



**Friends of
Castle Cary Community Library
Registered Charity Number 1180566**

**Trustees' annual report
and statement of accounts
for the period**

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024



Administrative details

1. The charity's name is the Friends of Castle Cary Community Library (FCCCL). The charity does not use any other name.
2. The charity's registration number is 1180566. Its activities are primarily centred on the library at Bailey Hill, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7AA.
3. The Trustees of the charity at the date of this report are: Peter Marsden, Will Vaughan, Doug Crosse, Mary Gray, Katherine Shingler.
4. The Treasurer is Douglas Crosse.
5. The Chair is Will Vaughan.
6. The Secretary is Katherine Shingler.
7. The day-to-day management of the library is undertaken by a management team led by Carole Kimberley and Laura Tilling who have been joint library managers since 21 January 2021.
8. At the date of this report there were 59 members of the FCCCL.

Governance

1. The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a constitution dated 6 November 2018 as its governing document.
2. FCCCL was entered in the Register of Charities on 6 November 2018 as a CIO.
3. Following FCCCL entering into a service level agreement with Somerset Council (then Somerset County Council) on 15 March 2019, operation of the library was transferred from the Council to FCCCL on 1 April 2019. The Council continues to provide all loan stock, information technology systems, internet access and professional support. The Council has also provided a self-service kiosk which is popular with library users. Through the Council's Library Service our little library also acts as a portal to all the vast book, non-book and e-resources of Libraries West.
4. The constitution requires there shall be a minimum of four and no more than eight Trustees. New Trustees can be elected by the members present at the Annual General Meeting. In addition, the Trustees can co-opt new Trustees during the year, up to the maximum.
5. The charity is resourced entirely by volunteers.

Objectives

The objectives of the charity as defined by its constitution are:

The advancement of education for the public benefit, in particular by the provision of library facilities and services for learning, for information, advice and other related library provision for the benefit of the residents and the wider community in Castle Cary, Ansford and the surrounding areas.

Financial review

1. Our income is mainly grant funded by Somerset Council, Castle Cary town council, Ansford parish council, Carymoor parish council and North Cadbury parish council. The rest of our income is made up with income from the library (fines, photocopying, donations, book sales and book reservations, etc).
2. We are acutely aware of the financial woes of Somerset Council and the possible impact this may have on the future support we may get from them. With this in mind we have been prudent in our spending during the last year, and have also increased our non-grant income via a 42% increase in library income (fines and reservations, etc), income from book sales, and interest on our deposit accounts. As a result, we have ended the year with a surplus of £3220.70.
3. The reason the electric bill was cheaper in the 2023-24 financial year is that the previous year included an outstanding bill from the previous supplier. The water costs are also double; we are not expecting any downward change there.
4. The treasurer extends his thanks to the volunteers of the library for making the job of treasurer easier by their excellent transaction recording.
5. Also special thanks to Jeannie Thanisch for undertaking the independent examination of the Annual accounts.

Our lease of the library premises

On 16 August 2021 the charity was granted a new lease on the ground floor of the library building for the period 16 August 2021 to 30 April 2027. As a result, the Trustees have been happy to authorise and implement layout modifications and other improvements suggested by the Library Development Group. The annual rent remains our principal expenditure.

Our community library partnership

The charity entered into a community library partnership with Somerset Council in 2019, one of fifteen libraries doing so. Our service level agreement defines the targets we are expected to achieve and the activities we must undertake. These are reviewed on a regular basis.

Trustees meetings

We have held regular Trustees meetings as required by our constitution. These have taken place in 2024 on 15 January, 29 April, and 29 August.

New library system (Axiell/Spark) and training

The new library management system (LMS) known as Axiell/Spark was introduced to all libraries within the Libraries West consortium in 2024. The main difference from the previous system is that Axiell/Spark is web based and therefore available on any device. A training package is also available, again web based.

Laura, Andy and Carole all used the training system in May to familiarise themselves with the new system. Unfortunately, the LMS was continually being added to and some features were unavailable during the training.

The timescale for training and going 'live' was very tight and Castle Cary library started to use Axiell/Spark on Tuesday 4 June 2024. Training for desk volunteers was provided in the main by Andy and Carole who visited each team during the library opening times to provide support.

As with any new computer system, it takes time for everything to settle down. There have been many weeks of frustration as all libraries have tried to carry out simple tasks only for the system to crash repeatedly. There is now a Microsoft Teams channel where all problems are shared and at long last, the system seems to be working.

Statistics

The managers and trustees receive quarterly statistical updates from Library Services. A summary of the key figures for the 2023/24 year is given below:

1. As at 31 March 2024, the library had **512 active members** (defined as having used the library at least once within the previous 24 months).
2. **173 new members** were recruited during the year, 17% down on the previous year.
3. **Visits** for 23/24 were **4,922**, 9% up on the previous year though 28% down on 19/20, the last full year before Covid.
4. **Physical issues** during 23/24 were **10,317**, 2% up on the previous year and an average of just over two per visit.
5. During the 23/24 year, **approximately 40 volunteers** have supported the running of the library. The level of commitment varies across volunteers, but the total number of hours given during the year was **approximately 3,000**, a significant and generous input from our small community.

The physical state of the library

With our planned improvements complete, we can now be justly proud of our little library, with its rearranged shelving making the public area of the library more spacious, with enough room for storytelling, new lighting, a smart new carpet which Doug and his wife are now regularly shampooing, and new, efficient and easily controlled heating. During the year, heavy rain caused significant damp in one corner, which turned out to result from blocked gutters on the roof. Our landlord acted quickly to sort this out. This remedial work seems to have reduced the overall relative humidity levels in the library.

Chris Edwards, one of our team of volunteers, continues to carry out the required maintenance checks.

Volunteer staff

Our team of around 25 volunteers who run the issue desk continue to work efficiently and happily, and have weathered well the frustrations of the new Library Management System, which is now at last beginning to settle in, but still has its challenges. The pattern of weekly or fortnightly sessions for each volunteer seems to work well, with a different team of three or four volunteers covering each session, plus a larger team of around twelve volunteers who cover Saturdays and emergencies. There are always two people on duty at any one time.

Andy Bentley, with his IT skills and patient support, has been invaluable in helping all the volunteers through the trauma of moving to a new computer management system. Carole and Laura, who are both resigning from their management role at the AGM, are working on devolving some of the routine tasks they have shared onto the session teams. So far this appears to be welcomed, and is lessening the overall management burden. At the time of writing they are still seeking someone to take over their role, possibly two people as the model of co-managing has worked well.

Access to the library

Our practice of engaging flexibly with the less mobile members of our community continues to work well. The 'official' Home Library Service remains available to us but is now rarely used as almost all our house-bound readers have friends, neighbours and family members (some of whom are also library volunteers) who are happy to collect and return books. Some are occasionally able to make the trip into the library themselves, which is always welcome. As such the role of the volunteer is increasingly about co-ordination, and providing a back stop where necessary.

There is however an ongoing issue of physical access to the library building, which currently lacks a wheelchair ramp.

Where possible we have helped readers get online and manage their own accounts, including choosing books and placing holds. Recent problems with the public website have set this back but we hope that this is a temporary issue.

In the past we have supplied books to two local care homes. These schemes petered out due to staff changes (such arrangements only work if there is an enthusiastic supporter in the care home), but we will have another go at rekindling support this autumn.

Young writers' competition

Having previously run a short story competition aimed at adults, in 2024 the committee agreed to target younger writers aged 11-18. To be eligible, entrants had to attend school in Somerset.

We publicised the competition via social media, our website and by contacting local schools – although engagement from the majority of schools was somewhat limited. We received a good range of entries with the top level of these being very impressive.

Prizes (1st, 2nd and 3rd) were awarded to winners in the years 7-9 and 10-13 categories by our judge, local author Emma Craigie, in a special event held at the Methodist Chapel in February 2024.



Activities for children and young people

Special activities for children have included story time for under fives and the Summer Reading Challenge for 5- to 12-year-olds. The 2024 Challenge had around 40 sign ups from the primary school. We use these activities as opportunities to encourage children (and their parents) to join the library and borrow books.

We continue to provide the Toybox Preschool with selections of books for their very young children. This year one of our volunteers, Chris Culpin, has run a book group for keen young readers from Castle Cary Primary School.

A recent review revealed that we had relatively few science books in the library, particularly for primary school aged children. The Trustees agreed to use some of the profits from recent book sales to buy science books, and after discussion with Castle Cary primary school the idea emerged of setting up a loan scheme to the primary school. We are hoping to purchase the books in November and have the scheme running in school before the Christmas holidays.

Other activities



Our book sales-cum-coffee mornings held at Castle Cary Market House twice a year have become very popular. They are good fundraisers, increase local awareness of the library, and also give an excellent opportunity for the issue desk volunteers, who rarely meet each other, to interact.

Several local book groups continue to use the library successfully for borrowing multiple copies of their chosen book. We sourced books from a number of libraries to complement a special exhibition in the Market House. We offered a seed swap earlier in the year and are repeating it now.

The small size of our library limits the activities we can offer, but we make use of the space available as imaginatively as we can!

Publicity

The managers and trustees publicise library events and activities where relevant, using social media primarily. Postings are made on the library website, www.castlecarylibrary.org.uk, library Facebook page (Castle Cary Community Library) and are also shared to the Castle Cary Real News Facebook page (12,100 members). Facebook posts are also often shared to other local groups/pages and to North Cadbury Next Door. An entry is submitted to the Cary Town Newsletter every quarter detailing what is coming up in the library. In addition, posters for events such as the twice-yearly book sales, are put up around the local area.

According to Facebook, our page has 453 followers, who are split 80% female 20% male, with 65+ the most prominent age group followed by 35–44.

The future

Our chief concerns continue to be meeting our community's wants and needs in respect of their local library, the sustainability of our financial situation in the medium and long term and the future of our premises.

Specific plans are:

1. Minor tweaking of the major planned improvements recently completed. These include storing cleaning chemicals in a locked cupboard.
2. Monitoring data, including number of active readers in order to assess more precisely the needs of the community. This will include items such as readers' ages, the footfall and the number of books borrowed.
3. Consideration of how the Friends group can be developed to support fundraising and other activities.
4. Development of the ongoing relationship with local schools and with pre-school activities.
5. Consideration of and planning for contingencies after the Somerset Council's contractual Grant expires in March 2026.
6. Gift Aid Registration; this has now been completed.
7. Planning for the future after the current lease extension terminates in April 2027.

Appreciation

Carole Kimberley and Laura Tilling have continued to co-manage the library. Janice Collins has continued to provide imaginative displays for the library.

Andy Bentley has provided essential IT support in connection with transition to the new library management system, to Windows 11, and management of individual library accounts.

Thanks to all the desk volunteers and story tellers, who have been essential for the continued running of the library service.

Peter Marsden is stepping down as Trustee at the AGM. The Trustees thank him in particular for his work in publicizing the activities of the library via social media.

Doug Crosse has continued to provide invaluable support looking after our library accounts and checking that we get value for money.

Thanks to Jeannie Thanisch for examining and approving the accounts.

And last but not least we continue in our gratitude to Somerset Library Services for their help, support and encouragement.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above, and the accounts attached.

Signed on behalf of the FCCCL Trustees



Full Name: William Henry Toulmin Vaughan

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date: 8th October 2024

Friends of Castle Cary Community Library (registered charity no. 1180566)
Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Friends of Castle Cary Community Library (registered charity no 1180566)

Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024

		Income and expenditure account			
INCOME	2023/24	2022/23	EXPENDITURE	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£		£	£
LIBRARY INCOME (FINES ETC)	1545.08	1085.61	OFFICE SUPPLIES/COSTS	56.72	36.55
			ELECTRIC	1774.76	2113.52
GRANTS Town and Parish	4700.00	4800.00	MEETINGS	33.00	63.20
GRANTS SCC	5000.00	5000.00	WATER / SEWERAGE	164.23	81.00
			INSURANCE / security / IOC REG	542.78	541.50
DONATIONS	497.15	114.42	ADMIN		
Photocopying	153.60	248.80	PHONE	60.00	85.35
EVENTS			EVENTS	395.55	105.70
Events donations	781.93	341.50	RENT	6399.96	6399.96
SUNDRIES	40.00	280.00	FUNDRAISING	70.00	
Gift Aid			WEBSITE	72.00	100.78
Hire of Library	80.00	16.00	CAPT EQU Carpet, Sumup kit		1651.05
United Trust Interest	263.84		Maintenance etc		183.56
Cambridge & Counties Interest	328.19		Sumup Fees	8.81	5.38
			Sundries	591.28	
Total Receipts	<u>13389.79</u>	<u>11886.33</u>	Total Payments	<u>10169.09</u>	<u>11367.55</u>
			Excess / Deficit	3220.70	518.78
			Total	<u>13389.79</u>	<u>11886.33</u>

Year end Balance Sheet

Current acc balance opening	8365.17	27846.39	Current Account Closing	2993.84	8365.17
United Trust Bank opening	10000.00		Unpresented cheques/payments	0.00	0.00
Cambridge & Counties opening	10000.00		Book balance Current Account	2993.84	8365.17
Petty Cash opening	0.00	0.00	Book bal United Trust Bank	18263.84	10000.00
Total	28365.17	27846.39	Book bal Cambridge & Counties	10328.19	10000.00
Designated Funds	0.00	226.85	Petty Cash closing	0.00	0.00
Balance brought forward	28365.17	27846.39	Total	31585.87	28365.17
Excess / deficit in general fund	3220.70	518.78			

Total	31585.87	28365.17	Total	31585.87	28365.17
-------	----------	----------	-------	----------	----------

Prepared by
Doug Crosse

Independently examined by
Jeannie Thanisch

Date 3RD JULY 2024
Signed 