

Charity Commission Number 1178050

Annual Report 2023/24



Whickham Volunteer Library Association

Draft Annual Report for 2023/2024

Whickhamlibrary@gateshead.gov.uk

Chair's Introduction

Now in our 8th year, Wickham Volunteer Library Association (WVLA) continues to grow and evolve into a popular resource and meeting place for our community. Although lending books and providing free access to computers are still our core purpose, we have a steady stream of people coming to the library to make use of the comfortable surroundings to read, chat and make themselves refreshments. More about our groups using the library later in the report.

Our 'Warm Space' is available all the hours the library is open which is longer than anywhere else in the neighbourhood. The refurbished lounge and meeting room are being increasingly used by a wide range of community groups and local charities.



We have been successful in obtaining an 100% grant from Groundworks to make our building more energy efficient. As a result of this, we are changing all our lights to LED lighting and having cavity insulation installed. We anticipate significant reduction in our energy costs and our carbon footprint as a result of this.

We had plans to start refurbishing the main body of the library this year but, unfortunately, we have had to temporarily shelve these because of financial constraints, largely due to greatly increased energy costs.

However, because of our vigorous fundraising, we do believe once our energy saving changes occur that we will be able to re-commence planning improvements to the main library in the next few months.

We very much look forward to continue developing the library, making it an ever increasingly resource for our community.

Allan Short, Chair

Operational Structure and Governance

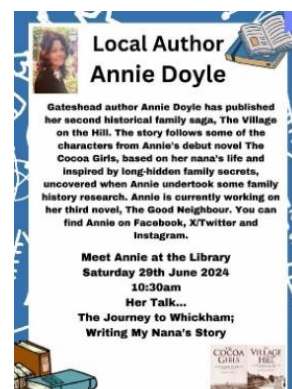
Whickham Volunteer Library Association continues to operate under a constitution approved by the Charity Commission. The provision of a core community library service is done in accordance with a Service Provision Agreement with Gateshead Council.



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 works well.

In the past year, we hosted a talk with local author, Annie Doyle which was well attended, we also have regular fortnightly visits with the Citizen Advice Bureau and are holding a drop-in session with a local solicitor on Wills, Lasting Power of Attorney, Property Protection Trusts and Home Trusts which may be repeated if the response is good.

We also host regular mental health and wellbeing “drop-ins”.



Our Trustees come from a range of professional backgrounds including health, education, engineering, the charitable sector and finance and includes a local Councillor. 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 2024:

Allan Short	Chair
Denise Bennett	Secretary
Peter Craig	Vice-Chair
Alison Richardson	Safeguarding
David Johnson	Treasurer
Jane Campion	Trustee
Anne Messere	Trustee
Andy Summerson	Trustee
Jeff Bowe	Trustee
Angela Todd	Trustee

Our website and Facebook page together with a library newsletter via Mailchimp continue to keep our community in the know. The reaction is always very positive. A few comments are shown below:

- 'Billy had a lovely time this morning. Thank you to all the volunteers for all their hard work.'
- 'I go with my grandchildren (3&4) every week, they love the library. The volunteers are pleasant and always make time for the little ones. The Gruffalo carpet is a great favourite. We are lucky in Whickham to have such dedicated volunteers running a much-loved library'.
- Annie Doyle (local author) – 'Whickham is very lucky to have such a wonderful library. I am looking forward to visiting it at the end of the month to talk about my novels and my writing journey'.
- 'Fantastic effort, 7 years.'
- 'Thank you to you all, it's my favourite place'.
- 'I came and bought lots of interesting gifts and cakes and thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm looking forward to next years. Fantastic of Whickham Belles WI for donating their time and takings to our wonderful library.' (Christmas Fair).
- Thank you to everyone, we had a great time. The kids especially liked the Tombola, Crafts and Goats.

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

1. **Activities** (Jane Champion, Anne Messere, Eileen Bone, Alison Richardson, Denise Bennett, Angela Todd) organising and facilitating all activities associated with the library, including social events.
2. **Buildings and future planning** (Allan Short, Alison Richardson, Denise Bennett, Eileen Bone, Andy Summerson) 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** (Sarah Rowan, Denise Bennett) to keep the information on our website up to date.
6. **Fund-raising** (Allan Short, David Johnson, Jane Champion, Denise Bennett, Alison Richardson, Eileen Bone) looking at funding opportunities and ensuring any criteria for the grants are fulfilled.
7. **Finance** (Allan Short, David Johnson, Denise Bennett, Eileen Bone, Alison Richardson) responsible for ensuring WVLA's finances are on track for maintaining and improving the library.
8. **Governance** (Allan Short, David Johnson, Denise Bennett, Angela Todd, Alison Richardson) responsible for assisting the trustee group to ensure that the board fulfils its legal, ethical and functional responsibilities.

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 were celebrated in the local press this year, when the Journal printed an article about our volunteers and our efforts to ensure that Whickham Library remains open for use by the community.

We currently have 10 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

Rhyme Time (3 sessions per week), Primary School and Nursery Visits, Christmas Fair, Easter Fair, Summer Fair and Halloween.

Activities for all

Author talks and book signing, Quiz Night, Film Afternoons and Evenings.

Book Sales

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

We held five 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 Group	U3A Literature Group	U3A Culture Group
Library Book Club	U3A Crafting Group	U3A Genealogy Group
NHS	Citizens Advice Bureau	Barclays Hub
Rhyme Time x 3	Tutoring for schoolchildren	Dementia Cafe

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 crafts
5. Donations
6. Raffles
7. Special events and fayres
8. Friends of WVLA

A group of intrepid walkers took on the Dales Way Walk (just under 90 miles), two of whom were library volunteers to raise funds for the library. The walk was done over 6 days (23rd – 29th May). Michael Richardson, a son of one of our Trustees took part in the Great North Run on behalf of our library. A huge thank you to them all.

To support our local community and raise awareness of the library activities we took a stall at the Chase Park Summer Fair. It was lovely to see so many local people enjoying the park and stopping to chat about the library.

The Friends of WVLA scheme was set up to enable financial contributions to be made by members of the community. In return the Friends will be updated with our news via a Friends newsletter, with advance notice of upcoming events, and invited to an annual meeting.

The Future

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



Annual Accounts 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

In the year ended 31st March 2023 our expenditure exceeded our income by £6021.55 with energy costs representing over 53% of our total costs. To try and mitigate some of these costs the trustees have successfully applied for grant funding to replace the existing lighting with Led units and install Cavity Wall thermal insulation.

In an effort to increase our income the charity has also registered with HMRC which will facilitate the reclaim of Gift Aid on donations made by individuals and there are plans in place to set up a "Friends of Whickham Library" to encourage people to give financially to support the charity either as a one off or on a regular basis.

During the year we have also developed and improved the facilities within the lounge area which has been well received by our users and allowed us to offer additional activities for our community.

David Johnson, Treasurer

Whickham Volunteer Library Association

1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

	Notes	
Receipts		£
Donations	1	1300.00
Library Takings	2	14920.00
Grants		3802.25
Other Income		471.23
Room Hire	3	2600.00
Interest		334.77
		<u>23428.25</u>
 Expenditure		
Running Costs	4	18716.66
Office & General Expenditure	5	10537.14
Governance	6	196.00
		<u>29449.80</u>
 Excess of expenditure over income		<u>-6021.55</u>
 Balance Brought Forward		68655.29
 Income	23428.25	
 Expenditure	29449.80	
		<u>-6021.55</u>
		<u>62633.74</u>
 Current Account	22614.60	
Epworth Cash Fund	40000.00	
Cash	<u>19.14</u>	
		<u>62633.74</u>

Whickham Volunteer Library Association

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024

1	This includes Donations received via Gift Aid Giving £1200
2	This includes Book sales, printing and photocopying together with Easter Fayre £588 Christmas Fayre £844 Race Night £450
3	Room hire agreement with Barclays Bank Plc
4	This includes Electricity £10463.53 Gas £5153.08 Gateshead MBC re-charge £1579.53 Website support £282.16 Licences £1098.36 Maintenance £100 Small items and miscellaneous costs
5	This includes News Papers £1526.11 Coffee, Tea, Biscuits etc £2213.93 Community Room £6754.08
6	This includes Insurance £96 Accountancy fees £100



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**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**

Whickham Volunteer Library Association

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1178050

Set out on pages

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 03 2024

**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:

[Signature]

Date:

20-11-24

Name:

PAUL E COULTHARD.

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

CIMA.

Address:

100 AUGUSTA PARK WAY

DINNINGTON

NEWCASTLE

NE10 7FJ

And finally... our Christmas Fair

