HATHERN COMMUNITY LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registration Number 1163357

Green Hill
Hathern
Leicestershire
LE12 5LG

http://www.hatherncommunitylibrary.org

This annual report relates to the sixth financial operating period of Hathern Community Library 01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022



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

HCL 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:

- Jon Smith-Moorhouse, Secretary
- Jane Sorby, Treasurer
- Annette Harper
- Alison Breacker
- Emma Ward

After its fifth year of operating, (March 2021), 2 trustees retired from office and 2 new trustees were elected at the 2021 Annual General Meeting. One third must retire annually in rotation.

The trustees represent the strategic element of the charity, keeping on top of the management, oversight and running of the library facility. A 34 strong team of volunteers then provide the day to day operations or 'front-of-house' for the library services.



Signing of the Renewed Partnership with Hathern Parish Council in March 2022

HCL now has a membership of 54 people (up from 31) who have voting rights at the Annual General Meeting, or any other General Meeting. The 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 has supported us both financially and in kind on a reducing scale during our early years. Financial support from LCC ended at the end of this financial period.

In 2019 HCL renewed its Partnership Agreement with Hathern Parish Council (HPC) from April 1st 2019 for a further 3 years. This agreement ended at the end of this accounting period and we are

glad to report that an agreement for a 3 year renewal was signed at our birthday celebrations in March 2022. We very much appreciate the support received from HPC as part of the Service Level Agreement between the two parties**.**

Achievements

Having soldiered through one full year of pandemic restrictions, we were hopeful by the summer that things would 'go back to normal'. Unfortunately with the resurgence of the virus and the emergence of the Omicron strain, this was not to be and we operated under a stop-start regime, unable to make plans for fundraising events. 2021/22 proved to be an extension of 2020/21. Without the benefit of a Charnwood COVID grant, it was very much a period of 'making ends meet'.

After a lengthy wait, the flat roof, guttering and fascia boards were all completely replaced in February. We are satisfied that the fabric of the building is currently in a good state of repair.

The Summer Reading Challenge had 32 children sign up, with 19 completing (59%). COVID restrictions prevented us from promoting in the school. The theme was Wild World heroes in partnership with WWF, a nature themed challenge to inspire children to stand up for the planet. This year we had a medal ceremony to celebrate the achievement of those who completed the challenge, which we intend to repeat.

During **Hathern Big Week 'Lite'** HCL took the opportunity to re-engage with the community and promote our existence and services as well as manning the second hand book stall for 2 days in the marquee, which raised a considerable proportion of our annual donations. As usual, we used the occasion to sign people up for library membership!

Foundation Group, group visits from the school, recommenced fortnightly and we welcomed some new younger members, who, we hope, will remain lifelong library users.



The HCL Hungry Caterpillar Christmas Tree at the Christmas Tree Festival

A **Trustee's Induction** course was held for new Trustees, to familiarise them with helping within the Library when needed.

HCL contributed to the **Christmas Tree Festival** with a 'Hungry Caterpillar' themed tree.

In February a face to face **Reunion party** was thrown for volunteers at Hathern Club, with the aim of getting everyone back together and introducing new volunteers. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all, with a presentation to Andy Branch (retiring Chair) and Gill Rockett, who resigned as Volunteers' Co-ordinator. Gill's contribution to the library from its inception has been a remarkable story of dedication and loyalty and the Trustees would like to record how much her work has been appreciated.

In March our annual event, a **Birthday party** was held, with games, cakes and coffee and a book stall. Trustees unanimously agreed to make an exception and announced that all funds raised would go to the Ukrainian appeal. The fantastic sum of £432 was duly donated. The event hosted the signing of the SLA agreement with HPC for a further 3 years.

March also saw HCL host a **talk** on Nanotechnology, to fit with the theme of Science Week. This was so popular it had to be held in Hathern Club.

Performance



Loughborough Mayor and Deputy Major join Parish Councilors at the HCL Birthday Party in March 2022

Despite the substantial difficulties of offering a service throughout the second year of a pandemic we have been able to continue our growth in membership. 74 new library users has been a tremendous success in these trying times. We loaned a total of 5,964 books during the year with 92 people actively borrowing books, making an average of 497 book loans per month and a total of 1,975 visits made to the library itself.

Clearly the library performance figures were up significantly on last year, simply by being able to be open again, with annual active borrowers up from 128 in 20-21 to 219 in 21-22

'Craft and Chat', Art group, Reading Group, and All Join In returned to their established weekly and fortnightly meetings and have made a welcome contribution to our running costs.

Links with De Lisle school have been maintained and whilst started a 6 month placement for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, whereby we have a student volunteer on Saturdays during term time, for a period of 6 months.

Financial Sustainability

The current balance is £ £56,811.79, a net improvement over the year of £3,927.52. Grants from Leicestershire County Council ceased completely at the end of March 2022. Hathern Parish Council continued to support the library with a £3,000 grant for the third year of a 3 year agreement.

Our main 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, raising £2,750 as a result of encouraging more annual subscriptions.

The reopening of the Library in the last quarter of the financial year was a period in which we chose to re-engage with the community, members, and volunteers in a way that welcomed people back, and thanked them, without fundraising being the 'raison d'etre'. The birthday party was therefore used to raised funds for DEC Ukrainian Appeal charity, whilst the volunteers' reunion and the Science Week talk were both free of charge to volunteers and the community respectively. We would like to continue to offer occasional events for the community as long as it remains financially viable to do so.

The significant S106 grant that we intend to use to fund an extension to the library is currently on hold. This grant is linked to the completion, and sale of, a percentage of the houses on the new Gardendon Estate. The uncertainty around when this work would start, which we can now see it has, and the level of completion required to unlock the S106 grant funding has meant that we have been unable to apply for grants that may cushion the impact of building costs on our finances, or help pay to equip the space. However the improvement in our financial position in 2020/21 and our ability to raise enough funds in 2021/22 to cover our operating expenses has enabled us to maintain the level of funds needed as a safety net when the work is eventually commissioned and we hope to apply for relevant grants when they arise.

People

Membership

Following the birthday party held at HCL on March 12th, a number of new members were enrolled into the HCL charity, taking the membership up from 31 to 54. A special thanks to Annette Harper for her efforts in encouraging new membership into the library.

Volunteers

Perhaps our biggest challenge with regard to volunteer management was the resignation of Gill Rockett, from the role of Volunteers' Co-ordinator. Gill has been on board since the inception of a Community Library and her in depth knowledge of the role has led her to take on a proliferation of duties, which could not be replaced by any single individual. Gill remains on hand as a volunteer at the library, and has helped the trustees to split out the various functions of the Volunteer Co-ordinator role and reallocate them amongst a number of willing volunteers and we are very grateful to them for stepping up to the tasks.

Despite the challenges of the past 12 months we have been able to retain our volunteer group and currently have a team of 34 volunteers, including Trustees, 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. Some volunteers excused themselves whilst the pandemic was still in the community, but returned when they felt safe to do so. We are indebted to the loyalty and enthusiasm of all our volunteers.

Little progress has been made in expanding the roles of our volunteers to manage the more formal side of running a charity. However, Gill's retirement has taught us that by redesigning and delegating roles in more bite sized elements, more volunteers have stepped up to help with broader activities.

Trustees

Trustees' meetings have been more difficult to arrange regularly for many reasons, practical and personal. Two of our Trustees were new on board at the beginning of the financial year and there were obvious initial difficulties in getting them up and running, which are now resolved. The Trustees are brilliantly supported by a number of volunteers who help with running the library stock and display, organising events, advertising and social media, and communications with LCC, not forgetting those who turn up for their rota on a regular basis, rain or shine! Their contributions have helped enormously.

Financial Review

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

Grants and allocated external funding £1,934.00 (20/21 £16,182)

The anticipated reduction in funding was mitigated in 2020/21 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 in 20/21. However our grants in 21/22 were half those of the pre-pandemic year of 19/20.

Fundraising £4,041.43 (20/21 £4,04.50)

Fundraising was impacted heavily, achieving a broadly similar figure to last year, with sums raised being down by 70% on pre-pandemic numbers. Again, the lottery was the biggest proportion of funds raised and our thanks go to Martin Clayton for relentlessly pushing it on social media and very nearly maximising ticket sales. Income from groups (Art and Craft & Chat) which we totally lost last year added a welcome £500 to our revenue growth. Events were predictably limited but we made small steps forward and raised £300 - against nothing last year!

Donations £273.98 (19/20 £79.80)

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 closures. Again, this is a small fraction of what we would expect in better times and we anticipate that pre-pandemic levels will be hard to achieve quickly, given the level of inflation and the cost of living crisis.

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:

Jon Smith-Moorhouse **Date 20/08/2022**
Secretary



Jane Sorby **Date 20/08/2022**
Treasurer

