



## Friends of Greenhill Library

Registered Charity Number 1158656

Greenhill Library, Hemper Lane

Sheffield S8 7FE

Telephone: 0114 2377657

email: [admin@greenhill-library.org](mailto:admin@greenhill-library.org)

[greenhill-library.org](http://greenhill-library.org)

### ANNUAL REPORT TO THE 2024 AGM (Final)

This report covers activities from October 2023 to September 2024 and the finances for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

#### Foreword

It has been another strong and busy year for Friends of Greenhill Library. The library continues to offer a professional standard of library service and a vibrant program of activities and events to meet the needs of local residents. The new section in the children's library, complete with murals and bean bags, has proved very popular with our younger users. Our finances remain very healthy, and we look forward to celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a volunteer-run library at the end of September — a brilliant milestone and a proud achievement for all those who have been and continue to be involved in Friends of Greenhill Library.

#### Main Achievements During the Year.

##### A) Library Service.

Our opening hours remain as last year at 26 hours per week. We are grateful to all the volunteers in customer-facing roles, especially 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 19/08/2024 were 15,378, up 5% from the figure for the previous 12 months. For the 12 months ending 31/3/2024, Yellow sticker loans made up 62% of our book issues. The current figure is likely to be higher. In the last 12 months we have registered 271 new users comprising 81 adults and 190 children. In a climate of nationally decreasing library usage, these are very encouraging figures.

Our sub-branch library, Lowedges, which shares a space with the Terminus Initiative in the Meeting Place continues to operate although our opening hours have reduced to 10 hours per week (down from 12.5 hours per week), due in part to Catherine Samengo-Turner, our lead at Lowedges, taking maternity leave from 23 March 2024, returning in January 2025.

Our Summer Reading Challenge for children run at Greenhill Library in 2024 was a

success. Co-ordinated by Clive Opie and in addition managed by a range of volunteers, the challenge attracted similar numbers to last year though with less completers at the time of writing. The table shows data for the last four years.

Year	Signed up			Completed		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2021	39	75	114	16	35	51
2022	56	81	137	17	31	48
2023	64	102	166	22	49	71
2024	61	97	158	15	35	50

We continue to expand our selection of books both through donations and the purchase of new titles. 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. However, during the year Revival Books stopped accepting damaged or unusable books for pulping. To avoid a storage crisis, we have been forced to be more selective in the donations we will accept. Recently we have started taking some donated books to book sales tables at local supermarkets, and to Hardwick Hall.

## **B) Community Outreach & 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".

Our activities program continues at a similar level to last year. Our offer over the last year has included:

### **Greenhill**

- We continue to enjoy 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.
- Our **monthly film program** for both adults and children continues to attract a good audience with many showings enjoying a full house.
- Our regular **evening talks** continue to be popular, and this year have included a talk on the history juggling (with lots of demonstrations) by Matthew Tiffany, an evening of Yorkshire dialects with Rod Dimbleby and a talk by Steve Porter, head of gardens and landscape at Chatsworth. We thank Vera Dyer who has stepped down from the task of speaker finder after many years. Lynne Brown has taken over the role.

- Our weekly **coffee mornings** are consistently extremely popular and now include a monthly visit to a local pub, The White Swan, for a lunch club, and occasional organised coach trips.
- Our two **book clubs** continue to operate; they both meet once a month
- **Story time** continues to be popular (to the extent of forcing us to take steps to reduce overcrowding in the children's library!) Our thanks to Lyn Clayton for taking the lead on this.
- Our annual **open Gardens event** (now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year) included 14 gardens. It attracted a significant number of people from outside the local area and raised an above-average total of £2036. we are very grateful to all those who opened their gardens and made contributions
- The **Scarecrow Competition** in August 2024 attracted 21 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 **poetry group** headed up by Louise Dore, continues to operate, albeit with modest audience sizes.
- The **Greener Greenhill** group have funded and organised the planting of three multi-stemmed hazels on the library lawn, with associated planting in surrounding flower beds, and on the roundabout.
- We ran three **artisan market events** during the year. These continue to be busy community events and a significant source of income. Our thanks to Jenny and Keith Wilson, and to Jackie and Rob Goodrum (amongst many others) for their hard work organising these.
- The **Greenhill Events Group** who are part of Friends of Greenhill library organized a Christmas Extravaganza, which ran alongside our December market. The group has subsequently disbanded as its four members find themselves with less free time.
- Our **Lego Club** for children aged 8+ continues to be popular with sessions booked to capacity. Our thanks to Richard Biddulph for leading on these.
- Our **Coder Dojo** (an after-school coding club for 8-13 year olds) enjoys regular attendance
- We ran two **readathon** events (a mixture of storytelling and crafts) during the year.
- Our **Knit and Natter** group meets twice a month and continues to be both popular and productive. They welcome donations of any spare/ unwanted wool.
- The children's library 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 Christmas and Dr Seuss displays! A huge thanks to Lynne Brown for all her work on these
- We no longer provide regular drop-in computer support sessions on a Friday

morning but offer help on a “by appointment” service.

## **Lowedges**

Overall, activity at the Lowedges library is at a lower level than last year. However, a range of onsite activities continues:

- Breakfast group Monday and Wednesday morning very popular with a regular group. Magazines (donated) are provided to read at breakfast and newspapers are occasionally available.
- Craft group on Wednesday morning remains very popular with a regular group making a variety of items for personal use, using different crafts forms. Paper craft items are made for our themed displays throughout the year.
- Reading group Monday mornings used by a small group who are now on their second book of short stories, which are used to stimulate discussion.
- Patrons attending morning sessions on both days is stable and good; however, afternoon sessions are not well patronised.
- Library book loans are significantly down on last year. This is due to a declining senior citizen population attending the library, only 1 regular patron takes books out regularly. Also, the loss of the children’s after-school group is due largely to more attractive after-school provision in the area.
- Free adult and children’s books are put outside the library each day and the public make use of this, often taking books and sometimes returning them as well.
- Board game after school group no longer runs, again due to more attractive provision in the area and lack of an afternoon session leader needed due to Maternity leave.
- Children’s Holiday Craft group numbers has declined each school holiday, culminating in no children attending during the recent August holiday.
- Staffing remains an issue particularly for Wednesday afternoon and will be an issue shortly on a Monday afternoon when the session leader has major surgery.

## **Lowedges Community Links**

- Lowedges Primary Academy have brought both reception classes to visit the library as part of their literacy and community cohesion curriculum. Also, we were due to give free books away in June, however this was not possible due to stormy weather.
- At Lowedges Fire Station Open Day we had a table of Free books to give away which was very popular.
- Energy Action continues to come every month to offer advice and help with energy costs. This is well attended during Autumn and Winter, but also used in reduced numbers in Spring and Summer.
- There are uncertainties around the future of the Lowedges library location, primarily due to the Terminus initiative (with whom we share the space)

considering options around the premises. We are working with them to minimise disruption. These questions are preventing us making firm plans for the future. Until this is resolved we feel that we cannot fully resolve our staffing problems or book loans or consider new initiatives to enhance the service.

- We acknowledge the consistent hard work put in by key volunteers to operate the service at Lowedges, notably Jan Williams, Carolyn Kirby and Michael Gormanly.

## **Communications (Greenhill)**

Our website continues to be the most definitive source of information particularly for our events program.

Our 8-page printed **newsletter** continues to be distributed every 4 months alongside a digital newsletter sent out monthly to just over 600 recipients (up from 500 last year) making it one of our most effective publicity channels.

We continue to maintain a significant presence on Facebook; Greenhill now has 1823 followers (up from 1609 last year) and Lowedges has 298 followers (up from 233 last year).

Plans to create a web site specifically for Lowedges have been abandoned.

## **C) Organisation & 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.

**At present we have 160 members**, of whom 129 are registered as volunteers, 1 is an employee (Catherine Samengo-Turner) and 30 are Friends contributing at least £20 p.a. Around 75 people regularly volunteer.

At the time of this report, we have six Meadowhead School students (three boys and three girls aged 16-18) volunteering at the library as part of their **Duke of Edinburgh award**. They are assisting at the Craft, Coding and Lego Clubs for youngsters from our community. One is helping the Library carry out a survey of our customers' needs and attitudes with a view to helping us determine our future.

### **Trustees**

Chris Brown  
Michael Corbishley  
Lyndon Henard  
Dawn Davis  
Ann Hartley  
Lynne Raven  
Wendy Crookes  
Janet Crowther  
Kirsty Atkin  
Lindy Stone

Chair  
Vice Chair  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Operations Manager  
Volunteer Coordinator

We were greatly saddened by the death of Laurence Coates in February 2024. Laurence was a staunch supporter of the library since 2014, having been, at various

times, session leader, secretary and treasurer. His meticulous attention to all he did, his gracious demeanor and his prodigious memory, were a tremendous asset to the library and are greatly missed. The position of treasurer has passed to Dawn Davis who has worked hard to get up to speed in the role.

Chris Brown will be standing down as chair and as a trustee, having served the maximum term allowed by our constitution.

**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.

#### **D) Finance for the year ending 31/3/2023.**

Our strategic objective is to maintain financial sustainability with multiple diverse funding streams.

Receipts in 2023-24 were £70,833 (2022-23: £76,645) and Payments £63,461 (2022-23: £143,484 – this large figure was due to building improvements) giving a surplus on the year of £7,371 (2022-23 deficit £66,860)

We are grateful to Sheffield City Council for their annual grant as well as for the support of their libraries staff. Fundraising and earned income for the year were £20554, comparable to £22,231 the previous year. We continue to maintain multiple diverse income streams including library hire, photocopying and printing, book sales, village markets, coffee morning, and the open gardens weekend, among others.

**Reserves Policy.** On 31/3/23 we carried forward funds of £166,339, of which most were unrestricted reserves. The trustees' policy is to designate as Reserves an unrestricted sum equal to 5 years gap between expected unrestricted receipts and payments (i.e. circa £27,000) but also to designate funds for significant matters. The fund for major repairs is now £28,500. £16,513 is designated to fund community events over the years. During the year some reserves were invested in interest-bearing accounts with the Charity Bank and the Hampshire Trust Bank.

#### **E) Building.**

Our **strategic objective** is to have a fit for purpose and developing building.

No building development took place during the period of this report. However, we are actively pursuing plans to modernise the main front office (which got "left behind" during last year's building work). This includes the replacement of the remaining single-glazed windows (3 in the office and some smaller windows in rooms further back).

We are also hopeful of a grant from the Royal Foundation to fund the building of a community room which has long been on our wish-list. There are several hurdles to

clear for this to become a reality, but it remains a tantalising prospect.

Greenhill and Lowedges Library both joined the wider Sheffield 'welcoming space' network providing a warm space during the colder months again demonstrating how we meet a myriad of needs in the local community.

**Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'B'.

Chris Brown (Chair of Trustees) Date: Sept. 2024