

THE THOMAS POOLE LIBRARY, NETHER STOWEY

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

1 October 2023 to 30 October 2024

Reference and Administrative Information

Registered charity name	The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey	
Charity registration	1181213	
Constitution	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Association model. Established by constitution dated 21 st October 2018, amended 15 th December 2018. Approved by the Charity Commission and registered on 17 th December 2018	
Operational address	The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey Castle Street Nether Stowey Bridgwater Somerset TA5 1LN	
Trustees	Susan Aubrey Norma Frood Nigel Phillips (co-opted) Terence Sackett (co-opted)	Catherine Christie Chris Pearson (co-opted) Eliza Sackett Roger Stacey
Bankers	Co-operative Bank 1, Balloon Street Manchester M60 4EP	

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is administered by a Management Committee consisting of the Trustees above and the following officers:

Roger Stacey	Chairman
Eliza Sackett	Secretary
Eric Coates	Treasurer
Norma Frood	Funding; Membership Secretary
Catherine Christie	Oversight, including budgeting, forward planning, compliance
Jo Davison	Health and Safety Officer
Lynn Scales	Volunteers leader
Ruth Pickard	(Co-opted)
Bill Streeter	
Sian Stafford	Events and Publicity Manager. Employed by SC/TPLNS
Kevin Ferriday	Parish Council representative

Tricia Griffiths-Gough assists Eric Coates

Objects

1. For the public benefit, the provision of a library in Nether Stowey, Somerset and a library service for the village and surrounding parishes.
2. For the residents of Nether Stowey and the surrounding area, to promote the library for recreation and/or other leisure-time occupation of people who need these facilities because of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, or social and economic circumstances; and for the public at large in the interests of the community, and with the object of improving the condition of life of the residents.
3. To advance the education of the public in the history and heritage of the area, particularly in the lives of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the local benefactor Thomas Poole, and in the local environment.

Public Benefit

In planning activities for the period covered by this Report the Trustees kept in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

THE THOMAS POOLE LIBRARY 2023-2024

We announce with much regret that Roger Stacey is resigning as Chair and as a Trustee. We are glad to say that he will continue to be a library volunteer, and will also continue to watch over the building with his invaluable professional skills.

Three new Trustees have been co-opted: Chris Pearson, Nigel Phillips, and Terence Sackett.

This year the thoughts of the Trustees have been dominated by the possible implications of the financial difficulties facing Somerset Council (SC). It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to provide a public library service. However, with all the other calls on their funds, SC has had to ask the Somerset Library Service (SLS) to make savings. At a meeting of the Trustees and the SLS in January, we were told that since we are a Community Library Partnership (CLP) library, we are within the statutory 'envelope', and not at risk of closure. However, the Trustees need to prepare for the possibility that the annual £5,000 grant from SC could be reduced, or that SC might not continue to waive the 20% Council Tax (discretionary relief after 80% charity relief).

SC own the library building. The Trustees had feared that SC might wish to sell it. The good news is that TPLNS has been told recently by SLS that SC have no plans to sell the building. However, because of the current funding crisis for local authorities, the Trustees are aware that they need to continue to plan ahead in case the SC have to change their policy.

The Trustees have held extra meetings to discuss these problems and possible solutions. A budget sub-committee has been formed to prepare financial planning for future eventualities.

The Trustees are working hard to find answers to the questions arising from SC's financial crisis. They are determined to do everything they can to preserve the library as an essential resource for the local community.

A Governance and Management Framework has been drafted, outlining a structure for the various groups that manage the library and defining the tasks for which each group is responsible. The Trustees also met informally to discuss the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The topics that arose from the Framework and the SWOT session were discussed at a strategic planning meeting of the Management Committee and the volunteers.

A new Library Management System (LMS) is being rolled out to SLS and to the six other library services in the LibrariesWest consortium. Since April this computer system has been plagued with glitches, not only to the tasks that the counter volunteers have to do, but also to stock control and circulation tasks. TPLNS's volunteers have been coping nobly, and in common with so many libraries in the southwest have been communicating with the creators of the new LMS to enable them to sort out the problems. The Trustees have every confidence that the LMS will soon be working smoothly.

The Trustees have undertaken a thorough review of TPLNS's policies (some of these are statutory, some required by the Charity Commission, and some deemed necessary). The policies are available for public view in the library.

Library Performance

TPLNS is one of only two public libraries in Somerset to be entirely managed and run by volunteers.

Opening hours: 18 hours per week.

Volunteer hours: volunteers gave a total of 2893 hours of their time, both within the library and elsewhere (up from 2548 hours last year).

Community Library Partnership meetings: two have been held with Somerset Library Service representatives to review performance, and TPLNS has received quarterly performance statistics. SLS is totally satisfied with our performance.

Meetings: nine meetings of the Trustees were held, six of the Management Committee, and two of the Volunteers. The Trustees met Darren Smart and Sue Sheppard (Somerset Library Service) to discuss the impact of Somerset Council's financial difficulties on TPLNS.

Activities

Evening Talks: ten were given.

Regular weekly/monthly/annual activities:

Children's activities, including weekly Storytime for toddlers, weekly Story Reading to a class from the village school, and reading and craft activities for children at half-terms and in the holidays, including the summer Reading Challenge

Knit and Natter

Chess Club

Dungeons and Dragons

Patient Participation Group

Book sales – held regularly, plus a book table in the library and book stalls at village events

Somerset and Exmoor Coast Trail: trail passports can be obtained and stamped at the library

Women's Walk – help with planning and catering, plus storage of the archive and the banner

Participation in many village events, including the Walking Festival (Stowey Walking), Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership walks, Stowey Green Spaces, Party in the Park (book stall)

Ancestry research facilities available

Displays, including natural history, local history, arts and crafts, children's art. There are also regular library displays in the community cabinet and the old gaol

Annual plant sale

A defibrillator has been kindly donated to the library. Regular training sessions on its use are held

Other events:

Events for children included participation in the village Christmas Bear Hunt and the RSPCA reindeer food event.

Poole Day: tea at Poole House and a talk in the library by Professor Tim Fulford on Tom Poole's friendships with scientists.

An article in Somerset Life magazine featured the library and the work of the manager, Sian Stafford.

National Digital Inclusion Network: questions answered and help given with smart devices to members of the public.

The library is now at the 'recommended' stage for listing on SW Heritage's Local Heritage List of buildings, structures and places which have cultural significance in Somerset. It is also now on the Somerset Historic Environment Record.

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme (a collaboration with Natural Landscapes) has been leasing an office in the library since November 2021. TPLNS is delighted to host QLPS, who are doing so much to enhance this area.

The Coleridge Collection is now housed in the library. This collection of old, rare, valuable and more modern scholarly books by and about Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his circle is owned by the Friends of Coleridge. TPLNS is privileged to host this collection, and very pleased that the books can be seen and used by the public.

Sian Stafford has joined the Quantock Messenger editors' group and edits the magazine every two months.

Grants and Financial Aid

We are grateful to the following organisations for their generous support:

Somerset Council

Waiving of remaining 20% Council Tax (discretionary relief) after 80% charity relief

Somerset Council

Revenue grant of £5000 for the financial year 2023-2024

Lottery Community Fund

Grant of £18,000 for period 31 August 2024 to 31 August 2025

Maintenance work carried out

Tarmac repair

Repair of wall beside the Shed

A full energy assessment by Erebus Environment Ltd – this will serve as a handbook for future work

Website and social media

TPLNS's website and Facebook continue to be updated regularly.

Acknowledgements

The Trustees express their sincere thanks to the officers and members who make up the Management Committee, to the Events and Publicity Manager, and to the volunteers for their committed service in carrying out daily librarian duties. The work carried out by all of them ensures that The Thomas Poole Library, Nether Stowey continues its Community Library Partnership with the Somerset Library Service.

Signed

For and on behalf of the Trustees

30 October 2024

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey
Registered Charity No. 1181213

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

*Receipts and Payments Accounts

for the Year from April 1st 2023 to March 31st 2024

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		2023-2024	2022-2023
	Notes	£	£
Incoming Resources			
<u>Grants</u>			
Annual Grant from Somerset		£5,000.00	£5,000.00
SCF Grant		£20,000.00	£15,000.00
National Lottery Grant			£10,000.00
Heating Grant		£1,000.00	£795.00
<u>Total Grants</u>		£26,000.00	£30,795.00
<u>Revenues from Operations</u>			
Bank interest now included with 'Other'			
Subs		£335.00	£145.00
Wednesday Talks		£389.60	£791.00
Book Sales	a	£595.00	£648.85
Library Takings		£641.90	£656.10
Hall hire (including rental for QLP)		£4,500.00	£4,840.00
Other (including car park)		£1,604.56	£1,001.34
<u>Total Revenues from Operations</u>		£8,066.06	£8,082.29
Total Income		£34,066.06	£38,877.29
Expenditure			
Services and Utilities		£4,363.32	£3,312.72
Maintenance (Routine)		£1,331.67	£15,235.95
Maintenance (Special)		£2,502.18	
Employee	b	£25,849.59	£29,283.93
Outreach including Speakers	c	£388.74	£588.33
Miscellaneous		£836.79	£1,796.11
Total Expenditure		£35,322.29	£50,217.04
Net (outgoing) incoming resources		-£1,256.23	-£11,339.84
Brought forward from previous FY		£45,888.54	£57,228.29
Carried forward to next FY		£44,682.31	£45,888.45

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey
Statement of assets and liabilities as at March 31st 2024

Funds	Notes	2023-2024	2022-2023
Co-operative Bank			
Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey <i>Community Directplus Account</i>		£3,109.80	£2,940.15
TPL SCF Grant <i>Instant access savings account</i>		£41,572.51	£42,948.30
Total Bank		£44,682.31	£45,888.45
Total Cash funds		£0.00	£20.13
Total Funds		£44,682.31	£45,908.58

Assets (note d)

Item	
Dishwasher	£130.00
Cordless vacuum	£279.00
Display stands	£43.00
Copier	£37.00
Book Stands 1	£43.00
Book Rack	£72.00
Copier	£178.00
Gazebo	£158.00
Shelving	£1,246.00
Book Stands 2	£142.00
Total	£2,328.00

Notes to the Accounts

- a Income from selling donated second-hand books.
- b Employee salary (paid via SCF fund) plus direct employee expenses
- c Costs of public-facing and public relations activities (e.g. the Website, information panels), funded via SCF grant
- d Items on the Asset Register are depreciated at an arbitrary 10% p.a.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

I report on the accounts of the Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey for the year April 1st 2023 to March 31st 2024 which are set out in the pages *(following)*

Respective responsibilities of trustees and reporting examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts,
The Charity's trustees consider that the audit requirement of section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities act) does not apply and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity
Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Charities Act, and
to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement


In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with those records and to comply with the accounting records of the Act

have not been met; or

- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent Examiner

Signed		Date	29/10/2024
Name:	ROBERT HOOG		