BARNES LITERARY SOCIETY



Report and financial statement year ended 31 July 2026

Presented at the AGM 10 November 2026

www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 1197046

Barnes Literary Society
Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2026

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Society Information

Patrons	Isla Blair Gyles Brandreth Harriett Gilbert Julian Glover Roger McGough Fiona Smith Venetia Vyvyan
Trustees	Sue Pandit (Chair) Kathy Owles (Vice Chair and Membership) C Elaine Redler (Secretary and Publicity) Kathy Kock (Treasurer) Fina Mason (Authors) Louise Carr (Hospitality) Belinda Darnton (Events) Philippa McEwan (Grants) Claudia Catelin (Social Media)
Principal address	St Mary's Church Church Road London SW13 9HL
Bankers	HSBC 593-599 Fulham Road London SW6 5UA

Barnes Literary Society
Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2026

The Barnes Literary Society has continued to deliver an excellent programme of authors to our members. Our trustee base was stable over the year and we continue to enhance the quality of our author events in the church with professional technical support. We held a great summer party in June. We have continued to expand our grant giving activities. We successfully introduced a new payment procedure, via membermojo, for members which was launched in August 2025.

Author Events

We had a fabulous group of speakers over the 2025/6 season covering an impressive range of genres including historical fiction and non-fiction, contemporary crime fiction, contemporary fiction, and a state of the nation novel. We now have 7 author events each season.

Our opening speaker in September 2025 was best-selling crime author, **Elly Griffiths**, who introduced us to the somewhat unconventional crime detective, DI Ali Dawson, who travels back in time to solve cold cases. Elly gave us a talk which covered many aspects of her writing life.

In October we welcomed local author and award-winning historian, **Anne Sebba**, who was in conversation with the BBC journalist **Eleanor Oldroyd**. Anne was discussing *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz* which addressed the role that music could play in a Nazi death camp.

In November the Booker prize-winning novelist **Sir Alan Hollinghurst** discussed his latest novel, *Our Evenings*, which traces the journey of Dave Win from boarding school childhood to an artistic flourishing in experimental theatre. Alan was in conversation with BLS patron and BBC journalist **Harriett Gilbert**.

In January **Sam Leith**, Literary Editor of The Spectator, discussed his history of the children's literary canon, *A History of Childhood Reading*, with **Nicolette Jones**, the Sunday Times Children's Book Editor. Sam revealed the magic of childhood reading, from ancient tales of Aesop, through the Victorian and Edwardian golden age to new classics.

In February we were due to welcome BBC journalist **Jeremy Bowen** to talk about his book *The Making of the Modern Middle East* but sadly he was called away to Ukraine at the last minute. We were very lucky to be able to welcome **Harriet Tyce** in his place who discussed her latest crime novel *Witch Trial* with local author **Jane Thynne**.

In April the award-winning author, **Tessa Hadley,** was talking to **Harriett Gilbert** about her latest coming of age novella, *The Party*.

We concluded our 2025/26 programme with **Priscilla Morris** who drew on her part Yugoslav heritage for her novel *Black Butterflies* that was shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction. Priscilla was in conversation with **Jo Weinberger**, previous Chair of BLS trustees.

We changed the venue for our June summer party to St Mary's Church. A much larger group of members enjoyed wine and excellent canapes from local caterer Jane Sutherland. We were then brilliantly entertained by BLS patron Gyles Brandreth. We have decided to continue this model for future summer parties.

National Year of Reading 2026

The BLS has been accepted as a pledge partner of the National Year of Reading. Our pledges focus on the charitable grants that we give to literacy focused projects at local primary schools and other charities. We have also explored the reading activities of our members. We have produced a short report that analyses local book group activities and have also produced several lists of the books that our book groups are reading. These lists have been very positively received by our members. We have also set up a new BLS book group, you will hear more about this in next year's Annual Report.

Grant giving activities

Philippa McEwan co-ordinates our grant giving activities and has been strengthening our relationship with some of the local primary schools including Barnes Primary as well as with the Mortlake Community Association and the Castelnau Community Centre.

Over the year BLS gave 16 grants of between £220 and £750 totalling £7,729. The variety of grant requests reflected the passion and commitment from those making the applications. There was an overriding theme to support literacy and most importantly the joy of reading from an early age.

The full list of grants is below:

Mortlake Community Association: Books for Santa's Grotto
Castelnau Community Centre: Turning Pages Workbooks Programme
Oso Arts Centre, Barnes: To continue support for the book club
Arts Richmond: To support annual Young People's Writing Competition
East Sheen Primary School: 'Before School Clubs' particularly targeting support for EAL pupils
Kew Riverside Primary School: Purchase of dual language books for EAL pupils
Sheen Mount Primary School: Books for outdoor sheds
Lowther Primary School: Purchase of wide range of books for dyslexia needs
Barnes Primary School: Purchase of books to support the RE curriculum
Thomson House School, East Sheen: To support an author visit to spread the love of reading
Buckingham Primary School, Hampton: Books for 'Books and Babies group'
Trafalgar Schools Federation, Infant and Junior School Twickenham: Outdoor reading boxes with books

Archdeacon Cambridge's CE Primary School, Twickenham: Updating library to include 'real life' experience books and author visit
St Mary's and St Peter's CE Primary School, Teddington: Purchase of books to better reflect the diverse cultures of the children
Heathfield Schools Partnership, Twickenham: To continue development of poetry library
Windham Road Nursery, Richmond: To invest in core texts and enhance the library

Membership

Membership for the year totalled 350. There have been no changes to the membership subscription this year. We have increased the guest price to £15 to keep us in line with other local literary events.

We now have a new payment system in place, membermojo, which has greatly improved how we manage our membership data. Standing orders have been phased out and direct payments are now made via the BLS website.

We have decided to introduce for the 2026/27 season a new annual 'member plus one' category for a fee of £80. This will enable members to bring along a partner, other family member or friend to whichever events are of particular interest to them.

BLS supporters

There are a number of people I would like to thank.

We are lucky to have supportive patrons at the BLS, several of whom regularly attend our events. We are delighted that Gyles Brandreth has agreed to join us as a patron.

I would like to thank Sarah Arthur who manages our website and features BLS news in the Barnes Bugle, the Barnes Community Association for providing coverage of our events in their publications, and all the local shops, businesses, and libraries who take our publicity posters.

We are very grateful to be able to have our events in St Mary's Church with the continuing support of AV specialist Mark Thornton. He was able to be with us for most of the author events over the year.

We would like to thank Venetia and her team from The Barnes Bookshop who continue to support our author events in the church plus the promotional support they provide in the bookshop.

Treasurer's Report

The accounts have been prepared on the cash basis in line with the requirements of the Charity Commission and will be submitted to the Charity Commission as part of the Annual Return. We delivered a surplus before grants of £8,386 compared to the previous year's surplus of £7,869. After awarding grants of £7,729 we ended the year with a net surplus of £657.We aim to distribute between £5,000 and £10, 000 a year in grants.

Given the very strong reserves that we have built up over recent years we are confident that this level of grant giving is sustainable.

It is BLS policy to keep reserves above a minimum level of £10,000. Reserves at 31 July 2026 were £35,377 represented by cash at bank.

Sue Pandit
Chair of Trustees
Barnes Literary Society

Barnes Literary Society

Income and Expenditure Account: Year ended 31 July 2026

	2026	**2025**
	£	£
INCOME		
Membership Fees	14110	11830
Guest Fees/Ticket Sales	2975	3340
Profits from the bar	452	860
Tax reclaimed on gift aid	2012	1685
Bank interest	445	1045
Other event income	160	140
	20154	**18900**
Expenditure		
Venue hire and rental costs	1818	2090
Speaker costs /other event expenses	4250	4614
Subsidy of creative writing course	0	405
Postage, Printing and Stationery	927	1085
Insurance	178	168
Bank charges etc.	464	284
Software	239	144
Website	1997	1685
Special event costs	1350	0
Publicity	545	456
Other costs	0	100
	11768	**11031**
Surplus before grants	**8386**	**7869**
Grants for charitable purposes	-7729	-5500
Net surplus/(deficit)for year	657	2369
Reserves brought forward	34720	32351
Reserves carried forward	35377	34720

Barnes Literary Society

Balance Sheet: 31 July 2026

	2026	**2025**
	£	£
Assets		
Cash at bank	35377	34720
Net Assets	**35377**	**34720**
Represented by		
General reserves	**35377**	**34720**

These accounts have been prepared on the cash basis as allowed by the Charity 026Commission

Approved by the committee and signed on their behalf

Chair:

