

Wroughton Library, Parish Report *November and December 2025*

Half Term Oct – Nov 25

A busy two weeks; we avoided Halloween by having a Monsters Vs Magic theme. Children made up their own monster name, completed monster word searches and cut and stick monsters. Paula came up with a sock monster craft club which was really well attended. We continue to post these events on social media.

Four new cover staff

One new recruit started by covering for Paula last Saturday, and was excellent. A second is to help provide cover on Saturday 6th December.

New Shelves

A month ago, I had a frustrating conversation with Gresswell; a supplier of library shelves. We were close to ordering an eight shelf unit and a ten shelf unit to expand capacity and choice, but Gresswell say the shelves do not come with wheels as it makes them unstable. As we need to move our shelves outside for events, it is vital to have wheels.

At this point I wrote to Glenda O'Connor at Central and West Swindon Libraries (thanks to the genius idea of Brian Boston, a previous Library trustee) to see if she had any shelves in storage that we can buy. Long story short, Richard and Taylor went to collect one today, have rebuilt it, and it looks terrific. It is an extra long eight bay shelf, which will provide much needed extra capacity. I have a feeling they are happy for us to have it for free.

New lights

Last winter we were keen to install better light as the library is surprisingly dark. This was before a series of leaks from the velux window nearest the door. In short, the lights were the least of our worries and were forgotten over the summer. Last month I emailed Hickmans for a quote to do a straight swap of the eight dingy halogens for larger brighter disc lights, basically a bigger version that casts whiter light. In addition, rather than a large overhanging light for the desks, which was the original plan, we will be buying two table lamps that cast a cosy glow.

Canal Trust Evening October 16th

The Canal Trust evening was very good, with 47 tickets sold (max capacity is 50) Robin Earle explained something of the history, and Chloe Ford took us through the current plans which are ambitious and generally supported by the Borough Council, who like the idea of the towpaths being renewed or created for public use.

The main obstacle is gaining permission from landowners and developers to take the canal through a development, even though it can act as a flood management feature. They are hoping to take it from Wichelstowe through Badbury Park and cross country to Abingdon in Oxfordshire, and eastwards to Semington near Melksham.

Footfall

The library continues to be busy, although there is no predicting when. On Tuesday 4th November we had 73 visitors between 10am and 12 midday, with many of them staying for Rhyme Time. This week, only 25 over the same period.

We are still awaiting for the statistics from the Summer Reading Challenge. Although the figures will only be for Wroughton and won't tell us how well other community libraries did by comparison, it does at least let us compare uptake and completion with last year.

Lantern Procession at the Switch On.

We were really pleased how the afternoon and evening went. I had four volunteers including Carolyn (a new member of cover staff) Grace and Swaran, Otilie, plus Paula, myself, Zoe, and her very helpful children. We decided to set out six tables with the craft activity which ran for an hour before the parade. This was well attended and there were no queues as each table could accommodate up to four children. We spent £84.41 on the craft, keeping costs down by using resources we already had, and voluntary contributions from parents came to £31. Likewise the procession materials came to approximately £195.93 (within budget of £200) and we have recovered £74 of those costs from the parents of participating children, with resources left to reuse next year. My thanks to Zoe for finding ways of staying within budget.

The procession itself went much more smoothly; thanks to Amanda and the team for making it possible. We held a team talk with the parents before we started so they knew what to do and what to expect, and had organised a better way to distribute the lanterns quickly.

Zoe led the procession, and residents applauded the children as they appeared, which was magic.

Next year I am thinking of making white birds, with wings that move – there won't be a dry eye in the house!

One unexpected bonus on the night was that I was approached by a year 3 teacher from Wroughton Juniors who would like to bring year three pupils to see the library. Many of them have never been to a library before, and this might encourage parents to bring them to join, and increase our reach to our residents.

Steve Antony in February

Steve Antony is a brilliant local children's illustrator and author, who was due to do a workshop with us last June but had to postpone. He has rescheduled for this February and will be talking about his book "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang". This being the case we will have a theme of "things that go" for craft and book displays. It also complements the fortieth anniversary of the closure of the Works in April, which we shall commemorate with a steam locomotive theme in the library.