Nursery** pupils 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 "Finn and the Five Flies", a lovely picture story by Emma and Molly Bennet, which they stamped for themselves!

4) Adult groups

Led by local artist Veronica Thornton, the **Textile Group** meets on Wednesday mornings. Their latest project was commissioned by Morley Memorial School Library, who requested buntings of books enjoyed by children in the school. Their previous project was a stunning collection of tributes to some favourite children's books which is now on display in the Homerton Nursery.

Sarah Ingram, formerly a Rock Road Library Assistant who holds a Masters in Creative Writing, leads the **Rock Library Write Club**, a 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.

Anita Tambala runs the **Flock on the Rock Yoga** group, which practices flow yoga, usually on Friday mornings and Monday evenings.

In the New Year, we launched three spring-time **Textile Repair Cafés** with experienced enthusiasts advising how to tackle mending, alterations and textile projects. "A hive of activity, creativity, learning and joy!"

Beginning in February there were a couple of **Post Partum Meetings**, encouraging mothers of any age to gather, socialise and share experiences.

We also hosted a new **Chess Club** which started with six weekly sessions, open to any level of chess player over the age of 12.

5) Evening events

Six Inches of Soil In October, we screened the inspiring film of young British farmers standing up against the industrial food system and transforming the way food is produced.

Nick Barraclough, a former Radio 2 DJ, entertained us in November with memories of growing up in the area chronicled in his book “A Disorderly House”.

Also in November author **Elizabeth Barber** gave an illustrated talk on Stone Age children based on her book “Stone Arrows “

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

Fugolburna was screened in January: a documentary which celebrates the beautiful Fulbourn Fen Nature Reserve and the efforts made by local groups to improve the health of local ecosystems.

Arch Tait talked in February about his translation of “Patriot”, the autobiography of Alexei Navalny, the prominent Russian opposition leader.

Ankarana Revisited Jane Wilson-Howarth spoke in February about two visits, decades apart, to the remote limestone massif of Ankarana in Madagascar which has now achieved national park status, partly due to her researches.

Nigel Blackmore gave a talk in March about three philosophers – Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Hollie MacNish is a renowned Cambridge and Glasgow-based poet who won the Ted Hughes award for new work in poetry with her memoir “Nobody Told Me”. In April, she stopped off at Rock Road Library as part of her sold-out UK tour.

In May **Charlie Haylock** spoke about the Suffolk dialect and his work tutoring Ralph Fiennes to sound like a local in the film “The Dig”. We learnt a great deal about the accent, idiom and history of the English language.

Rosemary Hayes talked about her prize-winning novel “The King’s Command” in September about the violent prosecution of the Huguenots (Calvinist Protestants) in seventeenth century France.

6) Writer-In-Residence Jane Wilson-Howarth

Jane Wilson-Howarth is our fourth honorary Rock Road Library Writer-in-Residence. She took up the reins in September 2022 for what she understood was a one-year appointment and three-and-bit years later it is time to pass on the baton. We are delighted to announce that Sarah Ingram has accepted the role from the beginning of 2026. As the fifth W-in-R she will bring a new range of skills and we are looking forward to welcoming her into our community.

The job description is flexible and one area Jane has been keen to work on is ideas to encourage more school-aged children into the library. To this end, she ran two free pilot author talks on Saturday mornings aimed at encouraging middle grade readers into the library including **Elizabeth Barber** talking about Stone Age children in November 2024 and another on **Madagascar Wildlife** but the uptake was disappointing. She then ran a series of children's author events in the October 2025 half term and plans three more in the February 2026 half term. She ran a **writing competition** with book token prizes funded by the Friends, and also supported the Friends of Morley School in June, helping with a book stall, and gave free talks at other Cambridgeshire libraries including Great Shelford, Milton Road and Papworth.

The lionesses' share of the Writer-in-Residence role during Jane's tenure has been to organise various authors talks at Rock Road (listed in 'Evening Events' above). In this she was ably supported by the Membership Secretary, the Trustees team and others. At the beginning of her tenure, she offered informal one-to-one chats with aspiring writers and will continue to respond to requests for such meetings after she hands over to Sarah Ingram, and also intends to continue to serve as a Trustee. Her thanks go to all for supporting our events.

7) The gardens

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

The gardens have been much enjoyed by library users of all ages. The secret tunnel under the steps continues to be a big draw to children. The garden is important for many of our events including the May Plant Sale, Rhyme & Story Time and Halloween Night. We believe that Rock Road must be the only library in the country with its own apple orchard! This year's bumper crop of apples was the focus of the popular Apple Day in October.

The summer was a challenging time for the back garden - it was closed for many months during building work - and the front garden was out of bounds due to scaffolding. This coincided with an unusually dry spring and summer. Volunteer gardeners had to do emergency watering, cutting back and mowing in the evenings, after the builders had gone home. Many thanks for their generous help, skill and constancy year-round.

Sadly we did lose a few plants in the front garden. However, this gave us the opportunity to plant a few new evergreen shrubs and lots of bulbs. These should make a colourful display in Spring 2026!

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. Two intrepid bird enthusiasts spent a chilly hour observing the library garden's wildlife and spotted a grand total of 2 birds! The national average was 29 per birdwatcher.

8) Membership

The Friends have a subscription-based membership scheme and by the year-end we had 162 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 £2,391, part of which attracted a further 25% in Gift Aid.

The Trustees welcome all offers of help in organising events, gardening and maintenance work.

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 2025 we had accumulated £4,270 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.

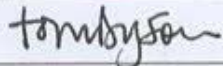
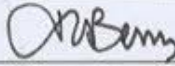
Our day-to day expenditure funds:

- 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****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)	Chair	Treasurer
Date	22.12.25	22-12-2025



Friends of Rock Road Library		No 1166498		CC16a
Receipts and payments accounts				
For the period from	1 October 2024	To	30 September 2025	

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £	Last year £
A1 Receipts					
Collection boxes	130			130	292
Donations	771			771	2,206
Gift aid	1,020			1,020	987
Fundraising and events	2,472			2,472	2,210
Membership subscriptions	1,620			1,620	1,520
Miscellaneous income	375			375	458
Total receipts	6,388			6,388	7,673
A3 Payments					
Book collections	78			78	1,250
Community garden	162			162	349
Fundraising and events	1,802			1,802	1,695
Library equipment	372			372	1,626
Library interior refurbishment	2,020			2,020	826
Miscellaneous	35			35	110
Newspapers	421			421	590
Publicity	181			181	261
Rhyme and story time	1,000			1,000	1,175
Total payments	6,071			6,071	7,882
Net of receipts/(payments)	317			317	(209)
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end	3,953			3,953	4,162
Cash funds this period end	4,270			4,270	3,953

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	Lloyds Bank	4,270		
	Total cash funds	4,270		

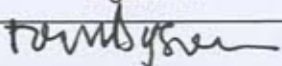
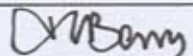
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets				

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
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 liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities				

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Alec William Thomas Dyson	22.12.25
	James Robert Berry	22-12-25