

THE THOMAS POOLE LIBRARY, NETHER STOWEY

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

for the 12 months ended 31 March 2025

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 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 Catherine Christie Tricia Griffiths-Gough (co-opted March 2025) Norma Frood (resigned August 2025) John Hartoch (co-opted September 2025) Helen Heslop (co-opted February 2025) Chris Pearson (resigned June 2025) Nigel Phillips Eliza Sackett Terence Sackett |
| Bankers | Co-operative Bank 1, Balloon Street Manchester M60 4EP |

Structure, Governance and Management

The Trustee Board manages the affairs of the CIO. In September 2025 the governance structure was updated. There are now three committees that report to the Trustee Board:

The Finance, Fundraising and Risk Committee chaired by the Treasurer

The Management and Operations Committee chaired by the Trustees Board Chair

The Nominations and Governance Committee chaired by the Trustee responsible for Governance

The operations of the library are run by the Management and Operations Committee, which consists of the following Trustees and Officers:

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Nigel Phillips | Chair |
| Eliza Sackett | Secretary |
| Tricia Griffiths-Gough | Treasurer |
| Catherine Christie | Nominations and Governance |
| Tony Edney | Health & Safety (co-opted) |

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| John Hartoch | Events |
| Helen Heslop | Strategy and financial planning |
| Ruth Pickard | Children, young people |
| Terence Sackett | Design, marketing and publicity |
| Lynn Scales | Volunteers Leader |
| Ron Scales | Building maintenance (co-opted) |
| Bill Streeter | Chess Club |
| Sian Stafford | Centre Manager. Employed by SC/TPLNS |
| Kevin Ferriday | Parish Council representative |
| Open | Fundraising leader |
| Open | Membership Secretary |

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 2024-2025

We began this year by welcoming our new Chair, Nigel Phillips.

Two Trustees, Norma Frood and Chris Pearson, and two members of the Management Committee, Eric Coates and Jo Davison, have resigned. The Trustees are very grateful to them for all they have done.

Three new Trustees, Tricia Griffiths-Gough, John Hartoch and Helen Heslop, and two new members of the Management Committee, Tony Edney and Ron Scales, have been co-opted.

The lively and intensive meetings held at the end of last year resulted in a decision that TPLNS should do more to further its ambition to welcome more people to the library and become a community hub for Nether Stowey and its surrounding villages. This year we have formulated a funded Three-Year Business Plan to achieve this, with the main objective to turn the non-fiction room into a community and exhibition room with a café.

The first step was to move the books out of the future exhibition room and re-arrange all the shelves and the book stock in the main room. This was a mammoth task, but the main room looks all the better for it, and our colleagues in the Somerset Library Service very much approve.

We have installed a Community Café in the exhibition room, complete with a coffee machine providing freshly-ground coffee and hot drinks and new café tables and chairs. This is already proving popular.

We are in negotiations with National Landscapes (NL – what was AONB), who would like to rent the office as their national office and to create a permanent exhibition about their work in the exhibition room.

In May 2025 we received a grant from HPC. Part of this grant will pay for an exhibition on our local landscapes, climate change, local history, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his friend Thomas Poole. We will be starting work on this exhibition in the autumn. We are most grateful to Nether Stowey Parish Council, who are applying to Somerset-Association of Local Councils (SALC) for a grant to pay for an oral history project, a valuable add-on to this exhibition.

We also hope to have ever-changing displays about local activities, clubs and societies in this room.

An eight-page full-colour brochure, designed by Terence Sackett, has been delivered to every house in Nether Stowey and Over Stowey and distributed to the neighbouring villages. It gives full information about the library and its activities, and we hope that it will encourage more people to visit the library and become library members.

Smart new signage (also designed by Terence), consistent with our 'house style', has been installed inside and outside the library, including a banner at the street entrance. The aim is to make the library unmissable!

A mini-Arts Festival has been arranged, and will take place in November: four events will cover painting, music and literature, including an exhibition of work by local artists, readings by local poets, and performances by folk musicians. We are arranging a similar mini-festival about the environment to take place next spring.

Thomas Poole was an untiring philanthropist. He benefited the village in so many ways, including setting up the Savings Bank and the Women's Friendly Society – and, of course, building the pioneering free school in 1813, which now houses the library. We are asking residents of our community to help us carry on Tom Poole's work for this community by becoming Patrons of the library, and we are most grateful to those Patrons who have already donated to this project.

As always, we are grateful for the support of our membership. At 31 March 2025 there were 73 paid-up members of the CIO.

This year the Trustees have been concentrating on governance and management. This ensures that by defining the tasks we have to perform, and by creating a structure of committees and groups responsible for each task, a firm framework will exist to support the many exciting projects we are busy with now or preparing for the future.

Library Performance

TPLNS is entirely managed and run by volunteers.

Opening hours: 18 hours per week.

Volunteer hours for library operations: volunteers gave a total of 2949 hours of their time, both within the library and elsewhere (up from 2893 hours last year). The time spent by Trustees in contributing to the management of TPLNS is not accounted for in these figures.

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: seven meetings of the Trustees were held, six of the Management Committee, and four of the Volunteers.

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, a children's book group, and reading and craft activities for children at half-terms and in the holidays, and the summer Reading Challenge
- Adult book group
- Knit and Natter
- Chess Club
- Dungeons and Dragons
- Patient Participation Group
- Book sales – held regularly, plus a book table in the library and stalls at village events
- Somerset and Exmoor Coast Trail: trail passports can be obtained and stamped at the library
- The Women's Walk (held in memory of Thomas Poole) – 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)
- Monthly drop-in IT sessions for those who need help
- The library is used by village organisations for meetings and AGMs (including Stowey Green Spaces, Stowey Walking, the Allotment Association)
- 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 village gaol
- Annual plant sale

Other events:

- Events for children included a visit from the RSPCA and special activities for World Book Day.
- Poole Day: tea at Poole House and a talk in the library on Tom Poole and the Poet Laureate Robert Southey given by Professor Lynda Pratt and Dr Ian Packer.
- The library shared a promotional stall (with Stowey Walking and Stowey Green Spaces) at the Christmas Fair in the Church Centre.

- 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 library has been nominated for the King’s Award for Volunteers.
- 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 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 this village magazine every two months.

Maintenance work

The following work is planned to be completed by the end of this year:

- Painting exterior of windows and cupola
- Felling tree and repairing tarmac lifted by its roots
- Lining ceiling of the Book Shed

Website and social media

TPLNS’s website, and its Facebook and Instagram accounts, are updated regularly. The social media team also post on Stowey News Facebook.

Grants and Financial Aid

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

Somerset Council

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

Somerset Council

Revenue grant of £5,000 for the financial year 2024-2025

Nether Stowey Parish Council

£500

Cannington Parish Council

£100

Over Stowey Parish Council

£300

Spaxton Parish Council

£250

National Lottery Community Fund

£18,000 to cover one year of employment costs of the library's Centre Manager

Somerset Community Fund: Warm Safe Spaces grant

£3,000

Energy Grant

£2,500 to cover winter fuel costs

Patrons of the Thomas Poole Library

Four patrons donated a total of £1,500 (three included in the financial year ending 31 March 2025, and one in June 2025)

After the end of the financial year (31 March 2025), the following grants and donations were received:

Books for Life Charity

£400

HPC Community Fund

£36,000, to cover the Centre Manager's salary for a year and to create an exhibition on the local environment and local history

Anonymous donor

£250 to buy reference books for children

Acknowledgements

The Trustees express their sincere thanks to the officers and members who make up the Management and Operations Committee, to the Centre Manager, and to the Volunteers for their committed service in carrying out daily librarian duties and tasks behind the scenes. The work carried out by all of them ensures that The Thomas Poole Library, Nether Stowey continues its invaluable role as a public library and a community asset, and maintains its Community Library Partnership with the Somerset Library Service.

Signed

For and on behalf of the Trustees

30 October 2025

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

Registered Charity No. 1181213

Receipts and Payments accounts for the year from April 1st 2024 to March 31st 2025

| | Notes | 2024-2025 £ | 2023-2024 £ |
|--|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Income | | | |
| <u>Grants</u> | | | |
| Somerset Count Grant | | 5000.00 | 5000.00 |
| SCF Grant | | | 20000.00 |
| Housing Grant | | | 1000.00 |
| Help for Winter Grant | | 3000.00 | |
| Energy Grant | | 2500.00 | |
| National Lottery Grant | | 18000.00 | |
| Other Grants | | 1050.00 | |
| Total Grants | a | <u>29550.00</u> | <u>26000.00</u> |
| <u>Revenues from Operations</u> | | | |
| Mermbership Subs | | 340.00 | 335.00 |
| Wednesday talks | | 925.75 | 389.60 |
| Book sales | b | 745.20 | 595.00 |
| Library takings | c | 770.10 | 641.90 |
| Hall Hire including QLP rental | d | 9512.00 | 4500.00 |
| Coffee shop | e | 375.00 | |
| Patrons and other donations | f | 1040.00 | |
| Other | g | 1586.02 | 1604.56 |
| Total Revenue from Operations | | <u>15294.07</u> | <u>8066.06</u> |
| Total Income | | <u>44844.07</u> | <u>34066.06</u> |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Services and Utilities | h | -3912.62 | -4363.32 |
| Routine Maintenance | | -1463.57 | -1331.67 |
| Special Maintenance | | 0.00 | -2502.18 |
| Secondment costs | | -20728.38 | -25849.59 |
| Purchase of coffee machine | | -2874.00 | 0.00 |
| Consummables | | -377.31 | 0.00 |
| Outreach costs | i | -720.28 | -388.74 |
| Media | | -347.50 | 0.00 |
| Other | | -824.16 | -836.79 |
| Total Expenditure | | <u>-31247.82</u> | <u>-35272.29</u> |
| Net (outgoing) incoming resources | | 13596.25 | -1206.23 |
| Resources B/F from PY | | 44682.31 | 45888.54 |
| Resources C/F to next year | j | 58278.56 | 44682.31 |

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

Registered Charity No. 1181213

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2025

| | 2024-2025 | 2023-2024 |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Cash at Bank | | |
| Co-operative Bank | | |
| Community Direct Plus | | |
| account | 4344.37 | 3109.80 |
| Instant Access Savings | | |
| Account | 53934.19 | 41572.51 |
| Total | 58278.56 | 44682.31 |

Notes to the Accounts

a) Grants

During the year the library received funding from the National Lottery to fund employee costs, the annual grant from Somerset County Council to support library operations, an energy grant and help for winter grant to help fund the designated warm space and various donations from local parishes.

b) Book sales

The library has a second- hand book shop on the premises and this is the income from selling donated second- hand books.

c) Library Takings

Library takings include late fees and book order fees.

d) Hall / Room Hire

In the year ended 31/3/2025, the library received 24 months of room rental from the Quantocks Landscape Partnership as well as income from hosting PCC elections.

| Room Hire | 2024-2025 | 2023-2024 |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| | £ | £ |
| QLP room hire | 9000.00 | 4500 |
| PCC elections | 512.00 | |
| Total | 9512.00 | 4500 |

e) Coffee Shop

The library has purchased a coffee machine and is offering tea and coffee for donations.

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

Registered Charity No. 1181213

f) Patrons and Donations

A patron scheme has been developed and there were 3 patrons at the end of the year.

g) Other income

Other income includes bank interest on the deposit account and revenue from car parking.

h) Services and utilities

| | 2024-2025 | 2023-2024 |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Energy | 1650.95 | |
| Oil | 1482.16 | |
| Water | 286.01 | |
| Insurance | 493.50 | |
| Total | <u>3912.62</u> | <u>4363.32</u> |

i) Outreach

Outreach costs include the costs of public facing and public relation activities (eg Website)

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

Registered Charity No. 1181213

j) Reserves and Going Concern

The library has a clearly documented reserves policy and ensures that there is a designated fund that includes all committed spend, two years of annual overheads and an exceptional maintenance budget. The library has a 3 year financial plan that supports its going concern assessment with a healthy level of free reserves.

Reserves Explanation

| | £ |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Cash balance at 31/3/2025 | £58,278.56 |

Agreed 2025 funding

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| HPC | £36,000.00 |
| SCC | £5,000.00 |
| Total agreed resources | £99,278.56 |

Restricted funding

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| National Lottery funding 24/25 | £9,200.00 |
| HPC Secondment 12 months | £22,000.00 |
| HPC Media centre | £14,000.00 |
| Total restricted funding | £45,200.00 |

Non restricted funding

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Designated reserves | |
| One year overheads | £12,000.00 |
| Committed secondment costs | £18,000.00 |
| Maintenance budget | £10,000.00 |
| Total designated reserves | £40,000.00 |

Free reserves £14,078.56

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

Registered Charity No. 1181213

k) Fixed Assets

The library keeps an asset register. All assets are fully expensed upon purchase and so are not capitalised on the balance sheet. The main addition to the asset registers in the year ended 31/3/2025 was a coffee machine for £2874. The below assets are shown below at original cost.

| | £ |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Display stands | 130.00 |
| Dishwasher | 279.00 |
| Cordless vacuum | 43.00 |
| Copier | 37.00 |
| Book stands 1 | 43.00 |
| Book rack | 72.00 |
| Copier | 178.00 |
| Gazebo | 158.00 |
| Shelving | 1246.00 |
| Book stands 2 | 142.00 |
| Coffee Machine | 2874.00 |
| Total | <u>5202.00</u> |

Independent Examiners 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 2024 to March 31st, 2025, which are set out in the attached pages.

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:
 - i. To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - ii. 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..... 20/10/25

Name B. A. Hood

The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

Registered Charity No. 1181213

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| Total Grants | a | <u>29550.00</u> | <u>26000.00</u> |
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The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey

Registered Charity No. 1181213

f) Patrons and Donations

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g) Other income

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Reserves Explanation

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| Cash balance at 31/3/2025 | £58,278.56 |

Agreed 2025 funding

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| SCC | £5,000.00 |
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Restricted funding

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- 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

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Independent Examiner's statement

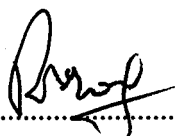
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2. To which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent Examiner

Signed

Date.....20/10/25.....

NameB. A. Hood.....