Annual Report for the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

Organisation name: Friends of Beechcroft Library

Charity registration number: 1188953

Objectives and Activities

This annual report has been created following guidance contained in the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) issued by the Charity Commission.

	SORP Ref.	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	Purposes as defined in the Constitution agreed in April 2020: The advancement of education for the public benefit in particular by the provision of library facilities and services for learning, for information, advice and other related library provision for the benefit of the residents and the wider community in Stratton St Margaret and the surrounding areas.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	The main activities undertaken to achieve the above aims were: • Working with Stratton St Margaret Parish Council to encourage community engagement and develop the library as a community hub • Running events and activities focused on our objectives of Improving health and well-being, and supporting education Training and skills • Promoting the Library via social media, posters, displays, developing a community network • Raising funds to support activities.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	*Para 1.18*	The Trustees assess each of their activities with regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

Additional information (optional)
You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP Ref.	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	The Friends do not currently give grants to individuals or other organisations
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	The Friends do not currently undertake any social investments
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	There are no employees, all the Trustees are volunteers. Library Volunteers are engaged by the Parish rather than the Friends but are supported and encouraged by the Friends. Their contribution is vital in enabling the Library and the Friends to undertake the numerous activities and groups which take place

Achievements and Performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	The Friends continue to support Stratton St Margaret Parish Council in developing Beechcroft Library as a thriving, multi-functional community hub. During the year, the Friends nominated the library for the Community Library Network Awards and were delighted when it won the national award for Outstanding Community Hub. This achievement recognises the hard work, commitment, and effective partnership working of all those involved in the library's success. At the beginning of the year, the Friends reviewed their key objectives to ensure they remained relevant. As the library has successfully achieved its goal of becoming a thriving community hub, it was agreed that the objectives should be retained, but with a shift in emphasis from fundraising to providing broader support to the Parish Council in the operation and development of the library. All the Friends' activities in support of Beechcroft Library are aligned with four key objectives, namely: 1. Improving health and well-being, 2. Encouraging community engagement, 3. Supporting education, training and skills 4. Supporting the Parish Council in running the library. The achievements of the Friends during the year are outlined under each of these objectives below.

Achievements and Performance (continued)

	SORP Ref.	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	**Objective 1 - Improving health and well-being** The regular groups and activities supported by the Friends are all well attended and help to mitigate the loneliness and isolation experienced by some of our residents. These regular groups include: • Fun Art Group • Friendship Group • Getting On-line workshops • Book Club • Home Book Delivery service These regular groups are supplemented by activities organised by library staff, volunteers and the Parish team, resulting in a very busy, welcoming and engaging feel to the library. We work closely with the library staff to put on various free activities for children during half terms and longer holidays. We continue to run the Home Delivery Book Service for local residents who have mobility issues and are unable to visit the library. Members of the Friends liaise closely with the Swindon Live Well Hub, especially the Social Prescribers and Community Navigators. They direct their clients to the various services provided by the library such as Stratton Advice Point, Getting Online workshops, Friendship Group and Art Group. Members of the Friends also work closely with the local Primary Care networks in particular to help with potential digital exclusion as the NHS becomes oriented towards digitisation of their services. As a result of enquiries from library customers, we have purchased various new books and activities which are dementia friendly **Objective 2 - Encouraging Community Engagement** We have built a strong collaborative relationship with the community cafe Brewbook which opened March 2024, working together on a number of events and sharing ideas and initiatives. The co-location is proving highly beneficial in enhancing community engagement with the library. While the introduction of the café has reduced the space available for activities such as the Friendship Group, Knit and

		Natter, and fundraising events, these disadvantages are outweighed by the longer-term benefits. The café provides a valuable additional income stream strengthening the library's financial resilience and supporting its long-term sustainability. The Friends have organised or taken part in various one-off community events during the year such as coffee mornings, raffles, book sales, information displays, etc. These included: • 26th April - World Earth Day. Planting sunflowers with local children with the objective of promoting environmental education.. • 13-17th May - Mental Health Awareness week to increase understanding of mental health • 14th June - Stratton Juniors Football Club Fun Day. Book stall, library information and kids activities, raised £8.20 for the Library • 19th July - Book stall and Library information stall at Stratton Festival, which raised £70 for the Library • 26th September - Coffee morning in conjunction with Brewbook Cafe which raised £1,310 for Macmillan Cancer Support . • 16th December - Book stall and raffle at the Brewbook Christmas market which engaged with many local residents and raised £230.51 for SANDS charity. Public transport links within the parish are poor, so we maintain a small book-exchange library at Grange Community Centre in Lower Stratton. Two members of Stratton St Margaret History Society are also Trustees of the Friends and they work hard to maintain the Local History Archive and curate the various interesting history displays both in the library and at various events throughout the Parish. Several of our Trustees are active members of various local organisations including: • Get Connected Swindon • Stratton St Margaret History Society • Local Primary Care Networks • Wiltshire Building Records • Swindon and District Local History Society • Wiltshire On-line Parish Clerks • National Literacy Trust • Community Managed Libraries Network

- Women's Institute
- STEM Learning Organisation

Objective 3 - Supporting education, skills and training

The Friends have increased their focus on this objective this year in view of the findings identified in the 2025 Indices of Deprivation. The deprivation is most severe within the Educational, Skills and Training domain where some areas of Stratton are ranked within the worst 3% in England.

Literacy Initiatives

The Friends and library staff have joined the National Literacy Trust, in order to work together with Swindon Stories to support children's literacy.

Alongside the national Summer Reading Challenge they organised a further Summer Writing Competition for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children. All local schools, Guiding and Scouting groups were contacted with details as well as it being promoted in the Library and advertised on the relevant local Facebook pages. To encourage and enhance the story writing, two workshops were held: the workshop for Key Stage 1 was run by local children's author Kate Claxton, whilst that for Key Stage 2 children was run by the local charity Story Shed. The competition was judged by local children's author Steve Antony.

Digital Inclusion Initiatives

Digital exclusion is a problem in the local area and the Library is a registered Digital Inclusion hub within the National Digital Inclusion Network.

The Friends are key members of Getting Online Swindon which is a forum for organisations which are working towards reducing the digital divide in Swindon and surrounding areas.

The Friends run weekly Getting Online workshops to help users with a range of queries including:

- Improving confidence with digital devices
- Setting up and using the NHS and other apps
- Accessing council services which are only accessible online, eg Blue Badges, Housing benefit, etc
- Online safety and security
- Searching and applying for jobs online
- Setting up emails and social media accounts

The Friends also provide access to Learn My Way resources provided by the Good Things Foundation, which provide a structured learning plan for users who want to improve their digital skills.

STEM Activities

Our weekly chess club is becoming increasingly popular. Chess is recognised as a valuable STEM learning activity for children. It acts as an intensive mental workout for the exact same cognitive skills required in STEM fields. It builds analytical reasoning, pattern recognition, logical planning, and complex problem-solving. It is also a great way of developing and maintaining mental sharpness in adults.

We were very sad that our wonderful chess coach, Peter Richmond, passed away at the beginning of February. Fortunately, his role as coach has been ably filled by his deputy, Simon Gill.

Our monthly LEGO Club encourages young children to think creatively. LEGO is not only fun but also a powerful educational tool that supports learning in STEM (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, **M**athematics) fields. By designing, building, and testing structures, builders naturally apply principles of Science (gravity, balance), Technology (coding, robotics), Engineering (structural stability), and Maths (geometry, ratios) in a fun, tangible way.

Other Initiatives

The Friends organise information displays with relevant reading material to support national awareness days and campaigns, including:

- World Earth Day
- Child Mental Health week
- World Book Day
- Mental Health Awareness week
- Summer Reading Challenge

Objective 4 - Supporting the Parish in running the library

The Friends have organised or taken part in various money making activities during the year such as coffee mornings, regular book sales, raffles, can recycling, etc., and have raised £661 in sales, donations, and interest, to support activities in Beechcroft library. This includes £250 from book sales of "History of Stratton Saint Margaret" written by Clive Carter, who is generously donating all the profits from his book to the Friends to benefit the library.

		Although this is only a small amount in relation to the overall cost of running the library, we hope that it provides some of the nice-to-have elements for the public, such as prizes, children's activity resources, badges, books, etc. **Future Plans** Looking to the future, we are hoping to continue our focus on education, skills and training, and to continue working with the National Literacy Trust.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP Ref	
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	Formal fundraising objectives were not defined other than ensuring that the objectives described in the previous section were supported financially where necessary.
Investment performance against objectives	Para 1.41	Not applicable

Financial Review

	SORP Ref.	
Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	Our income for 2025-26 was **£1,060.54**: We have spent **£981** on purchases for the library. Our net worth as at 31 March 2026 was **£2,237.88**. Please see the Annual Financial Report for full details.
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	Our Reserves Policy states that we will only hold reserve funds if we have formal financial commitments. As we now have Public Liability Insurance premiums going forward we will ensure that we have sufficient funds to cover the premium and run-off insurance in the event that the charity closes down.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	Sufficient to cover Public Liability Insurance Premium which was £215 in 2025-26, and the estimated premium of roughly £800 for run-off insurance for 7 years in the event the charity closes down.
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	Not applicable
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	Not applicable
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	We are dependent on the continued existence of Beechcroft Library. There is little chance that the Library would close in the near future as it is a popular resource for the parish.

Additional information (optional)
You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	We have received £400 in grants this year from Stratton St Margaret Parish Council We have received £661 in donations, book sales, and interest.
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	There are few risks facing the Friends charity and they are all categorised as low, the highest risks are: • Activities where safeguarding risks may arise • Heavy use of available space in the library due to the popularity of the library may restrict space available for events and activities

Structure, Governance and Management

	SORP Ref.	
Type of governing document	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted?	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation following the Foundation model
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions	Para 1.25	The existing Trustees can select new Trustees as required following the procedure described in the next section.

Additional information (optional)
You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	Recruitment of Trustees for the Friends should be in line with the guidance given below: • There is a written job description / person specification for the post • If a trustee wishes to volunteer for the Library they should complete a Parish Council volunteer application form and the Parish Recruitment policies be followed • A suitable induction programme is provided • The applicant is given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns.
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a written constitution. We are not affiliated to any wider network
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	We work closely with Stratton St Margaret Parish Council who run Beechcroft Library.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Friends of Beechcroft Library
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	**1188953**
Charity's principal address	188 Beechcroft Road, Swindon, SN2 7QQ

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Lesley Hemingway	Chair		
2	Richard Hemingway	Treasurer		
3	Indra Robson			
4	Lynette Dodson			
5	Greg Browne	Secretary		
6	Clive Carter			
7	Linda O'Kane	Deputy Chair		
8	Nigel Chalk	Deputy Treasurer		
9	Anne Chalk			

Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

Director name		
N/A		

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

Trustee name	Dates acted if not for whole year	
N/A		

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	Not applicable
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	Not applicable
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	Not applicable

Exemptions from disclosure

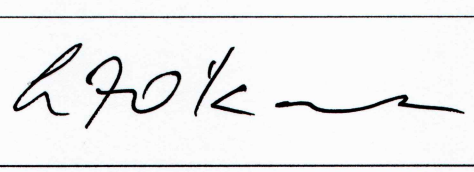
Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

Not applicable

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	LINDA FRANCES O'KANE	NIGEL PETER CHALK
Position(s) (eg Secretary, Chair)	DEPUTY CHAIR	Deputy Treasurer
Date(s)	29/07/2026	18/8/2026