

Ovingham Reading Room

Chairperson's Annual Report 2024-25 - Ovingham Reading Room

This report is to be presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 29 September 2025. Separate reports will be presented for Bookings and Hire and for Finance and Accounts.

1. Management and Trustees

The Reading Room is managed and maintained by a committee of Trustees who meet on the final Monday of each month at 7.30pm. Between the last AGM and this, the Trustees have met 10 times, with breaks in December and July.

Following the last AGM, the committee was joined by 3 new volunteer trustees, Jayne Keady, Keith Laidlaw and Jerry White. Tragically, Keith died in June this year.

At the time of the AGM then, Trustees are:

Lesley Holden – *Chairperson. Safeguarding Lead.*
Chris Lindsay - *Honorary Treasurer and maintenance contact.*
Debbie Reed – *Joint bookings secretary.*
Dean Bowen – *Maintenance contact.* .
Joanna Jackson - *Vice Chair (Parish Council). Safeguarding Lead.*
Jane Singh – *Committee member*
Jayne Keady – *Joint bookings secretary*
Jerry White - *Health and Safety Officer*
Lorraine White (*Drama Group*)
Marion Lewis (*Choir*)
Vicky Lindsay (*Toddler Group*)
Pat Carpenter (*Craft Group*)

At this AGM I will be standing down both as Chair and as a Trustee of the Reading Room.

Continuous review of the Reading Room's policies is needed by the management committee. In February, after a long and careful process of debate and review, a new version of the *Conditions of Hire* and associated paper work was adopted.

The Safeguarding Policy was next to be reviewed and an updated version entitled *Policy, Principles and Procedures for Safeguarding* was proposed and adopted on 31 March 2025.

The document currently being reviewed is the Reading Room's overall *Governing Document*, known as our Constitution, although the process has stalled somewhat due to other demands. I have retyped the existing document and included an appendix showing the provisions of a court order of 2004. Overall the document is fit for purpose but a section on the make-up of the Management Committee does not reflect how things work at present and needs to be updated and approved as a matter of priority.

I would also suggest that the *Health and Safety* and *Fire and Emergency* policies should be next for review as various national regulations have changed since these were last approved.

The Reading Room is a designated *Community Resilience Assistance Centre* and the emergency response plan was updated in January this year. This followed attendance by Vicky Lindsay and Debbie Reed at an event of the *Community Resilience Forum* and a meeting with officers from the County Council and Ovingham Parish Councillors.

2. Building maintenance and development

The building has been maintained in good repair throughout the year and special thanks are due to Chris Lindsay for all the work and time he has dedicated to leading on this vital aspect of our work. The Reading Room has continued to benefit from the services of a contracted part-time cleaner, and the continued flexible services of a local and very capable 'handyman'.

We had a target last year to hang some new photographic displays reflecting the more recent history and activities of the Reading Room, and to move some existing displays from the small to large hall; this has not been achieved and may require further consideration. A new display of past posters for Reading Room events has been hung in the Blackett Room. Dean Bowen also has an extensive collection of digital photographs of Reading Room activities which can be used to display a carousel of pictures on the big screen at various events.

The limited accessible storage space in the building continues to present regular challenges to Trustees and user groups, requiring regular discussion and review.

The need for some repainting throughout the building was identified last year and it was also agreed to change the colour scheme and totally repaint the main hall. Jim Wardle was invited to join a sub-group of committee members to plan for the redecoration of the main hall and to look at future refurbishment ambitions and associated fundraising. The hall was finally repainted in August this year, not without controversy, and some work outstanding needs further decision-making.

The Gas and Electricity suppliers were changed to British Gas and EDF respectively, leading to a reduction in bills. The Internet supplier was changed in March to SOGEA, again cutting costs.

Northumberland Community Energy Limited has now secured planning approval for the proposed solar panel installations to the roof of the Reading Room. Their solicitors are drawing up a draft lease agreement (for the roof) and will instruct solicitors *Sintons* to advise and act on behalf of RR Trustees in this matter. Next steps are that Sintons will contact us requesting documentation including land registry details and our Governing Document. Two Trustees need to be identified who will be involved in signing the final lease agreement and they will need to undergo identity checks.

3. Events and activities

Film Night has continued throughout the year, run by a sub-committee of trustees and other volunteers. In March we again took part in the *Tyne Valley Film Festival*, with a successful screening of independent locally-made films. The entry fee of £5 has remained the same since January 2024 and bar prices have been in place since August 2024. The same price list is used for any bar provided by the Reading Room for its own events. Film nights need a regular audience of 21 paying guests to cover the film licence fee. Attendance over 21 people and profit from the bar and ices, is a financial gain to the Reading Room. The majority of films shown do attract the target audience,

with only the very occasional dip. As the children's 2024 Christmas Matinee was poorly attended, the group have decided this year just to show a Christmas-themed film in the usual Friday night slot.

Trustees were joined by the Church Choir, Ovifun, the Mother's Union and other volunteers in hosting the traditional *Christmas Cheer* event on 10 December 2024 with carols, children's crafts, mince pies, mulled wine, turkey sandwiches and an *Ecobola*. The Blackett Room was transformed into a grotto for Santa in his brand new outfit and his Elf with children's gifts. Money raised was again donated to *Crisis at Christmas*.

The committee held the annual *Village Quiz* on 15 February, with a £10 entry fee including pie and peas. This raised over £700 for the Reading Room. Steve Mobbs ably hosted the entertaining, varied and challenging quiz with assistance from Rachel Peck. It is hoped they will do this again for a February quiz in 2026.

The Reading Room hosted the annual Goose Fair on the Village Green and Vicarage Haugh on 21 June, once again organized by a sub-committee of Trustees and volunteers and greatly assisted by a wide team of volunteers for the event itself. Despite an increase in the entry fee from £2 to £3 (children free), the event was extremely well attended and made an impressive overall profit for the Reading Room. The subcommittee met to review the event on 28 July with an overall very positive conclusion. A 'thank-you' evening for Goose Fair volunteers is planned for 10 October 2025.

Lesley Holden
Chairperson
Ovingham Reading Room Committee

September 2025

OVINGHAM READING ROOM

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

CASH AND BANK BALANCES AT 1ST APRIL 2024

y/e31.3.24

CASH IN HAND	144			169		
LLOYDS....646	3,708			2,544		
LLOYDS....124	4			4		
VIRGIN	12,761			17,726		
		16,617			20,443	
INCOME						
REG. HALL HIRE	6,180			6146		
ONE OFF HALL HIRE	2,515			2025		
GOOSE FAIR	6,070			4151		
GRANTS				600		
CHAT CLUB	3,504			3169		
FILM NIGHT	2,925			2591		
XMAS CHEERS				235		
QUIZ						
EVENTS	3,443			465		
DONATIONS				1220		
SUNDRIES	1,527			116		
Total	26,164	26,164	42,781	20718	20718	41,161
EXPENDITURE						
CLEANING SERV.	3600			3700		
ELECTRICITY/GAS	4102			5708		
INSURANCE	1210			1104		
LICENCES	240			365		
HALL/GR.MAINT.	3723			2818		
CL.MATERIALS	492			503		
OFFICE	23			297		

OVINGHAM READING ROOM

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

REPRESENTED BY BANK BALANCES AT

CASH IN HAND	
LLOYDS646	
LLOYDS....124	
VIRGIN DEPOSIT	
CHAIRMAN	
Lesley Holden
TREASURER	
Chris Lindsay
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	
Phil Holden
DATE	

I.T./WEB SITES	860			389		
WATER RATES	448			138		
EQUIPMENT	785			1837		
CHAT CLUB	3266			2357		
GOOSE FAIR	4840			1816		
XMAS CHEER				340		
EVENTS	1064			705		
FILM CLUB	1544			1199		
FAIRINGS				522		
SUNDRIES	551			746		
Total		26,748	26,748		24,544	24,544
			16,033			16,617
	-	584		-	3,826	

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25

Γ 31 MARCH 2025 y/e 31.3.24

144	144
2,806	3,708
4	4
13,079	12,761
16,033	16,617

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OVINGHAM READING ROOM

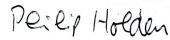
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Reg Charity Number: 248632

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention,
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 the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act,

have not been met.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Holden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a light blue rectangular box.

Signed :

Philip Holden
64 Piper Road
Ovingham
NE42 6AZ

dated : 25th September 2025