



South Western Regional Library Services CIO

Eighty Eighth Annual Report

1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

SWRLS CIO

C/O Arts University Plymouth

Tavistock Place

PLYMOUTH

Devon, PL4 8AT

www.swrls.org.uk

Charity Registration Number: 1176414

● Contents

·	1. Objectives, Activities and Public Benefit Statement.....	2
·	2. Chair’s Comments	3
·	3. Achievements and Performance, April 2023-March 2024.....	5
·	4. Report of Honorary Treasurer, April 2023-March 2024	8
·	5. Structure, Governance and Management	9
·	6. Reference and Administrative Information	11
·	7. Trustees’ Responsibilities in Relation to the Financial Statements	12
·	8. Financial Statements	13

• **1. Objectives, Activities and Public Benefit Statement**

The Trustees are pleased to present their Annual Report and financial statements of the charity for the period from 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Effective 1 January 2015).

The **charity's objects** are:

1. The advancement of education for the benefit of the public by:

- a. Promoting cross sector co-operation between members.
- b. Promoting access to library collections and specialist knowledge.
- c. Providing a framework for the inter-lending of materials.
- d. Advancing the skills and knowledge of the workforce and their stakeholders.
- e. Facilitating a collaborative network to share best practice and excellence.

2. The advancement of literature, knowledge and lifelong learning for the benefit of the public by promoting:

- a. Access to specialist resources.
- b. Cultural activities and partnerships.
- c. Access to data and information.

The Trustees confirm that they have taken into account the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

Examples of the work carried out in the period covered by this report are highlighted in section 3, Achievements and Performance.

• 2. Chair's Comments



I am now in my third year as SWRLS Chair, and continue to be thankful to the board of trustees and to members for all their invaluable experience and expertise and dedication to libraries. SWRLS Coordinator Shelley Trower is now in her second year in this role. We have continued to meet online as a committee and to communicate via the monthly newsletter and website; developed new training opportunities and Basecamp resources; new social media accounts on LinkedIn and Bluesky; organised further events and secured an Arts Council England grant to work in partnership again with SW literature development agency Literature Works to tour diverse authors to 18 South West libraries through 2026.

Looking back to the year of this report, March 2024-April 2025: Our annual Members Day took place on 5th July 2024 at Arts University Plymouth, with guest speakers including Michael Webb (Director of Technology and Analytics at Jisc) and discussions of sustainability, immigration and AI – a report is available [here](#).

The AGM Conference took place at Bristol's Engine Shed on Wednesday 13th November, where we shared our 4-year strategy, heard from the SWRLS-funded Hospital Engagement and Libraries Project, and welcomed guest speaker on neurodiversity, Joanne Fitzpatrick (Research Data Manager at the University of Lancaster, and co-chair of the neurodivergent library & information staff network) - the slides are [here](#).

As we remain in the grip of difficult budgets SWRLS continues to endeavour to ensure value for money, with subscription fees remaining frozen and offering grants to promote best practice, collaboration between and innovation in libraries. Looking ahead, in 2025-2026 we seek to further develop training and networking opportunities and to support new projects.

Donna Gundry, Chair

• 3. Achievements and Performance

2024-2025 saw the first year of SWRLS's new four-year Strategic Plan 2024-2028, finalized in consultation with our membership at the 2024 AGM. Updates on the implementation of the Plan have been provided for Board of Trustees meetings with the Plan being reviewed at least twice a year.

1. Co-operative working and partnerships

Networking opportunities:

Our July 2024 Members Day was held at Arts University Plymouth as outlined in the Chair's report above.

The AGM was at Bristol's Engine Shed in November, where we sought input and shared our 4-year strategy and heard from those who gained SWRLS grants that year.

2. Developing the workforce.

SWRLS Training Offer

SWRLS offered a series of workforce training opportunities to members including:

- **Neurodiversity in libraries** – a half-day online webinar – led by Joanne Foster-Murdock & Caroline Varney-Bowers in July & October 2024.
- **LGBTQ+** online workshop: developing inclusive library provision – led by John Vincent in October 2024.
- **Tips for Handling Difficult Customer Situations** – half-day online workshop – led by Diana Edmonds in January 2025.
- **Leadership Essentials** – short course - led by Diana Edmonds from November 2024 to February 2025.
- **Fundraising/bids training** – short course – led by Matthew Cock from March to April 2025.
- **Empowering librarians to navigate the AI revolution** – led by Phil Bradley in April 2025.

The training offer remains strong, for example including since April:

- Frontline training accessible to all SWRLS members via Basecamp flexibly and without cost, created by Dianne Edmonds in July 2025.

3. Supporting the cultural and community engagement role of libraries

SWRLS Grants

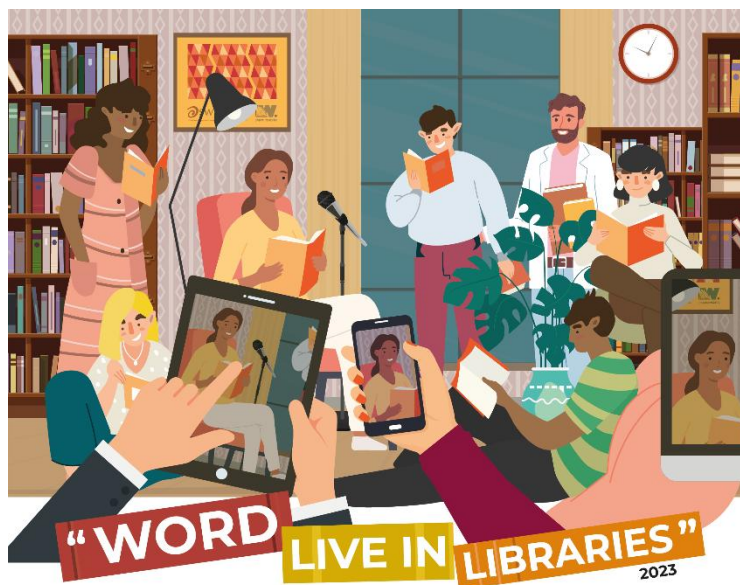
Hospital Engagement & Libraries (HEaL) project – libraries working with NHS to support health & wellbeing: an outline of this initiative is available on our Development pages [here](#).

Individual Training Grant: SWRLS approved a small grant to Jessica Phillips, Library Stock & Resources Manager for Wiltshire Libraries, to attend the CILIP conference on 10-11 July in Birmingham, sharing her report [here](#).

Arts Council England

SWRLS with Literature Works submitted a bid to ACE's National Lottery Project Grant programme to tour diverse authors to SW libraries in March 2024, following a commitment by SWRLS board of Trustees to award a small grant to match-fund with £4,000. This bid was unsuccessful in its first iteration, but after revising and resubmitting a new version at the end of June we heard late August that £30,000 is awarded to go ahead with the tour. We will shortly be delivering a tour of authors from diverse cultural backgrounds to eighteen libraries across the sector and our region. Talks and workshops will be held around the themes of life stories, nature/environment and wellbeing. Outcomes will also include a mini-film about the tour.

This project will follow on from the previous Word Lives in Libraries, which produced a film along with four inspirational posters to help advocate for libraries: www.swrls.org.uk/post/why-libraries-matter.



Imagery developed for ACE-funded SWRLS Word Live in Libraries Tour

4. **Effective Governance**

Merryn Kent and Sim Taylor (Secretary) are standing down as Trustees. A new Secretary was proposed and seconded: Jolanta Peters. Trustees were proposed and seconded for a further term included Emma Wellard and Mike Hosking. New Trustee (non-sector specific) was proposed and seconded, Dave Rowe.

Board meetings: The Board met four times, in May, October, November, and February.

5. **Marketing and advocacy:**

- **Website:** the SWRLS website at www.swrls.org.uk is continually refreshed with news, events and project information.
- **Social media:** SWRLS is regularly fed with news updates, job opportunities etc on LinkedIn and Bluesky.
- **SWRLS CIO Newsletter:** the newsletter is designed to keep members apprised of current opportunities and progress with SWRLS programme of project and training events and is published monthly.
- **Basecamp:** Now has a new resources area that includes training opportunities.

We continue to seek innovative and informative methods of communication with our SWRLS membership.

• 4. Honorary Treasurer's Report

Management

The trustees have considered the major risks to which the charity is exposed. The Board is confident that review services have been established to mitigate those risks and that we had sufficient cover in the 2023/2024 financial year.

Financial review

The Coordinator and Trustees continue to monitor the charity's income from membership fees and training, and its expenditure. This ensures that SWRLS provides a service that is value for money for all members and all sectors.

At the end of the 2024/2025 financial year, our reserves stood at £78,632. This included £52,371 held in a Charities Deposit Fund. While it is prudent to keep several months of running costs in reserve, it is important that excess funds are used for the benefit of members rather than being kept on deposit. At a board meeting in January 2023, the trustees agreed to set aside £25,000 as designated funds for three years from April 2023/24 specifically to support grant applications that focus on supporting good health and wellbeing, or on reducing financial inequalities. We will be revisiting this issue in the next few months and will look to make a decision about next steps.

SWRLS is keen to do what it can to mitigate the financial restraints everyone is under so, as always, the board welcomes suggestions about any support or training we could offer. We also welcome grant submission from all sectors and from individuals. If you have any feedback on the way funds are spent, whether positive or as a critical friend, please feel free to contact me or any member of the board so that the work of SWRLS continues to reflect the priorities of its members.

Thanks to all those who supported me in taking up the role of Treasurer this year.

Kerry Kellaway
Honorary Treasurer

• 5. Structure, Governance and Management

SWRLS is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and is governed by the Constitution and Rules, agreed in 2017. These set out the appointment process for the Trustees as follows:

- Trustees (officers and ordinary trustees) are nominated and elected by SWRLS CIO members. Members are circulated with invitations to nominate prior to the AGM advising them of retiring trustees and requesting nominations;
- At every AGM, one third of the Honorary Officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and one third of each category of Ordinary Trustee (public libraries; academic, special and other libraries; independent) shall retire from office;
- The trustees shall, from within their number, elect a Vice Chair;
- The Board of Trustees may co-opt to any subsequent vacancies, until the next AGM;
- Trustees can serve three consecutive terms;
- There must be at least 5 trustees, with the maximum number being 12.

The Coordinator is an *ex-officio* member of the Board of Trustees, but is not a trustee.

Member Organisations: SWRLS is proud of its cross-sectoral membership across the region. In 2023-24 the following organisations were members:

Bath & North East Somerset

Bath and North East Somerset Libraries and Information; Bath Spa University; University of Bath

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

AECC University College; Arts University Bournemouth; BCP Libraries; University of Bournemouth

Bristol

Bristol City Council Libraries; Bristol Grammar School; University of Bristol; University of the West of England

Cornwall

Cornwall College; Cornwall Council Libraries; Cornwall Health Library; Falmouth University

Devon

Devon Libraries; Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust; University of Exeter; Exeter Cathedral & Archives

Dorset

Dorset Libraries

Gloucestershire

Cirencester Sixth Form College; Gloucestershire County Council Libraries & Information; Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; Hartpury University; University of Gloucestershire

Guernsey

Guille-Allès Library

Hampshire

Hampshire Healthcare Library

Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

Jersey

Jersey Library

North Somerset

North Somerset Health Care Library (NHS); North Somerset Library Service

Plymouth

Arts University Plymouth; Plymouth Library Services; Plymouth Marjon University; University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust; University of Plymouth

Somerset

Bridgwater and Taunton College; Downside School, Radstock; Somerset Libraries & Information Service; Strode College; Yeovil College, Somerset NHS Hospitals Trust

South Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College; South Gloucestershire Library and Information Service

Southampton

Southampton City Council Libraries

Swindon

New College, Swindon; Science Museum Library and Archives at Wroughton; Swindon Borough Council Libraries

Torbay

Torbay Libraries

Wiltshire

Wiltshire Libraries

Representatives on other regional bodies:

CILIP South West Members Network

Inspire, Libraries in Cornwall

Read South West Executive

Libraries Connected South West

South West Higher Education Libraries (SWHELS)

Donna Gundry, Mike Hosking

Merryn Kent

Merryn Kent

Emma Wellard

Jackie Chelin

• 6. Reference and Administrative Information

Registered Charity 1176414

Registered Office Arts University Plymouth
Tavistock Place
Plymouth
Devon, PL4 8AT

Bankers Royal Bank of Scotland
Direct Business Banking
PO Box 5479
1 Springfields Square
Manchester, M61 0NH

Trustees: trustees serve to the AGM in November in any given year, unless otherwise stated:

- **Officers:**
 - **Chair:** Donna Gundry, to serve to Jan 2026
 - **Secretary:** Simonetta Taylor, to serve to Nov 2025
 - **Treasurer:** Kerry Kellaway, to serve to Nov 2028
- **Ordinary Trustees:**
 - **Academic, special and other libraries:**
 - Jolanta Peters, to serve to 2024
 - Jane Choules, to serve to 2027
 - **Public libraries:**
 - Emma Wellard, to serve to Jan 2025
 - Frances Tout, to serve to 2024
 - **Non sector specific (independent):**
 - Helen Chaloner, to serve to 2024
 - Michael Hosking, to serve to Jan 2026

Coordinator: Shelley Trower is an *ex-officio* member of the Board of Trustees, but is not a Trustee.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees



Chair of Trustees

Independent examiners report to the Trustees of South Western Regional Library Services CIO

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts for South Western Regional Library Services CIO ("the charity") for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

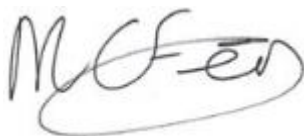
Albert Goodman LLP provides the charity with bookkeeping services. I confirm that the necessary safeguards as required by the Direction of the Charity Commission have been implemented, and that I have applied the provisions of the Revised Ethical Standard 2024 issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the accounts do not comply with these records

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



Michelle Ferris BSc (Hons) FCA DChA

Albert Goodman LLP
Chartered Accountants
Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2PX

Date: 07 November 2025



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

SWRLS

1176414

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2024

To

31/03/2025

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 £
A1 Receipts					
Interest Received	2,796	-	-	2,796	3,458
Member subscription	25,382	-	-	25,382	17,144
Training Courses	1,004	-	-	1,004	446
Grant income	-	-	-	-	6,786
Contribution	-	-	-	-	213
Other Income	-	-	-	-	25
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	29,182	-	-	29,182	28,072
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	29,182	-	-	29,182	28,072
A3 Payments					
Coordinator Support Post	13,265	-	-	13,265	14,753
Travelling & Subsistence	333	-	-	333	-
Training & Development	2,500	-	-	2,500	2,675
Conference & Meeting Fees (AGM & Members day)	2,043	-	-	2,043	896
Committee / Meeting Exepnses	-	-	-	-	555
Website / Internet	23	-	-	23	1,939
Advertising and marketing	1,325	-	-	1,325	-
Bank fees	27	-	-	27	-
Subscription Payments	1,059	-	-	1,059	-
Accountancy	5,257	-	-	5,257	1,320
Insurance	226	-	-	226	227
Event costs	480	-	-	480	-
World Live in Libraries Project	-	-	-	-	34,128
Grant / award Payments	11,042	-	-	11,042	199
Office Support Services	-	-	-	-	12,960
Sub total	37,580	-	-	37,580	69,652
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	37,580	-	-	37,580	69,652
Net of receipts/(payments)	(8,398)	-	-	- 8,398	- 41,580
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	87,030	-	-	87,030	128,610
Cash funds this year end	78,632	-	-	78,632	87,030

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	Current Account	26,261	-	-
	Deposit Account	52,371	-	-
			-	-
	Total cash funds	78,632	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK


	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	Accountancy Fees	Unrestricted	3,181	
	Consultancy costs	Unrestricted	575	

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	DONNA GUNDRY	7/11/25

Notes forming part of the financial statements

1. The accounts have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis and in accordance with guidance issued by the Charity Commission.
2. Neither the trustees, nor any person connected with them, have received any remuneration or expenses during the year (2024: None).
3. The funds of the charity are as noted on the receipts and payments accounts, with £nil restricted funds carried forward as at 31 March 2025 (2024: £nil).

Within unrestricted funds is £25,000 of designated funds (2024: £250,000).

4. The Trustees confirm, in accordance with the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012, that at the year end the CIO did not have any outstanding guarantees to third parties nor any debts secured on the assets of the CIO.