

## **FRIENDS OF BENSON LIBRARY**

### **CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CIO)**

Registered Number **1176595**

Address: Benson Library, Crown Square, Benson OX10 6SD

### **TRUSTEES**

#### **Officers:**

Frances Swann *Chair*  
Brendan Thorpe *Secretary*  
Judith Pignon *Treasurer*

#### **Trustees:**

John Murphy  
Patrick ('Barry') O'Connor  
Vivien Gardner  
Fiona Thomson-Tur  
Christopher Swann  
Lucy Browne  
Mary Phillipson

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

The purpose of the Charity continues to be to advance the education of the public by the promotion of a public library service for the residents of Benson and surrounding villages.

We meet these objects by raising funds to provide Oxford County Library Service with a subvention to maintain a library service in Benson, which also benefits residents in surrounding villages. There is considerable residential housebuilding in the area which has led to a significant population increase and increased demand for library services. We also recruit, assist in training of and organise a rota of volunteers to serve as assistants in the library.

The Charity communicates with stakeholders and the general community by means of a website, by Mailchimp communications, posters and fliers in the library and village, and in the 'Benson Bulletin', the latter being a rich source of local news which is widely distributed in the village and surroundings.

In 2024 all trustees and officers remained the same but in November 2024 Mary Phillipson said she would like to step down as Secretary. In February 2025 Brendan Thorpe succeeded Mary Phillipson as secretary.

We have a new library manager, Kirsty Shearer, who joined us on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 after the retirement of Hilary Rust in December 2023. She had been library manager at Benson Library for 17 years.

After the long awaited re development of the car park in 2023, in 2024 the CIO pursued the idea for the addition of a storage shed for garden tools, a bike shed, a covered area for

buggies, steps to the garden area and improvements to the overgrown area to the front of the property with Oxfordshire Country Council.

This year the library has been well supported by its readers with a large increase in members due to the addition of new houses in Benson, and the Library Manager has hosted a number of events such as the Summer Reading Challenge (culminating in the Medal Award Ceremony), Carers Coffee Mornings with local Carers Group, Rhyme Time for mothers and toddlers, Incredible Edibles gardening activity sessions, craft sessions, Lego sessions and Volunteers Get Together.

We have continued to recruit volunteers to assist with the library service provision. We have directly provided funds for book purchases that were withdrawn by the Oxfordshire Library Service. In this way, the reading interests of the local users are directly reflected in book stock that doesn't join our regular stock rotation with other libraries.

We have drawn up a document on Governance of the COI including the roles of the Trustees and Financial Controls which we regularly update.

The CIO also sees its role in the wider context of improving Benson Library's environment. We work with local groups planting fruit and vegetables in the library garden, encouraging local families to enjoy resulting produce for free and we are hoping to extend the garden into a further area of land which is currently overgrown.

The CIO participated in the local school fete in the summer of 2024 with a table of merchandise and information about the library to promote the role of the library in the school and village, and also in a Green Day together with St Helen's church, to raise awareness of the environment and the effects of climate change.

We had a large fundraising event in November 2024, our annual Quiz, with a Prize Draw which raised a good amount of funds. We had a successful cake sale in the May 2024 which raised funds for the library, and also raised awareness of the library in the village.

We have recently ordered and received branded tea towels, which can be sold or given away to help promote the use of the library.

Oxfordshire County Council continues to provide Lego and Duplo sets for the library which has led to successful sessions in the library for children.

We are planning an event to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of Benson Library together with the commissioning of a stone bench, which will most likely be in 2026 to coincide with the presentation of the Summer Reading Challenge Prizes.

We planned 6 author talks in the Library during 2025 to promote reading and interest in local authors to members of the library and villagers, together with another cake sale and quiz.

We have opened a second High Interest Bank Account into which we have placed some funds in order to receive interest on our invested funds.

We took part in the Benson Christmas Tree Festival at St Helen's Church in December 2024 which was a highly successful event and provided much goodwill and local publicity for the library and the work of the CIO.

## **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The opening balance in the current account was £29716.80 + £60.57 cash. The closing balance was £17696.87 + £10.57 cash + £467 (quiz raffle tickets), + £80 Quiz Bar Float+ £27.90 Quiz Cash with £20,000 in Charity Bank high savings account.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Frances Swann  
Chair

**Frances Swann** 28.10.25

Brendan Thorpe  
Secretary

**Brendan Thorpe** 28.10.25

**Accounts 01 Jan 20243 - 31 Dec 2024**

Item	Income	Expenditure
OCLS Salary		8001
OCLS Books		1000
Tea Fund		40
Book Tokens for retiring volunteers		135
Flowers for Gina after death of her mother		16
Insurance		247.49
<b>Funds</b>		
Standing Orders	348	
Donations	166	
SODC Registration of Lottery		20
Transfer to Savings Account Charity Bank		10000
Interest from Charity Bank Account	380.39	
wine etc thank you to volunteers		35.75
<b>Office Equipment</b>		
Web Hosting & Domain Name		78.13
Sum Up Purchase		46.8
Tea Towels order + sample		402.6
Storage Box		23.95
<b>Grants</b>		
Ewelme PC	250	
Benson PC	4005	
Warborough PC	257	
Chalgrove PC	426	
Berrick Salome PC	200	
Crowmarsh PC	100	
<b>Events</b>		
Cake Sale Zettle	157.62	
Cake Sale + bacs payment of 12.00	161.5	
School Fete Incl Float of £50.00	88	
Xmas Tree fair (Benson church)+Oxfam manager present 2023		25
Quiz Night ticket via bacs & cheque	1180	
Quiz Night Raffle & prizes sumup ##	54.1	129.89
Severn Trent (sponsor £100 first prize)	100	100
Quiz 2023 & 2024 raffle wooden spoons + £20.00 float 2024		33.98
Quiz Zettle bar + tickets (13)	581.61	
Bar Float		80
Quiz Night Hall Hire		167.5
Wreath 2023 & 2024		38
Author Talk Jan 2025	143	
Testing of Zettle & sumup machines	2.94	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8601.16</b>	<b>20621.09</b>

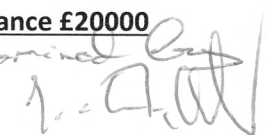
Minus 12019.93

2924.08 of the funds in the bank account are in a special fund for children's books

**Opening bank balance 29716.80 + 60.57 cash**

**Closing balance 17696.87 + 10.57 cash +467 (quiz raffle tickets cash) + 80.00 Quiz Bar float + Quiz cash 27.90**

**Savings Account with Charity Bank Opened balance £10000 Closing balance £20000**

*accounted for*  
  
 24.10.25