

HAPPY READERS BOOK GROUP - AND THE WIDER PICTURE

Brief history

1991 – Newbury branch of u3a is established

late 2013 – The Happy Readers book group is created as a result of the Good Reads book group being full.

April 2020 – Happy Readers meetings are temporarily suspended as a result of the COVID lockdown.

2026 - Newbury u3a has more than 70 groups available, six of which are book groups reading both fiction and non-fiction, one book group reading non-fiction only and one book group dedicated to reading Dickens

Three of the original members of the Happy Readers group remain, one of whom has become a “remote” member as age now prevents her from attending the group in person.

Importance of Newbury Library



Newbury Library plays a crucial role in enabling book groups to operate. For a reasonable annual fee, book groups can borrow sets of ten books chosen from an online catalogue. The library also produces a useful Book Group Newsletter.

Over the years, the library has increased the number of sets available for book groups to borrow and it now has more than 200 sets with over 60 registered groups using the library book group service.

This includes the Newbury Library VIP (Visually Impaired) Reading group which celebrated its 25th anniversary in August 2026.

There is also one private reading group that has been using Newbury Library's book group service since the library moved into its current building in 2000.

West Berkshire even offers an online book group, West Berks Reads.

Wider picture

There is a National Book Club Day to celebrate book groups which in 2026 will be held in September.

The Reading Agency, a UK charity with a vision to get more people fired up about reading, has a website, The Book Club Hub, formerly known as Reading Groups for Everyone, a safe space for UK book club members or those who want to join a book club, or those who want to hear what other book clubs think about books. It is community for book clubs in all kinds of places and is made up of all kinds of people.

The Reading Agency stresses the importance of reading for pleasure and the positive difference it makes to people's lives. It points out that book clubs are a great way to make friends, feel connected and empowered to try books that members may never have come across otherwise. According to original research conducted by Book Club Hub with book clubs across the UK, 94% of people asked read more widely and felt more connected to others thanks to their reading group.

The Book Club Hub hosted 46,118 book club members across the UK in 2024 – 2025. Through its programmes, over 113,000 people joined their local library and over 14.3 million books were borrowed from public libraries.

Book Club Hub works closely with publishers and book prizes to help its mission to empower people of all ages to read. Thanks to this, it can offer book club sets of books for free in return for their reviews.

Even people who cannot physically attend a book group can participate as there are many online book clubs. Online book clubs and reading groups let readers discuss classic books, explore best sellers, and connect with people across the country. A simple Google search brings up a number of options.



Bookclubs

<https://bookclubs.com> › join-a-book-club › online

✓ Online book clubs

Find a book club, discover new books, and organize your reading on **Bookclubs**, the free hub for all your book club needs. Find the right club for you!



Cambridge University Library |

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✓ The Really Popular Book Club

The **Really Popular Book Club** is the University of Cambridge Libraries and Archives' online book club. The book club is completely **FREE** and open to **EVERYONE**. [Read more](#)



Goodreads

<https://www.goodreads.com> › group › show › 21875-u...

✓ UK Book Club Group (6980 Members)

This is a **book group for Goodreads users in the UK**, but members from other countries are welcome too so long as all posts are made in English. [Read more](#)



Book Club Hub

<https://bookclubhub.co.uk>

✓ Book Club Hub

The Book Club Hub, formerly known as Reading Groups for Everyone, Find out how to have members join your online book club. **FREE, UK-wide programme.**



AI Overview



Find active online book groups in the UK through platforms like [Bookclubs](#), public institution sessions such as [The Really Popular Book Club](#) by Cambridge University, or community hubs like the [Book Club Hub](#) by The Reading Agency and global low-pressure groups like the [Silent Book Club](#).

Book clubs turn solitary reading into shared journeys. They inspire, challenge, and connect. Joining an online book club can also help people build a consistent reading habit. Many people struggle to read regularly. Being part of a group encourages accountability and makes the habit enjoyable. The discussion itself motivates readers to finish their books and engage critically with the material.

Online clubs also encourage sharing. Members recommend books to one another, helping expand literary horizons.