

Charity Commission Number 1178050



Annual Report 2022/23

Whickham Volunteer Library Association

Draft Annual Report for 2022/2023

Whickhamlibrary@gateshead.gov.uk

Chair's Introduction

Now in our 7th year, Wickham Volunteer Library Association (WVLA) is going from strength to strength. All Covid restrictions, including the screens have gone, making the volunteer librarians seem less remote.

We really feel that over the last year, we have greatly increased our presence within the community and we have many groups now meeting in the library.

Last year's refurbishment of the community room into the Library Lounge, a comfortable, warm space, has been highly successful and the library lounge is being used as a nice place to relax and it is where we show our weekly films. This film afternoon is popular amongst some of our elderly population and each film is eagerly anticipated.



This year, we completely refurbished our large storeroom so that we now have a meeting room with a conference table. We were again extremely fortunate to have the furniture for this room donated by Virgin Money. It is now used by an increasing number of groups.



We have also enhanced the exterior of the library to make it more visible. We now have a large illuminated sign and signposts on the village green. New window decals conceal the unsightly grills and the front of the library looks so much better.



Now that we have completed the work on our two community rooms, we are turning our attention to improving the main library. We are hoping to change the outdated fixed reception desk in a way to provide a modern welcome area. This would also enable us to create a large space in which to hold larger events such as ceilidhs, music nights etc.

Poems & folk
music in the
Lounge



Fundraising is an ongoing activity. Our craft fairs have become increasingly popular, especially the children's' activities. We recently held a race night which was well received and profitable. Our donated books and jigsaws are permanently on display for sale and this provides regular income.

Last Winter, we were part of the Gateshead Warm Space Initiative. This was to provide a safe, warm space where residents of Whickham and the surrounding area could spend time in the company of others. We provide free refreshments and biscuits and we have continued this through the warmer months. We will be continuing this initiative throughout this winter.

Allan Short, Chair

Operational Structure and Governance

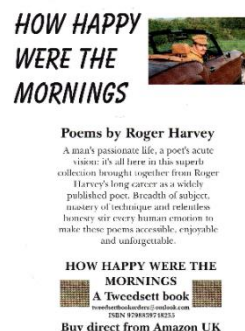
Whickham Volunteer Library Association continues to operate under a constitution approved by the Charity Commission. The provision of a core community library service is done in accordance with a Service Provision Agreement with Gateshead Council.



Even with all our success at engaging the community, we have not forgotten our core principle of providing a library service.

We maintain a good relationship with Gateshead Library Service who continue to provide us with books for loan. The system to request new books and to add donated books to our stock work well.

In the past year, we have held successful talks with a local author, Colin Youngman and also a local poet, Roger Harvey.



Our Trustees come from a range of professional backgrounds including health, education, engineering, the charitable sector and finance and includes three local Councillors. Trustees are guided on charity rules and regulations by advice from the Charity Commission and advice from other sources. These are our current Trustees as at October 2023

Trustees

Allan Short	Chair
Eileen Bone	Secretary
Peter Craig	Vice-Chair
Christopher Ord	Trustee
Alison Richardson	Safeguarding
David Johnson	Treasurer
Jane Campion	Trustee
Anne Messere	Trustee
Amelia Ord	Trustee
Andy Summerson	Trustee
Jeff Bowe	Trustee
Angela Todd	Trustee

Our web site and Facebook page continue to spread library news and we have now set up a 'mailchimp' to advertise up and coming library events.

The reaction is very positive. A few comments are shown below:

- 'Thank you for helping me this morning, the work you all do to keep the library open is greatly appreciated'.
- '...Love the library, the volunteers are lovely. My grandchildren go weekly'.
- 'Happy 6th Anniversary to all the volunteers. Well done on an amazing job'.
- (On our poetry and folk night) 'What a good night, I really enjoyed it'.
- (Craft Day) 'Thanks for a lovely time this morning, we all had a great time'.
- 'Love the books for sale at the library, it is the best book shop for miles'.

The Association has 6 working groups to support the development of our work in the library:

1. **Activities** (Jane Campion, Anne Messere, Eileen Bone, Alison Richardson) organising and facilitating all activities associated with the library, including social events.
2. **Buildings and future planning** (Allan Short, Christopher Ord, Alison Richardson, Denise Bennett, Anne Messere, Eileen Bone, Peter Craig) responsible for any issues relating to the library building or equipment including health and safety.
3. **Safeguarding** (Alison Richardson, Peter Craig) developing safeguarding policy and practice.
4. **Membership** (Eileen Bone, Alison Richardson) organising the daily rotas and developing practices for the induction of new volunteers.
5. **Website** (Eileen Bone, Alison Richardson) to keep the information on our website up to date.
6. **Fund-raising** (Allan Short, Christopher Ord, Jane Campion, Denise Bennett, Alison Richardson, Eileen Bone, Peter Craig) Looking at funding opportunities and ensuring any criteria for the grants are fulfilled.

Volunteering

The Association continues to be fortunate in the quality and quantity of people who have volunteered. Due to the skill, enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteers we have continued to offer an excellent service at the heart of our local community.

All new volunteers complete an application process, provide proof of identity and address and complete an induction programme, including "on the job" training. All volunteers are required to be familiar with our policies or procedures on Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Data Protection and ICT usage.

All volunteers are welcome to take part in our regular meetings and can raise any issues which may be of concern to them or make suggestions for the development and improvement of our library. Volunteers are encouraged to join our working group structure and to contribute to library activities and events.

We currently have 12 Trustees and continue to consider succession planning to ensure this group reflects the many and varied skills, knowledge and experience required by our organisation.

Activities & Events



The Summer Reading Challenge

The return of this popular event was welcomed by our younger readers with 88 children taking part and 41 completing the whole challenge. It was wonderful to see so many children using the library again.



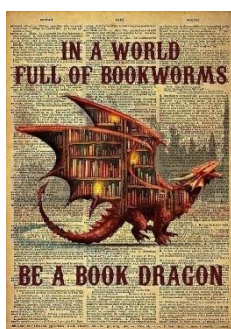
Children's Activities

Christmas Fair, Easter Fair, Teddy Bears Picnic and Halloween.



Activities for all

Poetry Reading, Book Signing, Race Night, Frets and Fiddles, Film Afternoons and Evenings.



Book Sales

Thank you to those in our community who donated books to the library. The quality was great and we appreciate the time taken to bring them to the library.

We held 5 book sales throughout the summer months which were a hit with the local residents who refreshed their home libraries.

Groups and sessions being held at the library

Art Group	Whickham Writers	U3A Quiz group
Knitters	U3A Theatre Group	U3A Book Groups x 3
Derwent Valley History Grp	U3A Literature Group	U3A Technology Group
Derwent Valley – Join me	Derwent Valley U3A Knitting	Active Families North East
NHS	CAB	Barclays Bank Hub
Rhyme Time x 3	Tutoring for schoolchildren	

Donations and Funding

In order to secure the future of the library we have a need to raise funds. We do this in a variety of ways and are currently actively fund-raising by:

1. Room hire charges
2. Charging for events such as Rhyme Time and craft activities
3. Selling second hand books and jigsaws
4. Handmade cards and bookmarks
5. Donations
6. Raffles

A big thank you goes to the Co-op for choosing us this year as one of their three local charities, this fund raiser is now completed and the local community raised £1,322.83 which will be reflected in next year's funds.

Virgin Money deserve a huge thank you for all the furniture they donated to the library as does our local Tesco store for supplying teas, coffee and biscuits

The Future

As we move forward into our next year of operation, we will continue to work with all the volunteers on the development of the library, increase our community involvement and establish priorities, actions and activities reflecting the objectives of our organisation.

We will continue to provide the core library services to the best of our ability. We are always striving to increase the library's involvement in the community which is reflected in our organisation's objectives.

Whickham Volunteer Library Association

Income and Expenditure accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023

Income		This Year	Last Year
Book Sales		£5,814.55	£3,592.33
Printing		£2,098.65	£1,594.90
Display		£1,503.00	£819.25
Donations		£2,481.66	£2,088.55
Warm Spaces		£638.01	
Events		£1,886.40	£359.10
Other Income		£650.00	
GMBC Funding		£1,310.00	£22,310.00
Amazon Smile		£21.82	£30.74
Office Rent		£3,900.00	
Bank Interest		£146.25	£6.67
Total Income		£20,450.34	£30,801.54
Expenditure			
Activities	£0.00		£539.88
GMBC	£1,033.73		£6,112.01
Children's Area	£3,484.96		£0.00
Furniture	£6,600.79		£0.00
Equipment	£6,608.00		£31.43
Building Development	£0.00		£0.00
Energy	£10,588.65		£7,084.32
Wix (Website)	£136.80		£141.01
Office	£3,032.63		£285.10
Accountancy	£50.00		£50.00
Maintenance	£3,279.47		£250.00
Total Expenditure		£34,815.03	£14,493.75
Deficit/Surplus for the Year		-£14,364.69	£16,307.79
Represented By			
Current Account	£7,912.15		£14,756.04
Deposit Account	£60,710.98		£68,149.10
Cash in Hand	£32.16		£114.84
Bank and Cash In Hand		£68,655.29	£83,019.98
Balance Brought Forward	£83,019.98		£66,712.19
Current Deficit	-£14,364.69		£16,307.79
Retained Funds		£68,655.29	£83,019.98

Statement from the Independent Examiner

I have examined the accounts of Whickham Volunteer Library Association for the period 1st April 2022 to March 31st 2023

I am satisfied that the accounts are an accurate record of the affairs of the Association during this period

However, I am concerned that an unauthorised payment of £2197.71 to Newday was paid from the Current Account on 21/11/22. The treasurer had to take urgent action to retrieve this money which was refunded on 12/12/2022.

I am given to understand that the payment was instigated by an authorised signatory to the account to pay a personal bill. This person was apparently slow to admit the "error" he had made.

I would therefore point out to trustees that under Charity Commission rules, this incident must be reported when the annual submission is made to the Charity Commission.

Trustees have a responsibility to safeguard WVLA funds from misuse and fraud. I would strongly recommend that they review authorised signatories and procedures for approving payments from WVLA funds.

Signed



David Rolfe
Independent Examiner
2 Coleridge Gardens, Dipton, Co Durham, DH9 9LH

The trustees of Whickham Volunteer Library Association note the concerns raised by the Independent Examiner.

The incident was reported to trustees by the Treasurer as being resolved via email on 12th December 2022 and was discussed in detail at the next regular trustee meeting on Wednesday 11th January 2023.

Trustees have agreed that the unauthorised payment was shown to be an error by one of the trustees who did not realise their mistake until alerted by their bank. Once alerted, they acted swiftly to work with the Treasurer in order to rectify the error.

Trustees do not agree that the person responsible was slow to admit the error that was made. The apparent delay and the reason for it was accepted by the remaining trustees as a genuine mistake. This error was corrected as soon as practicable and the Charity did not suffer any financial loss or damage to its reputation.

Since the incident, trustees have reviewed the authorised signatories and their procedures for approving payments from WVLA funds. Payments continue to be made on a dual basis and all other financial processes are deemed fit for purpose. No further action is therefore necessary at this time.

In terms of the accounts for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, trustees note that the Independent Examiner has reported "I am satisfied that the accounts are an accurate record of the affairs of the Association during this period."

