

2025 update

"Back in 2019, the closure of Northfields Library seemed imminent. There was a glimmer of hope as Ealing Council started consulting on options for the development of Community Managed Libraries (CML's). A small group of local people believed this might be the answer to save the library and develop it into a vibrant Community Hub – and the idea for Northfields Community Library … and more was born."

That's how we told you the story of the beginnings of Northfields Community Library last year – the online work during COVID, extending our hours, building a programme of events and activities for all ages, reaching out and developing partnerships within the community.

This year has seen a major review of our business plan, successful funding bids to improve our energy efficiency and extend storage space, and a clear reiteration of our values and aims:

NCL is not just a lending library……. but a space to learn, socialise and be informed.

- For children a place to have fun, access books, and meet other children
- For older residents a hub to socialise, connect with others, broaden their knowledge and discuss topics of interest .
- For parents and carers to socialise at children's events, exchange information & introduce their children to a wide variety of books
- For adults to acquire new skills in IT, literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages classes; to sit, chat and socialise

We should like to thank all our volunteers, Friends of the LIbrary, advisers, supporters, colleagues and partners, and of course our funders over the last five years.

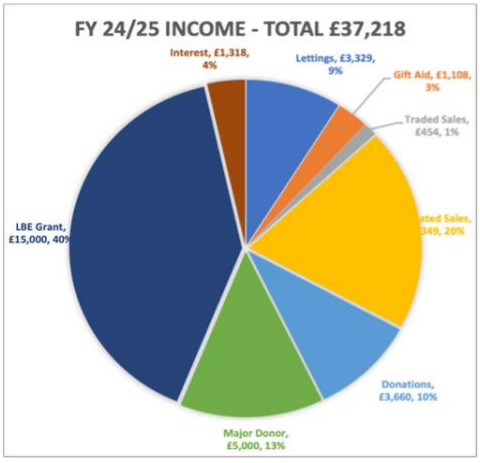


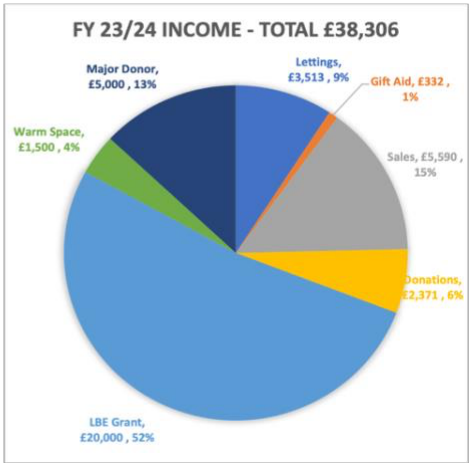






Finance and Fundraising – Increasing independence





Income and expenditure

Our main expenses amount to just over £24000 a year, and include Water, Electricity, Stationary, Cleaning, Insurance, Volunteer Overheads, IT (excluding library PCs), Training & Development, Administration, Activities and Fundraising. LBE provides bookstock, IT, and building maintenance. Volunteer hours totalled 667 hours in the typical month we sampled. We estimate that that equates to a contribution of £99000 a year.

Our main source of income has been our grant from LBE which tapers off each year. We have a most generous annual donation from a major donor, and we have built up a range of income streams to give us security for the future when the grant tapers off. Everyone who buys a book, a plant, or a ticket to an event; every group that hires our premises; everyone who takes out an annual subscription as a Friend of the Library or makes a one off donation, however small, helps to ensure that the doors of Northfields Community Library will remain open for all.

We have built up designated reserves to draw on as grant income decreases, and invested to give us a small annual income from interest. Our independent income will demonstrate to future grant funders (and we shall need them soon) that we are prudent and as self sufficient as possible.

Improving operational efficiency

As for most households, our biggest single cost is energy. As the library is all electric and poorly insulated, we have been hit hard by high electricity costs during the winter months. We are very grateful to LB of Ealing library services who agreed to our request to have solar panels installed on the roof of the library to help manage our energy costs. The installation of 12 solar panels was completed in summer 2024.

With the help of local resident, John Rowe (Parents for Future West London) we successfully bid for a Community Climate grant from LB Ealing in early 2025 to install a solar battery, which should help even more to manage our energy costs. The battery installation should be carried out in summer 2025. We will have live monitoring data available so everyone can see how much electricity we are generating and the C02 emissions savings.



Partnerships and Outreach – Connecting and Empowering

We have developed partnerships with other voluntary sector organisations who give expert advice and information as well as providing particular services to support our local community:

- **MCR Pathways** recruit and train mentors to support a care experienced or disadvantaged young person to help them build their confidence, belief, and self - esteem.
- **Ealing Advice Services** (EAS) is the equivalent of the CAB and we have been given access to their signposting digital service to help the local community identify local voluntary support services to meet their needs.
- **Adult & Community Development Academy** (ACDA) run classes in English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and IT Digital Skills Training for beginners.
- **Read Easy** helps adults learn to read and the tutors use the library to meet their students for twice weekly learning sessions.
- **Good Gym**, a community of people who get fit by doing good, have kindly been distributing updated leaflets around the South Ealing area
- **The Ealing Repair Café** visits us monthly
- Going forwards: We are in discussion with the **Log Cabin Charity** and **West London Performing Arts Academy**. Both organisations provide services for those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
- **Customer Service Point** is a service provided by LBE and it helps residents with advice and support on council services, helping customers with the challenges of accessing services online.



Outreach continues apace to raise awareness of the library -with attendance at school summer fairs and the Brentford festival. Furthermore, we have looked to strengthen relationships with other CMLs in the borough.

We continue to investigate how to extend our offer to under -represented groups eg younger people.

We will continue market research surveys to determine our existing users' needs and how the library can extend its service offer going forward.

Looking to the future the focus will be on improving our digital presence as a means of increasing our audience size: this has started with the launch of our Instagram page in the second half of 2024.

A Year of Vibrant Activities and Lasting Friendships



The number and range of events and activities has continued to increase over the past year. Our popular children's activities have included drama, art and craft sessions and our tuneful Rhyme Time sessions fill the library with babies and toddlers.



Our monthly Monday Socials, open to all but particularly suitable for older residents, are also very well attended and very lively! Our other regular activities, including our Knitting and Shared Reading Groups, continue to welcome loyal residents, who have all made firm friendships through attending these events.

Our author and local interest talks always do well and a highlight was the recent event to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, where the Little Ealing History Group and the audience shared stories of Ealing during WW2 and we were entertained with a singalong led by local singer Desiree Skylark.



New activities to the calendar - this year, in addition to our five year old Book Club, we are happy to have instigated a separate club for Young Adults and in June we will be holding a talk by a Young Adult author which we hope will attract a big teenage audience. And at the first of our Travel Lovers' Club meetings the (very well travelled!) attendees shared expert tips and insights.

If you would like us to offer other activities please let us know – we welcome your ideas!

Please sign our Visitors' Book!
Tell us what you love about the library, and what you think we should do next!