



Friends of Castle Cary Community Library

Registered Charity Number 1180566

**Trustees' annual report and statement of accounts
for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**



Chair's report

This is the sixth year that Castle Cary Community Library has been run entirely by volunteers. The Library has continued to remain active in servicing the requirements of Castle Cary, Ansford and the surrounding district. This has included both the loan of books and the provision of a growing number of IT facilities.

I am pleased to be able to announce that we have now secured a Community Library Partnership Agreement which will remain valid for seven years. We are the first of the community libraries to renew our Service Level Agreement with Somerset Council. We have been told that the agreement we have signed is now being used as a template for similar agreements by other organizations.

We have continued to be active in fund-raising, and have had particular success with our coffee morning book sales.

We have also been proactive in reaching out to the children in our community. We take our mission to help develop literacy and the love of books amongst the young very seriously. Storytime is an increasingly popular weekly session for pre-school children. A particularly notable feature has been using our resources to acquire science books for children which we have loaned to Castle Cary Community Primary School. There has been a gratifying response to this from the pupils.

There has unfortunately been a slight drop of 12 per cent in recruitment of new members. This is, we understand, in proportion to a similar reduction elsewhere in the County. However, we aim to redouble our efforts to reverse this trend by taking further steps to raise our profile locally and make clear the advantages the library has to offer.

Will Vaughan

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: Doug Crosse, Mary Gray, Vicki Nobles, Katherine Shingler, Laura Tilling, and Will Vaughan.
4. The Treasurer is Douglas Crosse.
5. The Chair is Will Vaughan. He will be stepping down at the AGM in 2026, when he will also resign as a Trustee.
6. The Secretary is Katherine Shingler. She will be stepping down and resigning as a Trustee at the 2025 AGM.
7. The day-to-day management of the library is undertaken by a management team who chair the group in rotation.
8. At the date of this report, there were 48 members of the FCCCL.

Governance

1. The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a constitution dated 6th 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 15th March 2019, operation of the library was transferred from the Council to FCCCL on 1st 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 2024/5

We are extremely grateful that we continue to receive grant funding from Somerset County Council, Castle Cary Town Council, Ansford Parish Council, Cary Moor Parish Council and North Cadbury Parish Council. All of these institutions are getting requests for funds from a very limited pool of money. May I take this opportunity to thank them for their continued support. We also do our best with our income from within the Library (fines, photocopying, donations, book sales and book reservations, etc).

We have continued to be very prudent in our spending during the last year and have ended the year with a surplus of £3829.80.

There has been a small reduction in our electric and water costs this last year, also a slight drop in some other costs, surprising but very welcome. The increase in phone costs was due to replacing the phone, which was necessitated by the 3G switch-off.

My thanks to the volunteers and managers of the Library for making the job of treasurer easier by their excellent transaction recording. There are no paid staff at the Library; everyone gives their time freely.

Also special thanks to Jeannie Thanisch for undertaking the independent examination of the annual accounts (included at the end of this document).

Doug Crosse (Treasurer)

Our lease of the library premises

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

Community library partnership agreement

Somerset Council is responsible for delivering library services across Somerset, and in 2018 agreed to create Community Libraries in partnership with Town and Parish Councils and other community groups to ensure the sustainable and long-term delivery of services in certain areas.

Our existing agreement, which commenced on 1 April 2019, was due to expire on 31 March 2026. So, during this financial year we entered into discussions with Somerset Council regarding a new community library partnership agreement. Subsequent to our year end, these discussions were concluded amicably and in October on behalf of Friends of Castle Cary Community Library I have signed the new agreement. The funding level from Somerset Council remains the same at £5,000 per annum.

We are pleased to report that we are the first of 13 community libraries in Somerset to have finalized our partnership agreement, thereby providing certainty and continuity of library services in Castle Cary for the next seven years.

Trustees meetings

We have held regular Trustees meetings as required by our constitution. These have taken place in 2025 on 6 January, 14 February, 13 June, and 13 October.

New library system (Axiell/Spark) and training

We have been using Axiell/Spark as our Library Management System (LMS) since June 2024. There have been numerous problems and at times these have seemed insurmountable both to the desk volunteers and library users alike. Credit is due to the desk volunteers for their perseverance as at times a pencil and piece of paper seemed the best way forward. Likewise, the Teams channel has proved a useful tool where issues are raised for all to see, and either reported to Axiell as problems or workarounds suggested.

Despite all the problems, the LMS layout is easier to understand and we continue to receive excellent support from IT.

Statistics

The managers and trustees receive quarterly statistical updates from Library Services. A summary of the key figures for the 2024/25 year is given below:

1. As at 31 March 2025, the library had **503 active members** (defined as having used the library at least once within the previous 24 months).
2. **152 new members** were recruited during the year, 12% down on the previous year.
3. **Visits** for 24/25 were **4,618**, 7% down on the previous year.
4. **Physical issues** during 24/25 were **7,968**, a fall of 23% against the previous year.
5. Usage of the **Public Computer** totalled **3518** minutes, an 11% increase against 23/24.
6. During the 24/25 year, **approximately 38 volunteers** have supported the running of the library, 26 of these are currently desk volunteers. The level of commitment varies across volunteers, but the total number of hours given during the year was **approximately 2950**.

The figures above should be taken within the context of embedding the new Library Management Software, which caused significant disruption.

The physical state of the library: actions taken in 2025

Exterior

A broken roof tile needs to be replaced, to stop possible water ingress. At the bottom of the valley section, a small tree branch has lodged above the gutter and needs to be removed.

An external light fitting that had broken free was removed, and the loose electrical cable was made safe by fitting a new junction box.

The two steps to the front doorway were cleaned and white lines painted, and also on the handrail, to provide visual aids for library users.

There is a gap between the front door and architrave, and the existing draught extruder needs to be refixed (if possible) or replaced with a superior extruder.

Interior

The condition of the lower part of the plastered wall on the eastern side of the library was poor, with material disintegrating – possibly caused by rising damp. A minor repair was carried out by removing a small area of plaster, with new filler being applied and then painted. The rotten timber skirting board will require replacement. It is anticipated that more work will be required, behind the adjacent bookcases & small corner storage cabinet.

The electric hot water unit in the cloakroom requires some maintenance, due to a reduced flow of water, probably caused by furred-up pipework. This should be serviced by a technician asap.

The owner's representative will be made aware of these issues.

Volunteer staff

Our team of around 26 issue desk volunteers continues to do its amazing job of running the library. Jenny Fitcher, our supervisor, has now undertaken to visit us regularly to help with stock weeding. We see other Library Service staff at our quarterly reviews.

This year we have changed the management structure of our team. Carole Kimberley and Laura Tilling have stepped down as Joint Managers of the Library and now the Team Leaders of the six weekday sessions meet bi-monthly, chairing meetings on rotation. They nominate a chair and secretary for each meeting. A trustee attends their meetings, and a volunteer attends the trustees' meetings. Specific management jobs are delegated to members of the team. This approach shares work and so far seems to be successful.

The new Service Level Agreement specifies induction and training that all issue desk volunteers must undergo, and our current team is catching up on this formal training.

Access to the library

As a community library, we want to make sure that our services are available to everyone, recognising that some may not be able to come and see us in person. We do have available to us the formal scheme operated by Libraries West, known as the Home Library Service, which matches volunteers with housebound readers. However, we make very little use of this scheme which was designed for situations where the volunteer and the reader are unknown to each other. In our case almost every referral comes from a friend or family member who is offering to collect and return books on a reader's behalf. The result is that we now have just two readers on the formal scheme but many more informal, flexible arrangements.

We do keep in touch with local care homes and have made a standing offer to supply residents with books but, while we do supply individuals in those homes, there is currently little appetite to put in place broader schemes.



Activities for children and young people

Storytime. Bethan Bullock, one of our desk volunteers, has kindly taken over the organization of this. Numbers have swelled. On one occasion we had over 20 squeezed in. After stories, the children choose books to borrow, so get used to the library routine. Many thanks to the team of storytellers and the volunteers who support at the issue desk.

Summer Reading Challenge. Ruth Eyre and Bethan Bullock offered their support for the Reading Agency scheme, and we added North Cadbury Primary School to Castle Cary Primary School for promotion of the scheme. This year 45 children completed the challenge of reading six books over the summer. The Friends of the Library have agreed to a small prize in addition to the medal, lanyard and certificate each child receives. These will be awarded at school assemblies.

Books for the primary school. The science books lent to Castle Cary Primary have proved popular and useful and the loan is continuing for an additional year so that all the children have a chance to enjoy them. The Friends are considering extending this scheme, using funds raised through our book sales.

The 'Reading Well' scheme has focused recently on books to help families. We are investigating ways of promoting these locally. They include books for children from very young to teenage who have anxiety or behavioral issues or have suffered the trauma of losing a parent.

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!

Celebrating volunteering



On 7 February 2025, the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mr. Mohammed Saddiq, attended an event organized by Castle Cary Town Council in the Assembly Room, Market House, to celebrate the activities of volunteers in the community. The Library mounted a display for this event. Library volunteers were represented by Gail Sheffield, who explained the activities of the library to the Lord Lieutenant. The Lord Lieutenant presented the Library with a certificate in recognition of the activities of the Volunteers.

Publicity

The management team and trustees publicize 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 (16,200 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 published every four months 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 479 followers, who are split 80% female 20% male, with 65+ the most prominent age group (30%) followed by 45 – 54 (23.2%) and 35 – 44 (23%).

Appreciation

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 has continued 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: Professor William Henry Toulmin Vaughan

Position: Chair for Trustees at the 2025 AGM

Date: 20 November 2025

Friends of Castle Cary Community Library (registered charity no. 1180566)
Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

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

Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025

Income and expenditure account					
INCOME	2024/25	2023/24	EXPENDITURE	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£		£	£
LIBRARY INCOME (FINES ETC)	846.87	1545.08	OFFICE SUPPLIES/COSTS	106.22	56.72
GRANTS Town and Parish	4850.00	4700.00	ELECTRIC	1667.73	1774.76
GRANTS SCC	5000.00	5000.00	MEETINGS	103.40	33.00
			WATER / SEWERAGE	112.47	164.23
			INSURANCE / security / IOC REG	460.60	542.78
DONATIONS	112.40	497.15	ADMIN	0.00	
Photocopying / Printing	479.94	153.60	PHONE	193.44	60.00
EVENTS	61.00		EVENTS	0.00	395.55
Events donations	666.40	781.93	RENT	6399.96	6399.96
SUNDRIES	0.00	40.00	FUNDRAISING	72.42	70.00
Gift Aid	6.57		WEBSITE	100.78	72.00
Hire of Library	128.00	80.00			
United Trust Interest	677.46	263.84	Maintenance etc		
Cambridge & Counties Interest	504.34	328.19	Sumup Fees	10.16	8.81
			Sundries	276.00	591.28
Total Receipts	<u>13332.98</u>	<u>13389.79</u>	Total Payments	<u>9503.18</u>	<u>10169.09</u>
			Excess / Deficit	3829.80	3220.70
			Total	<u>13332.98</u>	<u>13389.79</u>
Year end Balance Sheet					
Current acc balance opening	2993.84	8365.17	Current Account Closing	5641.84	2993.84
United Trust Bank opening	18263.84	10000.00	Unpresented cheques/payments	0.00	0.00
Cambridge & Counties opening	10328.19	10000.00	Book balance Current Account	5641.84	2993.84
Petty Cash opening	0.00	0.00	Book bal United Trust Bank	18941.30	18263.84
Total	31585.87	28365.17	Book bal Cambridge & Counties	10832.53	10328.19
Designated Funds	0.00	0.00	Petty Cash closing	0.00	0.00
Balance brought forward	31585.87	28365.17	Total	35415.67	31585.87
Excess / deficit in general fund	3829.80	3220.70			
Total	35415.67	31585.87	Total	35415.67	31585.87

Prepared by
Doug Crosse

Independently examined by
Jeannie Thanisch

Date 15TH MAY 2025

Signed *Jeannie Thanisch*