

Annual report 2021 – 2022

Denby Dale Community Project, operating as Denby Dale Community Library

Summary for period April 2021 to March 2022

We began the year in lockdown, with the library and cafe/shop closed. Safe browsing was offered in the library from May 2021 followed a month later by the opening of The Kirkwood cafe/shop. With the gradual relaxation in Covid rules, use of the building slowly returned to normal and activity reached near pre-Covid levels by the end of the year. We were also fortunate that most of our library volunteers returned to duty after Covid restrictions were lifted which greatly helped the smooth transition to normal operations. Further detail showing this transition to normality, month by month is provided in this report.

Financially we are in a healthy position; in year income exceeded expenditure by £6,351 mainly due to an £8,000 Covid grant.

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.

Our mission is to provide a safe and welcoming building and car park in which we can assist Kirklees Library Services (KLS) to run a library and information centre and in which community events can take place.

Covid-19

At the end of February 2021, HM Government published its 'Roadmap' to easing restrictions on public life as the vaccination programme reduced risk. The roadmap identified certain 'stages' of recovery as part of 'Living with Covid'. Relevant stages for the library and the building were:

- Stage 2: Opening of non-essential retail, other businesses, and public buildings, including libraries (Not before 12th April)
- Stage 3: Relaxation of rules on 'Life Events' and other social interaction, (Rule of 6 still applies.) (Not before 17th May)
- Stage 4: Relaxation of rules on social distancing (Not before 21st June)

KLS concluded in their risk assessment that the Denby Dale building would offer safe browsing from 17th May 2021.

Our Building Comes Back To Life after Covid-19

Apart from five weeks in October/November 2020, the building remained closed to the public from when it was mothballed on 22nd March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions until May 2021. The car park remained open throughout and continued to be used by those visiting local shops and services, when these were available.

The table overleaf shows some of the highlights of how the building usage came back to normality during the year

Month	Event
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building remained closed
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building opened for two days/week for safe browsing and IT access manned by KLS staff • The Kirkwood cafe redecorated and re-modelled in anticipation of re-opening
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kirkwood cafe & shop opened for business one day/week with limited menu (operated by Kirkwood volunteers as Cafe Manager resigned in April 2021) • Mayor of Kirklees visited library • Library opening expanded to three days/week staffed only by KLS staff • Building Caretaker volunteers started weekly building and car park inspection rota
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Trustee meeting held face to face in library since February 2020 • Due to lifting of formal Covid restrictions by KLS, the Library opened back to pre Covid-19 levels with four days/week staffed by KLS staff & volunteers and Saturday morning manned by volunteers only • Library participated in the village "Scarecrow" event and remained open to welcome visitors on the Saturday
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group activity re-commenced through daytime readings groups and evening 'Later in the library'
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further daytime and evening group activity re-commenced, almost back to pre Covid levels • Fifty people attended an evening wine tasting event
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kirkwood appointed a much awaited full time Cafe Manager.
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kirkwood cafe expanded opening to two days/week
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoga evening sessions commenced for first time
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kirkwood cafe expanded opening to four days/week with an expanded menu

Building Usage Reaching Pre-Covid Levels

Kirklees Library: KLS statistics show:

- 9745 books were borrowed by 522 active users
- 169 new users were registered in the year
- 339 uses of the public access computers
- 775 requests for stock from other libraries

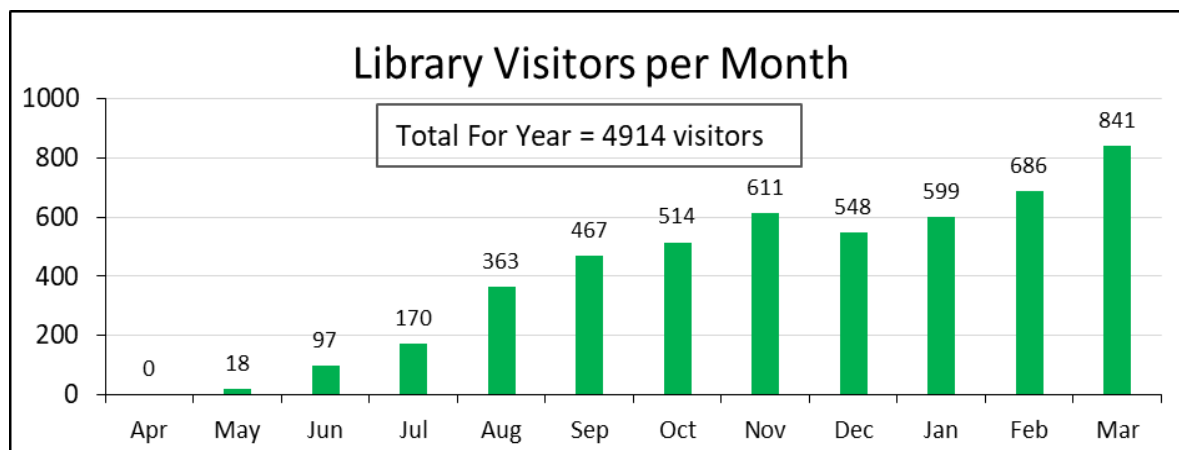
These figures are typically 25% down on the last comparable year (2019/20) but is understandable considering the library did not open back to pre Covid-19 levels until August 2021.

The use of the Libby app for e-books & audiobooks significantly increased during Covid. It is not possible to determine the loans for a specific library but service wide figure for e-book loans are:

2019/20	61K issues
2020/21	158K issues (lockdown boom)
2021/22	121K issues

We feel it has been greatly beneficial to users of the Denby Dale library service to have the same familiar librarian for three of the four weekdays. Lynne has shown great rapport with many members and offers an important continuity of contact for many in the community.

The graph overleaf shows how the number of library visitors increased during the year from opening the building two days/week on 17th May 2021.

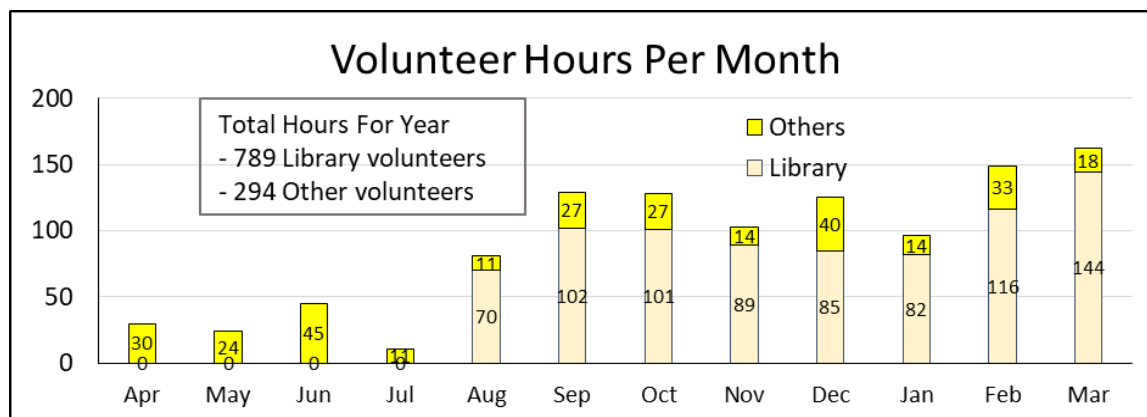


Volunteers: We have 21 volunteers who work in the library, either with a regular slot or to do occasional cover. After library volunteers were allowed back in August 2021 they gave a total of 789 hours during the remainder of the year in support of Kirklees Library Service, with a volunteer always matching the paid staff hours.

In addition, a further 294 hours of volunteer time was spent by:

- Caretakers (weekly inspections, building and car park repair and improvement)
- Trustees (regular management meetings)
- Coordination of volunteer rota planning

The graph below shows how the volunteer hours ramped up during the year as normal building usage resumed.

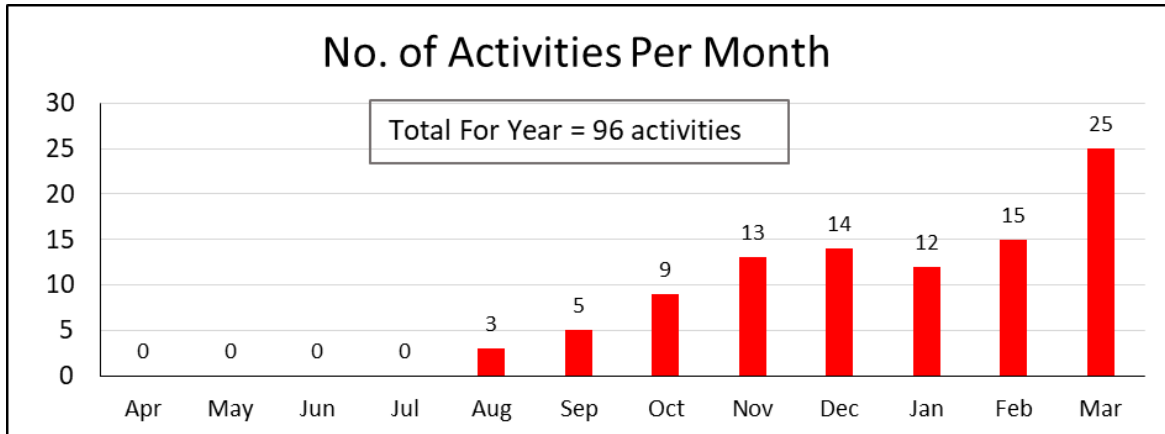


Activities in building: group activities in the building re-commenced in August and has gradually built up throughout the year as shown in the graph below.

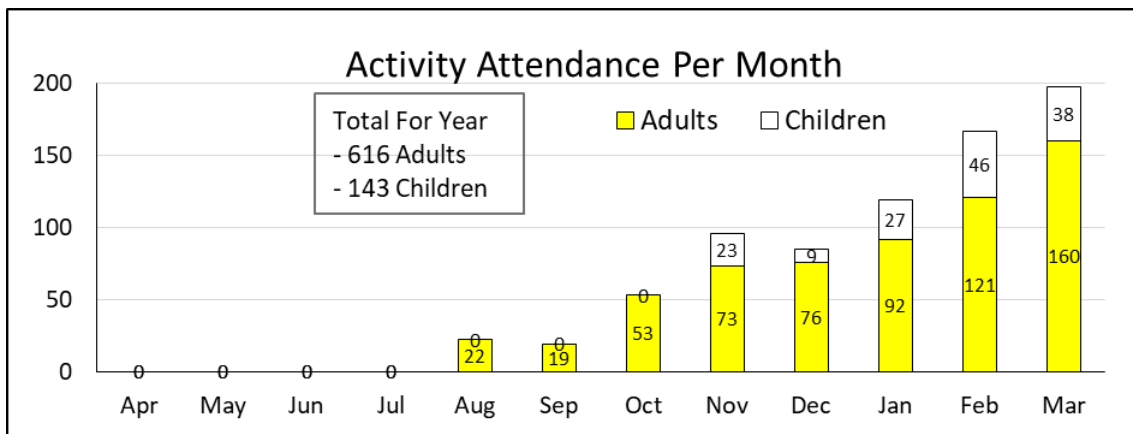
We have a number of regular craft and reading groups meeting in our building during the day which are open to anyone in the community to join. The Rhyme Time session is always popular with children and their parents/grandparents. The building is also used as a monthly contact point where the local public can drop in and discuss issues with police and neighbourhood watch representatives. Our evening use currently offers weekly meditation classes and yoga classes and a monthly programme of literary events, including author talks and poetry readings.

Our partner, The Kirkwood, run the cafe and gift shop. The appointment of a full time Cafe Manager in December 2021 has been instrumental in the recruitment, planning and organising

of volunteers and providing a welcoming face to users of the building. The cafe & shop has progressed from opening one day/week in June 2021 with a limited menu, to four days/week in April 2021 with an expanded menu.



Activity attendance: 616 adults and 143 children participated in groups and events held in the building. The graph below shows the gradual increase in numbers as the year progressed.



Improvements in and around our building

Completion of the former Nursery School and Headmasters House to seven residential properties has greatly improved the previous run-down appearance of the neighbouring property. We were donated a ceramic sink from the demolition of the old nursery building and it now has pride of place beside the car park, full of seasonal flowers.

A new electric distribution box was installed specifically for the electric heating boiler to prevent any breaker trips bringing down other electric circuits. Emergency lighting was installed in both toilets as an action from a fire risk assessment.

The 20 fold up chairs were replaced with a more comfortable version.

The Denby Dale Walkers Are Welcome group produced a series of 10 new walking routes which connect villages and rail stations at points along the Penistone line from Dodworth to Berry Brow. These are displayed in a new dedicated stand, making 29 local walking leaflets in total.

Governance

We have 12 Trustees with a wide mix of skills and experience. Trustees have continued to regularly meet during the year. “Zoom” was used when it was not possible to meet face to face but we finally met up as a group, after a gap of 18 months, in August 2021.

Since 2019, 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. Trustees can serve a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms. A much valued and respected founding member of the Trustees, Graham Turner resigned during the year after serving nine years as a Trustee.

Trustees are appointed by resolution, with due regard being paid to skills, knowledge and experience. Our new Trustee, Tony Poole was both a library volunteer and caretaker volunteer and demonstrated an interest in becoming a Trustee. A Trustee Induction Process was also developed during the year.

The following Trustees have served during the year:

Derek Lawrence	(Chair from 1 April 2021 – 31 May 2022)
Janet Johnson	(Deputy Chair)
Peter Belsey	
Richard Brook	Max term of 9 years reached in Nov 2021, agreed to remain on management committee, but not as Trustee
Susan Daniels	
Neil Denby	(Treasurer)
Tansy Hepton	(Secretary)
Kath Kerr	
Linda Kitson	
Jon Milner	
Tony Poole	New Trustee, joined March 2022
Kate Tunstall	
Graham Turner	Max term of 9 years reached, ceased to be a Trustee in Nov 2021

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

Finance

We are in a healthy financial position. We are very grateful to all our supporters, including members of our Supporters Club; people who have bought raffle tickets, attended events or donated into our collecting tins; the Parish Council and local Kirklees councillors who have given us grants in the past; and local people who have donated money and time.

We are improving our approach to providing for a secure financial future by developing a medium and long-term repairs and renewal programme. A “Cyclical repairs and major maintenance schedule” was published in February 2022 which estimated both reactive and planned spend for the period 2022 – 2030. In order to manage our risks, we aim to have reserves sufficient to cover two years together with estimated planned spend on the building and a modest emergency fund. We are currently comfortably within this position.

Our detailed accounts are awaiting review and will be available on the Charity Commission website before the end of December 2022 but in summary for the 2021/22 period:

Income:	£14,395 (includes an £8,000 Covid grant)
Expenditure:	£8,043
At year end (March 3 rd):	£45,749 in account

Risks

Major risks to which the Charity is exposed to were identified by the Trustees and detailed in the 2020/2021 annual report. The Trustees have given consideration to these and are satisfied that systems or procedures are in place to manage them. Now that the building has reached a level of normal operation after Covid, it is the intention of the Trustees to hold a strategic review on how some of these risks can be further mitigated.

Those risks identified were:

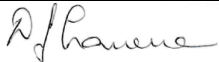
- Ensuring the safety & welfare of building users and compliance with H&S legislation
- Compliance with law and regulation of community buildings
- Protecting the long term future and condition of the building, fixtures and fittings
- Failure to comply with general data protection regulations
- Financial resilience, especially as financial success is heavily dependent on a single source of income through The Kirkwood
- Continuing ability to host the library and support KLS, recognising that KLS may have its own funding pressures
- Number and capacity of volunteers available to fill rota to support KLS staff and open the library
- Positive relationships with wider community in local area
- Lack of co-ordination and effective joint working between building trustees and major users
- Lack of awareness of the library building and all it can offer

Covid-19 has not only significantly disrupted operation of our building but worldwide in the past two years. Another devastating pandemic cannot be ruled out but a large amount of experience has been acquired putting us in a better position to handle any future pandemics.

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:	
Full name:	Derek J Lawrence
Position:	Chair of Trustees
Date:	2 nd July 2022

The Denby Dale Community Project
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