

GREAT GRANSDEN READING ROOM

Martha Sophia Webb Charity, Number 1077994

Annual Report for the Year January to December 2023

Presented to the AGM 19 February 2024

This is the annual report of the trustees of the above-named charity for the calendar year 2023 which is also its financial year for the purpose of preparing final accounts. The Reading Room is located on Fox Street in Great Gransden, SG19 3AA.

1. Governance

1.1 The following individuals served as management trustees during this period:

Anne Constantine	Elected
Claire Turner	Elected from 01.01.23
Stephanie Beaumont	Elected from 20.02.23
Vikki Murphy	Elected
Cathy Davis	Elected until 20.02.23
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 until 20.02.23
Fiona Coulson	Nominated by the Allotments Society from 20.02.23
Peter King	Nominated by Great Gransden Parish Council until 20.02.23
Cathy Davis	Nominated by Great Gransden Parish Council from 20.02.23
Sarah Bray	Nominated by Barneys Club
Stephanie Beaumont	Co-opted until 20.02.23
Elaine Boyd	Co-opted

*Evergreens, Revellers and the Royal British Legion remain as nominating user groups but did not have a trustee during 2023.

1.2 The custodian trustee for the premises (Reading Room building and garden) is Great Gransden Parish Council.

1.3 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”*.

Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

1.4 The Management Committee (the trustees) met on 20 February 2023, after the AGM, on 27 July (Special Meeting) and on 3 October. Other matters were considered via email between meetings. The Events Group/Café Management Group met regularly to manage the café and plan for events.

Key matters and decisions at the meetings were:

- Reading Room maintenance
- Events including the Coronation
- Reading Room extension and improvement project and consultation
- Fire risk assessment
- Furniture and fundraising
- Fees
- Financial procedures
- Financial reports

2. Usage

2.1 The Reading Room was very busy during 2023. Barneys After School Club and Holiday Club operated for local families for 48 weeks. The Parish Council held its monthly meetings in the Reading Room. Other regular society/club users were:

Gransden and District Horticultural Society

Gransden Society

Carry on Learning

Gransden Guides

Village Knitting Bee

Adult Ballet

East Anglia Model Railway Club

Ladies Group

2.2 Occasional bluegrass concerts have been popular, attracting talented musicians from the US and Europe.

2.3 There were two fundraising events for the children's chairs, a Welcome Event for new residents held jointly with the Parish Council, and a very busy Xmas Lights Celebration. The Coronation was celebrated in the Reading Room and surrounding area with an 'off-street' party alongside the Reading Room garden.

2.4 The café, which opened for 50 Fridays in 2023, continued to be very popular and café income was able to provide activities for children during school holidays. The weekly café continued to be a collection point for food donations to the NEED project.

2.5 There were 18 private lettings for parties, meetings and rehearsals.

3. Lettings

3.1 Lettings income was £9449, a 15% increase on 2022 and the first full year of lettings since COVID lockdowns. The café contributed a further £2765 for usage of the premises.

4. Financial Review

4.1 The charity's financial position for the year is set out in the accompanying accounts. Turnover for 2023 totalled £25,967. Reserves of £81,434 were held in a deposit account at the end of the financial year. These reserves are intended for investment in the Reading Room property as and when required for repair, maintenance or improvement of the facility. Sums held in the current account are for general operating expenses. The financial balance improved by just over £5000 compared to 2022.

4.2 A fundraising drive for new chairs for the children raised over £1400 and a further donation of £750 was given towards other Reading Room improvements.

5. Premises

6.1 The plan to complete the outside painting was defeated by the weather and has been rescheduled for Spring 2024.

6.2 An inspection of fire extinguishers and blankets was carried out in the autumn.

6.3 The decision was taken to carry out a full repair of the slate roof on the old building after yet another displaced tile which led to a wasp infestation. This requires Listed Building consent and Building Control approval so has been deferred until 2024 when these have been obtained.

6.4 The old curtains have been replaced with blinds. Several broken panes of green glass were replaced.

6.3 The Committee held a public consultation in early spring on plans to extend and improve the Reading Room. Formal responses were 94% in favour of the proposals and provided very valuable feedback on the detail, much of which was incorporated into amended designs. A full report of the consultation was presented to the Parish Council and Reading Room trustees. With the agreement of the Custodian Trustee (the Parish Council) a pre-app submission was commissioned. It is expected that this will be submitted in early 2024.

6.5 The FCC Recycling Community Fund awarded the Reading Room a grant of £35,166 for refurbishment of the toilets and the installation of LED lighting. This work will be undertaken in 2024.

7. Training

New volunteers at the Reading Room Café undertook food hygiene training.

8. Thank you

Thank you to all Members of the Committee in 2023 for their time spent and work on this much valued village facility. A particular thank you to Elaine Boyd and Sarah Bray who are standing down at the AGM in February 2024. Thank you to the Parish Council for its support, to all volunteers for their help with activities, and all users for bringing life to the Reading Room during the year.

DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved this Annual Report .

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees



Full name Margaret Anne Constantine

Position Chair

Date 19 February 2024