Management Team
Current Chair: Andy Branch

HATHERN COMMUNITY LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registration Number 1163357

Green Hill
Hathern
Leicestershire
LE12 5LG

http://www.hatherncommunitylibrary.org

This annual report relates to the fifth financial operating period of Hathern Community Library 01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021



Objectives and activities

The object (aim) of Hathern Community Library (HCL) is to promote, for the benefit of the electoral wards of Loughborough, Dishley, Hathern and the surrounding County of Leicestershire, the provision of general library services and facilities for education, recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facility by reason of youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, or social and economic circumstances, or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

Structure, governance and management

Hathern Community Library is a registered charity with a Constitution. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, whose constitution makes provision for a minimum of 4 and maximum of 8 trustees. Over the course of the current accounting period it had the following trustees, with up to 3 vacancies:

Andy Branch, Chairperson
Jon Smith-Moorhouse, Secretary
Jane Sorby, Treasurer
Annette Harper
Bill Leivers (resigned December 2020)
Bill Pritchard
John Martin

After its fourth year of operating, (March 2020), 1 trustee retired from office and 3 new trustees were elected at the 2020 Annual General Meeting. One third must retire annually in rotation. Bill Pritchard is retiring in 2021, with Bill Leivers having retired to move to Dorset. We would like to thank both Jan and Bill for their invaluable support since the Library was launched.

Hathern Community Library has a membership of 31 people who have voting rights at the Annual General Meeting, or any other General Meeting. Hathern Community Library operates in partnership with, and is supported by, Leicestershire County Council (LCC). As a condition of our agreement with LCC, we are required to use their book stock. LCC is also responsible for the IT services at the Library, and in addition have supported us both financially and in kind on a reducing scale during our early years.

In 2019 Hathern Community Library renewed its Partnership Agreement with Hathern Parish Council from April 1st 2019 for a further 3 years, terminating in 2022. We very much appreciate the support received from HPC as part of the Service Level Agreement between the two parties.

Achievements

Since Friday 20th March 2020 we have followed guidance issued by Leicestershire County Council in compliance with government regulations regarding Covid 19. After the second lockdown in January 2021, we offered a 'Click and Collect' service, whereby borrowers could request books to be chosen by volunteers and collected on a pre- arranged basis, which was well received. All educational and recreational groups were discontinued and all events, whether in conjunction with HVA or independently organised, were suspended, as were plans to establish room hire and visits by the Police Community Support Officer. To all intents and purposes, the library has been closed for the full year, with only short bursts of opening for socially distanced borrowing and returning books.

Plans to extend the building to the rear were submitted to LCC and granted planning permission but until the S106 monies contributing to the build are made available the project remains on hold. We have put the work out to tender in order to anticipate out likely additional grant requirements.

We are however, pleased to have been able to use the closure to update the heating and lighting, which has significantly improved the experience for both visitors and volunteers, as well as to replace two side windows in the kitchen and toilet. The roof lantern as been replaced which will improve insulation against heat loss, and the library was redecorated internally. We have also arranged with LCC to renew our flat roof and guttering, at a date yet to be decided.



The HCL 2020 Advent Window as part of the HVA Village 24 Days of Advent Tour



The sign up letting the few able to make it to the library aware of the minor disruption following the installation of the new heaters



children's rainbow pictures to thank and support the NHS

The library volunteers helped to put together a window display of socks decorating a chimney breast for the HVA village tour of the 24 days of advent, we posted children's rainbow pictures to thank and support the NHS, and maintained the gardens and annual bedding displays to continue to offer a bright and cheerful presence in the village.



New energy efficient programmable electric heaters fitted during the period



New side windows for the kitchen and bathroom

An application to Charnwood Borough Council for a £500 Member's Grant through Keith Harris was successful and, topped up from our own resources, funded new shelving and display racks, necessitated by the relocation of the radiators.

Performance

Despite the substantial difficulties of offering a service throughout a pandemic we have been able to continue our growth in membership, primarily, although not exclusively, through our established links with Hathern Primary School. 49 new joiners has been a tremendous success in these trying times. Although established groups have not been able to continue to meet in person, the 'Craft and Chat' group had a number of virtual 'Zoom' get-togethers and our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Gill Rocket, organised regular volunteer coffee mornings.

Links with De Lisle school have been maintained and whilst we were unable to facilitate a placement for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, we have offered and agreed a placement for the year ahead. The Summer Reading Challenge was moved online and we have no breakdown specific to HCL.

Financial Sustainability

The current balance is £52,884.27. The trustees had agreed to find a savings account for money allocated to the extension build. However, low interest rates and difficulty of access offered no real economic advantage and to date all funds remain in one account. Grants from Leicestershire County Council continued to reduce year on year, but through Charnwood Borough Council we were granted a one-off pandemic grant of £10,000. This has cushioned us significantly against the losses suffered through lack of fundraising opportunities, donations and library charges. It is an encouraging indication of our sustainability that even without grants, our income covered our costs, although our operating costs fell by 30%.

Hathern Parish Council continued to support the library with a £3,000 grant for the second year of a 3 year agreement.

Our only fundraising activities were the delivery of the Hathern Herald on behalf of HPC, Charnwood Lottery, (whereby ticket buyers nominate the library for a share of the proceeds) and most significantly, as always, our own lottery, which continues to be even more successful than ever.

The uncertainty of the timing of commencement of works at Garendon Estate has meant that we have been unable to apply for grants that may cushion the impact of building costs on our finances, or helped pay to equip the space. However the improvement in our financial position in 2020/21 has given us more of a safety net when the work is eventually commissioned.

People

Volunteers

Despite the challenges of the past 12 months we have been able to retain our volunteer group and currently have a team of 29 volunteers, who cover regular shifts to staff and promote the library, welcoming and helping customers and carrying out a wide range of tasks and procedures to keep the library going.

2 volunteers left in the course of the year and 4 have joined. Some volunteers have excused themselves whilst the pandemic is still in the community, but will return when they feel safe to do so. Training has obviously not taken place, but Gill Rocket has continued to update Trustees and organise regular Zoom meetings. We are always indebted to the loyalty and enthusiasm of all our volunteers, but even more so this year, in such unusual and difficult circumstances - screens, open doors, hand sanitiser, face masks and book quarantine to name a few!

Little progress has been made in expanding the roles of our volunteers to support broader activities and manage the more formal side of running a charity. It remains a challenge in terms of operating sustainability to recruit volunteers for non- library service activities, including events, promotion and maintenance.

Trustees

Trustees met regularly via Zoom to agree any changes to protocol due to Covid throughout the year. The 5 year strategic plan was updated. We gained 3 new trustees, but induction to their roles was limited and we look forward to realigning roles and responsibilities once face to face meetings can resume. We also look forward to recruiting more Trustees in the course of this AGM.

Financial Review

The principal sources of revenue to the charity are as follows:

Grants and allocated external funding £16,182.00 (19/20 £4,101.50)

The anticipated reduction in funding was mitigated by a £10,000 pandemic grant through Charnwood Borough Council, whilst timing issues of grants from LCC and HPC and a successful small grant application inflated our figures against 2019/20.

Fundraising £4,004.50 (19/20 £6,840.25)

Fundraising was impacted heavily, although year on year figures compare relatively favourably, since HVA were unable to offer funds last year as well as this. We have, for obvious reasons, been unable to undertake or support any extra events. Thanks are due to Martin Clayton for taking over the lottery from Bill Leivers and doing a sterling job in drumming up extra supporters and persuading them into a long term investment by forward selling tickets.

Donations £79.80 (19/20 £1,297.28)

The reduction in income from donations and library charges is self explanatory, since most of this money is realised within the library, or through library based events. Overdue library fines were suspended by LCC throughout the year.

The audited accounts are appended to this report as Appendix 1. Our thanks go to Mick Garton for his time.

The Charity Trustees have given due consideration to the major risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that procedures are established in order to manage said risks.

The property is held on a 10 year lease from LCC from 25.01.16 at a peppercorn rent. We are assured by LCC that the lease will renew on a rolling basis.

Signed on behalf of Hathern Community Library:

Andy Branch **Date 07/07/2021**
Chairman

