



Wroughton Community Library Parish Report April 2026

The library is a small room, which we hope is cosy, welcoming and safe. It's a place to sit quietly and "switch off", or to bring children and enjoy sharing a story, let them role play with the play kitchen, or count the fish in the bubble machine. It's a place to meet a friend, speak to a Housing Officer or an advisor from Citizen's Advice. It's a room with free refreshments, art in the cabinet and *thousands* of books.

I like to think that the impact of this room is a quiet but far reaching increase in community wellbeing. But as always, my challenge is to get more people to benefit from this. As I was writing this report I made a list of things we were "getting right" and things that could work better, and if I had to come up with a heading for the good things it would be "Contacts and Collaborations" because that is our rocket fuel.

We always keep an eye on footfall, we can't sit on our hands and wait for people to realise how much they need a library! The books we loan face fierce competition from screen time. Thanks to Zoe our Finance Officer we have an accurate picture of how footfall ebbed and flowed between April 2024 and March 2026, and the results are reassuring. Overall, numbers are going up; over the first 12 months we had 11,674 visits from customers, over the second 12 month period we had 12006, an increase of 332.

We benefit from other users of the Ellendune such as Little Lambs on a Wednesday, who have kindly encouraged parents to bring their children to the library afterwards, the Friday market which is so well attended and a natural partner; once you've bought cake and some tomato plants, why not round the morning off by browsing our crime section? Also the Monday Friendship Club, SMASH youth club and Thursday Yoga. We need these visits to be habit forming, especially for the young.

Creative activities

Only in its second year, Paula and I were astonished by how the Christmas Lantern parade has taken off. Not only were we oversubscribed, but every

child turned up with at least one adult, and siblings too, and squeezed themselves along the corridor ready to process to the tree. We planned the logistics of handing out the correct lantern to the correct child as carefully as we could and had some great volunteers to help on the night. The moment when the children are applauded by the crowd is magical. My thanks to Zoe Dyer our Finance Officer, who came forward to lead the procession.

We've had some great evening events which raise money for good causes; "Nancy Night", the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust evening, plus a Banner making workshop, a Creative Writing Course and a visit from artist and author Steve Antony. Steve Bessent exhibited his photos last August, as a result we have four of them framed and ready to go on the wall of the Alex room.

We have new artists and makers in the cabinet every month, plus Craft Club every Thursday, lego club, knit and knatter, Rhyme time, weekly visits from Tick Tock preschool and class visits from the Infant School which I hope will be repeated.

We have borrowed items from STEAM to mark the fortieth anniversary of the closure of the Swindon Works, and were kindly helped in this by two ex-employees, Norman Withington and Ken Habgood, who provided amazing photographs; thank you gentlemen.

Wroughton Monthly magazine, Facebook and Instagram raises our profile and keeps us in people's consciousness; so look out for posts about Lady Featherdown, our Bridgerton duck, all ready for the race next week.

So all of these things not only keep us busy, but relevant, and help us offer connection, not isolation. If you are not yet a library member, you might be missing out; just come and see us with some form of ID and proof of address, and we will do the rest.

Welcome aboard Wroughton Community Library!

