

OWN BOOKS AGM NEWSLETTER / REPORT ON 2024

FOR 2025 AGM on January 30th 2025

Welcome everyone to our 11th year AGM with Own Books!

In my usual newsletters, I tend to list all the details that have happened in the previous year and all the developments. 2024 has been better than ever and everything is going so beautifully and it is running so well with the amazing organisation of Alison, Julia, Dawn, Lynne, Carley, Alistair and Christophe, as well as advisors John and Judith,

BOOK DELIVERIES

So, in this newsletter the first thing to say is that we have continued to take on new schools in the year 2024. Alison will update us with numbers shortly. *(Added to end of this report)*

Alison and I held our annual Zoom with Vanessa and Joseph from World of Books (WOB). The good news is that they are happy to continue supplying/posting out books to our schools. However, they have changed their business model and instead of taking in all and any type of book, they are now being more selective in their process. They have a new CEO and are awaiting the completion of changes to their system, but will generally take in books they know they can sell right away or sell on at a later date. This means they have relatively fewer surplus books for charities like us. They have agreed to deliver one box to all of our schools twice a year instead of three times a year.

We approached another book source called Better World Books (BWB). This is a book company, much like World of Books based in Scotland, that has a good resource of books to give us. They supply boxes with 15kgs of books whenever we ask for them but we have to pay postage via UPS. We have a charity account with UPS now and the postage rate is £6 - 9 per box and Alison organises the postage labels needed.

We began with organising shipments to what I call my "out of reach schools", schools that we cannot physically get to with our lovely volunteers on the road. We have about 30 of these schools up and down the country and have supplied at least one box to each of these schools. Therefore, we are trying to fill gaps where WOB are unable to deliver.

We may look into finding another kind of WOB or BWB in the coming year to see if we can source more books.

Alison and Dawn do a sterling job of regularly collecting from the Oxfam bookshop and the guide dogs and any other donations to us and storing them at Montague storage in Warwick. These provide our local delivery stocks to local schools around the Warwickshire area, such as Coventry, Leamington, Warwick, North Warwickshire, and some in Stratford, and Alcester.

Our main discussion point for the AGM is to consider if we should put a hold on taking on any new ones for the time being and do a good, reliable, consistent service for the schools that we already have or continue to take on schools to our list. WOB will take longer to work through the

list of schools before starting again and we are unsure of their time span in delivering books to the complete list of 114 schools. Should we also increase the number of deliveries from BWB and carry the cost? How often should we use this alternative?

The endeavour is to provide the schools with a regular and dependable book supply so that schools will know there is a new replenishment coming. I will continue to send out extra labels posters flyers to schools when they request,

HIGHLIGHTS

The highlight of 2024 really was our King's Award presentation and volunteer lunch in Warwick and our trip to Buckingham Palace, in May. Alison and I had a fantastic day mingling with the great and the good in the grounds of the Palace gardens. It was a beautiful day and I have many beautiful photographs of the event.

We were also featured in a couple of local newspapers, the Stratford Herald et cetera, and a great deal of publicity was made of this event for us. It was a great honour and a great accolade for Own Books and all of our volunteers.

The other eventful moment was a free promotional video offered to us by Chilli Mintv studios in Warwick, where they created a lovely short video of the importance of early years books and reading, featuring a lovely mum and her two delightful children. This is now on our website.

OWN BOOKS INSPIRES WORKSHOPS

The workshops continue to be an enrichment program in addition to our Own Books core mission, and we are fortunate to obtain grant funding for these as well. We were granted an award from the Passionists grant funders to conduct early years workshops called the Great Big Story Time.

This was designed for children from 2 to 5 in nurseries and preschool settings along with their parents in a short morning session of exciting storytelling with professional author and storyteller, Cat Wetherall, followed by a brief art making session, making puppets. And always the big book giveaway.

This grant also enabled us to print an updated beautifully illustrated version of my book called Adventures in Mindful Parenting. First written by me in 2012 updated in 2024, with illustrations by Felicity Carey. We printed 500 copies to donate to the parents in these workshops and other nursery settings and I'm pleased to say that we have run out of copies and therefore we have done another re-printing recently of another 500 copies. Thanks to a second recent grant from the Passionists and Lynne 's amazing application for it. We are intending to run another couple of the early years workshops in the spring, early summer with this grant.

Another huge achievement, thanks to Carley and Lynne, in their amazing writing applications has secured for us a gigantic sum of £20,000 from the Arts for All Community Grant, from the National lottery. Since they have upped the amount from £10,000 to £20,000 last year,(and we were fortunate to secure the £10,000 grant in 2023) I decided we would just go for the big amount £20,000 and amazingly we were successful, yet again, I say, huge thanks to the incredible grant

writing applications of my wonderful Grant writers. So with this National Lottery money, I have designed another project called The Great Big Phone Off.

The stimulus for this was seeing children walk along the streets glued to their screens, never looking up and out at other people in the world. A paradoxical form of disconnection, within another form of connection, within a tiny screen. In all the times I have presented a workshop to schools, I have never had any response as fast as I did, when I launched it to 15 schools and within two hours all eight slots had been taken up.

This is obviously a sign of the times and a pressing issue. We are conducting these workshops as we speak and have done four already so far. We will finalise the last one on the 14th of February.

So far the response has been amazing from the children and they have particularly responded to the creative making part of the workshop playing with so many beautiful fabrics, materials, wallpapers, ribbons, et cetera they absolutely love playing with this.

The whole idea is to get them absorbed in a sensory hands-on experience, and to talk to each other in real time space. I have fantastic facilitators presenting this workshop. They work wonderfully as a team now, but I always feel this is a drop in the ocean working with groups of 35 10 to 11-year-olds, and only eight schools,

I can but hope that the pushback against the unhealthy mobile phone use for young people will be now seriously considered by schools as the negative aspects of addiction are going to be obviously affecting the mental health of these young people.

The future is with us. I feel the next couple of years will be turbulent, full of change, and full of opportunity for betterment. It is my wish and my heart's desire that Own Books continues to be the success that it is, and serves as a functioning, benevolent, service to children. I feel and hope that children having access to real hands on books will encourage self inquiry, curiosity, independent, critical, and free thinking, autonomy and agency, as well as enjoyment and imaginative, creative enrichment.

I remain entirely indebted to the generosity of our volunteers and trustees for the success of this project now in 11th year and the only way I can describe its success is the fact that it's wanted. If there would not be a need for it, it would not be here today.

Thank you all very much.

Have a fantastic 2025.

With love and best wishes always from Julie de Bastion, founder and creative director of Own Books

Book Deliveries 2024 (reported by Alison Shaw, Trustee)

I am very happy to report that we have a grand total of 110 schools on our list who receive books from World of Books (WOB) on a termly basis. We are in regular contact with these schools and receive a great deal of positive feedback.

$103 \times 45 \text{ books} \times 3 \text{ terms} = 13,905 \text{ books in 2024 from WOB}$

Projected for 2025: $110 \text{ schools} \times 45 \text{ books} \times 2 \text{ terms} = 9,900 \text{ books}$

Julie and Dawn are in frequent contact with local schools in Leamington/Warwick/Stratford and we are able to react quickly with deliveries of books from our own store as and when required. We also try to set up new schools with a good supply of books before the delivery from WOB. Any religious books collected are taken to St Mark's Church in Leamington, usually 1 or 2 bags.

In 2024 our wonderful team of volunteers made 92 deliveries (76 in 2023) and dispatched 457 (449 bags in 2023) bags of books. That's about 5 bags per school each delivery.

So far in 2025 we have made 10 deliveries and delivered 35 bags.

The number of books in a bag varies but there are usually at least 25 per bag so $457 \times 25 = 11,425 \text{ books in 2024 and counting!}$

We have received various donations throughout 2024 and these were all sorted and delivered.

We continue to collect books from Oxfam bookshop and the Guide Dogs charity shop in Leamington on a weekly basis. Thank you to Alistair, Christoph and Dawn for the expert navigating the Warwickshire roads and delivering to schools in Warwickshire, Coventry and Birmingham.

We work with Better World Books in Scotland who can send out boxes of books for us if we pay the postage. They can supply Primary or Secondary books. To date we have sent 39 boxes to our "Out of Reach" schools that we can't deliver to ourselves or schools that need a supply and we are unable to fulfill from our store. We have a charity account with UPS and the price is usually between £6 -9 for postage depending on location.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name

Own Books

Number

1190573

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
01/01/2024

To

Period end date
31/12/2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grants	-	29,000	-	29,000	16,700
Donations, transfer & refunds	226	-	-	226	30
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	226	29,000	-	29,226	16,730
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	226	29,000	-	29,226	16,730
A3 Payments					
IT / Internet / telephone		726	-	726	1,196
Printing / postage / stationery		2,795	-	2,795	239
Volunteer expenses		2,281	-	2,281	2,058
Projects / project management		9,648	-	9,648	12,211
Bank charges / interest		-	-	-	-
Governance		209	-	209	218
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	15,659	-	15,659	15,922
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	15,659	-	15,659	15,922
Net of receipts/(payments)	226	13,341	-	13,567	808
A5 Transfers between funds	151	- 151	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,532	12,814	-	14,346	19,020
Cash funds this year end	1,909	26,004	-	27,913	19,828

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash in current bank account	1,909	26,004	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	1,909	26,004	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	J.M. Gibson	JULIA GIBSON	31/03/2025	



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Own Books

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 December 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1190573

Set out on pages

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31/12/2024.

**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 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.

Signed:

Angela Barrett

Date:

27/03/2025

Name:

Angela Barrett FCCA

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

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Address:

5 Clark Close

Shipston on Stour

Warwickshire, CV36 4HJ