

## GREAT GRANSDEN READING ROOM

Martha Sophia Webb Charity, Number 1077994

Annual Report for the Year January to December 2024

Presented to the AGM 24 February 2025

This is the annual report of the trustees of the above-named charity for the calendar year 2024 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
Stephanie Beaumont	Elected until 19.02.24
Vikki Murphy	Elected
Cathy Davis	Elected from 19.02.24
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
Fiona Coulson	Nominated by the Allotments Society
Cathy Davis	Nominated by Great Gransden Parish Council until 19.02.24
Paul Greenland	Nominated by Great Gransden Parish Council from 19.02.24
Sarah Bray	Nominated by Barneys Club until 19.02.24
Kelly Walsh	Nominated by Barneys Club from 19.02.24
Elaine Boyd	Co-opted until 19.02.24
Stephanie Beaumont	Co-opted from 19.02.24

\*Evergreens, Revellers and the Royal British Legion remain as nominating user groups but did not have a trustee during 2024.

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 19 February 2024, after the AGM and on 1 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 considered and decisions taken at the meetings related to:

- Reading Room maintenance
- Events
- Reading Room extension and improvement project
- Financial reports
- Trustee roles
- Net Zero strategy
- Broadband
- Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies

## **2. Usage**

2.1 The Reading Room was busy during 2024. Barneys After School Club and Holiday Club operated for local families for 47 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

Adult Ballet

Village Knitting Bee Jan-April

East Anglia Model Railway Club

There were three fundraising events, screenings of the football Euros, and HDC booked the room twice for elections.

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

2.3 A popular innovation in 2024 was the Pop-Up Pub, the Fox Street Tavern, which ran on the first Saturday night of the month from June to December, standing in for the (temporarily) closed village pub. In December the Fox Street Tavern combined with the Christmas Lights celebration and the children's Christmas event.

2.4 The café, which opened for 51 Fridays in 2024, continued to be busy and café income was able to provide various free activities for children during school holidays. The café was a collection point for food donations to the NEED project.

2.5 There were 27 private lettings for parties and meetings etc, an increase on 2023, but the Reading Room is underused at the weekend. More private hire would help to boost income.

## **3. Lettings**

3.1 Lettings income was £10,920, a 14% increase on 2023. The café contributed a further £3060 for usage of the premises. The Fox Street Tavern made a profit of £859.

## **4. Financial Review**

4.1 The charity's financial position for the year is set out in the accounts for year ending 31 December 2024. There was a deficit outturn of £11,690 due to the roof repair, additional expenditure on the new toilets and project costs. This deficit was financed from reserves, which stood at £82,263 were held in a savings account at the end of the financial year. These reserves are

intended for further investment in the Reading Room as and when required for repair, maintenance, grant match funding or other improvement of the facility. Sums held in the current account are for general operating expenses.

## **5. Premises**

- 6.1 The outside painting project, which began in 2022, was completed in August 2024.
- 6.2 An inspection of fire extinguishers and blankets was carried out in the autumn.
- 6.3 A full repair and insulation of the slate roof on the old building was completed in June 2024.
- 6.4 All toilets were refurbished in June and October. This was badly needed and has been widely appreciated. The work also resolved some leaking pipe/damp problems. The FCC Recycling Community Fund awarded the Reading Room a grant of £35,166 towards the refurbishment of the toilets and the installation of LED lighting.
- 6.5 LED strip lighting was installed in place of old strip lights throughout the building.
- 6.6 The Reading Room engaged with the Green Business Programme on devising a Net Zero strategy for the premises with a particular focus on the potential for solar power and a low carbon solution for heating.

## **7. Training**

The Chair undertook Fire Prevention training and attended the ACRE conference on community buildings. The Chair and another trustee attended funding/grant seminars.

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

## **8. Thank you**

Thank you to all Members of the Committee in 2024 for their time and contributions to maintaining the Reading Room and helping it to thrive. A particular thank you to Ralph Goodison and Stephanie Beaumont who are standing down. 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	24 February 2025