

**Annual Report  
2024-25**

# Thirsk Community Library

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# Introduction

This is the 8th annual report of Thirsk Community Library Charity. We have been run and managed by volunteers for over 8 years and during that time we have sought to stay true to our vision of being an inclusive community hub where people can read, learn, use IT, socialise and have fun together. Our volunteers and our partnership with North Yorkshire Council are at the heart of all we do. We exist to serve the local community by delivering the Universal Library Offer, supporting other organisations to use our space and offering activities and events which add to the well-being of local people.

*“One of the most beautiful, bustling, brilliant libraries I’ve ever visited! Hope to come back soon.” Elena, Star Bright Arts*

## Thirsk Community Library Trustees

**1<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

The Trustees are responsible for the charity’s overall sustainability, setting priorities and direction, ensuring that we meet the requirements of the agreement with North Yorkshire Council and of the Charity Commission, and overseeing financial and service governance.

At March 31<sup>st</sup> 2025 the trustees were:

**Sally Burton** (Chair)

**Shirley Ward** (Secretary)

**Bronwen Cohen** (Treasurer)

**Anna Naughton** (Trustee)

**Nigel Lewen** (Trustee)

**Irene Marwood** (Trustee)

## Background and Context

In the current climate of uncertainty, economic strain and mistrust of public institutions it is important to note that research shows that libraries are among the top three most trusted public services.

Libraries can support many national priorities such as the growing recognition of the importance of literacy, a focus on the early years, support for the local economy and businesses, digital skills and inclusion and improving mental health. Also critical is helping people to understand safe sources of information. Libraries provide human connection, a safe free space to come together and a space to unwind and take stock.

In Thirsk Library we always have hot drinks, a friendly face and time for a chat for those seeking company, advice or a good book.

**The ‘Universal Offer’ for libraries provides a platform for all we do.**

**The 4 key offers are:**

- ❖ **Reading without limits** to build empathy, understanding, insights into other people’s lives and worlds and a deeper understanding of our own culture. Promoting the mental health benefits of reading. As we launch the Thirsk programme for 2026 Year of Reading we will work with others to bring reading in all its forms, books, audio, e-books, news and media to more people.
- ❖ **Culture and Creativity** supporting people to take part in creative activities.

*“My children love doing crafts on Saturday morning. It’s so lovely to have somewhere free and warm to go with no pressure to spend money,”*

This can range from regular craft and Lego sessions, hosting a Home Educators Art Class, to hosting quality performances and supporting the local cultural economy. We have great opportunities in Thirsk to work with Rural Arts, the Ritz Cinema, Museums, the U3A and local 'Creatives' to do this.

- ❖ **Information and Digital** – supporting the next generation of technologies, narrowing the digital divide and helping people navigate risks and misinformation. We provide free support, access to computers, advice and outreach and work with local partners to improve digital inclusion.
- ❖ **Health and Well Being** -supporting self-care, sharing Reading Well books, delivering books to people at home and in care settings, library social groups, parent support and volunteering all promote well-being. Collaborating with Hambleton Community Action on the Talking Newspaper, hosting Repair Cafes' Health Watch, La Leche Breast Feeding group, Reusable Nappy Library and Stop Smoking Sessions, supporting the Cod Beck Discovery Project to document and share information about nature.

### **Volunteers in the driving seat**

Day to day operations are driven and delivered by volunteers. We aim to have three Library Assistant Volunteers on duty for all shifts so that we can offer a good level of service and have capacity for dealing with the unexpected. The Charity continues to provide work placements to young people undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Work Experience.

Some volunteers hold key responsibilities such as rota management, and coordinating activities such as Story Times, School Visits and Pop up Libraries. Others look after our Book Clubs, run activities such as Knit and Natter and Lego Club and take on administrative tasks.

We are working to strengthen these arrangements supporting volunteers to work in small teams with specific projects so that they share skills and spread the workload. We are very grateful to the volunteers who do some of the unseen tasks, managing the cash, cleaning, keeping an eye on stock and keeping the office in order.

A team of volunteers manage the Home Library Service for people who are not able to get to the library, selecting books and delivering them to people at home.

There are now 15 Digital Buddy Volunteers (and rising) who support people with a range of IT related needs, meeting them in the library and in other settings.



We hold regular social events and ‘thank you’s for volunteers and many attend our regular fundraising quizzes.

### **Opportunities for Volunteers**

We welcome volunteers with a wide range of background and experience. Training is provided and experienced volunteers support new people to learn the ropes and operate the computer system. If anyone wishes to volunteer in a leadership capacity to support delivery of our priorities, and has time to commit to this, we welcome a discussion.

## **Our Performance in 2024-2025**

- ❖ **Volunteers donated over 10,000 hours of their time.** An increase on previous years due to our Digital Hub coming on line
- ❖ **A total of 60 volunteers across all our activities**
- ❖ **37,746 visits to the library**
- ❖ **The public computers were used 1970 times and portable devices used our free wifi an estimated 2000 times**



- ❖ **Delivered, hosted or organised over 700 activities for the local community**
- ❖ **39,162 books borrowed**
- ❖ **Numerous people helped to sign up to BorrowBox for ebooks and audio books** (data is not attributed to local libraries for BorrowBox)
- ❖ **12 Book clubs were supported with monthly books gathered from across the county**
- ❖ **We recorded and sent out the Talking Newspaper to about 20 listeners with sight loss every month**

In common with libraries across the country, the number of loans has reduced slightly. The good news is that North Yorkshire performs very well compared with other similar areas. There is a big increase in people using Borrow Box to download e-books and audio books but these borrowers do not get attributed to individual libraries in the way that paper books do.

## Our Activities

We directly deliver or organise a wide range of activities including:

- ❖ Knit and Natter meeting every week and providing a welcoming social group for knitters and fabric crafters
- ❖ Memory Swap meeting monthly to share and discuss life in the past
- ❖ Warhammer Games Club meeting every week for young people from 9 upwards



- ❖ Lego Clubs meeting twice a week
- ❖ Construction Play every week for pre-school children
- ❖ Story Time every week for pre-school children

- ❖ Music Time weekly sessions
- ❖ Two pop up libraries in local schools
- ❖ School visits to the library
- ❖ Friday Friends meeting every week to share quizzes, games and chat
- ❖ Thirsk Digital Hub and Digital Buddies provide 3 weekly sessions and outreach to local venues to help people with any digital needs
- ❖ Support to 12 Book Clubs with monthly bundles of books gathered from across North Yorkshire.
- ❖ Home Library delivering books to people who can't get to the library



*"I'm so grateful to the people who bring books to my house. It's the highlight of my week and you do so well finding books I love"*

- ❖ Regular Quiz Nights
- ❖ Speakers and Author Visits

## Partnerships

We work with a number of partners to support other groups to use our space and benefit from our facilities and skills.

This includes:

- ❖ Thirsk Repair Café
- ❖ Adult Learning Service
- ❖ Employment Support Services
- ❖ Hambleton Community Action - Talking Newspaper
- ❖ Smoking Cessation support
- ❖ Banking Services
- ❖ Parent Support Groups
- ❖ Play Groups and Childminders





- ❖ Hambleton Reusable Nappy Library
- ❖ La Leche League Breastfeeding Support
- ❖ North Yorkshire Police
- ❖ Art sessions for children who are 'home educated'
- ❖ Cod Beck Discovery Project
- ❖ Rural Arts

### **North Yorkshire Council**

NYC continues to support the library, paying a percentage of the lease cost, buying all the books, providing a range of online resources and providing all the computers and systems. The Council also funds a part time Community Library Support Officer who works with volunteers to train them, advise on new systems and support day to day delivery.

### **Bookmarked - Mini Festival with Rural Arts and White Rose Bookshop**

This Mini Festival at the end of March aimed to celebrate books included book binding and calligraphy workshops, theatre, music and film. We are in discussion with Rural Arts about future events linked to 2026 Year of Reading. We were grateful for funds from NYC –Inspire Fund and Thirsk Infant School Charity which enabled us to organise and fund 12 interactive, story based workshops, reaching over 200 pupils in local primary schools delivered by the fantastic Elena Joy Miller from Starbright Arts. We also hosted a Bronte and Hardy themed music night in the library and had an exciting theatre group visit with music, acrobatics and antics.



## Summer Reading Challenge

Summer 2024 saw us working with 12 local primary schools to invite children to sign up to read 6 books during the summer holidays. We ran a full programme of activities to support the challenge and repeated the whole thing again in 2025. The library really buzzes during the summer holidays and we have been lucky to have small grants and some funds from Tesco which have enabled us to offer a lot of free or very low cost activities



## Thirsk Digital Hub

In 2024 we launched Thirsk Digital Hub with the aim of making a step change from a library that offered some digital support to a Digital Hub for Thirsk based in the library but working on other sites and with other partners. We are very proud of our performance in 2024-5 as we helped 642 people with a range of digital needs. This project has received new funding and we are now outreaching with new partners as well as delivering 3 sessions a week in the library. Our Library Assistant Volunteers also support many people with printing, Bus Passes, Blue Badges and numerous ad-hoc digital requests.



## Financial Position

Our finances remain healthy but we are never complacent and continue to raise funds by selling books, holding quizzes, raffles and events and applying for grants.

Our income and expenditure for day to day running and back office costs are roughly in balance but we need to raise additional funds for activities and events. We have experienced a drop in income from room bookings over the last few months and will be working to achieve new bookings.

We are also experiencing a drop in income from Overdue Fines because NYC has introduced an email or text reminder to people to return their books. This is welcomed by the public and is a good thing in that it removed a perceived barrier to borrowing. However, we have noticed a reduction in such payments.

We are very grateful for support from: *NYC - Inspire Fund, Thirsk Infant School Charity, The Coop, Tesco and Thirsk Ladies Group.*

## Priorities for 2026 and Beyond

2026 is a big year for libraries as the Government has declared this to be a **Year of Reading**. This initiative is aimed at all age groups with a national strap-line '**Go All In**' the campaign aims to encourage reading to enhance interests by reading about them, be that sport, gardening, films or music. It also promotes the importance of reading for relaxation, mental health.

The campaign recognises that one of the strongest indicators of future academic success is that parents and carers regularly read to children. It also recognises that across all age groups people are reading less- in any format.

We are currently building up an exciting programme to drive our own initiative, **Thirsk Reads!** (name to be finalised), making Thirsk a place where people celebrate and share reading.

We are seeking to use the **Year of Reading** as a platform to build on existing relationships, grow new partnerships and promote library membership and borrowing across all age groups. We are developing a project plan, aimed at building on the **Year of Reading** to steadily increase library membership and during 2026 and then for 2 years after that.

Our plans fall into the following areas:

❖ **More people knowing about us and the value of libraries**

❖ **Marketing and Publicity**

Developing a Marketing Plan to enhance local knowledge of what we offer, make improved use of Social Media and other communications and identify how volunteers and partners can promote library services.

❖ Developing **Library Ambassadors** in a range of settings and communities

❖ **Partnership**

Enhance our partnerships to help develop and deliver this project across agencies. We will work with childcare providers, schools, adult learning, businesses, partner charities and communities to share the benefits of reading

❖ Expand our work with schools, nurseries and playgroups to encourage more loans and raise awareness among pupils and parents

❖ Targeting groups who are under- represented in terms of library membership to include teenagers, people from the most disadvantaged families, people who struggle to get to the library, supporting people with additional needs to use the library

❖ **Increasing borrowing**

Last year borrowing across North Yorkshire was down by approximately 2%. This is part of a national trend. Our goal over 3 years is to buck that

trend and increase borrowing by X% on last year's baseline. (% to be agreed)

- ❖ Working over 3 years to achieve an ambition for every Primary School Child and all Year 7s to be library members
- ❖ Managing the library environment- improving how we display, rotate and manage stock to keep it refreshed and attractive
- ❖ Managing relationships with existing customers and promoting borrowing among people who attend events and activities
- ❖ **Improved information about the benefits and value of reading and the range of available on-line resources**
- ❖ Collaborate with others to produce information for all sections of the community. For example, for parents, job seekers, users of health services, community groups
- ❖ **Reading related events and activities**  
We will produce a programme with monthly themes and events and evaluate the impact and will use the Year of Reading as a catalyst to grow and strengthen our team.

## Other Priorities for 2026

- ❖ **Deliver our Digital Hub commitments**  
Ensure we can maintain services and momentum when external funding ceases. Maintain a high level of free access to computers and wifi for the public.
- ❖ **Talking Newspapers for the Blind (NTN)**  
We are continuing to work with Hambleton Community Action and now seeking to increase circulation of USBs and develop the Newspaper as a

podcast so it can reach more people across the area and to incorporate a wider range of news media and local interest stories into it. We also plan to start to share it with Care Settings and Support Groups.

❖ **Establish new activities groups**

Chess, Board Games and Jigsaws and expand the new Tea and Tech Adult Coding Club.

❖ **Support the Cod Beck Discovery Project**

Space for meetings and presentations and with volunteer Project Librarians to ensure information is retained in an accessible format for local people, drawing in NYC support from library colleagues with Local Studies and Archive expertise.

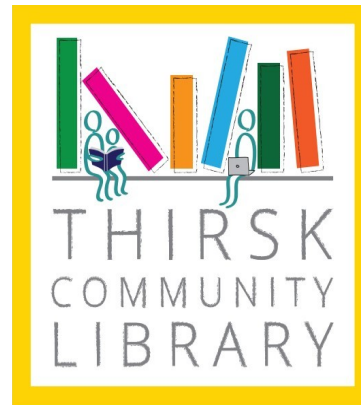
❖ **Review how we use our space**

To make it welcoming and accessible to key groups of users.

❖ **Continue to recruit, train and support a wide range of volunteers to lead and run the library**

*"We love the Library. It's always warm and welcoming and the volunteers are all so helpful"*





## **Thirsk Community Library**

### **Statement of Accounts 2024-25**

Our finances remain healthy but we are never complacent and continue to raise funds by selling books, holding quizzes, raffles and events and applying for grants.

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**Thirsk Community Library Trustees**

1<sup>st</sup> December 2025



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

THIRSK COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025
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### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Library Services	5,163	-	-	5,163	4,812
Fund Raising	1,010	-	-	1,010	488
Grants and Donations	14,178	-	-	14,178	5,042
Room Hire	6,700	-	-	6,700	4,200
Activities and Events	3,738	-	-	3,738	4,062
Bank & Building Society Interest	1,077	-	-	1,077	446
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>31,866</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>31,866</b>	<b>19,050</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>31,866</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>31,866</b>	<b>19,050</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Activities and Events	5,403	-	-	5,403	4,695
Rent and Insurance	4,001	-	-	4,001	3,500
Repairs, Renewals & Maintenance	472	-	-	472	5,566
Administration	2,174	-	-	2,174	1,816
Licences & Subscriptions	239	-	-	239	502
Childrens' Books & Posters	482	-	-	482	-
Advertising & Promotion	1,611	-	-	1,611	-
Digital Hub Administrator	4,015	-	-	4,015	-
Computer Software & Training	593	-	-	593	-
Website Development	1,200	-	-	1,200	-
Bad Debt	860	-	-	860	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>21,050</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,050</b>	<b>16,079</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
Galaxy Tablet	289	-	-	289	-
Trolleys and Shelves	-	-	-	-	1,768
Display Stands	-	-	-	-	1,848
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>3,616</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>21,339</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,339</b>	<b>19,695</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>10,527</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,527</b>	<b>- 645</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>10,527</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,527</b>	<b>- 645</b>

# 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	Barclays Bank	31,750	-	-
	Nationwide Building	26,835	-	-
	Cash	326	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>58,911</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

	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	Galaxy Tablet	Unrestricted	-	289
	Display Stands	Unrestricted	-	1,848
	Reception desk, cupboards, shelves & chair	Unrestricted	-	20,402
	Trolleys & Library Boxes	Unrestricted	-	1,976
	Filing Cabinets	Unrestricted	-	270
	Blinds	Unrestricted	-	140
	Camera	Unrestricted	-	808
	Gazebo Table & Chairs	Unrestricted	-	23
			-	-
			-	-

	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
	SALLY BURTON	11/12/25
	Bronwen Cohen	11/12/25





# CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A

### Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

THIRSK COMMUNITY LIBRARY

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 MARCH 2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1169352

Set out on pages

2-3

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

7/7/25

Name:

GRAHAM MELVYN JOHNSON

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

ACMA

Address:

2 RIPLEY GROVE

WIGGINTON

YORK YO32 2DF

### Section B

### Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

NOTHING MATERIAL TO DISCLOSE