

GREAT GRANSDEN READING ROOM

Martha Sophia Webb Charity, Number 1077994

Annual Report for the Year 2021

Presented to the AGM 22 February 2022

This is the annual report of the trustees of the above-named charity for the calendar year 2021 which is also its financial year for the purpose of preparing final accounts.

1. Governance

1.1 The following individuals served as trustees during this period:

Anne Constantine	Elected
Lynne Taylor until 23.02.21	Elected
Sally Adelman from 23.02.21	Elected
Sue Meredith	Elected
Vikki Murphy	Elected on 23.02.21, previously nominated by Barneys Club
Ann Girling	Nominated by the Gransdens Horticultural Society
Martin Davies	Nominated by the Gransdens Society
Ralph Goodchild	Nominated by Carry On Learning
Emily Glover	Nominated by the Gransdens Guides
Irene Cooper	Nominated by the Allotments Society
Elaine Boyd	Nominated by the Revellers Drama Society
Peter King	Nominated by Great Gransden Parish Council
Sarah Bray	Nominated by Barneys Club
Stephanie Beaumont	Co-opted

*Evergreens and the Royal British Legion remain nominated user groups but neither had a trustee during 2021.

1.2 The charity is governed by a Scheme that was adopted on 19 June 1953 and amended on 11 February 2020. This Scheme describes the purposes of the charity as *“physical and mental training and recreation and social, moral and intellectual development through the medium of reading and recreation rooms, library, lectures, classes, recreations and entertainments or otherwise as may be found expedient for the benefit of the Parish of Great Gransden and its immediate vicinity”*.

1.3 The Management Committee (the trustees) met on 23 February, after the AGM, and on 5 October. Other matters were considered via email between meetings. An Events Group was formed to plan and trial new events run by trustees and other volunteers. This led to the launch of the Reading Room Pop-Up Café in October, which has been very successful and much valued by the local community.

Key matters and decisions at the ordinary meetings were:

- COVID measures
- Future works
- Fees
- Financial reports, policy and procedures
- Reading Room website and Facebook

- Furniture
- Queen's Jubilee

2. Usage

2.1 Most regular users of the Reading Room have returned following the easing of COVID restrictions during 2021. Activities for children and young people were allowed to return in April under regulations set out by government and national organisations; these included Barneys After School Club and Guides. Village societies (Horticultural Society, Gransdens Society, Ladies Group) returned from September 2021 although some meetings were cancelled. Two groups have not returned: Evergreens has relocated to Little Gransden Village Hall because of its larger size; and Carry On Learning has not yet resumed. Parish Council and other meetings also returned to the Reading Room in the second half of the year. The new café was open every Friday morning from 1 October until the Christmas break.

2.2 A free celebration to welcome people back to the Reading Room after the easing of restrictions on outdoor gatherings was held in the garden on 4 July. Jazz and Pimms attracted 50 people to enjoy a summer afternoon with friends and neighbours with music provided by Jazz Workshop.

3. COVID

3.1 Full closure was required in the first lockdown in 2020 and only childcare activity allowed in subsequent lockdowns. The COVID risk assessment was updated during 2021 following changes in government guidance. The procedures adopted were successful in keeping the Reading Room COVID-free.

4. Lettings

4.1 Lettings income was £4365 in 2021 compared to £4968.70 in 2020 and £9,236 in 2019. Lettings income continued to be affected by Covid throughout 2021.

4.2 Huntingdonshire District Council continued to provide compensation to village halls affected by COVID restrictions during 2021. The Reading Room received £17,374 in 2021. Part of this was a RESTART grant which funded the Jazz and Pimms event and the set-up costs for the café.

4.3 Lettings fees were reviewed by the Committee in October and remain unchanged with the addition of a discretionary free period for new groups starting up. It was subsequently agreed that the Chair would have discretion to vary the hourly charge for charitable events.

5. Premises

5.1 Minor damage to guttering was repaired free of charge. A single quote has been received for the repair and painting of some windows but further quotes are needed as the gable-end fascias also need to be done.

5.2 An inspection of fire extinguishers and blankets and PAT testing were carried out in the autumn.

5.3 The Committee commissioned architects to draw up initial ideas and drawings for a rear extension to the Reading Room. We are currently unable to accommodate more than 50-60 people and this is insufficient for many activities that we would like to see at the Reading Room. It is too

small for any fitness or dance classes and villagers are travelling outside the village to access these. Covid has also reminded us of the importance of space and ventilation in social settings to reduce the risk of infections. Since the Reading Room was built the village population has increased by approximately 50%. The Committee is ambitious that the Reading Room be a vibrant hub for the village providing a range of activities for all ages and interests. Trustees hope to consult with Great Gransden residents on draft extension plans in early 2022.

8. Thank you

Thank you to all Members of the Committee in 2021 for their time spent and work on this much valued village facility. A particular thank you to Secretary Sue Meredith, who is standing down after 7 years. Thank you also to the Parish Council for its support, and all users for bringing life to the Reading Room during the year.