



## Annual Report 2024 – 2025



Registered Charity (No. 1175929, registered in England and Wales)  
Registered address: 28 Goldieslie Road, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5PQ



## **1. Introduction**

Welcome to the 2024 - 2025 annual report for FOLIO Sutton Coldfield. Although this reporting year runs from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, we have included key information from both before and after the period in order to provide a fuller picture.

Our vision is to help create an inspired and cohesive local community, passionate about reading and learning, which enjoys and engages with library services. But for this vision to be achieved, we need a local library service. The future of the libraries within Sutton Coldfield and across Birmingham was under threat during this period and so our focus was on campaigning to ensure that they continued to operate.

## **2. Changes to Library Services**

Last year, we reported that Birmingham City Council (BCC) needed to save approximately £2.2 million from the library service and was consulting with residents regarding the future of libraries, which included a reduction in the library service across the city. This process continued into the 2024/25 year.

FOLIO Sutton Coldfield campaigned in relation to the proposals both independently and as part of the Birmingham Loves Libraries (BLL) coalition of friends of libraries groups. This campaigning took various forms:

- Arranging public meetings in Sutton Coldfield, with the first being held on 17 April 2024.
- Engagement with our MP, BCC councillors and officers, and Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council (RSCTC) councillors and officers.
- Attending a Birmingham Save Our Services rally on 6 May 2024 to show support for the Sutton Coldfield libraries.
- Participating in the BLL-organised creative activities such as the Bookmark Art Drop which involved making and releasing a bookmark into a library book for someone else to find from 25 May 2024.
- Arranging a Walk and Read event on 29 June 2024, with groups setting off from Boldmere, Mere Green and Walmley libraries and walking to Sutton Coldfield library for a 'read in'.
- Raising awareness of and encouraging participation in the consultation processes. This included offering support in the completion of the consultation survey.
- We also passed on to the consultation team messages of support from Boldmere Library users (4), and from the Deanery and the Holy Cross primary schools in support of Walmley Library (262).
- Attendance at the 'in-person' consultation sessions held in the libraries at Sutton Coldfield (9 September 2024), Mere Green (9 September 2024), Boldmere (12 September 2024), and Walmley (25 September 2024).

- The review of numerous documents and reports and the submission of commentaries on the proposals to members of BCC's Cabinet, its Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the RSCTC.
- Attendance at various meetings of the two councils and their committees, observing, asking questions and lobbying.

We were also aware of the unsettling effect of the proposals on the library staff and offered them our unwavering support in order to emphasise that the services they worked so hard to provide were appreciated by the local residents who used them.

The outcome of the BCC consultation and decision-making process was that Sutton Coldfield's library service was hit particularly hard. At the start of 2024, Mere Green and Sutton Coldfield libraries were open for 35 hours (5 days) a week each and Boldmere and Walmley libraries for 21 hours (3 days) a week each. This was a total of 112 hours a week. BCC's decision in February 2025 meant that it would be providing a statutory library service of 28 hours (4 days) a week at Mere Green Library only.

Additionally, on 27 June 2025, BCC announced the closure of Sutton Coldfield Library "due to the significant investment required to address the condition of the building and associated Health and Safety concerns." A Friday afternoon mobile library stop was introduced. Although we recognised that the building was not a suitable location for the library, we were very disappointed that there did not seem to have been any attempt to secure an alternative location for it. This means that the town centre is now without a library and its local history resources have been re-located to the Library of Birmingham, where they are less accessible to local residents.

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council considered the implications of the BCC proposals. To our great relief, the Town Council, at its meeting on 23 September 2025, resolved to commission Birmingham City Council to provide a library service at Mere Green (for an extra day a week), Boldmere and Walmley (for 3 days a week each) and the adjoining community centres at Mere Green and Walmley. This was a total of an additional 49 hours a week.

The Town Council assumed control of the library and community centre service on 1 November 2025, with the initial contract running to 31st March 2030.

The timeline for the consultation and decision-making processes is shown in appendix 1 for BCC and appendix 2 for the Town Council.

### **3. FOLIO Services**

We were involved in supporting the Warm Welcome sessions in all the Sutton Coldfield libraries by providing some refreshments and equipment to facilitate this activity.

We continued with our regular activities at Sutton Coldfield Library including monthly meetings of the Elderberries group for the over 50s and weekly IT surgeries until it closed on 27 June 2025. We considered relocating the Elderberries group but its

members lived in or near Sutton Coldfield town centre and the other libraries were not convenient for them. A member of FOLIO has maintained contact with some of the Elderberries and the volunteer offering the IT surgeries. The IT surgeries relocated to Mere Green library and are well-attended.

We continued to support Ukrainian refugees. Through our links with Sutton Coldfield Library we worked with North Birmingham 4 Ukraine to run weekly ESOL classes, conversation classes and weekly employment advice sessions. These activities were well attended and offered much needed support until the library closed on 27 June 2025.

We were able to offer additional support to children's activities and craft sessions in Sutton Coldfield Library in relation to its celebrations for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 12 December 2024.

Once Sutton Coldfield Library closed, we removed the FOLIO resources from the library.

#### **4. Trustees**

The three trustees in place at the start of the year (Noran Flynn, Elizabeth Parry and Jennifer Wilkinson) were re-appointed.

During the year, the trustees agreed that we needed to recruit some additional colleagues. We advertised the role, interviewed the applicants and offered the role to four people. John Farrell, Eleanor Shipway and Yulia Velichko are appointed as trustees for three year terms. We are awaiting some documentation to complete a fourth appointment.

Once the new trustees were in place, in September 2025 Noran Flynn withdrew from FOLIO in order to focus her energies on her other community commitments. She has been an active member of FOLIO since the days of its precursor, The Library Lobby, and more recently has been our chair. We are extraordinarily grateful to her for all the time and effort she has put in to supporting the Sutton Coldfield library services and the perspective and wisdom she brought to the role. We wish her well.

#### **5. Thanks**

We are extremely grateful to the trustees and volunteers who gave their time so willingly to make these events and activities possible.

Liz Parry  
Chair, FOLIO Sutton Coldfield

### Timeline of Birmingham City Council consultation and decisions on library services February 2024 – June 2025

27 February 2024	<a href="#">Report to Cabinet</a> Savings proposed for 2024/25 and 2025/26 agreed, including savings proposal 193 for Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service (NAIS) and Community libraries: This saving proposes changes to the NAIS and Community Libraries services into Early Intervention and Prevention Hubs 'community living rooms'. The focus is to deliver better outcomes for citizens, have a fit for purpose offer which gets to citizens much sooner, supports self-support and self-navigation, removes avoidable demand from higher cost services, whilst delivering efficiencies and savings. To save £1,260k in 2024/25 and £2,285k in 2025/26.
4 April – 17 July 2024	<a href="#">First consultation:</a> Strategic framework for libraries Move away from 35 community libraries to a mixed delivery model of hubs offering library and early intervention and prevention services with some open 5 days a week and others open part-time hours; co-location with partners / community groups; community groups running library services via community asset transfers; expansion of mobile library provision. Anticipated circa 25 building-based library services.
23 August – 27 September 2024	<a href="#">Final consultation:</a> Proposed 27 BCC-funded buildings-based community library services: 10 x full-time library hubs [Mere Green in Sutton Coldfield]; 13 x part-time library offer; 4 x co-location; and 7 x partner-led opportunities [Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield, Walmley in Sutton Coldfield]; 1 x additional mobile library service [with 3 additional stops in Sutton Coldfield]; 1 x library closure [Spring Hill]
23 October – 3 November 2024	<a href="#">Consultation on revised proposal:</a> A more equitable split of hours between the full-time and part-time libraries, with full-time libraries opening 4 days a week and part-time libraries opening either 3 or 2 days a week. [For Mere Green, this meant a reduction in proposed hours from 35 to 28 a week.]
14 November – 12 December 2024	<a href="#">Consultation following error rectification:</a> An error was identified in the scoring mechanism used in the final consultation and the amended results were communicated for consultation. (This error did not affect the final recommendation.)
27 November 2024	<a href="#">Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee</a>

	Progress report on savings proposal 193, which was rated 'red' meaning the savings would not be delivered in 2024/25. This was due to consultation timelines slipping.
5 February 2025	<a href="#">Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee</a> Consideration of report being presented to Cabinet on 11 February 2025.
11 February 2025	<a href="#">Report to Cabinet</a> This recommended the following model: "Under the proposed statutory service model Birmingham will retain 28 library service locations (including the Library of Birmingham), offering comprehensive coverage across the city. This will include 10 Community Library Hubs opening four days per week, one in each parliamentary constituency. The remaining locations will operate on a two or three-day basis determined by current usage. [Note that this is amended by Recommendation 3.4 of this Cabinet Report to increase opening hours to a minimum of three days for all part time locations.] There will also be an additional mobile library vehicle, totalling 2 mobile libraries for the service."
5 March 2025	<a href="#">Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee</a> Consideration of requests for call-in of the 11 February 2025 Cabinet decision.
14 May 2025	<a href="#">Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee</a> Consideration of report on progress of the transformation of libraries and neighbourhood advice and information services implementation programme, taking account of the OSC's recommendations made on 5 February 2024.
21 May 2025	<a href="#">Announcement</a> of closure of Sutton Coldfield library on 27 June 2025 "due to the significant investment required to address the condition of the building and associated Health and Safety concerns." A Friday afternoon mobile library stop was introduced.

**Timeline of Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council consideration of library services  
February 2024 – December 2025**

23 April 2024	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> Noted that the library consultation was now live and would run to the end of July.
21 May 2024	<a href="#">Council meeting</a> Motion considered and passed: “This Council applauds and acknowledges the key role that libraries play in fostering local communities; supporting education and providing essential services to residents. The Council notes with concern the current proposed budget cuts to library services by Birmingham City Council. The Council urges Birmingham City Council to reverse the potential closure of library services across Royal Sutton Coldfield.”
9 July 2024	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> Noted the temporary opening hours of Sutton Coldfield Library and considered the Town Council’s contribution toward the running costs of the service based in the Town Centre.
18 September 2024	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> Noted the proposed changes to library services by Birmingham City Council and considered the Town Council’s response to the future of library services in Sutton Coldfield, including exploring a partnership approach. Also resolved to explore options including relocating Sutton Coldfield Library from the Red Rose Centre to a more prominent town centre location. Also noted that the Town Council ‘s consultation on the Strategic Plan 2024-2027 seeks residents’ views on the Town Council taking on more responsibilities for library Services and buildings and community services and buildings.
11 February 2025	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> Noted letter to Cabinet Member for Digital, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, correcting the position set out in the 11 February 2025 Cabinet report
24 June 2025	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> To consider options for Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council (RSCTC) to provide a sustainable library service for the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield together with the management of Mere Green and Walmley community centres.
15 July 2025	<a href="#">Council meeting</a> Received a petition calling for an agreement to safeguard Sutton Coldfield library for the future.

17 September 2025	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> To consider proposals for Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council to provide a sustainable library service for Sutton Coldfield, together with the management of Mere Green and Walmley Community Centres; and recommend to Full Council the recommendations outlined in this report.
14 October 2025	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> To receive a verbal update on Town Council Library and Community Centre provision.
1 November 2025	RSCTC assumed control of the library and community centre service.
8 December 2025	<a href="#">Strategy &amp; Resources Committee</a> To receive a verbal update on Town Council Library and Community Centre provision.





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

FOLIO Sutton Coldfield

1175929

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

01-Jul-24

To

30-Jun-25

### 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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	87	-	-	87	84
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	82
Gift Aid	11	-	-	11	13
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross income for AR)	98	-	-	98	179
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	98	-	-	98	179
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Printing	183	-	-	183	75
Equipment		-	-	-	157
Speakers and event providers		-	-	-	120
Refreshments	39	-	-	39	250
Digital	31	-	-	31	19
Insurance	206	-	-	206	196
Accountancy	216	-	-	216	216
Payment processing fees	5	-	-	5	5
<b>Sub total</b>	680	-	-	680	1,038
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	680	-	-	680	1,038
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	- 582	-	-	- 582	- 859
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	6,214	-	-	6,214	7,073
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	5,632	-	-	5,632	6,214

## 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 £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Bank	5,606	-	-
	Paypal	-	-	-
	Petty cash	26	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>5,632</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	IT equipment		-	-
	Display equipment		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	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



Jenny Wilkinson

17/04/2026



Ian Woodward Accountancy Ltd

**FOLIO**

I have examined the receipts and payments (income & expenditure) statements with the books and vouchers thereto and have obtained all the information and explanations that I have required.

I certify that in my belief the receipts and payment statements give a true and fair view of the transactions for the year ending 30 June 2025 according to the best of the information and explanations given to me and shown by the books of the fund.

Any concerns should be expressed as qualifications to the above statement.

Signed  Ian Woodward BA HONS FCCA

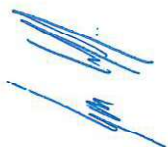
Date 5th April 2026

Accounting records to 30 June 2025

Income	Current year to 30 June 2025	Prior year to 30 June 2024	Cash at bank
Fundraising	0.00	82.21	5,606.35
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donations	87.00	84.18	25.62
Gift Aid	11.25	12.50	<u>5,631.97</u>
	98.25	178.89	

Outgoings	Current year to 30 June 2025	Prior year to 30 June 2024
Speakers and event providers	0.00	(120.00)
Printing	(182.56)	(74.60)
Refreshments	(38.70)	(250.00)
Equipment	0.00	(157.11)
Insurance	(205.80)	(196.00)
Accountancy	(216.00)	(216.00)
Digital	(31.18)	(19.08)
Payment processing fees	(5.34)	(5.40)
	(679.58)	(1,038.19)
Net income	(581.33)	(859.30)

IAN WOODWARD  
ACCOUNTANCY LTD  
57 HIGH STREET  
ROWLEY REGIS  
WEST MIDLANDS  
B65 0EH  
0121 559 5438

 5th April 2026  
IAN WOODWARD  
BA HONS FCCA