



Friends of Greenhill Library

Registered Charity Number 1158656

Greenhill Library, Hemper Lane

Sheffield S8 7FE

Telephone: 0114 2377657 email:

admin@greenhill-library.org

greenhill-library.org

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE 2025 AGM

This report covers activities from October 2024 to September 2025 and the finances for the year ending 31st March 2025.

Foreword

I was pleased to take over as Chair of Trustees of a highly successful community library. Its success has been, and continues to be, down to the hard work and dedication of all its volunteers and for all those who have been and continue to be involved in Friends of Greenhill Library.

It has been another strong and busy year for the library which continues to offer a professional standard of service and a vibrant program of activities and events to meet the needs of the local community.

Running a successful library, as we do, requires us to be alert to the number and range of volunteers we need to cover all aspects of the library's work. It also requires us to ensure we have an appropriate number of trustees. For personal reasons we shall shortly say farewell to two trustees, Wendy Crookes and Michael Corbishley, and thank them for their outstanding contribution to the running of the library. If either area of volunteering is of interest to you, please contact the library where an arrangement can be made to talk over what each entail with Lynne Raven our Volunteer Co-ordinator.

What follows is a more detailed account of the library's operation and, should you have any questions about it, it can be raised at its AGM which will be held at the library on October 1st, 2025, at 7.00 p.m. and I look forward to seeing you then.

Clive Opie
Chair of Trustees – Greenhill Community
September 2025

Main Achievements During the Year

Library Service

We are grateful to all our volunteers in whatever capacity they operate but special thanks must go to our operational lead Ann Hartley who works extremely hard to ensure smooth operation of the service. We continue to welcome around 6000 visitors each quarter and total book loans continue to grow. “Yellow sticker” book loans, (those not on the council’s library catalogue) for the 12 months ending 27/08/2025 were 16,500 very similar to the previous 12 months. Although we can’t give a definitive number, due to lack of up-to-date council figures, a reasonable estimate suggests “Yellow sticker” loans made up 65% of our book issues. In the last 12 months we have registered 278 new adults and 108 children- a reflection of the high esteem the library is held in by the community.

Our sub-branch library at Lowedges, shares space with the Terminus Initiative in the Meeting Place. Its value to the community in the area is undeniable and the Trustees are doing their utmost to ensure security for the excellent work carried started by its lead Catherine Samengo-Turner supported by a group of dedicated volunteers. There is uncertainty over the probable need to source new premises and if anyone has any thoughts on this they would be welcomed.

Our Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) for children run at Greenhill Library in 2025 has been another success and thanks go especially to Phoebe Pearson in managing this with support from a range of volunteers. We have, as in the past, bought a range of books, as recommended by the Reading Agency, to support the SRC. The table shows data for the SRC for the last four years.

Year	Signed up			Completed			
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	%
2022	56	81	137	17	31	48	35
2023	64	102	166	22	49	71	43
2024	61	97	158	15	35	50	32
2025	59	108	167	25	46	71	43

We continue to expand our selection of books both through donations and the purchase of new titles adding over 1500 new books to our “Yellow sticker” collection. We are grateful for the £1,000 book grant from Sheffield City Council and for an award of £1,000 from the Freshgate Trust, which is being used to buy audio and large print books. Donated books we cannot add to our catalogue ensure our ever-popular bookshop remains well stocked.

We continue to sell books to World of Books. This ensures books get the best possible chance of being used or recycled. We really appreciate people’s donations as book sales provide us with steady income. To avoid a storage crisis, we have been forced to continually be more selective in the donations we will accept. Recently we have started

donating books to book sales tables at local supermarkets, and to Hardwick Hall.

At the last AGM, and although monthly Trustee minutes were available for reading, there was a perception amongst volunteers that they were not always fully aware of the decisions made by the board. To try and address this link trustees were set up (see below) with the view of them becoming familiar with the various roles and tasks completed by the volunteers by active engagement, meetings, or e-contact as appropriate with them. In this way the library volunteers could be better assured that their beneficial contribution to the library is understood and recognised. The role of the link trustees is working well, with all of them providing valuable input and support for their areas and, where an identified need suggests a fuller discussion, asking for this as a specific discussion item at a board meeting. The fact that link trustees are conversant with their various roles has also meant more informed discussions can be had at the board meetings.

Team	Link Trustee
Library Services	Lindy Stone
Community Events & Communications	Michael Corbishley
Buildings, Grounds & Maintenance	Kirsty Atkin
Finance, Admin & Fundraising	Lyndon Hennard
Children's Activities/Volunteer Co-ordinator	Lynne Raven

We reported last year that that we were greatly saddened by the death of Laurence Coates, a staunch supporter of the library since 2014, having been, at various times, a trustee, session leader, secretary and treasurer. The library was extremely grateful to receive a bequeath of £20,000 from Laurence's will, to be used to support a range of community activities, one of which is the Music Day for children in October where, this year, the violin and cello will be accompanied by an oboe. A memorial plaque for Laurence has been installed in the library on the wall to the right-hand side of the internal door to the library.

We also reported that we were actively pursuing plans to modernise the main front office. This included the replacement of the remaining single-glazed windows (3 in the office and some smaller windows in rooms further back). We are pleased to announce that this work has been carried out, being completed in January, providing a much more attractive and constructive working environment for all.

There is continuous upgrading of facilities to support the library administration and users. Such as transferring a computer to provide more computer availability in the main front office and putting in mobile bookcases to allow further categorization of certain series of Youth Adult books thereby providing more space for the remaining books in this section. The new section in the children's library, complete with murals and bean bags, continues to prove very popular with our younger users.

The library wi-fi system has been upgraded to improve access to the internet and we continue to monitor the public computers in terms of their speed of operation. Linked to this

we initiated a printing service which has proved very popular. So much so that we have limited printing from phones to one or two pages, directing customers who have several documents to be printed to do so themselves using public computers.

Finally, in the past we have been pursuing the possibility of securing a grant from the Royal Foundation to fund the building of a community room which has been on our wish list. However, detailed analysis of the need, and therefore securing the potential funding for, a community room, has led the Trustees to shelve this development, possibly returning to it if future needs suggest it being more viable to pursue. We are extremely grateful to Michael Corbishley for all the hard work he has carried out in pursuing this potential development.

Community Outreach and New Activities

Our **strategic objective** is to grow outreach into our community and new activities. These would be to fulfil our mission “to work with local residents, groups and organisations to promote other educational, cultural, recreational and social activities that respond to their needs and contribute to community cohesion and development”.

Events and collaborative working program over the last year has included:

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- an enjoyable a range of **one-off events** at the library including a music day for children provided by violin and cello duo Jonny and Lucy, a wreath-making workshop provided by local florist Cheryl Hartley and a spectacular “Seuss Day” themed around the stories and characters of Dr Seuss.
- a **monthly film program** for both adults and children continue to attract a good audience with many showings enjoying a full house.
- our ever popular regular **evening talks**, with several local interest talks including: ‘The History of Water in Sheffield’; ‘Portland Works’; and ‘Railways built for the construction of the Derwent reservoirs’. We also welcomed back to the library the group “Jig for a Kiss”. Lynne Brown continues as the speaker finder for these events.
- weekly **coffee mornings** which remain extremely popular serving often more than 40 people. The 3rd Thursday of each month includes a lunch club visit to one of the local pubs. There have also been coach trips to Llandudno, Bury Market, Liverpool, Skipton, Filey, Whitby and this December, to Stratford on Avon Christmas Market. For many people these are the only holidays they take and, in the company of friends from coffee morning, adds to their enjoyment.
- **Greenhill school classes** who visit the library each week to further explore a particular topic they are studying. The last few visits have covered topics such as: ‘Brazil (Y3)’; ‘The Great Sheffield Flood (Y4)’; and ‘Mary Queen of Scots (Y5)’.
- three **book clubs** which continue to meet once a month.
- the ever popular **Story time**, and thanks go to Lyn Clayton for taking the lead on this.
- the **Craft club** which runs every Friday from 3.15 to 4 pm during school term. It is

very popular with young people with their parents/carers. It is run by recognised volunteer mums and a nurse from Children's Hospital on days when she is not on shift. The sessions are supported by several Duke of Edinburgh award pupils from Meadowhead School. Activities include youngsters replicating the work of the mums, painting and drawing and the youngsters go home with the items they have made.

- the annual **Open Gardens event** (now in its 8th year) was held on an obligingly sunny weekend in mid-June and featured 18 local gardens. It raised over £2,200. Our thanks to Kristi Flint for taking over the organisation of this from Mike Davis. We are also very grateful to all those who opened their gardens and made contributions
- the **Scarecrow Festival** in August 2025 that attracted 23 entries (two more than last year). We have particularly encouraged participation from the local shops (8 scarecrows) in support of the 'Growing Greenhill' initiative. Our thanks to Jennie Wilson who took over the organisation of this event
- two **Artisan Market** events during the year. These continue to be busy community events and a significant source of income. Our thanks to Jennie and Keith Wilson, and to Jackie and Rob Goodrum (amongst many others) for their hard work in organising these.
- a **Lego Club** for children aged 8+ continues to be popular with sessions booked to capacity. Our thanks to Richard Biddulph for leading on these.
- a **Coder Dojo** (an after-school coding club for 8-13 year olds) enjoys regular attendance. Our thanks to Chris Brown for leading these sessions
- the popular and productive **Knit and Natter** group which meets twice a month. Thanks to Lynn Munroe for leading on this. The group welcome donations of any spare/ unwanted wool.
- a children's library that continues to enjoy **fantastic displays** throughout the year which catch visitors' attention and no doubt help spark children's imaginations. Notable mentions go to the "Secret Garden" and "Sea Life" displays with a huge thanks to Lynne Brown for all her work on these
- the start of a new fundraising initiative - a monthly **lottery**. Starting with an initial prize draw in January 2025, numbers have slowly risen, and the lottery currently generates a monthly income around £200, of which 25% goes in prize money and 75% is retained in library funds. Thanks to Joy Arnott for initially organizing this, although the role has recently passed to Kristi Flint.

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Although book loan numbers remain low, the library sub-branch gives away between 150 and 350 books every month and has proved to be a valued meeting place for residents who might otherwise not do so. Its undoubted value to residents is achieved through:

- being open for **four sessions each week** (Monday morning and afternoon and Wednesday morning and afternoon).
- offering **free tea and coffee** during all our opening hours.
- providing **free breakfasts** on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- a **reading group** reading a range of poetry, short stories and other writing genres, such as recipes. We have read stories written by members of the group and reminiscences of life in Lowedges gone by and finish each session with a short writing exercise
- a **Craft group** on Wednesday mornings that remains popular and offers a variety of different crafts including painting and card making. The beautiful items made by this group are incorporated into the seasonal window displays.
- offering a Monday afternoon **Specialist Papercraft group** open to all adults.
- having **free wifi**, a **laptop** for public use and cheap **printing**.
- a celebration of **VE day 2025** where the library collaborated with two other local charities in delivering a free event for the community. Approximately 60 people attended and enjoyed a BBQ, scones, activities and an entertainer
- an **Open Day** at the local fire station in June where the library gave away 90 children's books. There was also a competition to design a bookmark, and the winning bookmark was given out to everyone who borrowed a book in July.
- Hosting a free **Tiger who came to tea party** In August attended by 12 people who enjoyed a range of snacks, themed crafts, party games and an interactive story time.
- the opportunity of working with the **Roots and futures** project, beginning this summer. Roots and futures is a 'place-based heritage project co-produced with communities and organisations across the city of Sheffield'. The writing from the library's creative reading group and art from the Wednesday craft group will be included in a book and exhibition showcasing the project later in the year
- building momentum in classes coming from **Lowedges Junior Academy** with all classes visiting in 2025

Communications

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- The website continues to be the most definitive source of information particularly for our events program and we continue to maintain a significant presence on Facebook

now having 1940 followers (up from 1609 last year).

- Our 8-page printed **newsletter** is distributed every 4 months alongside a digital newsletter sent out monthly to just over 760 recipients (up from 500 last year), making it one of our most effective publicity channels.

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- **Facebook**, where it has 321 followers, is a good way of keeping up to date with Lowedges activities, events and services, or better still, come into the library during its opening hours for a free hot drink and a chat.

Organisation and people

Our **strategic objective** is to maintain a workforce of volunteers with the skills, capacity and motivation to operate the library to the same standard as those operated professionally, and to provide a high-quality offering of community events.

Lynne Raven has the role in the Library as Volunteer Co-ordinator. She responds to all applications and meets with prospective volunteers to discuss whether there is a role suitable for them. Successful candidates are introduced to other key volunteers and complete an induction which includes fire safety and safeguarding. In the last 12 months, 17 volunteers have started volunteering at the library including 7 young people from Meadowhead School undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Awards whom we are very happy to support.

As part of her Volunteer Co-ordinator role, Lynne also writes a newsletter for volunteers and organises occasional social events for them. As of 1st September 2025, we have 138 members, of whom 117 are registered as volunteers, 1 is an employee (Catherine Samengo-Turner) and 20 are Friends contributing at least £20 p.a. Around 90 people regularly volunteer.

Trustees

Clive Opie	Chair
Lyndon Henard	Secretary
Dawn Davis	Treasurer
Ann Hartley	Operations Manager
Lynne Raven	Volunteer Coordinator
Kirsty Atkin	
Lindy Stone	
Janet Crowther	
Michael Gormanly	Maintenance
Angela Fry	

Trustees are elected, usually for a period of 3 years, by the membership of the Friends of Greenhill Library. They meet monthly and review FROGL's policies and procedures on a

regular basis.

Volunteers can access the minutes, policies and procedures on the Three Rings website. Members and library users may also consult them in the library on request. Additionally, Lyndon Henard has organized the collation of handover documents for key roles in the library to shore up our succession planning, these are also available on Three Rings.

Finance for the year ending 31/3/2025

Our finances remain very healthy and our strategic objective to maintain financial sustainability with multiple diverse funding streams continues.

Receipts for 2024-25 were £84,685 (2023-24 £70,833) This is an increase of £13,852. The main increase was a donation of £10,750 from the Laurence Coates family.

Payments for 2024-2025 were £71,589 (2023-2024 £63,461) This is an increase of £8128. The main reason was due to a problem with the electricity meter where we were charged £8,000 in error. It took several months for the supplier to acknowledge the problem and as a result was not rectified before the end of the financial year.

We are grateful to Sheffield City Council for their annual grant of £17,070.

Fundraising and earned income for 2024-2025 was £23,086 compared with £20,554 in 2023-2024. This is an overall increase of £2,532 and comes from various income streams including photocopying and printing, book sales, village markets, open gardens amongst others. At this point we would like to extend our grateful thanks to Margaret Davis who has undertaken outstanding work in generating funding for the library, particularly in securing grants for specific needs. Margaret has left Greenhill to live closer to her family and we wish her all the best for the future.

Total funds carried forward on 31/03/2025 were £179,435. Most of this is unrestricted reserves and includes a policy of £27,005 to cover the uncertainty of the Council Grant reducing in the future; holding a fund of £28,500 for major repairs; and £15,832 designated to fund community events in the coming years.

We have money invested with Charity Bank and Hampshire Trust