



Annual Report 2022 – 2023

Denby Dale Community Project operating as
Denby Dale Community Library

SUMMARY

This was our first full year since Covid restrictions were lifted and we are pleased to report that we are fully open and doing well. We now have a full library service on part of every day Monday to Saturday, with volunteers covering Thursday mornings, and the cafe is now open Monday to Friday.

We continue to have strong relationships with our two key partners/tenants - Kirklees Library Services (KLS) and The Kirkwood (TK), the latter being a local hospice who run the cafe and small gift shop in our building.

Financially we are in a healthy position; in year income exceeded expenditure by £2,151.

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 STATEMENT:

We provide a safe, accessible and welcoming building in which we help Kirklees Library Services run a Library and Information Centre; providing space for inclusive and enriching community events for all, and car parking for building users & customers of local businesses.

We do this through the support of our volunteers and partners. We will continue to:

- Provide volunteers to support library staff
- Keep the building safe and well maintained
- Raise funds, particularly through the Supporters Club and annual raffle

In March 2023 we agreed that our priorities for the next three years were to:

- Increase the number of people using the library services;
- Improve the amount of local information we provide;
- Build our relationships with The Kirkwood and other targeted groups and institutions within our community.

FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

We held an event in June 2022 to celebrate five years of operations, attended by around 300 people. As we wanted visitors to see the library and cafe looking as they normally do, we used the car park for stalls and activities including information, crafts and a tombola. We enjoyed a performance from the local school choir and welcomed the Mayor of Kirklees, Councillor Masood Ahmed, who said:

“I really enjoyed my visit and saw first-hand what a fantastic facility you have for the whole community”.

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SURVEY

We want our building to meet the needs of our community so we ran a survey alongside our annual Christmas raffle in December 2022, delivering paper copies to every household in Denby Dale and surrounding villages, and providing an e:version via our Facebook page and website. We had 196 responses, painting a positive picture with similar priorities to the 2019 survey. Of the responses, the majority were:

living in Denby Dale (80%), aged over 50 (76%) and existing library members (69%).

Everyone who responded said they thought it was important for us to have the community library building, whether they used it or not. Nearly a third are regular users (31%) and over a half are occasional users (53%), with just 16% saying they don't use it (but still think it is important).

Books and information remain the most important services, followed by the car park and the café. Although activities for children, PC's and wifi were lower, this is partly because they are not relevant for many, with significant minorities scoring them highly.

Noticeboards, Facebook and the website are considered to be the best ways of finding out what's on in the building.

There were lots of positive comments about how welcoming and friendly the building feels and there were some suggestions which will be considered as we work on our strategic aims. Here is just one representative quote:

I think the library is a wonderful facility for the community. The staff are so lovely & it is such a welcoming atmosphere. I love being able to bring my young granddaughter here just as I did as a child. She already loves the library too!

A fuller report on the survey is available on our website.

BUILDING USAGE

Kirklees Library: KLS statistics show:

	2019/20 (*)		2021/22	2022/23
Book issues	17,000		9,745	19,380
Active users			522	472
Requests for stock from other libraries			775	975
IT use	572		339	529
New members			169	226
Events			93	306
Attended by			759	3,000
Volunteer hours	1,260		1,083	1,761

** 2019/20 data (where available) is shown for comparison purposes as it was the last full year before any Covid restrictions*



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ACTIVITIES IN OUR BUILDING

We have a range of regular activities in our building, both during the day when the building is open to the public and on some evenings. We also provide a warm and welcoming space for anyone who needs it - they don't need to be a library member nor to buy anything from the cafe. We have local papers and magazines and have recently started a jigsaw-swap service. There is normally a jigsaw underway in the building for anyone who wants to join in.

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 weekly Rhyme Time session is always popular with children and their parents/grandparents and KLS run extra events for children during school holidays.

The Hands on History group has re-launched post-Covid with a project focussing on the development of Denby Dale village since the 1870s. A glass bottle containing local newspapers from 1872 was discovered by the developers of the neighbouring plot when they were demolishing the old nursery school. As Denby Dale First and Nursery School will be celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2024, the Hands on History group decided to research what Denby Dale was like in the 1870's and produce resources which will be kept in the library for use by individuals and groups, including schools, with an interest in local history. The resources will also be shared with the KLS Local History Archive.

Our evening use currently offers weekly meditation classes and a monthly programme of literary events, including author talks, book discussions and poetry readings.

Our partner, The Kirkwood, run the cafe and gift shop. The cafe and shop has progressed from four days a week in April 2022, to five days a week, with an expanding offer. As well as being a cafe, TK are looking to provide support in the community to people who need their services and increasingly see our building as an important part of their strategy. In October 2022 we were the site of two of the SnowDogs on their cross-Kirklees trail, bringing many new visitors to our building and the area.

We are grateful to have consistent staffing from KLS and TK. Both Lynne and Molly are friendly and welcoming to visitors, whether library members or not, and offer important continuity of contact for many in the community.

VOLUNTEERS

We are also grateful for our volunteers, without whom the library service could not continue. We have 24 (up from 21 last year) volunteers who work in the library, either with a regular slot or to do occasional cover, with a volunteer always matching the paid staff hours.

Additional volunteer time was spent by:

- Caretakers (weekly inspections, building and car park repair, maintenance and improvement)
- Trustees (regular management meetings)
- Coordination of volunteer rota planning
- Liaison with key stakeholders (regular meetings)
- Marketing (via Facebook, website, noticeboards and leaflets)
- Coordinating bookings and events
- Fundraising (managing our annual raffle and Supporters Club)

IMPROVEMENTS IN AND AROUND OUR BUILDING

In advance of our 5 year anniversary we re-decorated the inside of our building, liaising with The Kirkwood over colour schemes. We took the opportunity to make the building more dementia friendly by outlining the door to the public toilet in a different colour and installing a motion sensor light.

We also made some changes to the kitchen area to improve the layout for The Kirkwood staff and volunteers working there.

We know from customer feedback that it was sometimes difficult to find a space in our car park. Following several weeks of research, we could see that some people were parking all day to work locally, taking up valuable spaces that were needed by customers. We have therefore put up new signs explaining that the car park is for customers of the building and local business only and is not to be used for all day parking. We have seen improvement in the situation and will continue to monitor it.

Other repairs and improvements included the renovation of the outside noticeboard, a five-year electrical safety check, replacement of the emergency exit fire door and re-fixing the handrail on the outside steps.

The volunteer caretaker team has been instrumental in either doing this work or arranging and supervising contractors. We are grateful for their continued support in keeping our building safe and well maintained.

An energy audit showed that heating the building accounts for 50% of the total annual electricity cost. A fixed price deal and our photovoltaic panels have kept costs manageable through the year.

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GOVERNANCE

We have up to 12 Trustees with a wide mix of skills and experience who meet regularly during the year. Trustees are appointed by resolution, with due regard being paid to skills, knowledge and experience.

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.

The following Trustees have served during the year. Where resignations, retirements or appointments have happened after the year end but before the signing of the annual report, these have been included in blue italics for information.

Trustee	Status
Derek Lawrence	Chair from 1 April 2021 – 31 May 2022
Kath Kerr	Chair from 31 May 2022 to 31 March 2023, <i>resigned 12 August 2023</i>
Janet Johnson	<i>Chair from 1 April 2023</i>
Neil Denby	Treasurer
Tansy Hepton	Secretary
Susan Daniels	
Peter Belsey	Max term of 9 years reached in Nov 2022, agreed to remain on management committee, but not as Trustee
Linda Kitson	<i>Max term of 9 years reached in Sep 2023</i>
Jon Milner	
Tony Poole	Appointed 13 April 2022, resigned 8 January 2023
Kate Tunstall	
Sarah Bennett	<i>Appointed 19 April 2023</i>

The partnerships with Kirklees Library Service and The Kirkwood 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.

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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 have a cyclical repairs and major maintenance schedule, produced in February 2022, which estimates 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 normal operating costs 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 2023 but in summary for the 2022/23 period.

Description	Amount
Income	£12,482
Expenditure	£10,331
Surplus for the year	£2,151
At year end (31 March 2023):	£48,545 in bank account

RISKS

The major risks to which the Charity is exposed are identified below, together with the key controls in place to mitigate them. The Trustees have given consideration to these and are satisfied that effective systems or procedures are in place. The policies referred to below can be seen on our website ddcp.org.

Risk	Controls and mitigations
Ensuring the safety & welfare of building users and compliance with H&S legislation	Health, safety & welfare policy in place. Health & safety induction for all volunteers. Fire safety policy in place. Weekly checks of the building.
Compliance with law and regulation of community buildings	Review of Charity Commission guidance Liaison with Kirklees Council and Parish Council Member of Community Managed Libraries Network
Protecting the long-term future and condition of the building, fixtures and fittings	Reserves policy in place, including funds for future maintenance Weekly checks of the building
Complying with general data protection regulations	Data protection policy in place. The only personal data we hold relates to our volunteers and trustees
Financial resilience, especially as financial success is heavily dependent on a single source of income through The Kirkwood	Reserves policy in place, which requires a minimum of a year's worth of rental income in reserve, ideally two.
Continuing ability to host the library and support KLS, recognising that KLS may have its own funding pressures	Regular meetings with KLS Strategic objective to improve numbers using library services
Number and capacity of volunteers available to fill rota to support KLS staff and open the library	Advertising for new volunteers Induction for new volunteers Regular meetings of volunteers, including training
Positive relationships with wider community in local area	Recent survey to assess community views of the library
Lack of co-ordination and effective joint working between building trustees and major users	Regular building user group meetings between trustees, KLS and TK
Lack of awareness of the library building and all it can offer	Annual flyer delivered to all households in the catchment area. Marketing through noticeboards, Facebook and website
New COVID variant means restrictions re-imposed	Lessons learnt from previous restrictions



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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>Tansy Hepton</i>
Full name:	Tansy Jane Hepton
Position:	Trustee
Date:	2 October 2023

The Denby Dale Community Project
Denby Dale Community Library
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