

Annual report 2024 – 2025

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.

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 and 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*

Strategy

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.

Last year we reported good progress in all of these areas and the business usage figures below show that we continue to provide valued and well-used services in our community.

In February 2025 we reviewed our strategy and agreed that our mission was unchanged and that our focus for 2025/26 would be “**securing our future**”.

We agreed 3 main areas for action over the next year (2025/26) which are:

- Working with KLS and volunteers to **increase the number of people using the library services**
- Working towards an **asset transfer of the land behind the building**
- Working **on the lease renewal** with The Kirkwood

We will report on progress on these areas next year.

Key strategic matters for the period April 2024 to March 2025

Kirklees Library Services consultation

Last year we reported that Kirklees Library Services (KLS) were consulting on proposals to make cost savings by removing staffing from 8 smaller libraries in the metropolitan district, including Denby Dale Community Library. Under these proposals, our library would have become a 'Community Managed Library', outside the Statutory Provision. Both DDCL Trustees and volunteers met with representatives of KLS to fight this proposal on the grounds that we did not believe our community had the capacity to sustainably run a full library service without any paid staff. We were able to demonstrate the wide range of services we provide to our community at a marginal cost to KLS of one part time member of staff, demonstrating an excellent value for money return.

By the time last year's annual return was approved, Kirklees Council had withdrawn the proposal for 'Community Managed' libraries but were planning to consult on reviewing - and reducing - the level of paid staff support they provided to each library. We were therefore relieved when Kirklees Council used some of the additional funding provided by Central Government to support their libraries and approved a budget for 2025/26 which no longer required cost savings from the service. The Central Government settlement is for one year only and we continue to work constructively with KLS to improve the range and volume of services provided in our community.

The library service continues to be available during part of every day Monday to Saturday, the hours varying between morning, afternoon and early evenings to meet different user lifestyles.

We have a full staffed library service with volunteer support on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with volunteer-only service on Thursday and Saturday mornings. The cafe is open Monday to Thursday 10am - 3pm and on Fridays 10am - 1pm.

Asset transfer opportunity

During the year we were made aware of the opportunity to apply to Kirklees Council for an asset transfer of a patch of land of about 700 square metres immediately behind our building. This land was formerly the playground of a nursery school and comprises a section of tarmac (currently used as parking for staff and volunteers) and an overgrown and unused larger area of scrubland.

We agreed this was too good an opportunity to miss and set up a working group to explore the options and develop a business case to submit to Kirklees.

Our proposal was to clear the scrubland and then transform and manage it for community benefit and use, primarily as a nature garden linked to our library and café building.

As the application was developed and submitted over the summer of 2025, we will include more details in next year's annual report. However, in September 2025 we were delighted to hear that our application has been assessed and will be recommended to Kirklees Cabinet for approval.

Café lease renewal

The café in our building is run by The Kirkwood hospice. Like many hospices, The Kirkwood is facing extremely challenging financial pressures. In March 2025 they announced over £1.4m cuts to their budget, including a number of redundancies across their service. As their lease on the café is due for renewal in mid January 2026, we started early discussions about the future.

Subsequent to the year end, The Kirkwood have confirmed that they will not be renewing the lease when it expires but have committed to continue to manage the café until the lease ends.

We have set up a working group to explore options for maintaining a café in the building as we recognise that it provides a valued service to our community and enables the building to act as a true community hub. Our prudent Reserves Policy means we have capacity and time to manage in the interim. We will report the outcome in the next annual report.

Annual update

Building Usage

Kirklees Library: KLS statistics show:

| | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| Book issues | 9,745 | 19,380 | 21,840 | 19,531 |
| Active users | 522 | 472 | 843 | 816 |
| Requests for stock from other libraries | 775 | 975 | 1,096 | 1,381 |
| IT use | 339 | 529 | 620 | 1,134 |
| New members | 169 | 226 | 237 | 184 |
| Events held in the building | 93 | 306 | 430 | 414 |
| Attended by | 759 | 3,000 | 3,987 | 3,765 |
| Volunteer hours | 1,083 | 1,761 | 1,741 | 1,790 |

Note that the book issues in 2023/24 were affected by the temporary closures of two neighbouring libraries which meant more were taken out from our library than usual. Note also that KLS now only count events that are run by KLS or library volunteers - other events take place and go through our booking procedure. In particular our building is regularly used by local U3A groups.

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 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 and several local U3A groups also meet here. 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' (HoH) group continued to meet, with a major project focussing on the development of Denby Dale village since the 1870s, culminating in a well-attended exhibition in the library and a substantial permanent reference set of versatile resources, which is now available for use by individuals or groups. The catalyst for the project was the discovery of a glass bottle 'time capsule' by builders renovating the site of the original un-denominational Denby Dale School (next door to the current library). The bottle contained newspapers from August 1872, buried when building of the school commenced. As the school opened in 1874, this year marked 150 years of state elementary education in the village and the HoH group worked with the current school on both the exhibition and resources.

The 'Later at the Library' group continues to offer a monthly programme of literary events, including author talks, book discussions and poetry readings.

Our other evening use includes weekly meditation classes, a music group, and groups offering help for parents of ADHD children & for adults with a long-term health issue, and occasional one-off events.

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 25 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)

We celebrated National Volunteers' Week with a tea when 12 of our volunteers who have served for more than 10 years were presented with book tokens as a small thank you. We continued to hold social events and update meetings for all our volunteers.

Improvements in and around our building

Safety continues to be our key focus in maintaining our building. This year we replaced the guttering at the front of the building, which was proving too shallow for heavy rain and was overflowing onto the steps.

We also had support from the local Men's Shed to create a perspex barrier between our electrical mains supply panel and the area where our folding chairs are stacked.

During the year we commissioned an updated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which gave the building an energy rating of 'A'. This is an improvement over the January 2017 EPC report of a 'B' energy rating and reflects the actions we have taken over the last 5 years to improve our sustainability. We continue to benefit from the photovoltaic panels, which bring in over £500 of feed-in-tariff income annually.

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.

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.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Janet Johnson | (Chair from 1 April 2023) |
| Derek Lawrence | (Vice Chair, Bookings Co-ordinator, Caretaking lead) |
| Neil Denby | (Treasurer) |
| Tansy Hepton | (Secretary) |
| Susan Daniels | |
| Jon Milner | |
| Sarah Bennett | |
| Jan Goult | |
| Lauren Mallinson | (Appointed 23 May 2024) |
| Peter Belsey | (Appointed 12 February 2025) |

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.

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; and local people who have donated money and time.

Although we have benefitted from increased income from bookings, we have seen our costs of insurance and energy almost double over the last year and we have invested in improved signage and an updated Energy Performance Certificate.

We have a cyclical repairs and major maintenance schedule, produced in February 2022 and updated in September 2025, which estimates both reactive and planned spend for the period 2022 – 2033. 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 available on the Charity Commission website. In summary for the 2024/25 period:

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Income: | £14,549 |
| Expenditure: | £13,668 |
| Surplus for the year | £ 881 |

At year end (31 March 2025): £53,087 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 Hosting Agreement in place with KLS |
| 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 | Regular surveys 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 |

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 Susan Johnson |
| Position: | Trustee |
| Date: | 9 November 2025 |

The Denby Dale Community Project
Denby Dale Community Library
364 Wakefield Road
Denby Dale
Huddersfield HD8 8RX

Denby Dale Community Library

Income & Expenditure Account for year to 31st March

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| INCOME | £ | £ |
| Rent & room hire | 9,102.00 | 8,395.00 |
| Donations | 275.96 | 100.00 |
| Supporters fund/fundraising | 3,912.32 | 3,882.71 |
| Solar feed in tariff | 464.51 | 528.52 |
| Bank interest received | 794.72 | 682.99 |
| | 14,549.51 | 13,589.22 |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| Cleaner | 2,280.00 | 2,190.00 |
| Services & insurance | 5,161.63 | 3,470.42 |
| Repairs & maintenance | 3,137.62 | 2,775.93 |
| Rates: premises | 442.86 | 404.50 |
| Rates: car park | 319.36 | 163.84 |
| Website costs/domains/IT | 105.29 | 377.37 |
| Supporters club prizes | 50.00 | 225.00 |
| Bank charges | 64.80 | 62.40 |
| Grants/gifts | 562.42 | 254.16 |
| Sundries | 186.87 | 45.50 |
| Banners/signs | 703.60 | |
| EPC certificate | 495.00 | |
| Vacuum cleaner | 159.00 | |
| | 13,668.45 | 9,969.12 |
| OVERALL SURPLUS FOR YEAR | 881.06 | 3,620.10 |

Balance Sheet as at 31st March

| | 2025 | | 2024 | |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| ASSETS | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Building | | 250,000.00 | | 250,000.00 |
| Equipment | 500.00 | | 500.00 | |
| Sofa | 599.99 | 1,099.99 | 599.99 | 1,099.99 |
| | | 53,087.48 | | 52,793.35 |
| Prepayments & accrued income | - | | 154.20 | |
| Bank current account | 10,940.23 | | 11,286.62 | |
| Bank deposit account | 42,147.25 | | 41,352.53 | |
| | | 53,087.48 | | 52,793.35 |
| Accrued expenses | - | | (586.93) | |
| | | 53,087.48 | | 52,206.42 |
| | | 304,187.47 | | 303,306.41 |
| Funds brought forward | | 303,306.41 | | 299,686.31 |
| Surplus for the year | | 881.06 | | 3,620.10 |
| Funds carried forward | | 304,187.47 | | 303,306.41 |