

# **Annual report 2020-2021**

## **Denby Dale Community Project operating as Denby Dale Community Library**

### **Constitution**

The Denby Dale Community Project (DDCP) is a charitable incorporated organisation governed by its constitution and registered with the Charity Commission (registration number 1155111). It operates under the name Denby Dale Community Library (DDCL). Its registered address and details of its trustees are included further down this report.

In summary, our objects are to benefit the residents of Denby Dale and surrounding areas through the establishment and management of a community building and library, which will help advance education and provide facilities for leisure and social welfare.

### **COVID-19 update**

We began the year in lockdown, with the library and café/shop closed for the foreseeable future, the building mothballed and the caretaking rota and duties adjusted accordingly. We invested in an automatic hand sanitiser dispenser, face masks and extra cleaning materials, and kept the cleaner on a retainer so that we would be ready to have the building cleaned quickly at the end of lockdown. Our website and local social media channels were kept updated throughout, and this continues.

The Library was able to offer reduced opening at some periods during the year, as lockdown eased, but the Kirkwood Hospice (KH) café & shop have been closed all year.

Kirklees Library Service (KLS) worked hard to continue to offer services to people isolated at home, improving their online offer, despite most staff being diverted to other pandemic-related duties.

At the time of writing (July 2021) our building is closed again because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are hoping that we will be able to re-open soon so that we can continue to provide this well-used and well-regarded service in our community. Trustees are continuing to meet regularly to discuss assessing risks; our financial position; the security and care of our building; communication with our customers, community and stakeholders; and plans for safely re-opening.

We have all learnt a lot about Risk Assessments – and are pleased to have considerable expertise within the Trustees, with particular thanks to Derek Lawrence. We found that ‘locking down’ is much easier than getting back up and running safely!

The car park remained open throughout the year. It continued to be used by those visiting local shops, takeaways and services, when these were available. We allowed workmen on adjacent house-building sites to use the car park whilst the library was closed.

Our financial position is good. Our costs during closure are limited and we have sufficient reserves to cover these costs for another year or more. We have received a number of Government grants during the year designed to support small businesses cope with their losses during the pandemic.

We have agreed a significant rent reduction for our partner, Kirkwood Hospice, as their income from the café/shop was suspended and their fundraising has been badly affected by the pandemic.

## **The Year from April 2020 to March 2021**

The rest of this report gives more detail on our activities and performance for the year ending 31 March 2021.

Although very much affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, we continued to aim to provide a safe and welcoming building for the community of Denby Dale and surrounding villages, together with a small and well-used community car park.

The building provides a free space for Kirklees Council to run a community-supported library, thus preserving a popular service within the village. It also usually provides a community hub for a wide range of activities, both formal and informal. The building also normally benefits from a café and gift shop, run by Kirkwood Hospice, a local charity.

However, at the start of the year in March 2020, the building was mothballed, and everything closed.

### **Delivery of services – what was possible**

From April 2020, Kirklees Library Services (KLS) worked hard to enhance its library service online. Despite the Government announcement that from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020 libraries would be allowed to open if they could do so safely, few, if any, libraries in England were opened at this date. Prior to re-opening, ensuring the safety of users, volunteers & staff was paramount.

KLS needed to tailor their approach to each building and assess risks fully. Our building was acknowledged to have good accessibility, although restricted space. Trustees held meetings in the building with both KLS and KH to plan safe reopening for August.

In late July limited library opening began at Denby Dale, with book returns possible into a wheelie bin on the doorstep for ‘quarantining’. In early August ‘Ring & Read’ began, with KLS staff choosing books for customers to minimise handling, selecting up to 6 books taken from the shelves at Denby Dale, based on readers’ preferences. Members booked appointments to collect the books from the library door during two sessions per week. We co-ordinated cleaning of the building accordingly.

Extra restrictions were imposed in Kirklees due to rising local infection rates in August – preparations had been well underway for opening the library for browsing by users, but this had to be deferred. Rules were again tightened in September. Safe browsing finally started on 5<sup>th</sup> October, with users allowed into the building for the two sessions a week. These sessions were staffed by KLS, with no volunteer support. Numbers allowed in the building at one time were limited, furniture was removed or moved to enable social distancing, all leaflets were cleared, and a one-way system introduced. The number of customers was low, but those that did access it were grateful, and it proved a useful learning for the future.

Browsing was again suspended in the second national lockdown in November, however Ring & Read continued during the two sessions per week.

Kirklees moved out of the second lockdown into Tier 3; we were hopeful that safe browsing would be able to start again in January, although there would still be no access to PCs or free wifi, or volunteers. Kirklees Library Service staff are not allowed to work alone in a building open to the public, so the number of available shifts had to be halved to allow two staff to be present. Normally, staff are supported by our volunteers who are essential to keeping the library open for our community but KLS did not allow volunteers to start working until later in the year.

However, in fact even 'Ring & Read' was suspended after the New Year as the third national lockdown meant library staff across the borough were deployed to support essential services.

During the entire year, the 'Ring & Read' service operated for 14 weeks, and safe browsing for only 5 weeks. In these times, the Denby Dale Library issued just short of 3,000 physical items and had 500 visitors.

Our other tenants, Kirkwood Hospice, had an even more difficult year, being very much in the front line of the pandemic. We remained in regular contact via zoom meetings, and telephone. The Trustees agreed to a request to significantly reduce rent payments in the spirit of our partnership while Kirkwood were unable to open in the building.

It is not yet clear when the café & shop will be able to reopen. In autumn 2020 the hospice launched a new approach and new branding as 'The Kirkwood', and have repainted the café furniture and walls to fit with the colours of this image. Alterations to the cafe layout have been introduced to allow social distancing. KH are taking a cautious approach with their volunteers, many of whom are older and/or vulnerable individuals.

The Trustees agreed to use of our car park in April 2021 as a collecting point for donated goods brought by local residents for Kirkwood to sell in their shops, to ensure there is plenty of stock available when re-opening happens.

### **Other Activities**

The Trustees took the opportunity to improve our communication, which became more important in uncertain times when news on opening and closing needed to be relatively fast moving and accurate and available to people at home. Led by Pete Belsey and Kath Kerr, we developed a new website – with improved accessibility, clearer navigation and better features. We are very grateful to the free support given by Karen at Orange Circle: Marketing & Design Consultancy for this project (and in many other ways since we began). The new website was launched in October.

We began the year with 26 volunteers who work in the library, either with a regular slot or to do occasional cover. We kept in regular touch with our volunteers via email and phone, through our volunteer co-ordinators Kate & Linda. KLS also sent frequent bulletins to all library volunteers. As there were no hours this year worked by volunteers in the library in support of Kirklees staff, we have no statistics on this to report. However, many hours were given by volunteers and the Trustees towards re-opening or to help elsewhere in the village.

Our Caretakers group of volunteers, led by Derek Lawrence, continued with revised duties during closure, with extra efforts prior to each stage of re-opening. They visited the building once a week to make checks and keep everything ticking over eg flushing toilets regularly; weeding and sweeping the car park; repainting the outside doors; re-varnishing the noticeboard; and cleaning the windows. We estimate that at least 100 hours of time was given by the group in the year.

### **Returning to full use of our building**

Health and safety will be a key consideration as we plan for re-opening and we will work with Kirklees Library Services and The Kirkwood to ensure we comply with Government recommendations for social distancing and personal protective equipment, and other measures.

## **Improvements to our building in 2020 - 2021**

We have taken the opportunity to carry out some improvements whilst the building was closed, and in preparing for re-opening. We replaced the electric boiler in January 2021, which should be more efficient going forward.

The actions of others will also improve our offer. The adjacent derelict site of the former nursery school was developed for housing, providing a much more conducive setting and safer land-use next door. New fencing along the boundary with our car park was installed by the developer Wimpenny. We allowed the builders to use our car park while the building was not open – and received a donation from Wimpenny in return.

The Walkers are Welcome Group, who are active locally, upgraded their website, <http://denbydale-walkersarewelcome.org.uk/> and devised ten new routes & leaflets. Denby Dale has great walking country all around and the walk leaflets have been very popular in the library. As everywhere, this activity rose in popularity during lockdown in local areas close to home, and we hope that availability of more leaflets will help that continue in future.

## **Governance**

We have 12 Trustees with a wide mix of skills and experience. There were no changes to the Trustees during the year, and regular meetings were held at least every 2 months or as required. All meetings were virtual, via zoom thanks to Secretary Tansy Hepton who very competently organised these meetings and ensured everyone could access them.

Those Trustees whose terms of office expired were re-appointed for a further 3 year term. Trustees have agreed that the position of Chair will be held for a year at a time, rotating amongst those who are willing to take it on. The first of these was Janet Johnson, who was appointed Chair in November 2019. The Trustees agreed in January that it makes sense for the Chair to handover at the end of the financial year, with the new Chair taking up the role on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Accordingly, Derek Lawrence moved from Vice-Chair to Chair after the end of March 2021.

Discussions around shaping our future Strategy are on hold, a broad outline having been discussed in March 2020. Instead, the Trustees undertook scenario planning, looking at various likely timescales for the pandemic and the impact on our finances, at the beginning and the end of the year. With this in mind, we discussed the level of reserves needed, and agreed a Reserves Policy – see below. Work will continue to identify the parameters and sums required for the long-term maintenance and renewal of the building.

A GoogleDrive for DDCL was established to act as repository to share documents and store important information, available to all Trustees.

The partnerships with Kirklees Library Service and Kirkwood Hospice are important to us and we hold regular meetings with their representatives to share information, discuss re-opening and make sure our building continues to meet their needs and that our purposes are aligned.

## **Trustees**

Trustees are appointed by resolution at a properly convened meeting, with due regard being paid to skills, knowledge and experience. Trustees can serve a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms. The following Trustees have served during the year:

Janet Johnson	(Chair from 14 November 2019 - 31 March 2021)
Derek Lawrence	(Chair from 1 April 2021)
Neil Denby	(Treasurer)
Peter Belsey	
Richard Brook	
Susan Daniels	
Tansy Hepton	(Secretary)
Kath Kerr	
Linda Kitson	Re-appointed 30 September 2020
Jon Milner	
Graham Turner	
Kate Tunstall	Re-appointed 5 January 2021

## **Finance and Fundraising**

We remain in a good financial position despite the impact of the pandemic on our activities. Our accounts have been subject to formal examination by a suitable independent person and are available on the Charity Commission website.

We undertook cashflow modelling on various scenarios, including being closed all year as the 'worst case' view at the beginning. After the year of almost complete closure, we ran the exercise again.

We received reduced rental income and no lettings income for events & activities during the year. Our running costs for the year were reduced as far as reasonable, adopting a prudent approach, whilst being ready to mobilise to re-open.

We carried out repairs to the electrical main board, and replaced the electric boiler which began giving problems whilst the building was only in use twice per week, after investigations and attempts to repair it had failed.

A comprehensive external Fire Risk Assessment fell due and was carried out.

We agreed a rent reduction for our tenants and partners Kirkwood Hospice, although for the first quarter of the year they had already paid the full rent just as the pandemic hit, meaning the building was then closed for the whole quarter. The 75% reduction in rent is based on helping to cover our costs and recognising their loss of revenue. The Trustees continue to make decisions on this one quarter at a time.

We applied for and received Government grants available to small businesses – the total received in payments in June, December and January was helpful, and offset the immediate loss of income in the year. There will undoubtedly be longer-term continuing reduced income, as things take time to return to the 'new normal'.

Our income from solar panels was unaffected – indeed the excellent early summer sunshine was helpful!

We are reliant not just on funding, but also on a pool of dedicated volunteers who match the Kirklees Library Services staff hours. Many of these volunteers are in the "vulnerable" category as defined by Government guidelines and will not be able to return to their roles until it is safe for them to do so.

We are confident we will be able to find enough volunteers to resume 'normal' opening, and will look to recruit further volunteers from the community when the opportunity arises.

Our magnificent Supporters Club continued to support us, and the level of income from this remained the same. We offered occasional communications during the year from Richard Brook on behalf of the Trustees. The Supporters' Club Draw was held as planned in December, via zoom in the Trustees meeting, and the cash prizes distributed safely to the successful members. We are very grateful to all these people who support the Library & community facility in this way.

Our usual fundraising events were impossible this year. Our major event is the annual Christmas raffle. We considered options including running an online raffle, but had to reluctantly postpone and then cancel the raffle altogether when further national restrictions took hold in November. We hope to come back stronger in 2021!

## **RESERVES POLICY**

*February 2021*

The Charity exists to provide and manage a Community Building together with fund-raising and seeking grants to support this; and recruiting and managing volunteers to assist the Local Authority to run Denby Dale Library, now housed in our Building.

As a responsible organisation, we need to have an appropriate level of Reserves, kept in our deposit account, for the financial risks faced during periods of disruption and loss of income. The Reserves are funds retained from income, above and beyond any anticipated annual budget requirements, to cater for unpredictable circumstances that can draw heavily and/or unexpectedly upon the Charity's funds. We need to make sure that enough money is available to meet potential needs,

The level of total Reserves should be adequate to cover different circumstances that can be envisaged, to replace loss of income or cover additional expenditure and allow us to keep the building refurbished. It should not be excessive, effectively taking money away from charitable activities. These Reserves strengthen our resilience and our ability to maintain continuity of service.

### **General Reserves**

Our General Reserves are intended to cater for major risks & sudden variations in routine activity that would add significantly to costs of administration and activity such as:

- Loss of rental income from The Kirkwood as our tenant (operating a cafe & shop) – currently worth £1,750 per quarter. This is the major source of income for the Charity. The Reserves should cover at least two years, ideally three years, worth of replacement of this income, in case it ceases. This length of time is appropriate as it would probably take considerable time to find a suitable replacement tenant, in line with restrictions in the Asset Transfer Agreement; or to develop an alternative business model.
- Emergency building repairs – we have ownership and responsibility for the community building (which houses the library run by Kirklees, and a tenanted area comprising a café and shop run by The Kirkwood) and though normal repairs are covered within the annual budget, there are likely to be, from time to time, emergencies that require immediate, costly or complex attention.
- Closure of operations through pandemic or local circumstances

We therefore expect to hold between £16,000 minimum and £23,000 maximum as our General Reserves in the charity deposit account. The current level of funding at April 2021 was £11,369; Trustees are comfortable with this level because the balance in our Reserve fund is higher than planned.

### **Cyclical Renovation and Major Maintenance Fund**

In addition, we aim to build up earmarked Reserve funds for Cyclical Renovation and Major Maintenance (i.e. a 'sinking fund') to ensure that we can keep our building in good condition. This will enable us to carry out replacement of the internal fittings in the kitchen, toilets etc to keep them attractive; as well as renovation of external features eg paintwork, rainwater goods, solar panels and the roof at the right time. As the building is still new, this is about saving now for the future. We will do some work in the coming year to assess likely requirements and map out a timeline with estimated costs to set a clearer view of the scale required for this fund.

Our initial view is that this will need to be between £11,000 and £20,000 depending on where we are in the cycle. The current level at March 2021 was £28,025.

### **Review & Action**

This Policy will be reviewed by the Trustees annually in March each year, to assess whether it is still appropriate to the risks to be addressed, and ensure it meets the Charity's ongoing strategy. We will review the amounts held, as a trigger to action if necessary. We will ensure that if the Reserves fall below the minimum required the Trustees will take action to replenish the Reserves. If they rise above the maximum we envisage as required, the Trustees will discuss how to spend more money on our charitable objectives.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Trustees have given consideration to the major risks to which the Charity is exposed and have satisfied ourselves that systems or procedures are in place to manage them, as set out below. This will be reviewed annually.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY and ENVIRONMENT**

**Major Risk Area:** ENSURING THE SAFETY & WELFARE OF BUILDING USERS AND COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH & SAFETY LEGISLATION

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Health, safety & welfare policy; Undertake regular risk assessments for health & safety, fire and legionella; Pay attention to building maintenance; Give prompt attention to any accident reports or 'near misses': Establish a calendar of regular checks, servicing etc required

**Resulting Actions:** Caretaker Group established to carry out regular tests, checks and inspections & minor works, by rota. Caretaker volunteers to be recruited, trained, and supported, rota organised. Lead: Derek Lawrence

All library volunteers to have health & safety induction. Lead: Linda Kitson

**Major Risk Area:** COMPLY WITH LAW AND REGULATION OF COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Trustees with relevant professional experience. Be alert for regulatory changes.

**Resulting Actions:** Building lead: to lead on everything to do with the structure of the building and car park, working with the caretaker group Lead : Jon Milner  
Connect to relevant networks: National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Community Managed Libraries National Peer Network. Lead: Chair

**Major Risk Area:** PROTECTING THE LONG-TERM FUTURE AND CONDITION OF THE BUILDING, FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Build up sufficient funds to allow timely replacement of items and/or major repair work

**Resulting Actions:** Establish 'Cyclical Renovation and Major Repairs Fund' alongside general Reserves. Lead: Derek Lawrence

## **COMPLIANCE and GOVERNANCE**

**Major Risk Area:** FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Ensure clear policy and adequate training for trustees and all volunteers

**Resulting Actions:** General Data Protection Policy in place and followed. All Library volunteers to undertake GDPR training. LEAD: Tansy Hepton

## **FUNDING**

**Major Risk Area:** RECEIVING LESS FUNDING WOULD THREATEN ABILITY TO FUNCTION IN LONG TERM

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Programme of regular Fundraising activities in place

Promote activities within the building out of hours, through lettings.

Look for other relationships, sponsorships, events etc that could help support the Library

**Resulting Actions:** Supporters Club established, and open to new members with welcoming information on website and in Library, with clear lead: Richard Brooks  
Annual Christmas Raffle, reaching every home in the village and local area, with clear messages about the Library & building, prizes donated, with support from all Trustees and local businesses. Lead: Richard Brooks

Bookings for hire made through a single point of contact and clear terms and conditions and pricing. Lead: Susan Daniels

Explore opportunities for developing further relationships and sponsorships. Lead: Janet Johnson

**Major Risk Area:** FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Regularly review Financial position, including Reserves Policy and investment strategy

**Resulting Actions:** Financial position reported to each Management Group meeting, Reserves Policy agreed and reviewed annually. All Reserves to be held in a deposit account, with marginally better interest, separate to current account. Not worth exploring other accounts as interest rates so low at present, nor riskier options. Lead : Neil Denby

**Major Risk Area:** FINANCIAL SUCCESS IS HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON SINGLE SOURCE OF INCOME THROUGH KIRKWOOD

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Cultivate this relationship as a partnership for mutual benefit rather than a purely commercial one. Ensure good two- way dialogue through regular discussions, sharing strategy, etc

**Resulting Actions:** Regular dialogue established with key contact at The Kirkwood – and continuing via Zoom. Clear single contact at DDCL for communications, supported by the Chair Lead: Pete Belsey

## **RELATIONSHIPS & REPUTATION**

**Major Risk Area:** CONTINUING ABILITY TO HOST LIBRARY AND SUPPORT KIRKLEES LIBRARY SERVICE

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Manage and maintain this relationship ensuring good two-way dialogue through regular discussions, sharing strategy, etc. Lead: Kate Tunstall, Linda Kitson and Chair

**Resulting Actions:** Manage recruitment, training and support of volunteers and arrange rotas to support library staff. Lead: Kate Tunstall and Linda Kitson



**Major Risk Area:** NUMBER AND CAPACITY OF VOLUNTEERS AVAILABLE TO FILL ROTA TO SUPPORT KIRKLEES STAFF & OPEN THE LIBRARY

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Lead: Kate Tunstall, Linda Kitson and Chair

**Resulting Actions:** Manage recruitment, training and support of volunteers and arrange rotas to support library staff. Lead: Kate Tunstall and Linda Kitson

**Major Risk Area:** POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH WIDER COMMUNITY IN LOCAL AREA

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Ensure we understand public perception, needs and wants for the Library and our building.

**Resulting Actions:** Carried out Survey of 200 local people from Denby Dale and surrounding villages in 2018, to establish what people want and think. The Survey results discussed by Trustees, all Management Group, and fed into strategy; and disseminated via media.

Build and maintain good relations with all our supporters, including local businesses.  
Lead All Trustees

**Major Risk Area:** LACK OF CO-ORDINATION AND EFFECTIVE JOINT WORKING BETWEEN BUILDING TRUSTEES AND MAJOR USERS

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Manage and maintain communication between all parties through regular User Group Meetings to allow dialogue, airing issues and reaching understanding & solutions

**Resulting Actions:** Hold regular User Group meetings, attended by representatives from all parties Lead: Tansy Hepton, Linda Kitson, Kate Tunstall

**Major Risk Area:** LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE LIBRARY BUILDING AND ALL IT CAN OFFER

**How to avoid or reduce the impact:** Manage and maintain communication through our website and Facebook page, including the promotion of events and activities. Carry out marketing to improve Fundraising and/or to improve community access, interest and outcomes

**Resulting Actions:** New website established in 2020, active on social media channels through Facebook. Regular posts on Facebook and on website regarding current and future activities, news etc. Lead: Pete Belsey, Kath Kerr and Karen Fox

## Declaration

The trustees declare that they have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit and have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees

Signature:	<i>Janet Johnson</i>
Full name:	Janet Johnson
Position:	Chair
Date:	15 December 2021

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